

SEPTEMBER 2022

Newsletter



Burning Bush Prayers

The Season of Creation this year is symbolized by the image of a burning bush, reminding us of God's words from Exodus, "I have heard the cries of my people." In honor of this, we have a "Burning Bush" interactive prayer set up in our sanctuary, which can be accessed any time the church is open.



There is a basket of cloth strips in the Narthex that can be used to write prayers for creation, which can then be tied to the bush/branch in the sanctuary. These can be words or short phrases encapsulating our prayers of joy, lament, or hope for the future of creation. As the season continues, we will watch our prayers come together and grow - a visual reminder of our commitment to care for creation!

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Pastor's Letter

Beloved Siblings in Christ,

From September 1st - October 4th, we are joining with ecumenical partners around the world to participate in the Season of Creation: an annual Christian celebration to listen and respond together to the cry of Creation. The theme for 2022 is Listen to the Voice of Creation, symbolized by the Burning Bush from Exodus 3:1-12. You can learn more about this global Christian movement at seasonofcreation.org



The Season of Creation is well underway at Spirit of Grace, and has already brought so much richness and creativity to our worship experience! It is my hope that we will all take the message of this season to heart by finding ways to engage in the weekly themes and messages outside of this worship experience. Below, you'll find some reflections on the weekly themes and suggestions of ways to live out your response!

Listen to the Trees

Trees have much to teach us about being open to growth and change while remaining firmly rooted in God's care and grace. Try to spend time in contemplative prayer this week by opening your heart to the wisdom of the trees around you!

Do you have a favorite tree on your property or in your neighborhood that you could sit beneath while you pray or read? Is there a wooded area nearby where you can go on a meditative walk? Do you have a special memory of a tree from your childhood that you could bring to mind while in prayer or meditation? Could you even make plans to plant a tree in honor of God's creation, and spend time regularly praying near it as it grows? Find a way to reach out and connect with the trees of God's creation in a way that feels authentic to you.

Listen to the Waters

Water is perhaps one of the elements of creation that we are most connected to through our religious traditions. In the waters of baptism, we are given a new life in Christ, set free from the bondage of sin in order to live a life of love service to our neighbor and to all of creation.

We all encounter water in some way or another on a daily basis. What would happen if you used some of these encounters, such as a morning shower or washing your hands, as a reminder of your baptismal calling and identity? How could that make you more aware of God's presence in creation and in your daily life?

Pastor's Letter

Listen to the Stewards

To be a steward is to be someone who looks after and cares for something that belongs to someone else. Humans were not given ownership or dominion over the earth, but rather were entrusted as the caretakers of Creation; called to care for the earth not for our own profit or benefit, but for the sake of God our Creator.

Seek out the wisdom of farmers, ecologists, naturalists, or foresters who make sustainability the cornerstone of their practice. Learn from Indigenous leaders, whose ancestors have practiced this sacred responsibility for longer than we can comprehend. In your interactions with creation, consider how you are giving back to and nurturing this gift God has entrusted us with.

Listen to the People

All of humanity is a part of creation; responsible for caring for the earth in addition to being a part of creation that deserves to be well cared for. However, not all of humanity plays an equal role in nurturing or harming creation – and it is often those who do the least harm who feel the ramifications of the climate crisis the most.

Spend some time seeking out stories from those who experience the climate crisis more directly or differently than we do. How can you step out of your own experience to listen to the stories of climate refugees or those who live in places where the water is not safe or the ground is no longer fertile? How can we learn from the sustainable practices of our global neighbors as we unite together in the face of this crisis?

Listen to the Seeds

Here is the good news: as Christians, we know that God's story for us is never-ending and constantly unfolding in new and unexpected ways! Through renewable energy sources, sustainable farming practices, global engagement, and evolving science, we are working together to plant seeds to fight the daunting climate crisis – seeds that will take time to develop, but will hopefully begin to reduce and reverse the harm we have caused for future generations.

What is it that gives you hope for the future of creation? Is it the engagement of youth – the resilience of nature – the wisdom of Indigenous leaders – or something else? How can you support the growth of these seeds of hope with your own resources?

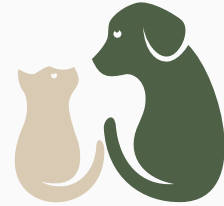
In Peace,
Pastor Miranda BG



Special Events

Animal Blessing & Planting Party - Sunday, October 2nd

Join us for a special worship service on October 2nd, as the Season of Creation draws to a close!



Animal Blessing

In honor of St. Francis of Assisi, we will be having a Blessing of the Animals during worship. Anyone with special animals in their lives are encouraged to **submit photos to be used in a slideshow during service**, so we can all see and bless these creature companions who help us experience God's unconditional love and grace! **Email animal photos to office@hoodriverchurch.com by no later than September 26th for them to be included during worship.**



Planting Party

Following worship, all are invited to stay for coffee and treats during our First Sunday Fellowship, and in response to the worship theme of the day (Listen to the Seeds of Creation), we will be having a planting party! We will be planting some flower bulbs around the property, so that when spring arrives we will be greeted with abundant colors, reminding us of the beauty in God's cycles of nature and growth. If you have any questions, please reach out to Rick McBee (rmcbee.44@gmail.com).



Neighborhood Party - Saturday, October 8th

Mark your calendars for October 8th from 1-3pm for a special Neighborhood Party at Spirit of Grace!

We will be throwing a special gathering for our local community with food, music, games, and fellowship.

We will need help from the congregation to make this possible, so please reach out to Pastor Miranda if you are interested in helping with food purchase, preparation, or serving, or by volunteering in some other capacity to make this a fun and lively event for people of all ages from our surrounding neighborhood!



Lifelong Learning

Here at Spirit of Grace, we are committed to encouraging all individuals to be "lifelong learners" by providing a variety of ways to engage in spiritual and religious education within our congregation! Below, you'll find a few new educational opportunities that are now a part of our rhythm at Spirit of Grace:

Children's Faith Formation - 1st Sundays

After worship on the first Sunday of each month, families are encouraged to stay for fellowship and a special children's activity led by Pastor Miranda! These activities will vary, and will relate to a theme from that Sunday and/or season of the church year.



Living [in the] Word - 3rd Sundays

After worship on the third Sunday of each month, learners of all ages are encouraged to join Pastor Miranda for a deep dive into scripture! We will gather around a biblical passage that appeared in the lectionary sometime that month, but wasn't able to be addressed in worship. Pastor

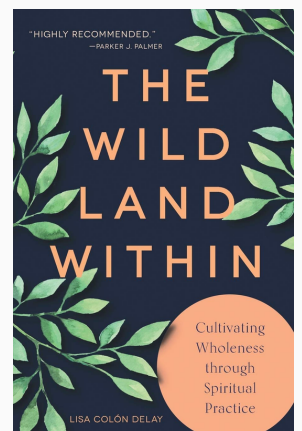
Miranda will help provide some historical and biblical context, and will facilitate a discussion in which we all participate in the sacred practice of dwelling in God's Word and bringing it to life with our thoughts, wonderings, questions, and curiosities!



Book Study Groups

Thursdays at 6:30pm or Sundays at 8:30am

This fall, our weekly Book Study Groups will be reading "The Wild Land Within: Cultivating Wholeness through Spiritual Practice" by Lisa Colon Delay. There are two meeting times available: Thursdays at 6:30pm (online) or Sundays at 8:30am (in-person). If you haven't signed up for a group yet, but are interested in participating, stop by the church or email Pastor Miranda to get started!



Community Updates

A graphic for a GEM Community Meeting. At the top, a white banner with a purple border contains the text "GEM Community Meeting" in purple. Below the banner is a stylized illustration of four people in purple, blue, orange, and yellow, holding a globe. The globe features a white dove and a red heart. The background is a solid blue-grey color.

10am-12pm
September 17th
Daubenspeck Park
413 W Humboldt,
Bingen WA

Join with Gorge Ecumenical Ministries member organizations, community partners and friends as we gather to begin the program year.

Renew connections and help GEM refine its new strategic plan through interactive games!

News from ELCA Churchwide

In early August, representatives from the 65 ELCA synods gathered in Columbus, Ohio for the Churchwide Assembly, to attend to the matters of the ELA as a whole! Many important legislative items were passed, including 3 memorials sent from the Oregon Synod.

Imran Siddiqui was also elected vice president of the ELCA, making him the first Asian American elected to the highest office a layperson in the ELCA can hold. For more updates and videos, refer to this [helpful summary from the Oregon Synod!](#)

Seeking Yarn Donations for Women of Uganda

Linda Chamberlin is going to Uganda this October to help women that are having fistula surgeries. She is looking for acrylic yarn to bring with her on the trip. She teaches the women who are recovering from the surgery to crochet. If you have any extra acrylic yarn around the house, bring it to the church and drop it in the fellowship hall (or you can call Carol Kyger and she can come pick it up from you (541-490-7033). We have worked with Linda in the past on this wonderful project.



Church Updates

FISH Distribution Dates

Our next opportunity to volunteer with FISH distribution will be on **September 19th, 21st, and 23rd!** This is an excellent way to both serve and connect with a wide range of people from our community. If you are interested in volunteering, contact Bette Lou (abyenne@gorge.net) to sign up for a day to serve.



Our Welcoming Church Journey



We have officially begun the journey towards becoming an official Welcoming Congregation through our denominational programs! Our Welcoming Church Core Team has been formed - please join me in extending our gratitude to **Alicia Bermes, Linda Borris, Michelle Sibley, Sharon Poynter, and Debby Chenoweth** for answering God's call to guide us on this path.



This fall, the Core Team will be focusing primarily on educating themselves on the process and LGBTQIA+ identities and matters within the context of faith and ministry. They are currently meeting twice per month on the 2nd and 4th Sundays – **2pm on Zoom on the 2nd Sunday of each month, and 11:15am in-person on the 4th Sunday of each month.** The Core Team will be updating the congregation regularly on their learnings and plans, but anyone from the congregation or community is welcome and encouraged to attend any of these meetings as they are able!

Ministry Teams

*Are you interested in getting involved with the ministry of Spirit of Grace?
Consider popping into one of our Ministry Team Meetings!
These ministries are sustained by the following team members, but meetings
are open to anyone interested in participating:*

Community Outreach - 6pm, Second Tuesday of the Month

Debby Chenoweth | Lee Huckins | Phill Scott
(seeking more team members!)

Hospitality & Events - 11:15am, Second Sunday of the Month (every other month)

Dottie Gilbertson | Pat Moore | Marlene Lahti | Sharon Poynter

Building & Grounds - Meeting Schedule TBD

Scott Fitch | Bette Lou & Allan Yenne | Ty Sibley | Rick McBee

Worship - 9am, Tuesdays

(as needed based on worship seasons)

Linda Borris | Dottie Gilbertson | Marlene Lahti | Bette Lou Yenne

Prayer & Visitation - 10am, First Wednesday of the Month

Donna Fitch | Carol Kyger | Jan Dutton

Lifelong Learning - Meeting Schedule TBD

Cindy Murahashi | Sharon Poynter
(seeking more team members!)



Prayer & Reflection

Weekly Reflections for the Season of Creation



September 4th – Deuteronomy 30:19-20

What choices in your life recently have been life-giving to you? Have any choices been death-dealing, leading you away from God's love and grace? What is it that sets you back on the path of life?

September 11th – Exodus 32:14

*Does the idea of God's plan or intention being changed by the pleas and persuasion of a human comfort you or unsettle you?
Why do you think that is?*

September 18th – Luke 16:13

*How has money stood in the way of you following God's call to care for creation?
How can you be a better steward of the resources God has gifted you?*

September 25th – Luke 16:31

*How many voices crying out will it take for our country to truly repent and commit to the fight against climate change?
How can your voice be a part of this crying out?*

October 2nd – Luke 17:6

*Even though we may feel small and insignificant in the face of the immense issue of the climate crisis, it only takes a small seed to create great change.
What seeds can you plant today to make a difference for the future?*



If you have prayer requests that you would like to be lifted up by our prayer chain and in Sunday morning worship, please email Carol Kyger (cckkyger@gmail.com), who will pass your request along to our prayer chain.

If you are interested in being a part of our prayer chain that receives prayer request emails as they come in, please email Carol Kyger to be added to that list.

If you have a prayer request that you would like to be kept **confidential**, please email Pastor Miranda. These prayer needs will not be shared publicly unless expressly mentioned.

Church Calendar

September 2022

Sunday	Monday	Tuesday	Wednesday	Thursday	Friday	Saturday
For times and details, visit our online church calendar: www.hoodriverchurch.com/calendar				1	2 Office Closed	3
4 Communion Worship First Sunday Fellowship	5 Office Closed (Labor Day)	6 Men's Coffee Hour	7 Quilting Group Prayer & Visitation Meeting Bell Choir	8	9 Office Closed	10 Women's Spirituality Group
11 Worship Hospitality Meeting Welcoming Church Meeting	12 Women's Coffee Hour	13 Men's Coffee Hour Community Outreach Meeting	14 Bell Choir	15	16 Office Closed	17 GEM Community Meeting
18 Communion Worship Living [in the] Word	19 Women's Coffee Hour FISH Distribution	20 Men's Coffee Hour Lifelong Learning Meetnig	21 Quilting Group FISH Distribution Bell Choir	22 Book Study Group	23 Office Closed FISH Distribution	24
25 Book Study Group Worship Welcoming Church Meeting	26 Women's Coffee Hour Animal Blessing Photos Due	27 Men's Coffee Hour Women's Bible Study	28 Bell Choir	29 Book Study Group	30 Office Closed	

Save the Date!

October 2nd
Animal Blessing
& Planting Party

October 8th
Neighborhood Party

October 17-19
Bishop's Convocation
(Pastor Miranda Out of Town)

October 30th
Reformation Sunday

Worship Duties

September 4th

Reader: Debby Chenoweth
Usher: Debby Chenoweth

September 11th

Reader: Jennifer Fowler
Usher: Rick McBee

September 18th

Reader: Sharon Poynter
Usher: Kristin Marcroft

September 25th

Reader: Tom Hart
Usher: Debby Chenoweth

Audio/Visual

Jenni Bermes-Goller

Altar Guild

Marlene Lahti

Contact & Connect

Sunday Worship

10:00 am

In-Person & Online

hoodriverchurch.com

Church Office Hours

9am - 1pm

Monday - Thursday

Staff

Pastor Miranda Bermes-Goller

spiritofgracepastor@gmail.com

Available during office hours or by appointment

Linda Boris, Pastoral Assistant

Available Tuesdays, 10am - 1pm



Spirit of Grace
Lutheran-Methodist Church

1140 Tucker Road

Hood River, OR 97031

541-386-3993

office@hoodriverchurch.com

Leadership Team Members

Board of Directors

Meets every other month

Pastor Miranda Bermes-Goller

Tom Hart, Treasurer (*end of term, 2024*)

Sharon Poynter, Secretary (*end of term, 2024*)

Shelley Oates, Chair (*end of term, 2023*)

Gordon Leigh (*end of term, 2023*)

Michelle Sibley (*end of term, 2022*)

Cindy Murahashi (*end of term, 2022*)

Finance Committee

Meets quarterly

Pastor Miranda Bermes-Goller

Debby Chenoweth (*end of term, 2022*)

Dottie Gilbertson (*end of term, 2022*)

Tom Hart, Treasurer (*Treasurer & Payroll*)

Jennifer Fowler (*Financial Secretary*)

Staff Parish Relations Committee

Meets quarterly

Sharon Pantley (*end of term, 2024*)

Pat Moore (*end of term, 2024*)

Jill McBee, Chair (*end of term, 2022*)

Ty Sibley (*end of term, 2022*)

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Scan the QR codes with
your phone's camera
app, or click on the links



Follow us on
Facebook for
Weekly Updates +
Inspiration



Give Online
to Support
Our Ministry.



Watch Sunday Worship
+ Learn More
on Our Website