



Spirit of Grace

A Lutheran-Methodist Cooperative Church

August 2022

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Congregational Conversations: Discerning Our Mission & Identity

Following worship on August 7th and 21st, the Board of Directors will be hosting two 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. During these two gatherings, we will spend time in conversation with one another and participate in some creative brainstorming as we dream about our future together! *It is our hope to articulate a mission statement that can be easily remembered and shared when out in the community telling the story of this church, as well as some values that paint a picture of our collective belief as a unique faith community.* 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!).

August 7th – 11:30am – FISH Community Room
August 21st – 11:30am – FISH Community Room

Resuming Fellowship

The Hospitality & Fellowship Team met in July and are excited to begin offering Sunday fellowship once more! Beginning in September, fellowship will be hosted on the **first Sunday of each month**, immediately following worship.

The Hospitality & Fellowship Team will assist with set-up and clean-up, and are asking for volunteers to sign up for a month to bring treats to share. Sign-up sheets can be found on the bulletin board in the Narthex, and we hope you will be sure to join us for worship and fellowship the first Sunday of each month!

Jennifer's Celebration & Blessing

Thank you to all who joined us for worship and fellowship on July 24th as we blessed Jennifer Fowler on her new position with the UMC and expressed our gratitude for her many years of service to this congregation!



Pastor's Message

Pastor Miranda Bermes-Goller
spiritofgracepastor@gmail.com



Beloved Siblings in Christ,

On August 21st, I will celebrate my one-year anniversary as an ordained minister of Word and Sacrament. I can hardly believe that it has already been a year since Jenni and I packed up our belongings, loaded up the car with pets and essentials, and drove from Minnesota to Oregon to start our lives here in Hood River. As I look back on my first year of professional ministry, it has been one filled with joy and struggles, grief and laughter, exciting possibilities and uncertain futures – and I've been learning and growing every step of the way. I am filled with immense gratitude for all that this community has taught me so far, and for all of the love and support you have shown to my family – and I'm even more grateful that this is still just the beginning of our ministry together!

This past year has been filled with its own unique set of challenges, as we learned that resuming life together in a continuing pandemic is by no means a linear process. And yet you all have been flexible and resilient amidst switches from in-person to online worship, adapting to precautions that allow us to gather together safely, because of your profound desire to be in relationship and community with one another. Even in adverse conditions, there is still a palpable joy on Sundays after worship as you connect with one another, sharing stories, asking for prayer, offering wisdom and advice, and pondering where/how God is calling us to dwell in our community. Regardless of the state of our world, there is so much healing and hope to be found in relationship with one another. As Paul writes in his letter to the people of Corinth,

"It was by one Spirit that all of us were baptized into one body. All of us have been given to drink of the one Spirit. And that body is not one part; it is many."

All of us are bound together by the Spirit, called to live a life enriched by the presence of one another so that we can more fully embody God's missional calling for us in this world: to share the gospel, live as Jesus taught us, and cultivate the Beloved Community of the Kingdom of God here on earth for all people.

The isolation of the pandemic has taken its toll on all of us in one way or another, because God created us to be in community and relationship with one another, first and foremost. Whether in Bible study or book discussions, through coffee hour or gardening, in the church building or out in our community, the Spirit of God comes alive and moves through us when we engage in this relational work. Over the course of this next year, it is my hope that we will work together to create a variety of ways and spaces in which to cultivate this community with one another, as well as our surrounding neighborhood.

Whether in study, fellowship, worship, prayer, or service, there are a variety of ways God calls us to dwell in relationship with one another and, in turn, the Divine. As we linger in these final weeks of summer, savoring time with family and loved ones, I hope that you will spend some time considering how you want to be engaged in community with Spirit of Grace this year, so that we can continue to grow in faith with one another.

In Peace,

Pastor Miranda Bermes-Goller

Season of Creation at Spirit of Grace

For 5 Sundays, from September 1st to October 4th, Spirit of Grace will be joining with churches from around the world to participate in the Season of Creation - a liturgical season designed to support Christian churches in strengthening our engagement and forming a united, faithful response to the growing environmental crisis. The Season of Creation ecumenical steering committee comes together each year to provide resources to empower Christians to enter a shared season of reflection and action, each in the tradition of their own denomination.



The theme for 2022 is Listen to the Voice of Creation, to encourage us to listen to the “*voices of those who suffer the impacts of climate change. These are voices of people who hold generational wisdom about how to live gratefully within the limits of the land. These are voices of a diminishing diversity of more-than-human species. It is the voice of the Earth.*”

The symbol for 2022 is the burning bush, signifying not only the prevalence of unnatural forest fires, but also burning bush that appeared to Moses, affirming “*that God heard the cries of all who suffered, and promised to be with us as we followed faithfully to deliverance from injustice.*”

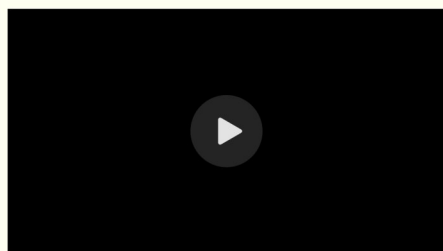


**Listen to the
Voice of creation**
SEASON OF CREATION 2022

For each of the 5 Sundays in the Season of Creation, our liturgy, hymns, and sermon will all be centered around this theme. Stay tuned for updates on other events, discussions, and ways to participate in this liturgical season!

Worship Livestream Update

Sunday Worship Livestream



Widget by VidLive

Thanks to the generous grant we received from the Columbia District Extension Society of the UMC, we have a new and improved livestream setup for worship! We now have three cameras that we will be using to capture different angles of the sanctuary during worship, and will be connected directly to the soundboard to improve the audio quality. We will still be streaming via Facebook Live, for those who like to take advantage of interacting with the livestream via comments and reactions – but beginning August 7th, the livestream can be viewed directly on the homepage of our website, with no need to go to an external site!

As this is a new technology set up, there will likely be glitches that need to be worked out in the first few weeks, so we ask for your patience as we troubleshoot any problems that arise. If you are watching the livestream and notice something that needs improving or fixing, send an email to office@hoodriverchurch.com so we can make a note of it.



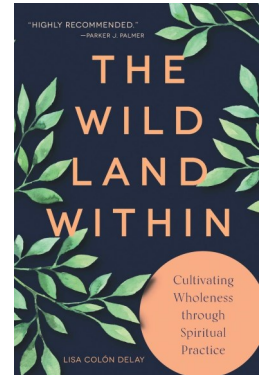
Lifelong Learning: Study Groups

In previous years, our Thursday Evening Study Group has been an excellent opportunity for a small group to gather regularly to engage in study and reflection in community with one another. This group has gathered weekly throughout the year, typically meeting from September - Advent, January - Lent, and Easter - June, discussing 2-3 books over the course of these 3 sessions. The group begins by reading a chapter or section together, and members take turns leading the discussion, using pre-written discussion questions. This year, we'd like to expand on this by creating multiple small groups that will all study the same text! Below, you'll find the proposed schedule for 2022-2023, and the two books we'll be reading:

Fall Session (September - November, 10-11 weeks)

The Wild Land Within: Cultivating Wholeness Through Spiritual Practice by Lisa Colón DeLay

The wilderness of the heart may be untamed, but you don't need to go there alone. In The Wild Land Within, spiritual companion and podcast host Lisa Colón DeLay offers a map to our often-bewildering inner terrain, inviting us to deepen and expand our encounters with God. Through specific spiritual practices from early desert monastics, as well as Latinx, Black, and Indigenous contemplatives, she guides us in cultivating lives of devotion. In opening ourselves up to God's healing, we will inevitably come across wounds we didn't even know we had. Colón DeLay uses theology and neuroscience to help us work through buried fear or pain and find embodied spiritual healing from trauma. A contemplative map to the wilderness of the heart, The Wild Land Within guides us through intimate geography in which God dwells.

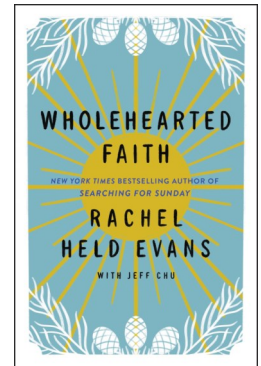


Winter Session (January - February, 6-7 weeks)

Wholehearted Faith by Rachel Held Evans & Jeff Chu

Rachel Held Evans is widely recognized for her theologically astute, profoundly honest, and beautifully personal books, which have guided, instructed, edified, and shaped Christians as they seek to live out a just and loving faith.

At the time of her tragic death in 2019, Rachel was working on a new book about wholeheartedness. With the help of her close friend and author Jeff Chu, that work-in-progress has been woven together with some of her other unpublished writings into a rich collection of essays that ask candid questions about the stories we've been told--and the stories we tell--about our faith, our selves, and our world. This book is for the doubter and the dreamer, the seeker and the sojourner, those who long for a sense of spiritual wholeness as well as those who have been hurt by the Church but can't seem to let go of the story of Jesus. Through theological reflection and personal recollection, Rachel wrestles with God's grace and love, looks unsparingly at what the Church is and does, and explores universal human questions about becoming and belonging. An unforgettable, moving, and intimate book.



Spring Session (April - June, 8-9 weeks)

Wholehearted Faith (continued)

To participate in our Fall Session, sign up on the sheet in the narthex or email Pastor Miranda to indicate your interest. Participants will receive an email asking them to list their availability and preferences for meeting (in-person or via zoom). Once all have had the opportunity to sign up, they will be divided into small groups based on their schedule and meeting preference, in order to be accommodating to as many needs and schedules as possible.

Copies of The Wild Land Within can be purchased online from [Bookshop \(new\)](#) or [Amazon \(new or used\)](#). If cost is a concern for you, the church has money in the budget set aside for purchasing educational materials - simply let Pastor Miranda know you are in need of a copy.

Safe Sanctuaries Event: The Cells Remember

**Tuesday, August 16, 2022
6:00 pm – 7:30 pm PT (Zoom)**

[Register Here](#)

Safe Sanctuaries is more than a policy, it is a way of life. Safe Sanctuaries acknowledges that all members of our congregations have experienced trauma in one form or another over the past several years. Children come to VBS knowing how to hide from active shooters. Youth face ridicule and peer pressure from online and in-person bullies. As adults, we bring the news into our lives through media outlets. Our nightly news brings the chaos and concerns of our world into our living rooms. Where do we go when this is too much? How can we as a caring congregation support each other?

John Wesley calls us to "First, do no harm, do all the good you can, stay in love with God" and our baptismal vows remind us of our need to care for all people. This is why the Safe Sanctuaries team has created an event around trauma. In our 90 minute gathering we will discuss what trauma is, how it affects our lives, and how as a spiritual community we can learn self-care.

We are excited to announce our guest presenters for the August 16th zoom gathering:

Robert Marrs, LCSW – *"The Cells Remember: The Impact of Trauma"*

Kristi and Mel Phillips – *"The Church's Response to Trauma"*

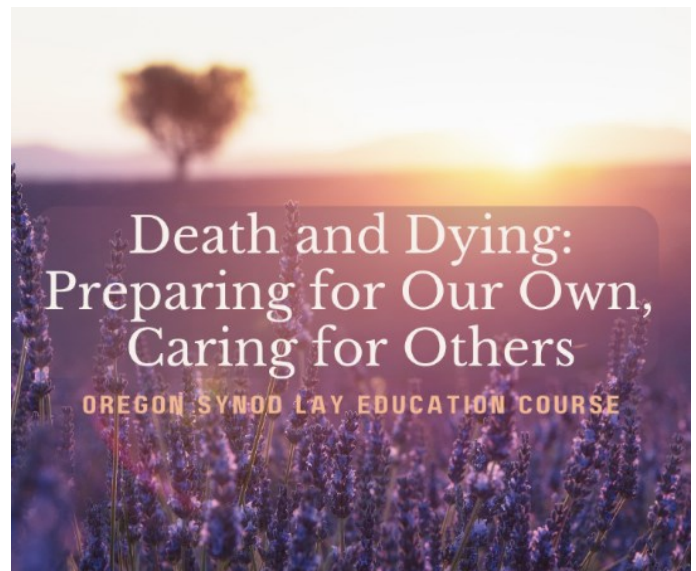
Questions? Email Lydia Henry at preventabuse@umoi.org

Oregon Synod Lay Education Course

*How might I prepare for my own death?
What are ways to be present, grounded,
and supportive as someone dies or grieves?*

Join with others from around the Oregon Synod as we learn more about the dying process itself, what happens shortly after death, and advance planning. We'll also explore the legacies we want to leave, knowing our own grief, being present for others' grief, and related rituals. **This on-line course will meet on eight Tuesday evenings from 6:30-8 pm (Pacific Time) beginning September 20.** We'll be joined by several guest instructors with a depth of experience in chaplaincy, palliative care, and hospice.

The course is designed with a Lutheran lens and inclusive heart; all are welcome. Course participants and/or their congregations are encouraged to donate, as they are able, on a sliding scale between \$20-\$160, but donations are not required to participate.



Lift Every Voice Oregon - IP 17 Update

In response to the resolution passed at the 2022 Oregon Synod Assembly, Spirit of Grace collected signatures every Sunday in June for the petition to put IP 17 on the November ballot. On Friday, July 8, members of Lift Every Voice Oregon (LEVO) gathered at Augustana Lutheran Church in Portland to kick off a journey to deliver IP 17 signatures to the Secretary of State's office.



Faith leaders, students and community members boarded a school bus and journeyed to Salem, where they held a rally and marched arm-in-arm to deliver boxes of over 130,000 petition signatures.

Surpassing the required number of signatures, the measure will be on the Oregon November ballot. If passed by voters, would ban the sale of magazines with a capacity greater than 10 rounds and would require permits and firearm safety courses to purchase any gun. Applicants would have to pay a fee, submit to fingerprinting and pass a criminal background check.

Watch the KGW video:

["Oregon group delivers signed petitions for gun reform initiative"](#)

Read the Religion News Service article:

["An interfaith group in Oregon is behind one of nation's strictest gun control measures,"](#)

5th Sunday Special Offering in July: Warm Springs Community Action Team

Over the last year, Spirit of Grace's Reckoning with Racism Team has spent time learning the history of the land we now worship on, prior to the displacement of the many indigenous communities who lived here for centuries. In honor and recognition of this, our 5th Sunday Offering will be going to a group that works to strengthen and empower members of the Warm Spring Reservation, to help them create a better future for their community.

The [Warm Springs Community Action Team](#) is a non-profit community development organization located on the Warm Springs Indian Reservation. WSCAT envisions a Warm Springs Reservation in which tribal and community members control their own destinies, in which people are in a position to provide for their families, pursue their hopes and dreams, and achieve their full potential:

By 2040, the people of the Warm Springs, grounded in our multi-tribal heritage, will have found new ways to live happily and well, with healthy families residing in stable homes, locally-owned businesses supporting the community, our youth pursuing education, growth, and personal development, and our elders looking back on lives in which persistence and hard work helped create a stable, strong Warm Springs middle class and a vibrant economy. The people of Warm Springs will understand the importance of caring for our environment and our culture, draw strength and identity from time-honored knowledge systems, strive to reach personal and family goals, and demonstrate that good people with the right vision, values, and solutions to problems can achieve anything.



Submitted by Tom Hart, Treasurer

Income Comparison for 2022	6/30/22 Actual	6/30/22 Budget	6/30/22 Actual	Difference vs. Budget
General Fund Offerings	49,275.00	55,500.00	50,991.85	(4,508.15)
Technology Grant	0.00	999.98	5000.00	4000.02
Solar Panels	1280.00	699.98	2046.48	1346.50
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	0.48	1.00	0.52
Floral Fund		0.00	155.00	155.00
Quilting Group		0.00	200.00	200.00
Totals	51,651	57,200.44	59,129.75	1,929.31

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*

plan community engagement opportunities and outreach events

Debby Chenoweth, Lee Huckins, Phil Scott

Hospitality & Special Events *Meeting Schedule: the second Sunday after worship, every other month*

set-up, clean-up, and food planning for coffee hour and other events

Dottie Gilbertson, Pat Moore, Marlene Lahti, Sharon Poynter

Building & Grounds

maintain and care for the church property, and plan future improvements

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

Worship *Meeting Schedule: Tuesdays at 9am, as needed based on the liturgical calendar*

assist with planning and selecting worship themes, liturgies, and hymns

Linda Boris, Dottie Gilbertson, Marlene Lahti, Bette Lou Yenne

Lifelong Learning*

plan regular educational opportunities for children, youth, families, and adults

Sharon Poynter, Cindy Murahashi

Prayer & Visitation*

assist with praying for the needs of our community and visiting homebound members

Donna Fitch, Carol Kyger

****teams seeking more members!***

Weekly Reflections

August 7th: Hebrews 11:15-16

In order to embrace a new future, sometimes we have to dwell less on the past. How can you set your mind on what has yet to unfold in your life of faith?

August 14th: Luke 12:51

How can you work to cultivate relationships that lead to the True Peace of Christ, rather than the false peace of complacency, in your life?

August 21st: Luke 13:15-16

Jesus allowed his work to be guided by the needs of God's people, rather than the rules of society or religion. How is God calling you to behave likewise?

August 28th: Luke 14:13-14

At God's heavenly banquet, a special invitation is given to those who have been marginalized and oppressed. How are we extending a similar welcome to those in our community?

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

Important Upcoming Dates

August 4th – Leadership Team Meeting

August 6th – Women's Spirituality Group

August 7th – Congregational Conversation:
Discerning Our Mission & Identity Part One

August 9th – Worship Team Meeting

August 21st – Congregational Conversation:
Discerning Our Mission & Identity Part Two

August 22-27 – Pastor Miranda on Vacation

August 23rd – Women's Bible Study

August 28th – Food on the Fourth

September 1st – Season of Creation Begins

September 3rd – Women's Spirituality Group

September 4th – Back to School Blessing & Fellowship Sunday

September 10th – GEM Members Meeting

Birthdays & Anniversaries



Martha Hoskins	1
Bill Crompton	16
Cindy Murahashi	22
Audrey Bentz	27

<u>Anniversary</u> Erica & Pepi Gerald	1
<u>Anniversary</u> Bette & Alan Yenne	10
<u>Anniversary</u> Cindy & Scott Murahashi	17
<u>Anniversary</u> Pat & Bill Crompton	19
<u>Anniversary</u> Cheri & Jim Anderson	20
<u>Anniversary</u> Donna & Scott Fitch	20
<u>Anniversary</u> Shelley & Greg Oates	29

August

SUN	MON	TUE	WED	THU	FRI	SAT
	1	2	3	4 6pm Leadership Team Meeting	5	6 9am Women's Spirituality
7 10am Worship Congregational Conversation Part One	8	9 Worship Team Meeting 10am Men's Fellowship (zoom)	10 9am Quilt Grp	11	12	13
14 10am Worship 11am Hospitali- ty & Fellowship Meeting	15 10am Women's Coffee Time	16 10am Men's Fellowship (zoom)	17	18	19	20
21 10am Worship Congregational Conversation Part Two	22 10am Women's Coffee Time Pastor Miranda on Vacation	23 10am Men's Fellowship (zoom) 2-4pm Women's bible study Pastor Miranda on Vacation	24 9am Quilt Grp Pastor Miranda on Vacation	25 Pastor Miranda on Vacation	26 Pastor Miranda on Vacation	27 Pastor Miranda on Vacation
28 Food on the 4th 10am Worship	29 10am Women's Coffee Time	30 10am Men's Fellowship (zoom)	31			

Worship Duties

August	7	14	21	28
	Jennifer Fowler	Sharon Poynter	Jill McBee	Sharon Pantley
		Debby Chenoweth	Kristin Marcroft	Sharon Poynter
PowerPoint	Jenni Bermes-Goller	Jenni Bermes-Goller	Jenni Bermes-Goller	Jenni Bermes-Goller
Altar Guild	Marlene Lahti	—	Marlene Lahti	—



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 & Online at hoodriverchurch.org

Church Office Hours

Monday-Thursday 9am-1pm

Pastor

Miranda Bermes-Goller

Available during office hours or by appointment

Pastoral Assistant

Linda Boris

Tues 9am to 1pm

Leadership Team Members

Board of Directors (3 yrs)

Meets every other month

Pastor Miranda Bermes-Goller

Tom Hart, Treasurer (2024)

Sharon Poynter (2024)

Shelley Oates Chair (2023)

Gordon Leigh (2023)

Michelle Sibley (2022)

Cindy Murahashi (2022)

Finance Committee

Meets Quarterly

Pastor Miranda Bermes-Goller

Debby Chenoweth (2022)

Dottie Gilbertson (2022)

Tom Hart Treasurer & Payroll

Jennifer Fowler Financial Secretary

Staff Parish Relations (2yrs)

Meets Quarterly

Jill McBee (2022)

Ty Sibley (2022)

Sharon Pantley (2024)

Pat Moore (2024)

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inspiration](#)**



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Ministry](#)**



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Our Website](#)**



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