

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
Jen Price
- 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
Church email: 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
april 2026

The Road to Easter
Pastor Alissa

There's a good chance you are receiving this newsletter a day or two before Good Friday. At the beginning of this week, we joined together on Sunday to take the final steps of our Lenten journey toward renewal in God's mercy. As our children led us in the palm parade, we sang "Hosanna" and joyously welcomed Jesus into the "streets" of our church proclaiming him our Messiah and giving praise to God for the gift of salvation. But just as the events 2000 years ago turned swiftly, so did our worship experience. No sooner had we waved our palms did we sit down to read about Jesus' last supper with his disciples, joining our voices this time to sing the antiphon of Psalm 118 which is one of the traditional Passover hymns.

From there we followed Jesus as he took the 12 for a time of prayer in the garden at Gethsemane. Though he was "grieved and agitated" knowing what was to come, his disciples



were too sleepy to stay awake with him for one hour of prayer. When that hour was up, as they rubbed their tired eyes, they watched as one of their own betrayed Jesus to some of the religious leaders who had conspired for his arrest. As he was taken away, they deserted and fled while we, who were left behind to hear the rest of the

story, sang a song of "Dust and Ashes" to name *our* failures and *our* failings and to ask the Holy Spirit to guide us through "all gloom and grieving to the paths of resurrection." For like Peter, who would stick to the shadows trailing the entourage taking Jesus to the high priest, we, too, often lack the courage to stay at his side as he makes his way to the cross, and we, too, all too often, deny our relationship to him when pressed. (Cont. on pg. 2)



(Cont. from pg. 1) We listened as Jesus was questioned and accused by Pilate then put up as an option for release with Barabbas and we witnessed to the crowd choosing our Lord to be the one to die. We could sing no other song than "What Wondrous Love Is This," for truly, we cannot fully understand Jesus' choice to lay aside his divine crown for one of thorns and to die for the sins of the world. With Christ crucified, we turned to prayer – appealing to the God of all hopefulness to forgive us *though* mercy, to transform us *by* mercy, and to renew us *in* mercy so that as we left the foot of the cross, having sung our glad hosannas, we were made ready to experience the full joy of the resurrection to come.

A number of us will gather (or perhaps already have) on Wednesday evening at *The Respite* contemplative experience we have offered over the past six weeks. We will begin our time together with a celebration of the Eucharist, recounting the Last Supper and the long arc of God's work of salvation fulfilled through the life and death of Jesus. We will then spend time alone in contemplation, some of us choosing to reflect on scripture or art, others to journal or sing, still others engaging the story of Christ's passion through sacred conversation or silence. When we regather, it will be the ritual of Tenebrae that guides us in slowly extinguishing the light until only one candle remains in the darkness of the Chapel turned tomb where we will sit in silence until the Spirit tells us it is time to go.

On Easter Sunday that dark tomb will be empty and we will gather to celebrate that miracle of miracles! We will proclaim to the world that "Christ is Risen! He is risen indeed!" filling our sanctuary with bold "alleluias and Gloria Patris" as we witness to the Good News that death and sin shall never have the final say – God's mercy will reign forever! **I encourage you to join us on Easter Sunday, April 5 at 9 am for our Resurrection Celebration. Invite your friends and family to come with you! After worship we're offering a home-cooked Easter breakfast and our youth group is already busy preparing for an egg hunt for our younger kids!** Please also plan to join us on April 11 – though the first Sunday after Easter is often referred to as "Low Sunday" (because attendance tends to be on the low end), we're going to be welcoming New Members because our worship attendance and participation in the ministry of our church keeps growing! Praise be to God!

I pray that your Lenten journey has indeed been one of renewal and that the Easter season brings an experience of new life and transformation – I have been blessed to walk this season with you and give thanks to God that we share this road together!

Peace-
Pastor Alissa



Pastor Alissa will be on renewal leave from April 21 - 26 to attend the Five-Day Academy for Spiritual Formation.
(Photo – The Chapel of the Good Shepherd at the Archbishop Brunett Retreat Center)



A P R I L



BIRTHDAYS

- 4/1 Rowena Harr
- 4/2 Ali Norris
Tom Pletscher
- 4/3 Pat Porter
- 4/4 Judy Fox
- 4/7 Dommie Oswald
Erin Gregory
- 4/11 Gerald Bafus
- 4/13 Barbara Soran
- 4/14 Lexi Shay
- 4/15 Michael Mackin
- 4/19 Allen Shay
- 4/22 Raelynn Gebhart
- 4/23 Karlene Brown
- 4/30 Dannie Hawley
Tyler Meckel

ANNIVERSARIES

- 4/9 Tom & Pat Porter



SPECIAL EVENTS:

- 4/1 7:00 pm Lenten Contemplative Service
- 4/4 9:00 am Outside cleanup
- 4/5 9:00 am Traditional Easter service
10:30 am Easter Egg Hunt
10:30 am Easter Breakfast (Gym)
- 4/6 11:00 am Quilters (125)
- 4/7 10:00 am SPR (FPR)
- 4/11 4:00 pm Rejoice & Thapelo Wedding Ceremony—All are welcome. Private family reception to follow.
- 4/13 10:00 am Prayer Shawl Ministry (Youth)
6:30 pm Trustees (FPR)
- 4/14 9:00 am Huddle (213)
2:30 pm Finance (FPR)
- 4/16 12:00 pm Thursday Crew Lunch (Gym)
- 4/20 11:00 am Quilters (125)
- 4/21 11:00 am Touched by Cancer (115)
- 4/27 10:00 am Prayer Shawl Ministry (Youth)





You're invited to our Accompanist, Zachary Bjurstrom's Senior Recital on Wednesday, April 15th at 7 PM at Spokane Valley Steinway Piano Gallery, located at 13418 E. Nora Ave. Zachary will give a one-hour recital as part of his final requirements to earn his Piano Performance degree at EWU in June 2026. The program will feature a variety of classical pieces as well as three original compositions written by Zachary. There will be light refreshments after the recital.

Mahan Legacy Scholarship 2026-2027 Academic Year

SVUMC's Mahan Legacy Scholarship is available to students attending school for an undergraduate or graduate degree during the 2026-2027 academic year. Applicant must be a member or an active constituent of SVUMC. Scholarships will be for a minimum amount of \$800. Please call the church (509-924-7262) to request an application. Completed applications must be received in the church office by May 4, 2026. For any questions, please talk to Gerry Bafus.

GOOD FRIDAY PRAYER VIGIL

This is your opportunity to spend 45 sacred minutes with your Lord in our beautiful sanctuary. The prayer vigil will be held Friday, April 3rd, beginning at 6 AM. Be sure to sign up for your time slot on Palm Sunday at the Connect Desk. If you have questions, talk with Margie Collin or Mary Jane Waters.



THE JOURNEY CONTINUES

HOLY WEEK AND APRIL WORSHIP PREVIEW



MARCH 29 – PALM/PASSION SUNDAY

We will explore the final days of Jesus' life through a service of word and song including Psalm 118:1-2, 19-29 & readings from the Gospel of Matthew.

APRIL 1 – HOLY WEEK EXPERIENCE AT THE RESPITE

Join us for one last Lenten Dinner and a special Holy Week Contemplative Experience at *The Respite* where we will walk Jesus' last days together and in private meditation.

APRIL 5 – EASTER SUNDAY – "A NEW START"

Pastor Alissa preaching a sermon on Psalm 118:1-2, 14-24 and Matthew 28:1-10 with a Celebration of The Great Thanksgiving. *Easter Breakfast offered to all after service with an Egg Hunt for kids!*

APRIL 12 – SECOND SUNDAY OF EASTER – "ON THE ROAD AGAIN"

Pastor Alissa preaching a sermon on Mark 16:9-20 with a liturgy of welcoming new members!

APRIL 19 – THIRD SUNDAY OF EASTER – "3000 NEW PILGRIMS"

Pastor Alissa preaching a sermon on Acts 2:14a, 36-41 with a Ministry that Matters Moment.

APRIL 26 – FOURTH SUNDAY OF EASTER – "ALL NATURE SINGS!"

Join us for a "Singing Sunday Celebration Service" led by Betsy Pletscher! We will sing hymns and read scriptures that inspire us to join our voices with all creation in praise to God our Creator!

JOIN US FOR WORSHIP ON SUNDAYS AT 9AM AS WE CONTINUE OUR MISSION TO TRANSFORM THE GREATER COMMUNITY BY THE GRACE OF GOD!

APRIL WORD SEARCH

- April Fool's
- Sprout
- Holy Week
- Ostrich
- Dance
- Easter
- Poppy
- Hug
- Fondue
- Creativity
- Jazz
- Robin
- Superhero
- Ping Pong
- Fashion
- Librarian
- Theater
- Earth Day
- Volunteer
- Festival
- Poetry
- Hat
- Radio
- Orchid

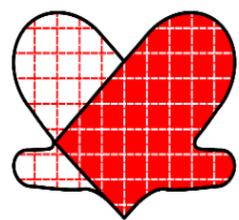
S	B	H	K	W	A	P	O	K	M	S	R	E	T	S	A	E	Q
F	U	S	V	H	C	F	N	G	Y	U	C	B	D	L	P	I	R
G	Z	P	B	D	X	O	A	M	P	I	N	G	P	O	N	G	L
J	B	R	E	L	S	N	V	S	Q	A	E	B	E	O	K	X	D
L	P	O	J	R	C	D	E	F	H	B	Q	T	M	F	Q	B	A
H	Z	U	I	O	H	U	Y	A	T	I	R	V	E	L	U	K	N
O	I	T	R	B	V	E	Z	H	K	Y	O	B	G	I	J	S	C
L	U	P	R	I	W	F	R	Z	B	S	A	N	O	R	S	R	E
Y	H	N	S	N	A	D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



Join us for a special coffee chat conversation about our new devotional book, *Walking In Grace*, with other readers. Grab a coffee after service on April 12 and come to Room 115 with your book to discuss some of your favorite devotionals from February & March. Questions? See Madelyn Bafus or Shirley Porter.



The Respite
Thank you to all who joined our Midweek Contemplative Experience!
Stay tuned for more opportunities to attend The Respite!



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.

Thank you



Thank you for bringing in so many food items last month! We held a food drive at the Connect Desk for Partners INW's food bank.

The UWF and Mission & Service is hosting a lunch for the Thursday Crew on April 16th at noon to say Thank You for all their hard work around the church! All Thursday Crew members are invited and welcome, no RSVP necessary.



You're invited to Easter Breakfast

Join us after service on Easter morning for cinnamon rolls, egg dish, sausage links, fruit, & juice. All proceeds go to our covenant relationship with missionary Katherine Parker.

Thank you to everyone who helped support our Annual Easter Dinner in March! We'll be able to share more about how much was made from this event in next month's newsletter.

Interested? Contact: Robin Gregory (858-344-7462) or Madelyn Bafus (509-869-8213)

Broadway Elementary presented SVUMC with a Meritorious Service Award for assisting the families of students impacted by cuts to the SNAP program in the fall. Thanks to everyone who made it possible for us to be there to help!



SCC Basic Needs Program

This month at the Connect Desk, we are collecting staple cleaning items for the Spokane Community College Basic Needs Program. Please bring Dollar Store cleaning products like dish soap, dish cloths, oven cleaner, toilet bowl cleaner, Comet, Windex, Lysol, Ajax, steel wool pads, bath cleaner, bleach, Pine Glo, disinfectant spray & wipes, carpet cleaner, mops, and buckets.



Coming up in May, we'll be collecting toilet paper and paper towels for Maddie's Place, a nonprofit recovery nursery caring for babies experiencing withdrawal from prenatal substance exposure. Stay tuned - May's Connections Newsletter will have more information.



All women of the church are invited to the

Lilac Luncheon



HOSTED BY
The United Women in Faith
MAY 30TH, 2026 | 11:30AM - 1:30 PM | CHAPEL
MARK YOUR CALENDAR!

April Circle Meetings

Sarah Circle
Monday, April 6 | 6:30 PM | FPR

Rachel Circle
Thursday, April 9 | 11 AM | Off-campus
This month, Rachel Circle is going to the Ronald McDonald house to make lunches; space is limited, so if you would like to join, please call Susan Henderson and confirm you're going.

Esther Circle
Tuesday, April 14 | 1 PM | Room 115
Esther Circle is hosting a program by Aging and Caring regarding Fall Prevention. Anyone interested is invited to attend. To RSVP, contact Shirley Porter at 509-951-9027.