



Spirit of Grace

A Lutheran-Methodist Cooperative Church

July 2022

Pastor Miranda	2-3
Board & Finance	4
Notes-N-News	5-6
Birthdays/Anniversaries	7
Calendar	8
About Spirit of Grace	9

Gratitude for Audrey & Myrin Bentz

On Sunday, July 12th, we offered our gratitude and appreciation to Audrey and Myrin Bentz for their many years of service not only at Spirit of Grace, but at many churches across the country throughout their lives! Audrey and Myrin have been faithful members of Spirit of Grace for many years, assisting with worship and ministry in a myriad of ways. In order to prioritize their safety and well-being, Audrey and Myrin will no longer be able to worship in-person with us regularly. Though we will miss their physical presence, we know that they dwell with us in our hearts every time we gather together for worship.

They wanted to share this note, expressing their own gratitude for their farewell Sunday:

Thank you to Spirit of Grace congregation for such a thoughtful and pleasant "farewell" on Sunday 6/12. We have been blessed by many beautiful people (Methodist and Lutheran!) during our 25+ years and will miss seeing you at worship and social events.

The wonderful cake and coffee, the beautiful plant and the many kind words help reduce the "sting" of missing worship, choir, and general contacts. We pray that the congregation, with the dynamic leadership of Pastor Miranda, will blossom heartily as you continue your ministry in Hood River.

Gratefully, Pastor Myrin and Audrey Bentz



Photo credit:
wartburg.edu

Happy Hands Transition

As Happy Hands becomes **Women's Coffee Time** and begins a new stage in their shared life together, we want to take a moment and acknowledge all of the significant and important work this group of women has accomplished over the years! Each year, these women would gather faithfully to not only share in fellowship with one another, but to use their gifts and talents to support their community by crafting items to sell in support of local community causes and organizations: Hood River Sheriff Youth Program; Laundry Love; Gifts for Graduates; Hood River Women's Shelter; Crochet Bra Cups for mastectomy patients, to name a few!

A Note from Jennifer Fowler

"Meaningful work gives life purpose and connects you to something bigger than yourself."

I have been blessed these past 13 years to be church secretary: first for Our Redeemer Lutheran, then Asbury-Our Redeemer Partnership and finally, Spirit of Grace. Working here was always about what I could give and how I could help.

As a member continuing to attend Spirit of Grace, I will still give and help.

Thank you to all who have sent me a note or reached out to me!

Blessings, Jennifer Fowler

Pastor's Message

Pastor Miranda Bermes-Goller
spiritofgracepastor@gmail.com



Beloved Siblings in Christ,

Summer is finally here! Though it felt like the rainy cold days would linger endlessly, the sun has finally broken through, and it looks like blue skies and hot afternoons are here to stay. As the earth of the Columbia Gorge comes alive, bearing abundant food and flowers to nourish our bodies and souls, I find myself contemplating the new ways in which God is calling all of us to grow and blossom in abundance in our own unique ways.

When I was first discerning my call to Spirit of Grace and learning more about this unique congregation, one of the goals articulated by the call committee was, “We want to build on the work that has been done by the Transition Team to continue to clarify the identity of Spirit of Grace.” The Ministry Site Profile compiled by the Transition Team did a wonderful job describing the history, passion, gifts, and challenges of this congregation – I remember being filled with joy and excitement upon first reading about this small congregation! Over the past year, as I have learned even more about the people and community who make up Spirit of Grace, I’ve only fallen deeper in love with the story and mission of this congregation. Now, I want to ask for your help in figuring out how to best share this story, mission, and communal identity with visitors and our surrounding community!



In this modern day, the first impression many people have of a new church when they are searching for a faith community is their website. Visitors will often first seek out a mission statement or list of values, to see if their needs will be met and supported in this congregation. Currently, the following paragraph is found at the bottom of our website homepage:

Spirit of Grace is a vital congregation of forward-thinking Christians who take seriously God's call to be engaged with the world. We believe that God is calling us to be a Living Bridge, connecting community with God's grace. We are proud of the heritage of our parent congregations, Our Redeemer Lutheran and Asbury United Methodist. We strive to bring the best of the past with us as we move creatively ahead into the future. Whoever you are and wherever you are on your journey of faith, you are loved by God and welcome here. We invite you to join us, as together we seek to walk more closely with God.

This is a beautiful summary that paints a picture of who this congregation is and what our purpose is in this community. It is my hope that we can come together and build off of this to craft a more succinct mission statement, along with a list of values and/or beliefs that expand upon that statement. This will offer clarity not only for newcomers and visitors, but for all of us as we dream together about what our ministry will look like in the coming years! Thankfully, we will not be starting from square one – instead, we'll be extracting from and building off of this paragraph, as well as the information collected by the Transition Team during your search for a new pastor.

continued

In August, the Board of Directors will be hosting two Congregational Conversations following worship on August 7th and 21st. These will be opportunities for us all to gather and discern how best to share the story of Spirit of Grace and highlight our mission, vision, and values clearly for all to see. As we hope to grow our presence in the community, this is an essential step to take. Ideally, we will come up with a mission statement short enough that it can be easily remembered and shared when out in the community telling the story of this church. But this work cannot be done by an individual or even a small group – we are all equally valued members of the body of Christ, and therefore we all have something unique and valuable to contribute to this conversation! Please plan to join us for at least one of these Congregational Conversations (though coming to both is welcomed and encouraged!).

Congregational Conversations: Discerning our Mission & Identity

August 7th – 11:30am

August 21st – 11:30am

I'm greatly looking forward to these conversations with you all – I hope that you will spend some time this month dwelling on this topic yourself, so that you can come filled with questions, ideas, and dreams to share!

In Peace, Pastor Miranda Bermes-Goller

Pastor Miranda at Providence Hood River Memorial Hospital

In early June, Pastor Miranda began her training with the Spiritual Care department at Providence Hospital in preparation for her beginning to serve there as an on-call chaplain. Pastor Miranda will be the on-call chaplain on Wednesday nights, as well as offering coverage for the primary chaplains on the team. She looks forward to being able to continue growing her pastoral skills in this new context, and is excited to have the opportunity to become more connected in our local community!



UMC Greater Northwest Annual Conference Summary

The UMC's Greater Northwest Annual Conference was held virtually once again this year, from June 19-25, as we gathered online to conduct important business of the church. On Sunday evening we convened for opening worship and listened to Bishop Elaine's final Episcopal Address as her term draws to an end ([listen to or read the transcript of this address here](#)). The evening concluded with some laity and ministry tema reports, as well as approving the upcoming budget. On Thursday, members of the Oregon-Idaho conference met for our plenary as we celebrated new elders, recognized the service of those retiring, and lifted up prospective Episcopal names for discernment. In the afternoon, we continued discussing and voting upon many action items and standing resolutions, which can be read in [this packet of materials](#). On Saturday, we gathered to take care of some business across the three conferences, and had a special closing worship and celebration for Bishop Stanovsky, ahead of her retirement at the end of the year.

The GNW conference also acted quickly in response to the Supreme Court's most recent decision regarding abortion, and voted to publically release [this statement](#), as well as set up a fund to allow GNW Area members to support conference and area staff, clergy and their family members who may be impacted by this restriction of reproductive freedom. To give online, visit greaterpnw.org/choice or text the code "GNWCHOICE" to 44-321 on your mobile device.

Spirit of Grace Board of Directors - June Meeting Minutes (abbreviated)

Present: Pastor Miranda, Shelley Oates, Tom Hart, Cindy Murahashi, and Sharon Poynter via Zoom. Gordon Leigh and Michelle Sibley were unable to attend.

Currently there is about \$25,167.55 in the bank, this includes 5K Grant and 3K for Happy Hands. Key bank has a \$10,000 CD up for renewal. Regular giving is about \$49,000 to date.

Pastor Miranda gave her report. Lent zoom services went well. Maundy Thursday service was well attended and was very worshipful. Easter was also well attended and it was nice to be able to share in fellowship and refreshments. Pastor attended the ELCA Oregon Synod Conference in Sun River. Jim and Cherri Anderson were our congregational delegates.

The congregation received the \$5,000 Technology Grant from UMC. The money has been allocated for upgraded A/V and improved live streaming services to implement by summer's end. This will require training and adding at least a couple more people to run the PA and powerpoint, and formulating a Technology ministry to include live streaming services. Cindy wondered about hiring someone with knowledge of live streaming and asking UMC if they can suggest someone as a consultant or trainer. It was the consensus of the Board to pursue this.

There are new individuals attending services. This is very encouraging. We will continue to maintain our mask policy for indoor worship. Hopefully we will start up fellowship with refreshments after services within the guidelines of local Covid status.

Short Term Mission Goals:

Pastor Miranda is organizing Ministry Teams with at least 3-4 members each, to promote the idea of intentional and fluid accessibility for all to engage in the ministry of the church.

There is also a need for better communication and transparency of the Board and other groups of the congregation. We will utilize the Bulletin Board as another means of communication. The church website is sorely outdated and in need of updating and reworking.

We need to establish and redefine our mission statement and goals that accurately represent Spirit of Grace. To accomplish this we can share a workshop session with the congregation encouraging spontaneous ideas.

Another concern is adding By-Laws to our Constitution. Shelley will look into this and contact other congregations to see how they amended &/or added to their documents.

Pastor Miranda closed the meeting by reading "Psalm of Possibility" by Gail Song Batum.

Respectfully submitted by, Sharon Poynter, Board Secretary



Submitted by Tom Hart, Treasurer

Income Comparison for 2022	5/31/21 Actual	5/31/22 Budget	5/31/22 Actual	Difference vs. Budget
General Fund Offerings	44,645.00	46,250.00	49,261.93	3011.93
Technology Grant	0.00	833.31	5000.00	4166.69
Solar Panels	1280.00	583.31	2046.48	1463.17
Designated Giving	645.00	0.00	585.00	585.00
Good News Gardening Rent	450.00	0.00	150.00	150.00
FISH Food Bank Rent	1.00	0.40	1.00	0.60
Floral Fund		0.00	155.00	155.00
Quilting Group		0.00	200.00	200.00
Totals	47,021.00	47,667.02	57,399.41	9732.39

FISH Food Bank Volunteers

Many thanks to the members of Spirit of Grace who served during our FISH distribution last week. Several served three days and many served two days. It was a wonderful full experience !! We served 142 requests and 544 individuals during the week. This mission to our community is very special and so appreciated. We were blessed with several others stepping up to serve with us.

Bette Lou Yenne

Oregon Nisei Veterans World War II Memorial Highway

OREGON NISEI VETERANS WORLD WAR II MEMORIAL HIGHWAY

The official dedication of the Oregon Nisei Veterans World War II Memorial Highway will be held on Saturday, August 13 in Hood River (as of July 5th, the location of where the ceremony is hasn't been mentioned). The Japanese American Citizen League website has some information: <https://www.pdxjacl.org/niseivetshwy/>

Responding to the Supreme Court Ruling on Abortion

In light of the Supreme Court's most recent ruling on abortion on June 24th, I'm sure that many of you are wondering what our church and our faith has to say on this manner, and how we as Christians are called to respond. In worship on June 26th, I shared excerpts from several statements released by our denominations, all of which expressed a similar sentiment: Regardless of our personal opinions on the morality of this issue and whether life begins at conception or birth, this decision by the Supreme Court denies the bodily autonomy, dignity, and sacred worth of the lives of all people who need to make decisions about unplanned pregnancies. I encourage you all to take some time to read the full statements from our denominations:

[ELCA: Bishop Eaton issues pastoral message on SCOTUS ruling regarding Roe v. Wade](#)

[UMC: Roe v. Wade Statement from Council of Bishops](#)

[UMC - GNW Annual Conference: Call for Support of Reproductive Autonomy and Healthcare](#)

I know that this is a complex, deeply personal issue for many people. If you are looking for a space in which to process your thoughts, feelings, or questions on this matter, please know that I am more than willing to be in conversation with and/or hold space for you – don't hesitate to reach out.

Pastor Miranda Bermes-Goller

spiritofgracepastor@gmail.com , 708-738-9975



Spirit of Grace Ministry Teams

For the past few months, we have been working to reestablish our ministry teams in order to cultivate a more sustainable and accessible culture of ministry in our church! The purpose of these ministry teams will be to collaborate with Pastor Miranda on ways to grow, engage, and support these areas

of our church life. These ministry teams will meet on a regular basis (to be established between the pastor and primary team members). Once a regular meeting time has been established, these meeting dates will be published on the church calendar and announced so that anyone who wants to drop into a meeting can do so. While each team will have a few core members to offer continuity and stability, these meetings will be open to all in order to incorporate as many diverse voices and ideas into our ministry as possible!

Community Outreach

Debby Chenoweth, Lee Huckins, Phil Scott*

Hospitality & Special Events

Dottie Gilbertson, Pat Moore, Marlene Lahti, Sharon Poynter

Building & Grounds

Scott Fitch, Bette Lou & Allen Yenne, Ty Sibley, Rick McBee

Worship*

Linda Boris, Dottie Gilbertson, Marlene Lahti

Lifelong Learning*

Sharon Poynter, Cindy Murahashi

Prayer & Visitation*

Donna Fitch, Carol Kyger

**teams seeking more members!*

Reckoning with Racism Update

Our Team, Pastor Miranda, Alicia Bernes, James Moudy and Sharon Poynter, has completed the sessions that started last October and ended June through Ecumenical Ministries of Oregon. We shared with many congregations throughout Oregon struggling with this work. Listening to their challenges and accomplishments. Our own team shared with our own congregation just a small sampling of what we found regarding our land story. Even in our small communities of Hood River County we see the prejudices toward Indigenous, Asian, Hispanic and even the few Black citizens. Our work and commitment to this work deals with reconciliation and restored relationship. How we accomplish this is the challenge. Looking to the Fall we may participate again for a second year. Please consider participating.

Sharon Poynter.

Weekly Reflections

July 3 – Galatians 6:9 *The road to the liberation and peace of the Kingdom of God is long, and demands much from us. How do you support and sustain yourself so as not to grow weary?*

July 10 – Colossians 1:11 *In what ways do you find strength in God? How does this give you hope for the future?*

July 17 – Luke 10:41-42 *What worries and anxieties do you hold in your heart that are no longer necessary? How can you give these burdens over to God?*

July 24 – Colossians 2:6-7 *What are the things that keep you firmly rooted in Christ? How have they deepened and grown over the years?*

July 31 – Luke 12:15 *What gives you security in your life, beyond wealth or possessions? How can you nurture these blessings?*

Prayer Chain requests: call Carol Kyger 541-490-7033

Online Giving

QR Codes are available on Spirit of Grace's website, our Facebook page, and on the last page of this newsletter each month.

Birthdays & Anniversaries

Pat Pettit Jean Sheppard	1
Skip Fowler Bette Yenne	3
Lisa Godard Doug Swanson	16
Balance Donahue	21
Alden Gendreau	22
Maggie Ishizaka	27

<u>Anniversary</u> Jill & Rick McBee	12
<u>Anniversary</u> Kristin & Brian Marcroft	14
<u>Anniversary</u> Margaret & Bob Godard	17

FISH/Spirit of Grace garden volunteer calendar

JULY 2022

SUN	MON	TUE	WED	THU	FRI	SAT
27	28	29 Work Party 4-7p.m.	30	31	1	2
3	4	5 Work Party 4-7p.m.	6	7	8	9
10	11	12 Work Party 4-7p.m.	13	14	15	16 Work Party 9 a.m.-1 p.m.
17	18	19 Work Party 4-7p.m.	20	21	22	23
24	25	26 Work Party 4-7p.m.	27	28	29	30

Amelia, Garden Coordinator. fishgardenvc@gmail.com

JULY

SUN	MON	TUE	WED	THU	FRI	SAT
					1	2 9am Women's Spirituality
3 10am Worship 11 Fellowship	4	5 10am Men's Fellowship (zoom)	6 9am Quilt Grp	7	8	9
10 10am Worship 11 Fellowship	11 10am Women's Coffee Time	12 10am Men's Fellowship (zoom)	13	14	15	16
17 10am Worship 11 Fellowship	18 10am Women's Coffee Time	19 10am Men's Fellowship (zoom)	20 9am Quilt Grp	21	22	23
24 / 31 Food on the 4th 10am Worship 11 Fellowship	25 10am Women's Coffee Time	26 10am Men's Fellowship (zoom) 2-4pm Women's bible study Zoom	27	28	29	30

Worship Duties

July	3	10	17	24	31
	Tom Hart	Sharon Poynter	Debby Chenoweth	Debby Chenoweth	Tom Hart
	Sharon Poynter	Debby Chenoweth	Debby Chenoweth	Kristin Marcroft	Sharon Poynter
PowerPoint	Linda Boris	Lee Huckins	Rick McBee	Sharon Poynter	Debby Chenoweth
Altar Guild	Marlene Lahti Pat Moore		Marlene Lahti Pat Moore		



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 zoom

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 (3 yrs)

Meets every other month

Pastor Miranda Bermes-Goller

Tom Hart, Co-Chair (2021)

Sharon Poynter (2021)

Shelley Oates Co-Chair (2020)

Gordon Leigh (2020)

Cindy Murahashi (2022) 1 year

Finance Committee

Meets quarterly

Pastor Miranda Bermes-Goller

Debby Chenoweth (2022)

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 (2yrs)

Sharon Pantley (2020)

Pat Moore (2022)

Representatives

Oregon Synod Assembly: Jim & Cheri Anderson

Oregon-Idaho Annual Conf.



Tithely



Facebook



Church Website



A Lutheran-Methodist Cooperative Church

Spirit of Grace

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Hood River, Oregon 97031

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