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THE SPIRIT – ISSUE 05 – MAY 2026



Love Boldly
Serve Joyfully
Lead Courageously

ResourceUMC.org/Vision

#LoveServeLeadUMC

A MONTHLY PUBLICATION OF CHENEY UNITED METHODIST CHURCH

A New Vision for the United Methodist Church

We are in the middle of our new sermon series that invites us to step into a renewed vision for the global United Methodist Church, one that feels both timely and deeply rooted in who we've always been as Cheney UMC.

The Council of Bishops reminds us that our calling has not changed, but perhaps our clarity and courage are being reexamined for this moment.

The new vision is simple, yet powerful: **to form disciples of Jesus Christ who, empowered by the Holy Spirit, love boldly, serve joyfully, and lead courageously.**

At first glance, these three phrases may seem like familiar church language. But when we slow down, they ask something real of us.

To love boldly means more than kindness. It calls us to truly see and embrace people as Jesus did, crossing boundaries and widening the circle of belonging. It challenges us to ask: who might we be overlooking, and how can we love more like Christ?

To serve joyfully reminds us that service isn't meant to drain us, but to connect us. When we walk alongside others—especially those who are hurting or overlooked—we often discover that joy meets us there, too.

And **to lead courageously**... well, that one can feel a little daunting. It asks us not to stay comfortable, but to stand up for what is right, to work toward justice, and to trust that God walks with us even when the path is uncertain.

This vision isn't just something for church leaders or faraway conferences, it's for all of us, right here in Cheney. It shows up in small acts of kindness, in conversations, in service, and in the quiet choices we make every day to follow Jesus more closely.

As we journey through this sermon series together, may we be open to how the Holy Spirit is shaping us—individually and as a church—into people who love, serve, and lead in ways that reflect God's hope for the world.

After all, transformation doesn't start somewhere else. It starts here, with us.

Pastor Damian

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Time For Celebration

Easter Joy: from Hilltop to New Life

Friends, what a celebration we had this Easter—especially after our meaningful and sometimes challenging Lenten series, “Giving Up Bad Theology.”

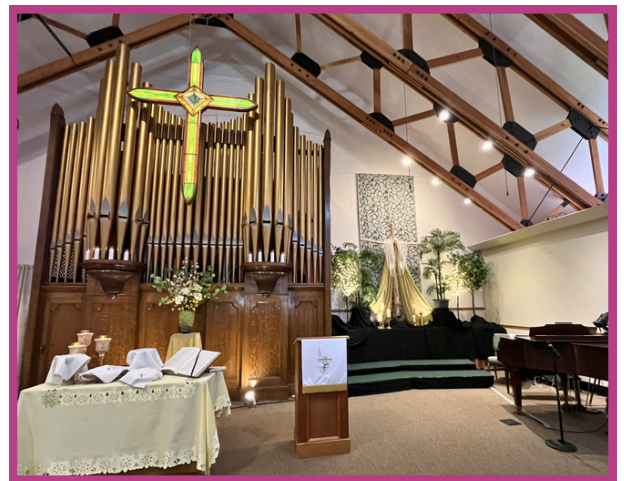
Our day began early, with a faithful group gathering on the hill at Cheney Cemetery. As the sun rose, Pastor Matt Goodale from the Congregational Church led us in a simple but powerful Easter morning liturgy. There’s something special about proclaiming “He is risen!” while surrounded by the quiet beauty of that place—it sets the tone for everything that follows.

From there, we made our way back to the church, where even more friends joined us for an 8:15 a.m. Easter breakfast. What a feast! A huge thank you to everyone who brought food and drinks and helped create such a warm and welcoming time of fellowship. Our bodies were certainly nourished—and so were our spirits through laughter and connection.

Then it was time to move into the sanctuary, beautifully decorated for the occasion - thank you to our amazing Design Team for creating such a meaningful and inviting space. Led by piano music, choir, and prayer, we entered into worship together and were challenged one more time by the final message in our series: “Giving Up Getting Saved.”

Yes, you read that right.

We were reminded that Christianity isn’t about securing a ticket to heaven someday. It’s about participating in God’s work right now, bringing a little more of heaven to earth each day. After all, as Revelation 21 promises, God is coming to dwell with us. Easter is not just about what happens after we die, it’s about the new life already breaking in, right here and right now. What a celebration of new creation. What a reminder of hope.



Thank you all for being part of this bold and meaningful journey from Ash Wednesday, through the cross, and all the way to the empty tomb. I’m so grateful we get to walk it together.

Pastor Damian



Wedding Anniversaries

- 26 Josie & Todd Sackmann
- 28 Greg & Laurie Murphy
- 31 Heather & Trent Watkins

Birthdays

- | | |
|--------------------|----------------------|
| 4 Cathy Almekinder | 19 Edna Wilcox |
| 5 Jewell Swan | 20 Kristin Mansfield |
| 15 Bob Brasefield | 25 Lori Dupler |
| 17 Sydney Lincoln | 30 Keri MacDonald |
| 18 Cathy Sleeth | |

If you do not see your name, please let the office know and we will update you in our database.

Celebrate



Spring Cleaning 2026

Every year, this church family comes together to make our space shine again and Spring Cleaning 2026 did not disappoint!

Thirteen amazing volunteers showed up, rolled up their sleeves, and got to work. Cupboards and shelves were dusted, kitchen cabinets were rearranged (and finally make sense again!), chairs were scrubbed clean, every inch was vacuumed, and even the storage room got some much-needed attention.

More than just cleaning, it was a time of laughter, teamwork, and shared purpose. There's something special about caring for the space where we gather, worship, and connect. It's one small way we **"seek, serve, and share"** together.

A heartfelt thank you to everyone who gave their time and energy! You made a big difference. I truly love serving this church.



Pastor Damian

Caring for Creation: A Conversation with Kevin Fagan

On Sunday, April 19 after worship, we had the opportunity to welcome Kevin Fagan, who led us in a thoughtful and practical conversation about climate change right here in our own corner of the world. His message wasn't just about global trends or far-off places. Instead, he brought it close to home, reminding us that climate change is something we're already experiencing in the Inland Northwest.

From hotter summers (with significantly more days over 95°) to increased wildfire smoke and pressure on our water resources, Kevin helped us see how these changes are affecting our daily lives. He also highlighted how rising energy costs and insurance challenges are becoming real concerns for families in our region.

But the heart of his message wasn't fear, it was hope.

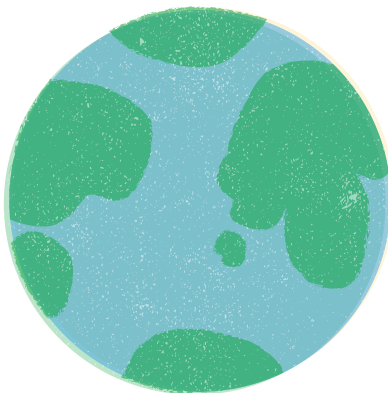


Kevin shared simple ways we can respond, like water-wise landscaping, improving energy efficiency, and protecting our homes and neighborhoods. He also reminded us that real change happens together through community efforts that care for both people and the planet.

As Christians, this message resonates deeply. In Genesis, God calls us to be stewards of creation not just to enjoy it, but to tend and protect it. Caring for the earth is one way we live out our mission to *"Seek, Serve, and Share Jesus Christ."*

Kevin left us with a simple but powerful truth: we are not powerless. When we act together - with wisdom, faith, and hope - we can make a difference.

Pastor Damian



Earth Day Community Garden Cleanup Crew at Work! Story next page.



Celebrating Earth Day with Community Service



The Kerrs and the Yanceys participated in the Cheney Parks and Recs Community Garden Clean up on April 18th. Their hard work was very much appreciated by the Parks Department and the gardeners who got help with their plots. Ari and Kaylee worked just as hard as the adults!

Thank you for all your hard work!

There is more work to do in May!

Once we get our assignment and date from Parks and Rec, we will let you know. We will announce it during church and sign up will be on the **Door of Opportunity!**

Excited for the Future

Cheney United Methodist Church Schedule

	Sun	Mon	Tue	Wed	Thur	Fri	Sat
Church Office Hours:			10am-12:30pm 2:30-5pm		6:30-8:30pm		
Meals on Wheels			11am-1pm		11am-1pm		
Choir				7-8:30pm			
Bible Studies: contact the church office for addresses.							
With Congregational Church*					1:15-2:15pm		
Leader: Margie Lindner		2-3pm					
Leader: Carol Kriegh		7:30-8:30pm					
Leader: Saralynn Kerr			7-8pm				

Bible Study with Congregational Church: For the month of May, we will be meeting at the Congregational Church.

May 13th there is NO bible study.

Sassy Senior Society meets on **May 20th** from 2 p.m. to 3:30 p.m.

Pastor's Upcoming Absence: 4 Day Peace Making Training in Spokane
May 11 - 14

Attention: Our Pastor changed is day off from Monday to Friday.
You can call him on Mondays, but please don't on Fridays.
Thank you!

Worship Schedule for May

Sunday, May 3 – 5th Sunday of Easter – 10 am

Love Boldly

With Communion

Pastor Amanda Nicol: James 2:14-24

Sunday, May 10 – 6th Sunday of Easter -10am

Serve Joyfully

Pastor Damian Carruthers: 1 Peter 4:8-11

Sunday, May 17 – 7th Sunday of Easter -10am

Lead Courageously

Pastor Damian Carruthers: Joshua 1:5-9

Sunday, May 24 – Pentecost -10am

Receiving New Members

Pastor Damian Carruthers: Matthew 28:16-20

Sunday, May 31 – Trinity Sunday – 10 am

Carol Kriegh: Jeremiah 29:11-13

Love Boldly

Serve Joyfully

Lead Courageously



Excited for the Future

Adult Fellowship: Bloomsday BBQ at our church!

Bloomsday - what does that mean?

For many people it means a 7 1/2 mile walk/run through the streets of Spokane.

For Cheney UMC it means BBQ time! Please join us on Sunday May 3 for our monthly fellowship gathering (a week early because of Mother's Day) at 6 p.m. at the church.

Burger, dogs and buns will be provided. Just bring a salad or dessert or some other side dish for the potluck. Food, fun and fellowship - we are all Bloomsday winners.



Carol Kriegh

FELLOWSHIP TIME BLOOMSDAY

BBQ

 **204 4TH ST,
CHENEY UMC**

 **3RD OF MAY
6 PM**

**BURGERS ARE PROVIDED -
PLEASE BRING SOME
SIDES TO SHARE**

Excited for the Future

Mayfest 2026!
Saturday, May 9th

We need your help!

Friends, it is the time of the year again when folks from Cheney (and beyond) fill downtown Cheney. And we will be in the thick of it with a table and an interactive activity. Our goal is to invite people to check out our church and our ministry. We need many people to be present at our table on May 9th from 9 AM to 4:30 PM. So please check out the sign-up sheet at the door of opportunities! If you can't make the date, but want to help, contact the office.

Pastor Damian

We have a table at the Mayfest on May 09th!
Save the DATE!

CHENEY MAYFEST



Excited for the Future

Ready to Say "Yes?" Join Our Membership Class!



When we baptize children, we joyfully proclaim God's "yes" over their lives. And when someone chooses to become a member of Cheney UMC, they get the opportunity to say their own "yes"—to God, to a life of faith, and to our church family.

Whether you were baptized as a child or are still exploring baptism, this is your moment to step into something beautiful. At Cheney United Methodist Church, we describe ourselves as a "community of believers and seekers"—people walking together in faith, with open hearts and a readiness to grow. Becoming a member is more than just a formality. It's a way to say, "I belong here. I want to be part of what God is doing in and through this church."

Interested? We'd love to have you with us for a series of three relaxed, no-pressure classes. It's a chance to ask questions, get to know others, and discover what being part of the UMC is all about.

Here is the schedule for the classes and the final worship service in which we receive the new members:

Sunday, May 3 from 2 Pm to 5 PM – Session 1 & 2

- Methodist History and Theology
- Organization of The United Methodist Church
 - Globally, nationally, state wise and locally

Tuesday, May 5 from 6 PM to 8 PM – Alternative Date for Session 1 & 2 or 3 & 4

Sunday, May 17 from 4PM to 7 PM – Session 3 & 4

- Membership Vows
- Rights and Duties of a Member

Monday, May 18 from 6 PM to 8 PM – Open Session

- Open Questions and Planning of the Worship Service

Sunday, May 24 at 10 AM – Worship Service to Receive new members

If that date does not work for you, we can find another date to welcome you as a member during a Sunday morning worship. If you're feeling that gentle nudge, that quiet invitation from God come. Just show up.

We're excited to walk this journey with you.

Pastor Damian



Excited for the Future



Join us July 19th for Sunday worship
With our Global Ministries Missionary:

Joy Prim

She will be sharing about her ministry in Hong Kong

As I've entered this year, my word of the year is **LOVE**:

- **LIVE** my faith in action each day.
- **OPEN** to how God is moving in my life and the lives of others in my community
- **VALUE** each other and each other's contribution. To not take advantage or make someone feel less than because they have less.
- **EMPATHY** each and every day. To work to understand our differences and not isolate someone because of them

I invite you to join with me and embrace **LOVE** in 2026.



There are more than 380,000 Migrant Domestic Workers in Hong Kong.

These workers are from the Philippines, Indonesia, Nepal, and other Southeast Asian countries and Africa, working to provide for their families at home.

They are serving as modern-day slaves, are the lowest-paid employees in Hong Kong, and are often abused.

Come to learn more about the ministry and how we support Joy and the Migrants.

News from our Community

Goodbye Laurie... and Welcome Macey!

Friends,

As many of you know, after 28 wonderful years, we recently said goodbye to our Office Manager, Laurie Murphy. What a blessing she has been to our church! I'm especially grateful for the past four years I had the chance to work alongside her. Laurie's faithfulness, kindness, and steady presence have meant so much to all of us.

While we will certainly miss her, we're also excited for this new season in her life: more time to enjoy with her family and her dogs (which I suspect are very happy about this change!). Laurie shared a thank you note with us, and I'd love for you to hear her words. (See the next page)

Every farewell holds the promise of a new beginning, and with that in mind, we are excited to welcome our new Administrative and Communication Specialist, Macey Fredenberg! Macey began her role on April 28, and we are thrilled to have found such a great fit for our church. (And yes, we had two strong candidates, so we feel especially grateful!)

With Macey joining the team, our office hours have been updated. While I am in the office most of the week, Macey will be available during the following times:

Office Hours:

Tuesdays from 10:00 AM to 12:30 PM & 2:30 PM to 5:00 PM

Thursdays from 6:00 PM to 8:00 PM

Phone (has not changed): 509-235-4600

Email (still the same): cheneyumc204@gmail.com

Let's be sure to thank Laurie when you see her, and also give Macey a warm Cheney UMC welcome!

Pastor Damian



News from our Community

Thank you from Laurie:

"Dear Cheney UMC.

Thank you for the Red Robin gift card! That is my favorite place to eat. I really appreciate your thoughtfulness.

I also want to thank you for your kindness and consideration while I worked here. I truly enjoyed being the Church secretary and getting to know all of you."

-Laurie Murphy



News from our Community

Summer Camp Scholarships for Kids

Summer break is right around the corner, and while it brings sunshine and a change of pace, it can also be a challenging time for families figuring out how to keep their kids engaged, cared for, and growing.

One incredible opportunity we're blessed to have is Twinlow Camp in Idaho, a place where kids can laugh, learn, make lifelong friendships, and experience God's love in a real and meaningful way. For many of our children, camp isn't just a week away, it's a chance to grow in confidence, deepen their faith, and simply be kids in a safe and joyful environment.

Over the years, Cheney UMC has been able to support families by helping cover the cost of camp or partially, especially for those where finances might make it difficult. With camp fees typically ranging from \$450-\$550, we know this can be a stretch for many households.

That's where our church family comes in.

If you feel called to help, we invite you to contribute to our Summer Camp Scholarship fund. Simply mark your donation with "Summer Camp Scholarship," and know that every dollar goes directly toward helping a child attend camp.

Together, we can Seek, Serve, and Share Jesus Christ giving our kids the chance to experience faith, friendship, and fun in a way they'll never forget.

Thank you for being such a caring and generous community.

The Church Council



News from our Community

Smaller, Sent... and Still Growing

If you've ever felt like the Church is shrinking, you're not wrong, but that's not the whole story. In 2016, the Pacific Northwest Conference included 236 congregations with an average worship attendance of 17,198. Today, that number has shifted to 187 congregations and 9,355 in average attendance. Many churches that were once larger have become "family-sized" or "pastoral-sized," and 94% of our congregations now fall into those categories.



Most of our smallest congregations are navigating a genuine sustainability question as well as a growth one. That's reason to take their situation seriously and to ask honestly what support, structure, and pastoral care serve them well.

Only 24 congregations average over 100 in worship, a threshold identified in past statistical reports as a baseline to support a full-time pastoral appointment. An additional 5,128 people are counted as online worship participants, which aren't factored into the numbers above.

We should take that number seriously without overstating it. Online attendance counting is notoriously inconsistent across congregations, and the figure almost certainly includes some meaningful overcount. Still, real people are showing up to worship online, and that matters. Whether we're building meaningful connections with them is a question worth taking seriously.

Those are real changes, and we shouldn't ignore them. But they don't mean the mission has disappeared. The people who need connection, hope, and the love of Christ are still here. The mission field hasn't shrunk. What's changing is how we live out that mission. Smaller churches, when healthy, are often deeply rooted in their communities. They build strong relationships, move quickly when needed, and create meaningful, authentic spaces for people to belong.

News from our Community

Smaller, Sent... and Still Growing (continued)

That's where this becomes our story. At Cheney UMC, we are seeing signs of life and growth. Over the past four years, our average worship attendance has grown from 54 to over 67, and this year, we've already reached an average of 70+.

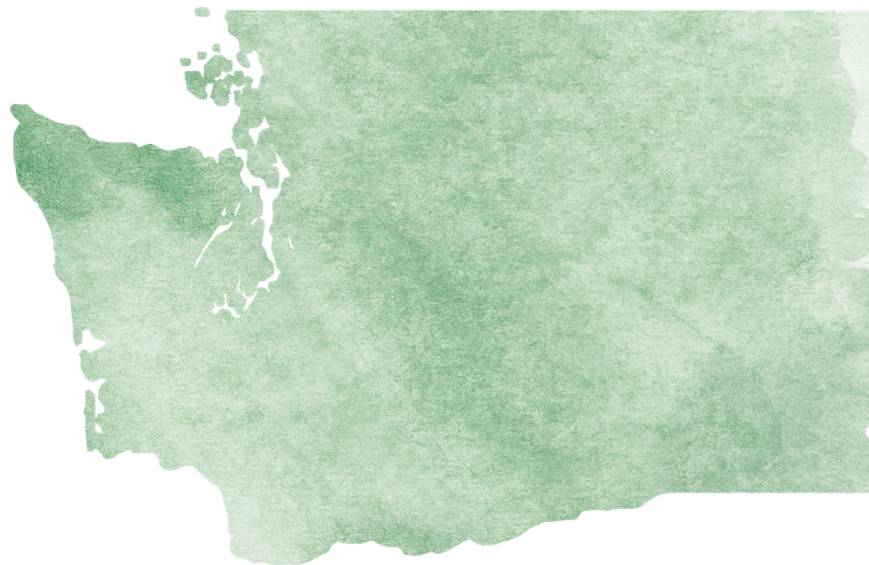
That's not just a number; that's people showing up, building relationships, and encountering God together. So yes, the Church is changing. But we are still here. Still sent. Still part of God's work in Cheney.

The question in front of us isn't whether we're big enough; it's whether we're willing to be faithful with what we have.

What might it look like for us to lean into being a connected, community-rooted church right here, right now?

Originally written by PNW Communications **Director Patrick Scriven**, shortened by **Pastor Damian**

Read the full article here: tinyurl.com/smallergnw



Opportunities to Engage

Seventy guests enjoyed a hot meal in April at Feed Cheney. CHS culinary arts students prepared the meal, CHS FFA members, CHS National Honor Society members and an EWU sorority served and helped clean up. It was a fun and full event. Please note, the meal in May is one week early because of the Memorial Day holiday.



**FREE HOT MEAL
EWU EXERCISE SCIENCE**

WHEN

**5:30 PM MONDAY,
MAY 18, 2026**

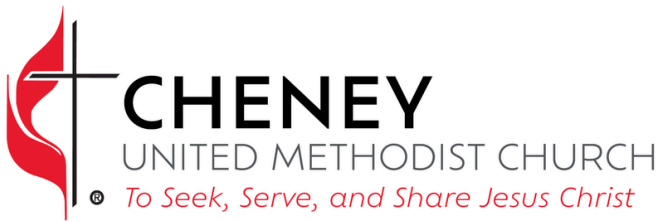
**FOR ACCOMMODATION CONTACT CHENEY PARKS AND
RECREATION AT 509-498-9250 BY MAY 15.**

WHERE

**Wren Pierson Building
615 4TH STREET, CHENEY**

FOR MORE INFORMATION

509.498.9250 WWW.FEEDCHENEY.COM



Newsletter

204 4th St
Cheney, WA 99004
Return Service Requested

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