

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 - 3pm

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 october 2026

The Two Year Academy for Spiritual Formation by Pastor Alissa

Back in 2013, during my first year as a Provisional Elder, the Board of Ordained Ministry Full Membership Interview Team reflected back to me their concern that due to my having been a lay person for the first eight years of my full-time ministry as a campus pastor, I had not been granted the clergy benefit of one week of "renewal leave" each year. Though I had a day or two off each week and a lighter schedule during the summer and winter holidays, I had never experienced

the gift of a longer sabbath experience away from my ministry setting. As part of my formation for ordained ministry, they expressed their desire that I take an annual sabbath and encouraged me to consider attending The Five Day Academy for Spiritual Formation being offered in the Pacific Northwest Annual Conference in April of 2014.

The Academy of Spiritual Formation, of which the Five Day is one iteration, is a ministry of The Upper Room and General Board of Discipleship. The mission of the Academy is to offer a sacred place for "spiritually hungry pilgrims," both clergy and lay to deepen their connection to God in a disciplined Christian community that emphasizes holistic spirituality to nurture mind, body, and spirit. Each Academy, which are hosted all over the United States on a roughly biannual basis, invite participants to spend time apart in a Christian retreat setting with worship at the center. Each session usually has two faculty who provide a reading list ahead of the Academy to prime the mind and who offer daily morning and afternoon lectures on a particular theme during the Academy. These faculty members work together to help create time and space to respond to their shared theme through silence, written and spoken word, prayer, and community sharing. A few themes I have experienced over the years are "The Gifts of Darkness," "Welcoming the Wilderness," and "Sacred Encounter." Worship is offered three times a day (Morning Prayer, Afternoon

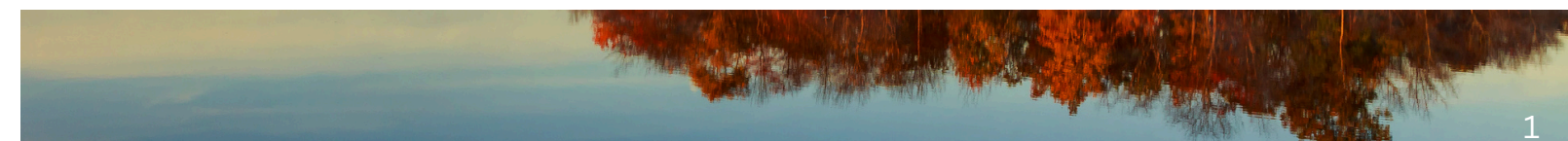
Eucharist, and Night Prayer) using the Upper Room Worshipbook and everyone participates in a daily Listening Circle where the priority is to listen to what the soul has to share. Everyone has their own private room and there's plenty of time for individual reflection but also free time to share in conversation, take a nap, or enjoy the unique aspects each retreat center has to offer. If this brief description of the Academy sounds like something you might like to do to grow your spiritual relationship with God, you can learn more at <https://www.upperroom.org/academy>.

It didn't take more than one day at my first Five Day Academy for me to know that it was something my soul had been needing. From the worship services to the learnings from the faculty to the sacred conversations to the blessed hours of silence, I experienced the nurture of mind, body, and spirit that true sabbath brings. I have since attended five Five Day Academies here in the Pacific Northwest and intend it to be part of my regular bi-annual sabbath practice for the rest of my life.

Back in 2014, at my first Academy, I learned that there is a Two Year version in which you journey with a cohort for eight five-day sessions over a two year period. I was instantly interested but I wasn't in a place where I could (Cont. on page 2)



*The logo for the Academy for
Spiritual Formation.*



(Cont. from page 1) commit the time (never mind afford it). Flash forward 12 years and I now find myself in a season of ministry that makes this opportunity possible. I initially shared my desire to participate in a Two Year with the SVUMC SPRC during my interview in January 2022 before being appointed, and, once appointed, worked with me to start saving unused Accountable Reimbursement funds to put toward it. The timing wasn't right the first few years of my ministry here, but in 2025, having built up trust with our staff and leadership, and knowing I had Formation Funds from the Board of Ordained Ministry I could access along with my AR funds and savings, I let the SPRC know that I was ready to apply and asked their blessing to do so. They affirmed my applying and I was delighted to be accepted into the 44th Cohort of the Two Year Academy for Spiritual Formation earlier this year!

The setting for my Academy is Camp McDowell in Nauvoo, Alabama and our first session is October 26-31 (I fly home on the morning of Nov. 1.) I will attend four sessions in 2027 (Jan. 25-30, April 19-24, Aug. 9-14, and Nov. 1-6) and three sessions in 2028 (Jan 24-20, April 24-29, and August 7-12). Each session will have two faculty members – one who lectures on how spirituality is organized and the other how spirituality is done. Though my primary reason for participating in the Academy is for my own personal spiritual formation and to deepen my connection to God, the fact that this experience will take place in the mid-life point of my ministry career (assuming I serve to 68), it will surely help me persevere in the “race” and stay in love with my calling to pastoring.

Though I can't take you all with me to Alabama, it is my desire to bring you all along on my journey by sharing the themes and suggested reading list in the monthly newsletter ahead of each session and then by offering a reflection on my experience in the monthly newsletter after each session. Additionally, when the schedule works out, Sue Magrath will preach the Sunday I am gone and offer a sermon on the same themes I'm exploring drawn from her own participation in many Five Day Academies and a Two Year. My hope is that by sharing what I am learning and experiencing as part of my spiritual formation, that you, too, might deepen your connection to God and the calling placed on your life. The themes, faculty, and reading list for our first session are below:

- **Attentiveness to the Word: Spiritual Formation and Scripture** - taught by Rev. Juan Carlos Huertas
 - *This Here Flesh* by Cole Arthur Riley
 - *Things Hidden* by Richard Rohr
- **Traditions of Christian Spirituality** - taught by Dr. Amy Oden
 - *Streams of Living Water* by Richard Foster
 - *Our Unforming: De-Westernizing Spiritual Formation* by Cindy Lee

I appreciate your support of this spiritual undertaking and I welcome your prayers as I travel to Alabama and experience the first week of my two year journey!

Peace-
Pastor Alissa

Behind the Scenes: An Update from Mackenzie

Hello, all! As of September 1st, I have a new title—“Church Administrator”—and full-time hours at SVUMC. I am thrilled to remain at the church in this capacity and hope to continue to serve the community well! I wanted to share with you some of the work I've been doing with my new full-time schedule.

In August of this year, SVUMC partnered with a church management software company called Subsplash. With their help, we've updated our website (you should check it out if you haven't yet!), our online giving platform, our livestreaming process, and more. We're even building an app for your phone so you can keep up to date with the goings-on of the church! We'll share more info about that very soon.

The website is still at spokanevalleychurch.org, and it has many of the same features as our last site, including a calendar of upcoming events and web pages explaining the church's history, mission, and ministries. It also provides a new Give page, where both one-time and recurring gifts can be made online. Setting up online giving is simple and quick, and if you have any questions about signing up or run into trouble with the platform, don't hesitate to reach out! You can call the office or email me, and I'll be happy to help troubleshoot any problems you might run into.

Another new feature that we're excited about is the ability to livestream Sunday services directly to the website. If you visit the site on Sunday mornings, there will be a banner across the top of the page that says, “Live broadcast starts in...” and it will have a timer counting down the minutes (and seconds) until 9:00AM. You can click (Cont. on page 6)

Twinlow Camp & Retreat Center: “Build Faith - Shower Love”

For nearly a century, Twinlow Camp and Retreat Center has been a sanctuary where individuals and families come to experience the peace of nature, the joy of community, and the presence of God. Nestled on the shores of Lower Twin Lake in North Idaho, this 40-acre camp offers a variety of programs - from summer camps for youth to year-round retreats for adults - all designed to foster spiritual growth and connection.

As they look to the future, they are excited to announce a new project that will enhance the experience for all who visit Twinlow: the construction of a year-round shower house. This facility will provide modern, accessible, and comfortable bathing facilities, ensuring their guests can enjoy their time at camp with dignity and ease, regardless of the season. The total cost to build this much needed shower house is \$500,000. This investment will improve the quality of life for their campers and retreat center guests allowing them to expand their programming and serve more individuals and families in the years to come.

Our Financial Resources Team has already sent a check for \$1147 from our Misc. Twinlow Fund and the remaining funds raised for our two Eagle Scouts who did their projects at the camp in 2025. If you would like to personally support this project, you can find some ways you can contribute to the right.

To donate, please visit their website at [Twinlow.org](https://twinlow.org) or contact them directly at director@twinlowcamp.org or by calling (208) 352-2671.

One God, Three Persons: Walking with the Holy Trinity

Sally Cole-Stokes, SVUMC member, wishes to share some of the knowledge she has gained from her beautiful experiences with the Holy Trinity throughout her life.

As United Methodists, we ground our faith in the beautiful mystery of the Holy Trinity. We do not worship three separate deities, but rather one God who reveals Himself in three distinct persons. Each person of the Trinity meets us exactly where we are, offering unique gifts to guide us on our spiritual journey. I hope you find this useful as a guide and a meditation for your own sacred reflection. ~ Sally

The Father: Our Creator and Sustainer

Yahweh, our Heavenly Father, is the ultimate Creator of all things. He is the author of the law that guides our steps, but He is equally defined by His overwhelming judgment, mercy, and grace. When we look at the world around us, we see the Father's hand sustaining and loving His creation.

The Son: Our Savior and Redeemer

Jesus Christ is our Holy Savior. Through His life, death, and resurrection, He offers us complete restoration. Jesus brings miraculous healing for our earthly bodies and eternal salvation for our souls. He is the tangible expression of God's love walking alongside us.

The Holy Spirit: Our Comforter and Guide

The Holy Spirit is the Great Comforter who makes a home inside our hearts. The Spirit is our constant companion, whispering divine guidance, shielding us with protection, and instilling bold courage into our spirits when we face life's storms.

Connecting Through Prayer

Because of this triune nature, our prayer life can be incredibly rich. We can pray to the Father, Son, and Holy Spirit - heartily thanking them for the blessings and goodness in our lives. We can also courageously ask them for help with the things that are still hurting us or holding us back on our path. As we close our prayers in their names, we rest in the promise that the one true God hears us, loves us, and is actively working in our lives.



- **\$50** – Provides materials for one shower stall
- **\$125** – Funds a Toilet
- **\$250** – Sponsors the installation of a water heater
- **\$500** – Funds a window
- **\$1,000** – Covers the cost of plumbing and fixtures for one shower stall
- **\$2,500** – Funds a tankless hot water heater
- **\$5,000** – Sponsors the lumber package
- **\$10,000** – Sponsors the truss package
- **\$20,000** – Sponsors the electrical rough in
- **\$25,000** – Sponsors the roof or siding
- **\$30,000** – Sponsors the HVAC
- **\$50,000** – Sponsors the foundation
- **\$100,000** – Sponsors demolition, excavation, and utilities
- **\$250,000** – Naming opportunity

Every gift, no matter the size, brings them closer to their goal!

NEWS & ANNOUNCEMENTS

SVUMC's Charge Conference is scheduled for Tuesday, October 20 at 6:00 PM in the Fireplace Room. All members of the church are welcome to attend, but only members may vote.

The church office will be closed on 10/12 in observance of Indigenous People's Day.

Need to reach out to a staff member? Take a look at the Congregational Bulletin this week for new email addresses!

Thank you to everyone who donated books for my multilingual students at Cheney School District. Kids get to choose a book to take home each week after they finish their work, and they are SO excited to have books to keep "forever!" Thank you for helping to cultivate literacy and a love of learning in these students!

-Quynh Parlane

Free once-monthly Zumba classes are resuming in the gym starting October 7 at 6 PM!

(Cont. from "Behind the Scenes" from page 2) "watch now" next to the timer, and it will take you to the livestream page. Services will also still be livestreamed to Facebook and YouTube, so if you prefer one of those platforms, don't worry! You'll still be able to watch there. The website also gives us the ability to post each livestreamed service; our backlog can be found under the "Media" button at the top of the website.

Additionally, we're currently developing an app for Spokane Valley UMC. The app will have almost everything the website has, including the calendar of events, an opportunity to submit prayer requests, our media library, and the giving platform. You can also watch the livestream each Sunday from the app! And there is an in-app Bible, in case you'd like to follow along with the liturgist as they read the scripture each week, as well as a place for notes. If you have a Smart TV at home, you will also be able to download the app to your television and watch the service on a larger screen. I'll have more information to share with you about how to download the apps in just a few weeks.

I'm excited about all these updates and how they'll help us reach out to more of our Spokane Valley community! If you have questions or concerns about these changes, I would love to discuss them more with you.

Peace,
Mackenzie

Office phone: 509-924-7262

Email: secretary@spokanevalleychurch.org

OCTOBER WORSHIP PREVIEW

OCTOBER 4 – "LOVE ONE ANOTHER: ABIDE IN LOVE"

As we continue the Fall Worship series we began on Sept. 20, Pastor Alissa will be preaching on John 15:1-5, 9b-11 where, during the Last Supper, Jesus turns to a vineyard metaphor to draw them more closely together.

As we celebrate The Great Thanksgiving, we will reflect on how Jesus is the vine and we are the branches – when we abide in his love, we thrive together!

OCTOBER 11 – "LOVE ONE ANOTHER: YOU ARE MY FRIENDS"

Pastor Alissa will be preaching on John 15:12-17 where Jesus teaches that to be friends is to see one another as equals and as expressions of Divine Holy Love. Though his friends, the disciples, will soon deny and desert him, he is ready to lay his life down for them and knows that love is what they all will need to endure the days ahead.

OCTOBER 18 – "LOVE ONE ANOTHER: GRIEVING TO REJOICING"

As we wrap up our series, Pastor Alissa will be preaching on John 16:1, 12-13a, and 20-22 where Jesus teaches us our final lesson in loving one another: remembering that we are all alike in our grieving and in our desire for joy.

As his disciples, we are called to proclaim that no one, especially those who seek to harm or destroy, can take away the joy that comes from God's Ever-Present Love. We will also have a Ministry that Matters Moment from Partners INW.

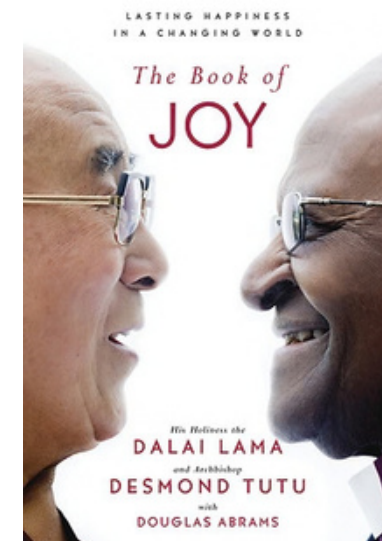
OCTOBER 25 – "ALL MUSIC SUNDAY: PRACTICING JOY"

Our Director of Music, Betsy Pletscher, has created a sermon-free service of Scripture and Song inspired by the "Book of Joy" by the Dalai Lama & Archbishop Desmond Tutu. Built upon their "Eight Pillars of Joy", our worship experience will be full of uplifting hymns, readings, and special music that will help us both practice and experience joy!

NOVEMBER 1 – "ALL SAINTS DAY RECOGNITION"

As Pastor Alissa travels back from the Two Year Academy, Sue Magrath will lead worship and a litany of remembering the saints from our congregation who passed into glory this year. Her sermon will reflect on the themes of attentiveness to the Word and traditions of Christian Spirituality which are the focus of the first week of the Academy. Rev. Sheila Miranda will join Sue to preside at the Table for the Great Thanksgiving.

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



KIDS' KORN E R

Summer seemed to fly by, and now that it is officially Fall, I wanted to take a moment and share what some of our youth had to say about their Twinlow experiences this summer:

- Barrett enjoyed getting to hang out in the woods and play Dungeons & Dragons.
- Lucas' favorite part of summer camp was having his design chosen for the bench he and his group got to paint. He also enjoyed the polar plunge off the dock in the morning.
- Riley loved getting to sleep outside, the food, and getting to go tubing and kayaking.
- Alex liked getting to meet new people and swim at the lake. He is looking forward to more lake time in the future.

I am grateful for all the memories being made at Twinlow and I can't wait to hear about more. On October 17th and 18th a few of our youth members will be a part of the first in awhile UMC Central/East Side Connection overnighter at Central UMC. I feel very blessed to have been a part of the planning and can't wait to share our experience with you all soon.

-Jen Price, Coordinator of Ministries for Young People





*"Do all the good you can,
By all the means you can,
In all the ways 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.*

Thank
you 

Thank you to everyone who supported the Cinnamon Roll Sale for Katherine Parker! This completes our commitment of \$5,000 to support our missionaries.

And thank you for supporting Shalom Ministries in September with socks, gloves, hats, scarves, men's and women's underwear, winter coats, and blankets. Your generosity is very appreciated!

Thank you to everyone who supported Mission Community Outreach's Annual Benefit Luncheon, whether by purchasing a ticket or by setting up, serving food, and cleaning up afterward.

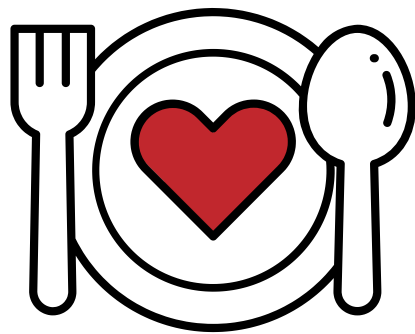


Broadway Fall Fest!



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 to help with games and activities at the Fall Fest at the Connect Desk, too. See you there!

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



Broadway Elementary School's Winter Celebration will be on Thursday, December 3!
We'll have sign-up sheets throughout November to volunteer and to bring cookies for decorating.



Coming up in November...

We'll be collecting jeans and shirts for MCOC. Clothing should be for girls and boys, from infants through 6th grade. Long sleeve shirts and pants (pant sizes 10-12, specifically) are especially needed.



The final Cinnamon Roll Sale of 2026 will be held on November 8 in support of Jamaa Letu Orphanages. Learn more about their mission at www.pnwumc.org/hfca/.



DINE IN & TAKEOUT ANNUAL HARVEST DINNER

Saturday, November 14

Takeout from 4:00-5:00pm | Dine in from 4:30-5:30pm

Adults - \$15 | Children (6-12 years) - \$7 | Children 5 & younger - Free

Turkey & Dressing

We will not collect money prior to the event.

Mashed Potatoes & Gravy

Preorder your dine-in or takeout meals and time by calling Madelyn at 509-869-8213 beginning Sunday, November 8 through Friday, November 13 between 9am-1pm.

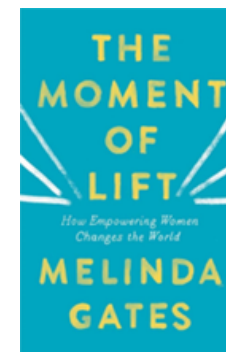
Green Beans with Bacon

Cranberries

Rolls & Butter

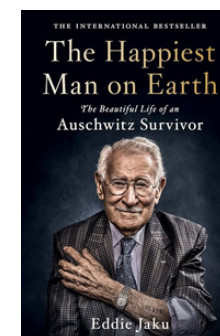
For takeout meals, have your check or cash ready in a sealed envelope with your name. Takeout pick up will be at the back of the church by the double gym doors. For dining in, we will collect your money at the door.

Pumpkin Cake



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 UWF book club will meet next in February to discuss *The Happiest Man on Earth: The Beautiful Life of an Auschwitz Survivor* by Eddie Jaku.



Upcoming meeting dates:

10/1: Sarah Circle - meeting at Second Harvest to pack lunches for Bite2Go from 5:30-7:30pm.

10/8: Rachel Circle - meeting in the Fireplace Room at 11am.

10/12: Prayer Shawl - meeting in Room 123 at 10am.

10/13: Esther Circle - meeting for lunch at Indigenous Eats at 12:30pm. Call Sue McGovney for more information.

10/26: Prayer Shawl - meeting in Room 123 at 10am.



There will be a book sale all four Sundays of October during Coffee Chat! Come and take a look at the books UWF has to offer. Free will offerings will be taken as payment.