

Return Service Requested



SPOKANE VALLEY
UNITED METHODIST
CHURCH

115 NORTH RAYMOND RD
SPOKANE VALLEY, WA
99206

Sunday 9am
Traditional Service
Sunday School & Nursery

Pastor

Rev. Alissa Amestoy

Director of Music

Betsy Pletscher

Accompanist

Zachary Bjurstrom

Director of Hospitality

Margie Manfred

**Technical Ministry Co-
Coordinators**

Lexi Shay & Logan Tiedt

**Coordinator of Ministries with
Young People**

Jennifer Price

Nursery Caregiver

Chris Nilles

Church Administrator

Mackenzie Draper

Lay Leader

Zack Reiber



Check out
our website!



Scan our new QR
code for easy
online giving!

Church Office: 509-924-7262

Office Hours:

Mon - Fri 8am - 12pm

Church website:

www.spokanevalleychurch.org

Church email:

secretary@spokanevalleychurch.org

Our Purpose:

*Spokane Valley United Methodist Church is
here to invite people to: follow Jesus, love
others, and transform the greater
community through the grace of God.*

connections

september 2026

Love One Another: Replacing Othering with Neighboring

This month's message was provided by Dr. Marsha McFee, United Methodist Worship Consultant, as part of the "Love One Another" series that she created and that we will start on Sept. 20 to kick off our second annual National Good Neighbor Day celebration and continue our yearlong exploration of our mission to "transform the greater community by the grace of God!"

"We live in _____ times."

You can fill in the blank. Some days I am overwhelmed by a cynicism about humanity that evokes words for filling in that blank like "disappointing," "disheartening," and "disturbing." It becomes difficult to believe in hope for a way through, or out of, this particular moment. I find myself wondering if we have the tools we need to alleviate the suffering and injustice that has plagued us (yet is caused by us) as long as we've been humans.

It is easy to stay focused on what's wrong. Our brains are wired for this in order to keep us vigilant and out of danger. Our early survival depended on being able to assess difference and equate it with danger as a "first

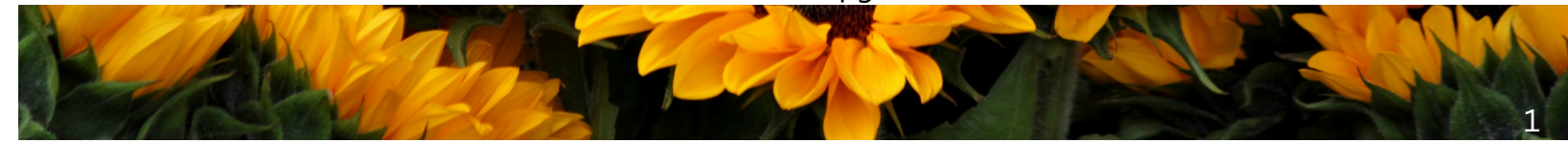
response" in case we needed to lash out or run away to preserve our life and the lives of our "kin."

But this human trait has run amuck. We have "othered" each other over so many kinds of differences that we now run the risk of destroying ourselves via the very trait meant to "protect" us. Our portfolio of relationship is shrinking and the traits we need now to bind together for survival in this global-sized community - empathy and compassion - have literally been getting a "bad name." Fear is the

trigger for "othering." Self-preservation kicks in and because resources appear limited in a time of fear, we tend to limit our output of everything... including the one thing that Jesus insisted was never-ending: LOVE. As long as we are connected as branches to The Vine, love is always flowing. Never runs out. And love is calling us to a different way of preserving our humanity: "neighboring."

These terms ("othering" and "neighboring") are written-and-researched concepts about how we interact with each other and how we perceive one another. But they are also concrete ways we act - ways we treat one another. Do we pull back and make assumptions or do we lean in and ask questions? Do we avoid contact or do we risk proximity? Do we contract or extend ourselves?

This worship series focuses on making sure we are considering love-as-action, not just love as a concept or feeling. Sometimes we may find it impossible to understand a neighbor's point of view, but we can still engage in loving actions— sharing a meal, tools, a ride. If we only interacted with those whose viewpoints were identical to ours, we would become more and more isolated. (Cont. on pg. 2)



Cont. from pg. 1) Too often we forget that “difference” is also part of the progress of humanity, helping to create solutions out of necessity. Survival also meant adaptation to changing environments and social situations. We had to find common ground and adapt so that cooperation was possible. This ability is also part of our DNA.

However, when we stay zoomed out at a drone-level view of humanity, we fail to see what is really happening “on the ground.” There are small, kind acts that have been incremental, yet humanity-saving measures. At any one time in history, there are people who transgressed human-made boundaries to help each other. With a meal. With a kind word. With the sharing of resources. With a listening ear. Or even heroics. This is what humanity is capable of... still. But we need to be reminded of that capacity and our need to exercise it.

That is what Jesus did at the last meal he shared with his friends. His “famous last words” were not focused on the next strategic step to overthrow the oppressors. It was a “show-and-tell” of how love-in-action is what they would need as they continued his ministry, how love is what God requires, what God inspires, and what can transpire when we embody God’s love in an “us-and them” world.

All this might not “move the needle” in big ways visible from that drone-level view of humanity. But it can mean seismic shifts in someone’s experience and perception of life “on the ground,” “in the everyday.” It could turn “we live in horrible times” into “we live in a time when my neighbor checked in on my wellbeing and I checked in on theirs and that made all the difference today.”

The “anchor image” in this series is a table... more specifically I have chosen the image of a picnic table. The presence of picnic tables in public spaces like parks (or your church’s yard) is a symbol of invitation to conversation and a good meal...often a meal that requires a sharing of resources (otherwise known as a “pot luck”)....I also chose a table as an anchor image because a meal is where Jesus chose to impart important last words to his loved ones before his crucifixion. And so our tables become places where we risk sharing sustenance for heart and belly. Sitting down together at a table is about answering the call to embrace “IRL” (shorthand for “in real life”). This is the call to get “analog” in a digital world. It is a call to get face-to-face in a time when we have learned to do pretty much anything with our noses buried in the digital device.

When the pandemic created isolation on a scale we’ve never experienced in modern times, a phenomenon happened in New York City called “The Longest Table.” When it was safe to gather outside, a neighborhood placed tables end-to-end all down one Manhattan street. Each 8-person table was hosted by someone who provided or organized food for that table, alleviating the need to coordinate food for the whole street. And yet, the fact that tables were end-to-end gave it the feeling, and acted as a symbol, that everyone was at a common table... that there was a connection and a flow of good-will (we could call it love) from one end to another. It gave New Yorkers a sense of being part of something bigger than just their apartment or building. In this series, I’ve highlighted the work of The Longest Table (which has since grown to a national movement) and hope you will create one of your own. (We are! See page 6 for more details!)

I have the great privilege of living in a neighborhood that intentionally gathers on a regular basis. At one gathering, I was awe-struck by the realization that I share with these people the experience of living in this part of the city, on this street, hearing these birds, affected by certain social factors based on our location. We are connected already and yet by physically connecting in “fellowship,” we don’t just live next to each other, we live in relationship with each other. When someone has a baby, we collect our resources to buy strollers and baby clothes. When someone is gone or in the hospital, we take care of yards and check on pets. When someone needs a hand, we put out the call and people respond.

So let’s sit down at the table together and check in. Whether this is the community right around your church or the one around your house, or the extended community beyond your street, let’s figure out how to tend to each other and try to alleviate immediate pain on a granular level. Because when we do that, the overarching existential pain eases a bit, making life in this moment more doable, more survivable.

Peace & Passion,
Marcia McFee, PhD
Creator and Visionary - Worship Design Studio, Inc.

(Cont. from page 3) make biblical connections and identify the hyperlinks (cross-references), an understanding emerges of this shockingly coherent collection of books written over the millennia. The Holy Spirit was always able to use my tepid practice toward positive kingdom goals. However, my past Bible reading practices, without exploring the footnotes or getting lost for weeks down a rabbit hole, did not yield the understanding I now am starting to enjoy when reading Scripture.

A month ago, Zachary asked how he would approach a daily practice like the one I have cultivated over the past year. Armed with a year’s worth of ministry classes, devoted daily reading, and many lessons learned, I told him I would put together a 28-day study using the *Letter to the Hebrews*. Why Hebrews? Christians often prefer to start in the New Testament. The Letter to the Hebrews provides an excellent entry point into the New Covenant story of the early church, set against the backdrop of the cross-referenced Old Testament, also known as the Hebrew Bible or TaNaK. Well, I am now over 20,000 words into my “little” 28-day study that I started writing for my son. I’ve even pitched teaching **Hebrews in 28 Days: A Bible Study** through **BeADisciple.com**, and they are open to assessing the proposal later this fall! I hope to finish writing this study in the next two months and get back to developing the **Community Praxis** project I wrote about last month.

Yours in community,
Shawna
509.844.4729 I ShawnaBeese@gmail.com



S E P T E M B E R W O R D S E A R C H																		Chickens Museum Chess County Fair Blueberry Egg Labor Day Cherry Caddy Bison Bowling Swim Lizard Teddy Bear Watercolor Sunset Birding Yoga Magic Lobster Horchata Mini Golf Hat Earring
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NEWS & ANNOUNCEMENTS

Join us Sunday, September 20 from 4:30-7PM in the Courtyard for a new community dinner event called The Longest Table, brought in conjunction with Opportunity Presbyterian Church, Mission Meadows Community Garden, Spokane Valley Library, and Neighbors Feeding Neighbors. Bring a side dish and invite all your friends; SVUMC will provide a hot dish and drinks.

The Longest Table began in 2022 in New York City in response to people's feelings of loneliness, disconnection, and loss. They set out a table in a public space, filled it with friends and neighbors, and shared a meal, and discovered connection, forged new relationships, and built community together. The Longest Table events have now been hosted in over 30+ cities across the country, brought to neighborhoods by local hosts, open to everyone and always free to attend.

Do you have children's books at home you're not using any longer? Quynh Parlane would like to give them to multi-lingual students learning English! You can bring your gently used books to Pastor Alissa on Sunday mornings this month.

Choir rehearsals will start up again the weekend of September 19 and 20. Anyone 12 and older is welcome to join! Rehearsals will be Saturday mornings from 10-11:30 AM.



Looking for a family-friendly Friday night event in September? Look no further! Join us Friday, September 25 at dusk in Balfour Park to watch the movie *Sing*. Bring a chair, blanket, or other seating as well as your own refreshments. Everyone is welcome, so make sure to invite your friends!

THE
LONGEST
TABLE

SEPTEMBER WORSHIP PREVIEW

SEPTEMBER 6 – “DISABILITY AWARENESS SUNDAY”

Our Disability & Inclusion Team will lead this service designed to help us all see with new eyes so we can continue being a welcoming, accepting, and accessible facility for all people. Pastor Alissa will preach on John 9:1-11, the story of Jesus healing the man who had been blind from birth. Service includes a celebration of the Great Thanksgiving.

SEPTEMBER 13 – “COVENANT RELATIONSHIP SUNDAY”

We are delighted to welcome Katherine Parker, United Methodist Missionary to Nepal! Katherine will be our preacher and our United Women of Faith will help lead the service. Join us for a special Coffee Chat after worship to support Katherine's ministry!

SEPTEMBER 20 – NEW SERIES: “LOVE ONE ANOTHER”

To kick off our National Good Neighbor Day events, we'll start a new series by Dr. Marcia McFee that encourages us to replace “othering” with “neighboring.” Pastor Alissa will be preaching on John 13:1-4a, 34-35 in which Jesus teaches his disciples a new commandment: Love one another. Includes a Ministry that Matters Moment update about Shalom Ministries.

SEPTEMBER 27 – “LOVE ONE ANOTHER: SHOW US”

Pastor Alissa will be preaching on John 14:8-14 where the disciples, in their lack of understanding, ask Jesus to show them God. The answer? Whenever they have witnessed his works, they have seen God...and when he is gone they will do works like these and even greater!

THE “LOVE ONE ANOTHER” SERIES WILL CONTINUE INTO OCTOBER!

October 4 – “Abide in Love,” John 15:1-5, 9b-1 with the Great Thanksgiving

October 11 – “You Are My Friends,” John 15:12-17

October 18 – “Grieving to Rejoicing,” John 16:1, 12-13a, 20-22

JOIN US FOR WORSHIP ON SUNDAYS AT 9AM AS WE CONTINUE OUR MISSION TO TRANSFORM THE GREATER COMMUNITY BY THE GRACE OF GOD!

Down the Rabbit Hole: A Ministry Candidate Update by Shawna Beese

One of the most rewarding spiritual practices a Christian can cultivate is daily study of Scripture. It wasn't until last year that I truly began to experience the full richness of this practice. From young adulthood into middle age, I read devotionals and attended a handful of yearlong study groups. I often focused on the New Testament or the wisdom books, such as Proverbs, Ecclesiastes, and sometimes Psalms. At times, I did focused readings to tackle problems I was experiencing in life. These practices reinforced my familiarity with a narrow band of selected passages, often taken out of their rightful biblical context. All Scripture reading is a positive practice. Yet there was still so much opportunity to take my study further.

As an adult, I've also taken on reading the Bible in its entirety as a challenge. Mostly, I wanted to check the task off. Reading the Bible cover-to-cover is not the same as in-depth study aimed at connecting the dots of the larger story told across all the biblical texts. Once you (Cont. on page 7) 3

BIRTHDAYS

9/7 Cayde Gebhart

9/14 Susan Ingalls

9/16 Sue McGovney

9/19 Georgette Rogers

9/21 Mick Palanuck

9/28 Nancy Olds

ANNIVERSARIES

9/10 Cliff & Sharon Maxey

9/12 Gerald & Madelyn Bafus

Ron & Leanne Pope

9/26 Betsy & Tom Pletscher

SPECIAL EVENTS

9/1 10:00 am SPR Meeting (FPR)

9/3 9:00 am Thursday Crew

11:00 am Susan's Audiobook Club (201)

9/7 Office Closed in observance of Labor Day

9/8 9:00 am Hospitality Huddle (213)

9/9 9:30 am Disciple 4 (115)

9/10 9:00 am Thursday Crew

9/14 6:30 pm Trustees Meeting (FPR)

9/15 10:00 am Touched by Cancer (FPR)

2:30 pm Finance Meeting (FPR)

6:00 pm Coordinating Council (FPR)

9/16 9:30 am Disciple 4 (115)

9/17 9:00 am Thursday Crew

6 11:00 am Susan's Audiobook Club (201)

9/19 10:00 am Choir Rehearsal (Chapel)

9/20 11:00 am Church Council Meeting (Chapel)

4:30 pm The Longest Table (Courtyard)

9/21 9:30 am Shirley's Group (115)

11:00 am Quilters (125)

9/22 9:00 am Hospitality Huddle (213)

9/23 9:30 am Disciple 4 (115)

9/24 9:00 am Thursday Crew

11:00 am Susan's Audiobook Club (210)

1:00 pm Lois' Small Group (FPR)

9/25 Dusk: Movie in Balfour Park

9/26 10:00 am Choir Rehearsal (Chapel)

9/28 9:30 am Shirley's Group (115)

9/30 9:30 am Disciple 4 (115)

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*"Do all the good you can,
By all the means you can,
In all the places you can,
At all the times you can,
To all the people you can,
As long as ever you can."
- John Wesley*



United Women in Faith

United Women in Faith shall be a community of women whose purpose is to know God and to experience freedom as whole persons through Jesus Christ; to develop a creative, supportive fellowship; and to expand concepts of mission through participation in the global ministries of the church.



Coffee Chat resumes Sunday, September 13 with a very special Cinnamon Roll sale! You'll hear from Katherine Parker, missionary to Nepal, in the service, and afterward you can enjoy a cinnamon roll with her. All proceeds from the sale will go toward our covenant relationship with Katherine!

We know that Shalom Ministries is going through a time of change, and we're walking beside them in this process. Throughout this month, we'll be collecting items to give them when they're able to re-open so they can continue to serve Spokane's homeless community. These items include: new socks, gloves, hats, scarves, men's and women's underwear, and new or gently used winter coats and blankets.



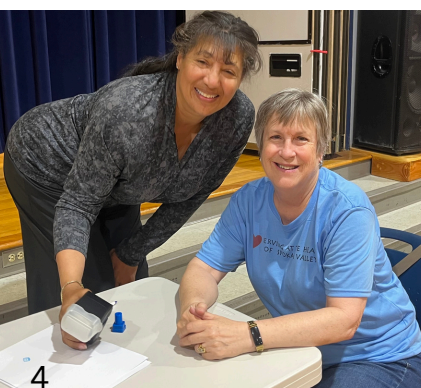
MCOC is hosting their Annual Benefit Luncheon at SVUMC on September 29! You can sign up to volunteer at the Connect Desk.

We need volunteers at the Teacher's Luncheon at Broadway Elementary School on Wednesday, October 21! Sign up to help at the Connect Desk throughout this month.



On Monday, August 24, we were able to help with Broadway Elementary School's Back to School Night!

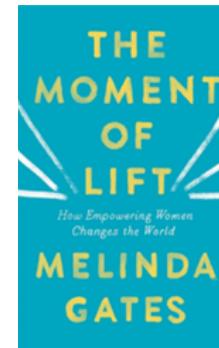
Thank you to everyone who came out and volunteered to make this event successful!



Broadway Fall Fest!



All through October we'll be gathering wrapped candy at the Connect Desk for Broadway Elementary School's Fall Fest on October 22! You can sign up to volunteer for the Fall Fest at the Connect Desk, too. See you there!



Mark your calendar and remember to join us on Sunday, October 11 at 1 PM in the Fireplace Room to discuss Melinda Gates' *The Moment of Lift: How Empowering Women Changes the World*. The book focuses on women around the world who are doing the difficult work of creating more egalitarian societies wherever they are. For any questions about Book Club, please see Madelyn Bafus.



2026 Inland District United Women in Faith Annual Gathering
September 12, 2026 - Simpson United Methodist Church, Pullman, WA

Soul Care: Experiencing Our Connections with Others

9:00-9:25am - Registration, Coffee, and Snacks

9:30am - Start at Simpson UMC, 325 NE Maple St., Pullman, WA

Enjoy the day with your sisters in Christ as we learn about the important work we do as United Women in Faith. We will have a special guest, our missionary Katherine Parker, to share about her important work in Nepal. After lunch, we will break out into small groups for a mini-soul care retreat in which we will learn more about how to connect spiritually from within as well as with each other.

Registration forms are at the Connect Desk!

Circle groups are starting up again this month!

Esther Circle

Tuesday, September 8
12:30 PM | Room 115

Rachel Circle

Thursday, September 10
11:00 AM | FPR

Sarah Circle

Monday, September 14
6:30 PM | Room 115

Prayer Shawl & Lap Blanket Ministry

Monday, September 14
Monday, September 28
10:00 AM | Room 123

