



Spirit of Grace

A Lutheran-Methodist Cooperative Church

Pastor Miranda	2
Notes-N-New	3
Birthdays/Anniversaries	4
Calendar	5
About Spirit of Grace	6

January 2022



The annual meeting of the congregation of Spirit of Grace, ELCA UMC will be on **Sunday, January 16th, 2022** at 11:00 am following worship. There will be an option to participate via Zoom for any members who would like to do so, and in the event of dangerous weather or a sudden rise in COVID cases in our county, the annual meeting will be switched to a fully virtual format via Zoom.

We will handle all of the regular business of the congregation, including reviewing and celebrating the ministry of the last year, electing officers, presenting the budget, and receiving other reports.

It is vital for members of our congregation to attend, as we gather together to give thanks for the work God has done among us in the past year, and dream together about where God might be calling us in 2022.

January 30th – Guest Preacher: Lenny Duncan

On Sunday, January 30th, we will welcome Rev. Lenny Duncan (pronouns: they/them/jawn) as they come to Spirit of Grace to preach the gospel of Christ! Rev. Lenny Duncan is ordained in the ELCA and is the author of two books thus far: “*Dear Church: A Love Letter from a Black Preacher to the Whitest Denomination in the U.S.*” and “*United States of Grace: A Memoir of Homelessness, Addiction, Incarceration, and Hope.*” Both books are enlightening, challenging, inspiring, and filled with the message of the Divine. All are encouraged to read one or both of these books prior to January 30th if possible, in order to appreciate the message of Rev. Lenny all the more. After service on January 30th, we will host a time of fellowship and discussion as we continue the conversation begun during worship.

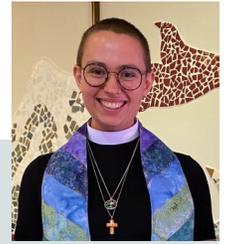


Lenny Duncan was the keynote speaker for the Oregon Synod’s Day of Learning this past September. If you are unfamiliar with them, here is a brief bio from their website, <https://lennyduncan.substack.com>:

Lenny is the author of United States of Grace and Dear Church. Born on 62nd and Race in West Philly he now lives in the Pacific Northwest. Lenny is a nationally recognized writer, speaker, preacher, thinker, and agitator who has centered most of his theological work in the task of dismantling White Supremacy in the republic. Lenny is just another Black queer writer trying to survive “America”. He loves hip hop, tattoos, Jesus, liberation, and most likely you.

Pastor's Message

Pastor Miranda Bermes-Goller
spiritofgracepastor@gmail.com



Beloved Siblings in Christ,

Merry Christmas and Happy New Year! 2022 is finally upon us, whether we are ready for it or not. While I know that many of us had been hoping 2022 would be the year that a sense of normalcy might return to our world, the emergence of new variants of this virus have left us bracing for the need to pivot yet again, anxiously wondering what this new phase of this pandemic might have in store for us, and what it might mean for our plans this coming year.



On Christmas Eve morning, I woke up with excitement and anticipation. Our family members had arrived in town the night before, with everyone now sleeping peacefully under the same roof. Christmas Eve service was fully planned and ready to go, meaning I could spend most of the day with everyone before needing to excuse myself to get ready for evening worship. I woke up early to drink some coffee and get settled in the kitchen for a day of baking and cooking — starting off with some sourdough bagels and peanut butter miso cookies! As I was pulling the last of my cookies out of the oven, I excitedly pointed out the newly falling snow to our loved ones milling around the house. Everything felt perfect – like it was going exactly as planned.

Then my phone rang, and I was informed that the beautiful snow was already causing dangerous driving conditions, which would only worsen as the day drew on. I knew immediately that we would need to cancel our in-person worship and switch to a fully virtual format via Zoom – and I was utterly heartbroken. One hour, a few tears, and several phone calls later, I was in the car driving over to the church building to spend my day reformating our service. There would be no choir singing – no celebratory gathering – no darkness filled with candlelight as we joined together in singing Silent Night – just me, standing between the Advent Wreath and the Christmas Tree, alone in an empty sanctuary. I was tired, sad, and nervous. The readings and liturgy may have stayed the same, but this was in no way the Christmas Eve I had planned.

As worship began, I took a shaky breath, thanked everyone for their flexibility and understanding, and reminded us all of zoom etiquette and procedures before beginning our service. And despite all the last-minute changes – despite all the plans we had to let go of – despite the empty sanctuary – it was still Christmas. In the readings, in the music, in the tiny faces on zoom screens, in the lighting of my candle as I sang Silent Night, I felt the presence of the Spirit resting on our hearts and drawing us all together across time and space. I was reminded that the whole point of Christmas is that *there is nothing that can stop God from breaking through amidst the brokenness and chaos of humanity in order to abide with us*. It was not the Christmas moment I had expected – but I believe it was the Christmas reminder I needed, as another year of unknown challenges draws near.



I may not know what 2022 has in store for us, but I do know this: God does not come as planned or as expected or as we have prepared for. God comes in unknown, unexpected, mysterious ways that we never could have anticipated. But if we are prepared to be flexible – if we are ready to embrace change – if we allow ourselves to be open to the dancing movement of the Spirit – we can witness and be a part of the miraculous work of God being done in this world, despite all of the brokenness and uncertainty.

May it be so among us this coming year.

In Peace,

Pastor Miranda



A prayer for the new year from Oregon-Idaho
Conference of UMC District Superintendent
Tim Overton-Harris.

**“God of all time, help us enter the New Year quietly,
Thoughtful of who we are to ourselves and to others,
Mindful that our steps make an impact
And our words carry power.**

**May we walk gently.
May we speak only after
We have listened well.**

**Creator of all life, help us enter the New Year reverently,
Aware that you have endowed every creature and
plant,**

**Every person and habitat
With beauty and purpose.
May we regard the world with tenderness.
May we honor rather than destroy.**

**Lover of all souls, help us enter the New Year joyfully,
Willing to laugh and dance and dream,
Remembering our many gifts with thanks
And looking forward to blessings yet to come.**

May we welcome your lavish love.

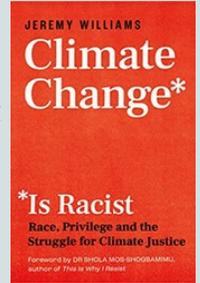
**In this new year,
May the grace and peace of Christ bless us
Now and in the days ahead.”**

-Vinita Hampton Wright

Credit: <http://gnw-email.brtapp.com/>

Climate Change & Racism Study

For 6 weeks in January and February, Pastor Miranda will be participating in an online book study with our district of the UMC, led by Rev. Tim Overton-Harris. We will be reading and discussion Jeremy Williams’ book, *“Climate Change is Racist: Race Privilege, and the Struggle for Climate Justice.”* Over the course of 6 weeks, Rev. Tim will lead local clergy members as we weave together two of the critical issues we face in an intersectional manner as we all try to find ways to learn, grow, and act to dismantle racism and address climate change. If you are interested in this topic and would like to engage in conversation along with Pastor Miranda during this study, you are encouraged to purchase your own copy of the book and reach out to Pastor Miranda to set up a time to discuss this text together.



Reckoning with Racism Team Update

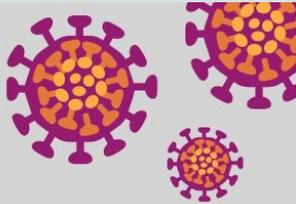
Spirit of Grace is excited to have a small team participating in Common Table’s Reckoning with Racism series. This is a gathering of interfaith leaders & practitioners who are committed to learning more about one another, trusting one another and standing together even in the midst of our differences. We meet on Zoom on the first Tuesday of each month as a large group cohort from around Oregon (100+) and then on the third

**OUR
SHARED
FUTURE**

**RECKONING
WITH OUR
RACIAL PAST**

Tuesday as just the Spirit of Grace Team (made up of Pastor Miranda, James Moudy, Sharon Poynter, and Alicia Bermes). As a large cohort, we have heard from Native American leaders, Black pastors and ministry leaders, and many other wonderful resources. We hope to host sessions in the future in which we can bring some of these resources to the rest of the congregation!

Thus far as a team, we have researched and discussed the indigenous people who stewarded this land, and considered how we live on stolen land. We are currently beginning the process of creating a Land Genealogy for Spirit of Grace, which involves researching who owned this land and the progression that was taken through the years. If you have any knowledge or information that might be useful in that endeavor, don’t hesitate to reach out to any of our team members - we would love to hear from you! If you are interested in learning more or even being a part of this group, we more than welcome your participation – it’s not too late!



COVID-19 UPDATE

We are thrilled to see that (as of December 29th), 80% of the population in Hood River County has received at least 2 doses of the COVID vaccine, with 89% having received at least 1 dose. This is wonderful news, and an important step in fighting this pandemic. Yet, we know that emerging variants of the virus threaten to set us back. If you are able and have not done so yet, **please get the booster dose of the COVID vaccine in addition to the original doses.** This is critical for your safety and the safety of our community.

We know that the Omicron variant moves quickly and can cause cases in a community to skyrocket. We are therefore keeping a close eye on our county's numbers through covidactnow.org, and will make decisions regarding worship accordingly. We will keep you informed of any changes that may need to be made in the coming months via email, phone, and our website. For now, please wear your mask, get vaccinated, and do whatever you can to prioritize the safety of those most vulnerable in our communities, as Christ calls us to do.

January Weekly Reflections

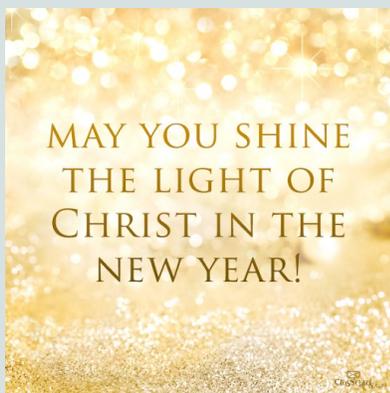
Jan 2nd – John 1:14 *Where do you see the Word of God still present and dwelling in our world today?*

Jan 9th – Luke 3:22 *Like Jesus, we too are called as God's Beloved. How do you experience this calling and identity in your life?*

Jan 16th – John 2:3-5 *In order to witness miracles, we first, like Mary, must have the faith and the boldness to ask for and expect miraculous things. What miracle are you awaiting in your life?*

Jan 23rd – Luke 4:18 *Jesus is clear about who his message of Good News is for: the poor and the oppressed, the captive and the prisoner. How are you engaging with such communities in our world?*

Jan 30th – Luke 4:28-29 *Jesus preached a challenging message that was not well received by those who benefit from the status quo. How does Christ's message cause you to think critically about the way you live out your faith?*



January Birthdays & Anniversaries

Jill Rowland	3
Sally Havig	18
Shelley Oates	20
Noah Boris, Rick McBee	24
Cheri Anderson	26
AN: Pat & Roy Pettit	28
Miyuki Gerald	29
Willie Ishizaka	30

Prayer Requests

Personal prayer requests can be sent to Carol Kyger at cckyger@gmail.com or call 541-386-6341.

JANUARY

SUN	MON	TUE	WED	THU	FRI	SAT
						1
2 10am Worship	3	4 10am Men's Fellowship (zoom)	5 9am Quilters	6 6:30pm Study-Group Zoom	7	8 9-1 Women's Spirituality
9 10am Worship SPRC Meeting after worship	10 10am Happy Hands	11 10am Men's Fellowship (zoom) Worship Team Meeting	12	13 6:30pm Study-Group Zoom	14	15
16 10am Worship Annual Congregational Meeting	17 10am Happy Hands Martin Luther King Jr. Day	18 10am Men's Fellowship (zoom)	19 9am Quilters 6:30pm Bell Choir	20 6:30pm Study-Group Zoom	21	22
23 Food on the 4th 10am Worship	24 10am Happy Hands	25 10am Men's Fellowship (zoom)	26 10am Staff Meeting 6:30pm Bell Choir	27 2-4pm Women's bible study 6:30pm Study-Group Zoom	28	29
30 5th Sunday Special Offering 10am Worship Special Guest Preacher	31 10am Happy Hands FISH Duty	1 February is 	2 FISH Duty	3	4 FISH Duty	5

Worship Duties

January	2	9	16	23	30
	Sharon Pantely	Debby Chenoweth	Tom Hart	Kristen White	Tom Hart
	Linda Boris	Debby Chenoweth	Sharon Poynter	Kristin Marcroft	Kris & Bob White
	Debby C. and Margaret G.		Debby C. and Margaret G.		
Sound System Power Point	Debby Chenoweth	Rick McBee	Rick McBee	Lee Huckins	Sharon Poynter



Spirit of Grace

1140 Tucker Road
Hood River, Oregon 97031
Phone: 541-386-3993
Email: office@hoodriverchurch.com
Web site: hoodriverchurch.org

Sunday Worship Times

Worship Service 10:00am in person
and Facebook live
Outdoor Fellowship 11:00am (weather allowing)

Education Times

Check with the Church Office

Office Hours

Pastor

Miranda Bermes-Goller

Mon-Wed 9-12 or by appointment

Staff

Jennifer Fowler

Office & Financial Secretary

Mon 9am to 2pm

Wed 9am to 2pm

Thurs 9am to 2pm

Linda Boris

Pastoral Assistant

Tues 9am to 1pm



<https://www.facebook.com/HoodRiverChurch>

Board of Directors

Pastor Miranda Bermes-Goller
Tom Hart, Co-Chair (2021)
Sharon Poynter (2021)
Shelley Oates Co-Chair (2020)
Gordon Leigh (2020)
Michele Sibley (2022)

Finance Committee

Pastor Miranda Bermes-Goller
Debby Chenoweth (2021)
Dottie Gilbertson (2022)
Tom Hart Treasurer & Payroll
Jennifer Fowler Financial Secretary
Shelley Oates Board Liaison

Ministry Team Leaders

Worship Linda Boris, Dottie Gilbertson
Altar Guild Marlene Lahti
Children & Youth
Men's Ministry
Women's Ministry
Outreach Debby Chenoweth
Prayer Chain Carol Kyger
Reception/Hospitality
Building Rick McBee

Music Ministry

Organist/Piano Dottie Gilbertson & Audrey Bentz
Voice Choir Audrey Bentz & Sharon Poynter
Bell Choir Linda Boris

Staff Parish Relations

Jill McBee (2020)
Ty Sibley (2020)
Sharon Pantley (2021)

Representatives

Oregon Synod Assemble Bette Lou Yenne
Oregon-Idaho Annual Conf.



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