

Shepherd's Voice

May 2026
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A Little Love Note

Eastertide is the season in which we lean into life in the risen Christ: a resurrection life that shouldn't have been possible but is through the grace and love of Jesus Christ. Acts 2:42-47 portrays a community of believers that is living in direct response to the proclamation of the risen Christ. Their community is marked by: (1) Apostles' teaching of Jesus; (2) community fellowship; (3) breaking of bread; and, (4) prayer.

Would you say that our faith community is characterized by these tenets?

I think in the Northwest family that we are centered in Christ and these tenets of a Jesus-following community. Even when we might face disagreements or challenges, we come back to these access points of remembering and experiencing God's grace, these works of piety and adoration of Jesus Christ. Just like the apostles and the early faith communities written about in the Bible, we are human. They started to fall apart in Acts 5...three chapters after the scriptures on this ideal faith community! Just like the apostles and early believers, we return to what matters most, and that is love of God and love of neighbor. We cannot love God fully without loving all that is under God. That's the gist of what we are doing here. There is no full life in God without our neighbors. This community is where we experience salvation. It is where we experience the risen Christ.

Potlucks are the perfect example of community: sharing a common meal with one another. Bringing our food together and sharing it in a way that multiplies the impact of the food and the joy is a powerful statement. It's even more powerful knowing that it is in the breaking and sharing of the bread that the disciples recognized Christ.

- continued on next page-

Inside this issue

Leadership Team Summary	2
Birthdays	2
Altar Flowers	2
Book Club	3
Miracle Sunday	3
Graduation Sunday	3
Memorial Day	3
VBS	3
Worship In The Park	4
Town Hall Recap	4
Contact Us	4

Birthday's

Help us CELEBRATE our congregation! Wish them a HAPPY BIRTHDAY if you see them this month!!

2nd-	Kate Gilles
3rd-	Paul Gollnitz
8th-	Randy Anderson Doris Meinke
12th-	Anastasia Ybarra Beene Kim Switzer James Scott
13th-	Jim Craner
21st-	John Morris
25th-	Sandy Osman
30th-	Griffin Scott

Altar Flowers 2026

The calendar is open for altar flowers for the 2026 calendar year. If you would like to reserve flowers, please **fill out a form** with the amount owed. You can put it in the offering basket or turn it into the office. The new calendar is up!

It is how we recognize the risen Christ and how we are able to truly see one another. After the Walk to Emmaus, after the Pentecost moment when the Holy Spirit rested upon each person and Peter proclaimed the risen Christ, Peter and John noticed the person who was born with a mobility issue in Acts 3:1-10. It was in the name of Christ that he was healed. It was the noticing, the seeing without the blinders that was the first step to the miracles done in Christ's name. Practicing these tenets of a community following the risen Christ is life-giving. It helps us to see one another. It helps us take notice and provide an environment of mutual care. It is in community that God led people to grow and experience salvation, according to Acts 2:47. That is how vital our congregation is for the people in and outside our walls.

I am grateful for each and every one of you: for the love and care that you share with one another and the way you love God. It's that kind of love that makes all the difference. It's that kind of love that will change the world.

All my love,

Pastor Melissa

Leadership Team Meeting Summary

Hi Church family,

The Leadership Team met on April 13 for our regular April meeting.

Pastor Melissa led us through a thorough discussion of the data collected at the April 12 church-wide town hall event. We discussed responses to the "What's stirring in your heart?" and "Two things..." questions submitted by the congregation. Pastor Melissa will continue compiling this data so we can use it to assist our goal-setting.

Our next town hall meeting is scheduled for Sunday, July 12, after church. Reminder: the town hall is for everyone. Even if you're not formally on a committee, we want your input!

We celebrated Easter with some big numbers: 67 in attendance on Palm Sunday and 83 on Easter. Looking ahead on the calendar, we'll have a busy worship service on Sunday, May 24. Not only is that Pentecost, but we'll also be having a Membership Sunday *and* honoring our junior high and high school graduates. You definitely won't want to miss it!

Next, we discussed our plans for the upcoming Annual Conference. As a two-point charge, we'll alternate delegate responsibilities with Prospect UMC. This year, PUMC will appoint our delegate and one "equalizing member." Northwest will appoint one "equalizing member," Jim Craner, who will attend Annual Conference on our behalf.

The next Fifth Sunday will be Sunday, May 31. We'll be celebrating Church in the Park, hopefully with our sister church in Dunlap. Details are still to be determined.

Remember, everyone is always invited to attend our Leadership Team meetings! The next one is scheduled for Monday, May 11, at 6 p.m.

Respectfully submitted, Jim C.

Miracle Sunday

May 17- What is Miracle Sunday?

The United Methodist Church (UMC) is a worldwide, connectional church. Miracle Sunday is a giving initiative in the UMC that is developing sustainable support for theological education in Africa, Europe, and the Philippines. In worship, we will view a video telling a story of what this offering supports each Sunday during the Season of Easter leading up to the Miracle Offering on Sunday, May 17.

Graduation Sunday

Graduation Sunday is Pentecost - May 24, too! Please submit your 8th grade, high school, college, and post-graduate school graduate names and pictures to be included in the bulletin and worship slides. Please submit information to the church office by May 15.

Memorial Day

Memorial Day we will be honoring our congregation members / family who have served in the military - please submit names and photos, birth year-death year

VBS

Please join our new friend, Ollie the seal, for a Snowball Mountain Challenge! This one day Vacation Bible School will be held on Sunday, June 7th from 12-4pm at Northwest United Methodist Church at 3800 W. War Memorial Drive. All children, grades K-5, are welcome!

Our theme is Mountain Motto which is "I can do all things through him who strengthens me." (Philippians 4:13, NRSV). We will play lots of Arctic games, craft, sing, snack, and learn to share our gifts, to be brave, to give our all, to pray, and to hope!

Please RSVP to the Church Office at office@nwunitedmethodist.org or 309-692-0421 by Sunday May 24th to ensure we have enough supplies for each child to get the fullest out of this experience.

We welcome teen helpers and adults to join the Snowball Mountain Challenge VBS fun! We need help decorating, guiding lessons, teaching songs, preparing snacks, and helping with clean-up. Please consider volunteering. "It takes a village," as the saying goes! If you are interested in volunteering, please contact the Church Office by May 24 at office@nwunitedmethodist.org or 309-692-0421. Adults working with children must agree to our Safe Sanctuary policy and pass a background check.

NUMC Book Club

Northwest UMC Book Club! If you enjoy reading and exploring different genres of books, come join the Northwest Book Club! We meet once a quarter for an hour to discuss the books we have read and spend time picking out another set of three books for the next gathering. The next Book Club will be on Sunday, May 3 at 12 noon, following the morning worship. (If the Fellowship Hall is busy, we will move downstairs to the Adult Sunday School room.)

All are welcome!

Currently, we are reading these three books:

"A Calamity of Souls" by David Baldacci - set in 1968 in Virginia, this legal thriller is about a racially-charged murder case (historical fiction)

"Canary Girls" by Jennifer Chiaverini - about women working as "munitionees" in British munitions factories during World War I (historical fiction)

"Haben: The Deafblind Women Who Conquered Harvard Law" by Haben Girma - a memoir by the first deafblind woman to graduate Harvard Law

Staff and Office Information

Pastor

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Drop in hours Tuesdays 8:30-10:00 AM
Or by appointment

Church Office

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Worship In The Park

There will be a joint worship service at the North Park pavilion in Dunlap on Sunday, May 31 at 10am. Come for some music, prayer, and fun! There will be a potluck afterward, so you are invited to bring a dish to share. If you would like and as you are able, we also recommend bringing your own camping chair.

Town Hall Wrap Up

Congregational Care: Kathy Becker, Dixie Rogers, Sandy Osman

Greeting Cards: Birthday card showers will be for homebound parishioners. If anyone needs a card sent to someone within the congregation, please contact Sandy.

Meal Train: Summarized how the meal train works, if you have questions or need to request a meal train, please contact Dixie.

Missions: Karol Castens, Susan Sparks (co-chairs)

Karol shared the Missions of the Month this year, as well as the 5th Sunday outreach.

Please note- Sunday, May 31 will be Worship in the Park, details to come. Karol also invited anyone who would like to help with the Missions Team to please let her know so that there is more support and help for the work that it takes to make missions happen.

Church Office:

Reminder of new Office Hours

Voicemails left on the Church Phone are checked daily.

Available by email, Monday-Friday.

Thursdays, 9-11:30am in person office hours

Directory: If you need help accessing it, contact Mary. Print directory will come soon. Forms to update info are in the hall.

Leadership Team: Julia Gruber

Simplified Board, our Leadership Team, and how our coach is supporting us. Pastor Carol led us in a retreat to center ourselves in God's support and love, and to vision for the church. Two main goals that were discussed with much detail were: To nurture members in their growth in the love & power of Christ. To partner with our neighborhood in meaningful ways & to mobilize community support in order to build relationships & trust

Pastor Melissa:

Shared a summary of the fall listening sessions & Mission Insite data. Slides are available on the welcome desk.

Facilitated table group discussion on the following 2 questions:

What is stirring in your hearts & minds?

What are the 2 things we should focus on based on what you've heard today?

Next Town Hall meeting: July 12 after worship service