MAY/JUNE 2023

Newsletter





Christ is Risen Indeed! Alleluia!



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PAGE 01 SPIRIT OF GRACE

Pastor's Letter

Beloved Siblings in Christ,

Spring sure took her sweet time getting here this year – but she was well worth the wait. Watching the first, bravest flowers peeking out from the soil while the threat of cold and snow still looms close – observing the buds forming on the trees, bursting into bright greens seemingly overnight – taking in the aroma of pear blossoms and lilacs on my morning walks – the emergence of springtime is an annual miracle that should never be taken for granted. It gave me so much joy to walk into work one morning and see the bulbs we planted together last fall begin to burst through the earth – reminding me that growth happens beneath the surface far before we see signs of it above the soil.

We have been doing a lot of beneath-the-surface growing here at Spirit of Grace in the last couple of years, and we are beginning to see signs of that growth emerging in our presence. This growth is found not only in a fully sanctuary on Easter morning, but in joyful fellowship, thoughtful discussions, and an eagerness to welcome all of God's children. It warms my heart and soul to reflect on all the ways in which we have grown since I first met you almost two years ago, and it makes me excited to see how we will continue to grow in the months and years to come.





Pastor's Letter

Spring is a time for growth; both a time to appreciate what is growing around us as well as get to work planting that which we want to grow and harvest in the coming seasons! Not everything we plant will come to fruition – some seeds just never make it above the earth. Then, other times, we are surprised by sprouts that come up in places where we didn't even prepare the soil! Though God has called us to be laborers in this world, it is not work we have been called to alone; all of God's people, and even God's creation, join us in the fields, each doing their part to tend the soil, plant the seeds, and nurture growth that will lead to abundance in this world.









Remember beloveds: As children of God with the Holy Spirit in our souls, we are always growing into something new – and God loves us and holds us in grace at every stage in the growing process – not only once we are fully formed.

As we enter into the growing season, I invite you to consider these questions:

- How have you noticed yourself growing in new ways recently?
- What is a sign of growth you have noticed in our community?
- What is something you would like to plant and nurture within our congregation?



In Peace,
Pastor Miranda BG



Welcoming Church Team

The Welcoming Church Team has been hard at work over the last several months laying the foundation for our journey to becoming an Open and Affirming Congregation through our respective denominational organizations. After many one on one conversations, we are ready to move into the next phase of this journey: education!

Over the summer, there are three main ways for you all to participate in learning more about how to live into the identity of truly being a "Welcoming Church":

- Read "One Coin Found" by Emmy Kegler during the months of May and June, and participate in our discussion groups at the end of June!
- Read "Transfiguration" by Austen Hartke during the months of July and August, and participate in our discussion groups at the end of August!
- Register for our SOGIE (sexual orientation, gender identity and expression) training on Zoom on June 21st to learn more about the identities of the LGBTQIA+ community!

These educational opportunities are meant to serve as a starting point, sparking questions and curiosities that we can dig into together with more focused trainings and presentations this fall. As new wonderings rise up in you this summer, reach out to the members of our Welcoming Church Team to let them know, so that we can all continue

Alicia Bermes
Debby Chenoweth
Linda Boris
Michele Sibley
Sharon Poynter

learning and growing together!





SOGIE = Sexual Orientation, Gender Identity and Expression

As we seek to deepen and expand the holy work of welcome, inclusion, and celebration of LGBTQIA+ people in the church and society, we can find ourselves asking, "What does LGBTQIA+ mean?" Together we will co-create a safe space to learn helpful skills and tools to support you and your ministry. This training is great for those who are hoping to support their faith community in ongoing education, or for individuals who have an open heart and mind on learning more about God's diversity of creation.

Register for this training by filling out a registration form in the church office!

The recommended payment for this training is \$35 per person - however, we will not turn anyone away from this training due to lack of funds.



SPIRIT OF GRACE INVITES YOU TO JOIN IN OUR

WELCOMING CHURCH SUMMER READING



May & June

"One Coin Found: How God's Love Stretches to the Margins" by Emmy Kegler

In One Coin Found, queer pastor Emmy Kegler tells us a story about struggling with mental illness, wrestling with faith, and rejecting human rejection in favor of God's infuriating grace. Her questions, her vulnerability, and her skill as a story teller invite us into a place where we can be honest about who we are and be loved for it.

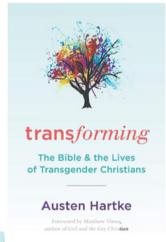
Discussion Groups hosted by Spirit of Grace: Sunday, June 25th -- 11:15am -- in-person in Fellowship Room Wednesday, June 28th -- 5:30pm -- online via Zoom

July & August

"Transforming: The Bible and the Lives of Transgender Christians" by Austen Hartke

By introducing transgender issues and language and providing stories of both biblical characters and real-life narratives from transgender Christians living today, *Transforming* helps readers visualize a more inclusive Christianity, equipping them with the confidence and tools to change both the church and the world.

Discussion Groups will be hosted by Spirit of Grace at end of August, dates TBD.



Book Copies available for purchase from the church office for \$15 per copy.

Copies of One Coin Found available now.

Copies of Transforming available in June.

Leadership Team Updates

Spirit of Grace Board Meeting Minutes -- April 30, 2023

Present: Pastor Miranda, Shelley Oates, Cindy Murahashi, Doug Swanson, Tom Hart, Gordon Leigh, and Sharon Poynter.

Pastor Miranda opened the meeting with a guided breathing exercise, then led into a Bible study of the scripture Ephesians 4:4-7, 11-13. this scripture talks of being one body and one Spirit as well as given different gifts for ministry. We brainstormed on what each of us sees is our gifts we share.

Tom gave the financial report as of April 21, 2023. Income is down a few thousand from last year, but expenses are less this year. Overall net income is \$8491.04 about \$2590 over last year this time.

Shelley raised the need for an independent audit of our financial records by a 3rd party. Cindy has a person in mind to ask. Shelley reviewed our Endowment funds. We don't have any graduating Seniors this year. She recommended donating \$2000 to the Red Cross for Ukraine Civilian Relief. She made a motion to this, Tom seconded. Unanimous vote in support.

Sharon reported on SPRC after just attending that meeting after church. Pastor Miranda is taking on too much, especially regarding the Ministry teams. It was decided that members of SPRC be more active in recruitment of members for involvement and leadership positions in these Ministry teams.

Pastor Miranda gave her report. She also reported on the Ministry Teams. Of the 6, 3 are doing well; Prayer & Visitation, Welcoming Church, and Worship Planning. Lifelong Learning can use another voice and we might approach one of our newer attendees. Community Outreach and Hospitality & Events need more leadership as well as members. For the Health and Growth of our congregation we need more lay member involvement and leadership. A question brought up; if a Ministry Team lacks leaders does it mean it's not a congregational priority at this time? Cindy and Pastor will meet and articulate the needs for leaders in some Ministry Teams.

Leadership Team Updates

Shelley discussed some old business. No new developments on the church directory. Pastor is looking into an 'on-line' directory. There is one used by ELCA @ \$117/year. The challenges are the technical skills required for some of our members to access but it can be put to a PDF and Gordon is willing to print this for those who prefer a hard copy.

The Outreach house property has interested parties still looking into some kind of offering for the homeless community. Mainly the Mid Columbia Community Action Council. The hold up is with funding, both Federal and State, as well as formulating a written proposal.

New business is hiring a coordinator for scheduling the FISH Community Rm. SPRC will write up a job description with input by Pastor Miranda and Debbie Chenoweth. The new lock box is in place for checks being dropped off by parties using the facility.

We discussed a Stewardship Campaign, Giving in Generosity, Intentional commitment in service and financial. Doug and Sharon agreed to work on this; Time, Talents, Tithe, & Treasure.

Cindy brought up a concern for better visibility of the driveway into the parking lot. Perhaps painting highly visible lines, arrows, something that does a better job of indicating traffic flow. This will be brought up to Building & Grounds group.

Tom will reinstate bi-monthly financial reports to go out with the Newsletter keeping the congregation aware of updated financial status.

Meeting was adjourned around 4 PM. Next Board Meeting will be Sunday July 30 @ 2 PM.

Respectfully submitted by Sharon Poynter Board Secretary.

Spirit of Grace Treasurer's Report As of March 31, 2023

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Income is down a few thousand from last year, but expenses are less this year.

Overall net income is \$8491.04 about \$2590 over last year this time.

If you are able to increase your giving, we strongly encourage you to consider doing so so that we can remain financially stable through the year!

Lifelong Learning

Women's Bible Study Fourth Tuesday of the Month May 23rd & June 27th

On the 4th Tuesday of each month at 2pm, women of Spirit of Grace and our surrounding community are invited to gather at the church building for a time of study and fellowship with one another. This group is led by lay members, using the Bible Study from the ELCA magazine, "Gather," which is currently offering a four-session study of the 10 commandments, written by ELCA pastor and author Christa von Zychlin, to help us see how these commandments are more than they may appear at first glance.

Book Study Groups Sunday Mornings & Thursday Evenings Concluding June 11th & 15th for the Summer

Our Book Study Groups have been reading Rachel Held Evans' Wholehearted Faith this year, and will finish this book mid-June. Our Sunday morning group meets at 8:30am before worship, and the Thursday group meets at 6:30pm on Zoom. These groups will pause for the summer, and pick back up in the fall with a new text!



Living [in the] Word Third Sunday of the Month May 21st & June 18th



On the third Sunday each month, Pastor Miranda leads a Bible Study after worship, during which we dig into a scripture text from the lectionary in the last month that we didn't have time to address during worship. This is a chance to engage with scripture as the Living Word of God. We ask questions of the text that help us better understand the history and context of the story, as well as consider how the text has changed over time and what meaning it has in our lives today.

Church Updates

FISH Distribution Dates

Our next opportunity to volunteer with FISH distribution will be on June 12th, 14th, and 16th.

This is an excellent opportunity to support and connect with our local community! If you are interested in volunteering, contact Bette Lou (abyenne@gorge.net) to sign up for a day to serve.



Collecting Care Kits

The women of Spirit of Grace have decided to collect items throughout the year that will be used to make up Baby Care Kits and Personal Care Kit. These kits are being collected by Lutheran World Relief, , and will be sent to places all over the world where there is need.

We will be collecting items for these kits starting this month and concluding May 1st, 2024. There will be two large plastic containers in the church narthex where donations can be placed. We hope that all will participate in donating materials as they are able. Monetary donations are also accepted - be sure to indicate on the check or giving envelope that the donation is for "LWR Care Kits."

For information on donation guidelines, pick up an instructional sheet in the narthex, or visit www.lwr.org/kits.

If you have any further questions, reach out to Dottie Gilbertson (dottieg@gorge.net).



Church Updates









Blessing of the Quilts

In the last year, our dedicated quilters created over 50 quilts to send off to Lutheran World Relief, to be shared with people in need around the world!

If you want to know what happens to the quilts after they are sent off to LWR, check out this video:

Have you ever seen 13,000 quilts at once?

Want to know how you
can help?
The quilters are always
in need of bedsheets to
use for backing the quilts
(flat sheets only - no
fitted sheets!).

If you have any in good condition, or find some for a good price, drop them off at the church!

Community Support

Civil Rights & Confidentiality Training Required for FISH Volunteers

All volunteers at the FISH Food Bank are required annually to review the Civil Rights & Confidentiality Training Brochure and/or watch the training video.

To review these materials and complete the form online, go to www.fish-food-bank.com/current-volunteers

To review these materials and complete the form in person, stop by the FISH Food Bank Warehouse in Hood River.

GEM Community Meetings

GEM (Gorge Eccumenical Ministries) has reinstituted their monthly community meetings, meant to provide an opportunity for people of faith from around the gorge to come together, connect with and learn from one another, and hear more about the important work being done by local organizations in our communities!

These meetings happen on the third Thursday of each month, with fellowship beginning at 11:30am and the presentation beginning at noon.

THURSDAY, MAY 18TH

FELLOWSHIP: 11:30-NOON PROGRAM: NOON-1PM

ROCKFORD GRANGE - 4262 BARRETT DRIVE, HOOD RIVER

GUEST PRESENTER: KALAMA RUETER

Join friends from Gorge Ecumenical Ministries at the Rockford Grange to hear Kalama Rueter share her work with helping the gorge become less dependent on fossil fuels for powering our vehicles. She was instrumental in bringing the electric charging station to White Salmon, Washington.

Next Meeting:
Thursday, June 15th
Fellowship: 11:30-noon Program: noon-1pm
Location & Presenter TBA

ELCA Updates



Please hold our voting representatives (Alicia Bermes, Tom Hart, and Pastor Miranda) in prayer as they gather with the other Oregon Synod representatives on Saturday, May 20th to attend to the business of the synod. If you are interested in watching the assembly to enjoy the worship and plenary sessions offered, it will be livestreamed on YouTube:

www.youtube.com/@OregonSynod



Learn more at www.lutherwoodoregon.org/camp/

UMC Updates





Please hold members of the Oregon-Idaho Annual Conference in prayer as they gather for sessions throughout May and June. The bulk of these sessions will be held June 8-11th in Meriden, Idaho, and hosted in a hybrid format for those participating online.



We will officially install
Bishop Cedrick Bridgeforth
as the episcopal leader for the
Greater Northwest Episcopal
Area of The UMC on
Saturday, May 20,
in Juneau, Alaska, at 2 p.m. AKT.
The service will be livestreamed
on Youtube:

www.youtube.com/@GreaterNW
The installation service will be
the kickoff to our GNW Annual
Conference session.

Prayer

For What Shall We Pray?



"For What Shall We Pray?" is a weekly post through ELCA Worship inviting individuals, groups, and congregations to lift up our world in prayer.

See more like this at

blogs.elca.org/worship

For the friends and family of the shooting victims in Texas; for all those who have suffered from gun violence...

For an end to the killing of innocent civilians in warfare – especially in Ukraine...

For peace in Sudan, Ukraine, Palestine, Israel, and Syria...

For our representatives in congress; that they would devote themselves to working together for the well-being of all...

For an expansion of mental health care in our country, especially in rural communities...

For the rights of women and girls for education and health care especially in Afghanistan...

In thanksgiving for health care workers, especially nurses, that they may be honored and sustained

For a resolution to political turmoil in Kenya...

in their critical work...



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 (cckyger@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.

Weekly Reflections



May 7th - 1 Peter 2:5

How do you know when you feel the spirit moving within you, calling you towards something new?

How do you respond to the movement of the spirit in your life?

May 14th - Acts 17:24

God does not live in sanctuaries built by human hands — God lives in the creation and the world that God poured their very self into. Where have you found God's presence in the world this week?

May 21st - John 17:11

Jesus called us to be in relationship with one another – to be united as One Body. When do you feel disconnected from your neighbor – and how does the Spirit move you grow closer?

May 28th - John 20:23

When was the last time you had to ask someone for forgiveness? How does that experience influence how you offer forgiveness to others in your life?

June 4th – Psalm 8:3-4

Think of a place in nature that reminds you of the majesty of our Creator. How does it feel to be reminded of your own smallness, while knowing how much our God still cares for us?

June 11th – Hosea 6:3

God's presence is as sure as the setting and rising of the sun – even if sometimes they are more noticeable than others. Where has God met you in your life recently?

June 18th - Matthew 9:37

There is much work to be done in the world to bring about God's kingdom. As Christians, we are called to be laborers in God's field. What work has God called you to?

June 25th – Jeremiah 20:9

God calls us to be truth-speakers in the face of injustice. What is a truth that you have felt burning within you, that you simply could not contain? How do you proclaim God's truth in this world?



May Church Calendar

Spirit of Grace Church Calendar						May 2023 (Pacific Time - Los Angeles)
Sun	Mon	Tue	Wed	Thu	Fri	Sat
30	1	2	3	4	5	6
	9am - Church Office Open: 9am-	9am - Church Office Open: 9am-	9am - Church Office Open: 9am-	9am - Church Office Open: 9am-		9am - Women's Spirituality Group
	10am - Women's Coffee Hour @	10am - Men's Coffee Group @	9am - Quilting Group @ Fellowship	6:30pm - Book Study Group @		
		6pm - Outreach Team Meeting	10am - Prayer & Visitation			
		op.ii oaacaan ream meemig	7pm - Bell Choir			
			7piii - Bell Olloli			
7	8	9	10	11	12	13
Holy Communion	9am - Church Office Open: 9am-	9am - Church Office Open: 9am-	9am - Church Office Open: 9am-	9am - Church Office Open: 9am-		
8:30am - Book Study Group @	10am - Women's Coffee Hour @	9am - Worship Team Planning	7pm - Bell Choir	6:30pm - Book Study Group @		
10am - Worship @ Sanctuary		10am - Men's Coffee Group @				
11am - First Sunday Fellowship @						
14	15	16	17	18	19	20
8:30am - Book Study Group @	9am - Church Office Open: 9am-	9am - Church Office Open: 9am-	9am - Church Office Open: 9am-	9am - Church Office Open: 9am-		Oregon Synod Assembly
10am - Worship @ Sanctuary	10am - Women's Coffee Hour @	10am - Men's Coffee Group @	9am - Quilting Group @ Fellowship	11:30am - GEM Community		
11am - Hospitality Team Meeting			7pm - Bell Choir	6:30pm - Book Study Group @		
2pm - Welcoming Church Team						
21	22	23	24	25	26	27
Bell Choir	Pastor Miranda Out of Office					
Holy Communion	10am - Women's Coffee Hour @	9am - Church Office Open: 9am-	7pm - Bell Choir	6:30pm - Book Study Group @		
8:30am - Book Study Group @		10am - Men's Coffee Group @				
10am - Worship @ Sanctuary		2pm - Women's Bible Study				
11am - Living [in the] Word						
28	29	30	31	1	2	3
Food on the 4th	9am - Church Office Open: 9am-	9am - Church Office Open: 9am-	9am - Church Office Open: 9am-		-	
8:30am - Book Study Group @	10am - Women's Coffee Hour @	10am - Men's Coffee Group @	7pm - Bell Choir			
	Homens owner hour &	ment outlee droup &	- P Boll Gillon			
10am - Worship @ Sanctuary						
11:15am - Welcoming Church						

Important Dates

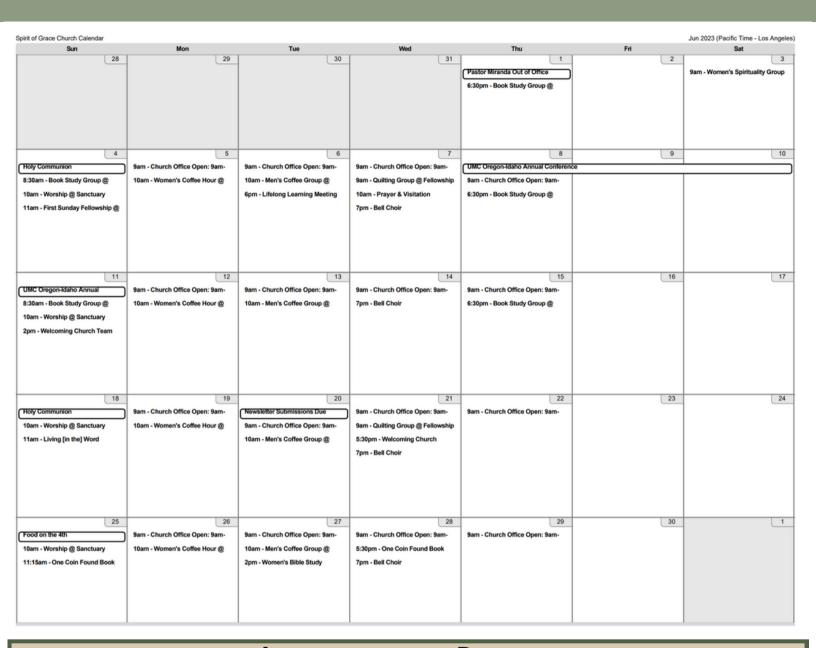
May 14th: Hospitality Ministry Team Meeting

May 18th: GEM Community Meeting

May 20th: ELCA Oregon Synod Assembly

May 22nd-26th: Pastor Miranda Out of Town

June Church Calendar



Important Dates

June 1st - Church Office Closed

June 6th: Lifelong Learning Ministry Team Meeting

June 8th-11th: UMC Oregon-Idaho Annual Conference

June 20th: Newsletter Submissions Due

June 21st: SOGIE Training

June 25th & 28th: One Coin Found Book Discussions

Contact & Connect

Sunday Worship

10:00 am

In-Person & Online hoodriverchurch.com

Church Office Hours

9am-1pm Monday-Thursday

Staff

Pastor Miranda Bermes-Goller

spiritof gracepastor@gmail.com Available during office hours or by appointment

Linda Boris, Pastoral Assistant

Available Tuesdays, 10am-1pm



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)
Doug Swanson (end of term, 2025)
Cindy Murahashi (end of term, 2025)

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, Chair (end of term, 2024)
Pat Moore (end of term, 2024)
Margaret Godard (end of term, 2025)
Lee Huckins (end of term, 2025)

Connect with us online!

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