

BEHOLD! SMYRNA

April 2025



UNITED CHURCH
OF CHRIST

Letter from Pastor Jennifer

I knew a guy who, in college, was very connected to the college chaplain. She had walked him through many of the heartbreaks and transitions of that time of life, so when she announced she was leaving to take another position just before his senior year, he was devastated. "What will I do without you?" he cried. She sat crosslegged on the floor and looked at him with so much calm compassion. "You will do what you will always do when things change," she said. "You will remember. You will honor. You will become different." This didn't make his grief lessen, exactly, but it did help him remember that change is inevitable, and if we are intentional it may even be just the teensiest bit enjoyable.



Transitions of all sizes are impactful. Smyrna is a community of people who have experienced and weathered changes big and small over the years, especially the recent years. We can't always take a breath and take a moment with every change to remember and honor what was, and consider how we are becoming different. But taking that reflection time can refresh us so we can move forward and greet the next challenge.

We have a really special opportunity to do just this at our all-church retreat on April 4 - 5. On Friday, April 4, we'll gather for dinner and a time to recollect about our past — "to remember." Then, on Saturday, April 5, we will meet up again after resting at home and consider together how we can honor what has been, even as we reflect on how we are changing.

We are planning this as a day of hope and celebration and anticipate that our time together will involve every single person who is connected with our congregation. I hope to see you there!

Many blessings,
Jennifer

A Newsletter of Smyrna UCC
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Sunday Worship in April	Luke 19:28-40 Pastor Jennifer Preaching
April 6 — Communion Sunday, 5th Sunday in Lent	John 12:1-8 Pastor Jennifer Preaching
April 13 — Palm Sunday with Palm Parade	April 20 — Easter Luke 24:1-12 Pastor Jennifer Preaching
	April 27 — First Sunday after Easter Pastor Janet Bess Farrell preaching



ALL CHURCH RETREAT April 4 and April 5 —

All members and friends are cordially invited to these days of conversation, remembering and imagining. **We'll meet on Friday evening from 5:30-8:00 pm for potluck and conversation about where we have been. Then, we'll go home to sleep and come back to church on Saturday from 9:30 am -2 pm to talk about where we are going.** Please come for all or some of our time together — your voice matters!

A is for April and Advocacy Days!

Advocacy Days are organized by social justice groups. They are day-long events to network, learn and meet with our legislators. There are three advocacy days coming up in the month of April - two in Oregon and one organized nation-wide by the United Church of Christ. Let Pastor Jennifer know if you are interested in attending any of these and she will get you registration materials. Even if you can't attend yourself, please keep those in attendance in prayer.

Sacred Organizing Coalition Advocacy Day, Monday April 7, 2025

Gather at 600 STATE ST, SALEM, OR 97301

- The Sacred Organizing Coalition will bring together people from across Oregon for a full day of seeing, hearing and tasting belonging while exercising our power. Here is our schedule:
- 9:30-11:30 Preparation: Music, Art, and Story weaving us together from across the state as a powerful Coalition ready to take action.
- 11:30-12:30 **People's Potluck Action & Press Conference:** On the square in front of the Capitol, a feast of defiant joy pointing towards a vision where all Belong.
12:30-On Pass our Priorities: Join others in your district to share stories with our legislators in scheduled meetings throughout the afternoon.

Oregon Interfaith Advocacy Day organized by Ecumenical Ministry of Oregon on Tuesday, April 29, 2025

St. Mark Lutheran Church in Salem.

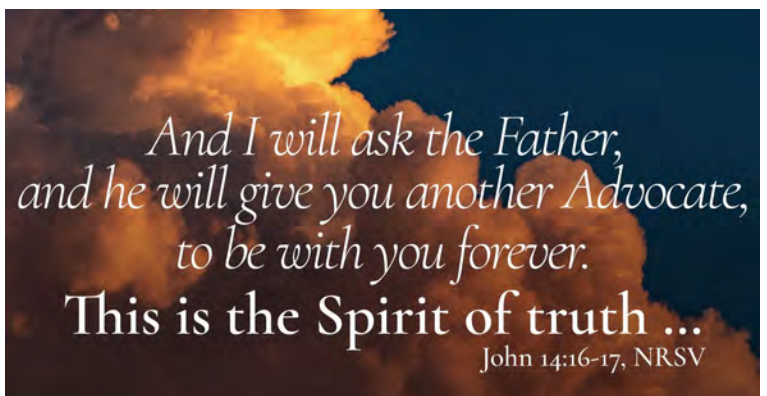
Together we can be the prophetic voice at the Oregon Capitol, standing with the marginalized in our communities and upholding the moral imperative for a state budget that supports the common good. Our goal is to create a massive mobilization of informed and influen-

tial citizen-lobbyists! The morning session at St. Mark Lutheran Church will feature a keynote address, training on effective advocacy and issue briefings. In the afternoon, participants will march to the Oregon Capitol Building, where they will present concerns to their legislators. Talking points and legislative appointments will be provided.

United Church of Christ Nationwide advocacy week UCC Wellness Ministries, CHHSM, and the UCC DC Office of Public Policy & Advocacy are hosting a Medicaid and SNAP Advocacy Week April 21-25, where registrants from across the country will have in-district meetings with their members of Congress in support of Medicaid, CHIP, and SNAP.

Led by Jesus, a renowned healer, the UCC proudly stands as a faith community that believes everyone deserves access to affordable, safe, high-quality healthcare and essential, nutritious food. Medicaid was established to provide healthcare for low-income Americans and those with disabilities. Our congregants and neighbors include some of the 100 million people with healthcare coverage through Medicaid or CHIP, and 40 million receive assistance buying nutritious groceries through SNAP.

As Christians, we believe that no one should live in or die from poverty. We must raise our voices nationwide in support of Medicaid Awareness Month and the 60th anniversary of this life-saving program.



Mission and Outreach Guest Speakers

Every month Mission and Outreach will be inviting a special guest to talk about one of the ministries we support during worship services. Upcoming guests will talk about these missions:

April — Guide Dogs for the Blind

May — Marion Polk Food Share

June — N. Willamette Habitat for Humanity

July — Salem Drop

August — Second Home

September — Living Room

October — Bridging Cultures

November — Love One



Smyrna's Highway 170

Cleanup is moving to a warmer, drier time of year.

We will meet at the church on August 2nd (Saturday) at 9 am for our next road cleanup on our adopted portion of Highway 170 a.k.a. Canby/

Marquam Highway. Rick will have the road signs, vests, yellow bags, and pickup devices on hand at the church at 9 am. It would be great to have as many volunteers as possible, which will make the job quicker. This is a good opportunity for scholarship applicants to provide service to the church. Any questions can be directed to Rick Gano at 503-651-2044.

Direct Link is now providing our wifi routing service so we have one available for free to a good home. It is about 5 years old. Contact Joel.

Description:

NETGEAR Orbi Tri-band Whole Home Mesh WiFi System with 2.2Gbps speed (RBK23)
Router & Extender replacement covers up to 6,000 sq. ft.,
3-pack includes 1 router & 2 satellites.

<https://www.netgear.com/home/wifi/mesh/rbk23/>

Balance

Preventing falls depends on good balance, and natural deterioration occurs as we age. Here are a couple of ways to help improve your balance.

⇒ Stand on one leg and count for five seconds, then repeat with the other leg. (If you are new to this exercise or are unsure of your balance, stand near a chair or other solid object that you can touch if you need to.)

⇒ Stand with both feet on a level, uncarpeted floor and imagine that you are standing in the middle of a big clock. With one leg, reach out to the hour position you are imagining and then return your leg to the center. You can go around the entire clock face and touch each hour, returning **to the center after each one. It's okay to use either leg. Probably the easiest way is to use your right foot for the twelve to six o'clock positions and the left foot for the others.**



Other things such as yoga, tai chi, Pilates, and weight training can also help improve balance. If necessary, ask your doctor for a referral to physical therapy if you notice you are not walking steadily. Preventing a fall is always preferable to recovering from one.

LONELY? Medical issues? Need Help?

Please visit the Smyrna Resource page. **On Smyrna's** website, www.smyrna-ucc.org, just click the Resource tab

RESOURCE Page

A Helpful page for people in
our community.

(Click here.)



The Fund Raising Group has designated May 11,

2025, as the date for a Mother's Day Brunch. This will be held in Friendship Hall following our Church Service which ends at 11:30 AM. Please stay and join in with the celebration of all Mothers near and far. Brunch will continue until 2:00 PM. We hope you can include us in your plans for this Day.

New Books in the Smyrna Library

Good Enough: 40ish Devotionals For A Life of Imperfection by Kate Bowler and Jessica Richie. 2022. **"This book is a companion for when you want to stop feeling guilty that you're not living your best life now."** Each short reflection includes a blessing and a **"Good Enough Step"**. **"Blessed are you who need a gentle reminder that even now, even today, God is here, and somehow, that is good enough."** (excerpt from **"A Blessing for a Joyfully Mediocre Journey"** in the book's introduction)

In Defense of Kindness: Why It Matters, How It Changes Our Lives, and How It Can Save The World by Bruce Reyes-Chow. Rev. Reyes-Chow asserts we can each choose kindness as a new way to experience community and wholeness. Chapters provide **"For Reflection"** and **"Try This"** ideas to exercise your kindness muscles.

*Refugia Faith: Seeking Hidden Shelters, Ordinary Wonders, and the Healing of the Earth by Debra Rienstra. 2022. **"By weaving nature writing, personal narrative, and theological reflection, Rienstra proposes a way to transform Christian spirituality and practice, become a healer on a damaged earth, and inspire others to do the same."**

*Tribal Histories of the Willamette Valley by David G. Lewis. 2023. Dr. Lewis is a member of the Confederated Tribes of Grand Ronde. He gathers oral stories and information from years of researching historical documents to write this history of Willamette tribes from a native perspective.

*Books that Pastor Jennifer mentioned in sermons

Good Friday Worship 7 pm in Canby

Our siblings in Christ at Zoar Lutheran Church (190 SW 3rd Ave, Canby OR 97013) invite us to join them at 7 PM on Good Friday, April 18, 2025 for a solemn and prayerful Stations of the Cross experience. This day, traditionally recognized as the day Jesus was crucified, will be a day to connect in a prayerful way with our neighbors and with the suffering throughout the world. Pastor Jennifer will be attending. Please let her know if you plan to attend also.

Office Admin Update

We have enjoyed and appreciated the strong talents of Jeannie Rogers for decades as our Behold and Bulletin editor. When it became clear that more help in the office would be beneficial beyond these important functions, Jeannie said "thank you, but no" since she already has a full time job at a public library as well as her work for Smyrna (and another full time job as grandma to Penny!). It took a bit of looking, but we are so delighted to announce the hire of Leo Aguilar as our Office Administrator. After only a few weeks, she is already making herself invaluable. Here's a picture of Leo along with her son Michael. Stop in the office on Tuesdays and Thursdays to say hello to Leo — Here is a letter of introduction from her.

Hi, I'm Leonor Aguilar, I am so thankful to be joining this congregation, I have looked for a role that aligns with my personal beliefs, and I have found it here at Smyrna. I have a sweet son named Michael. We are big fans of OMSI, The Oregon Zoo, the coast and Monster Jam. We spend tons of time with **Michael's cousins, he** has 22 cousins counting both sides of the family! Last year we took our first out of state trip to Seattle, it was amazing to explore the city just us two. I have a creative spirit and enjoy crafting and painting.





Journey with Jesus Through Holy Week - Smyrna UCC, 2025

Earlier in the year, we chose star words as a way to guide us through the year. Our congregation's star word was PASSION. There are lots of ways to define this word, but one way it is used is to describe the suffering that Jesus underwent during Holy Week. This suffering, Christ's passion, can open our eyes to the suffering of those in our community, nation and world, as well as guide us into prayerful attention about how to meet that suffering. Can you find 20 minutes each day to read, reflect and pray as you Journey with Jesus Through Holy Week?

Sunday, April 13 Palm Sunday

Jesus enters the city of Jerusalem during the festival of Passover.

Matthew 21: 10 *When Jesus entered Jerusalem, the whole city was stirred and asked, "Who is this?" (Want more? Read Matthew 21:1-11)*

Even as the crowds welcomed Jesus, they still continued to question who he really was. As you welcome Jesus into your heart this Holy Week, allow yourself to be surprised by your own response to the age-old question "Who is this?"

Monday, April 14

Jesus enters the temple and clears out those exploiting the poor.

Matthew 21:13 *"It is written," he said to them, "My house will be called a house of prayer,' but you are making it 'a den of robbers.'" (Want more? Read Matthew 21:12-17)*

When Jesus clears the moneylenders and sellers out of the temple, those in power are threatened by him, **but the common people continue to cry "Hosanna" or "save us!"** What places in our own lives and world need cleansing or purifying? Who cries to Jesus for salvation?

Tuesday, April 15

Jesus teaches, preaches and tells wisdom stories to those gathered in Jerusalem.

Matthew 22:37-39 *"Love the Lord your God with all your heart and with all your soul and with all your mind.' This is the first and greatest commandment. And the second is like it: 'Love your neighbor as yourself.' (Want more? Read Matthew 22:34-40)* Later in this passage, Jesus decries the hypocrisy of those who pray loudly, while privately benefiting from the oppression of others. In your prayer time today, ask Christ to open your **eyes to ways in which you might be complicit in the oppression of others. As you confess, receive Christ's love as an assurance that you are forgiven.**

Wednesday April 16 Spy Day

On this day, Judas betrayed Jesus.

Isaiah 53:8 *By oppression and judgment he was taken away. Yet who of his generation protested? For he was cut off from the land of the living; for the transgression of my people he was punished. (Want more? Read Isaiah 53:1-12)*

As we consider the suffering of Jesus, we remember those around the world, who because of "oppression and judgment," also suffer and sometimes die. Bring to your prayers today an urgent plea to God to open your eyes to the suffering of the world, and to be an agent of healing in those places of suffering.

Thursday, April 17

Jesus celebrates Passover with his disciples. After they share this meal, Jesus goes to the Mount of Olives to pray, where he is arrested and tried.

Matthew 26: 26-28 While they were eating, Jesus took bread, and when he had given thanks, he broke it and gave it to his disciples, saying, "Take and eat; this is my body." Then he took a cup, and when he had given thanks, he gave it to them, saying, "Drink from it, all of you. This is my blood of the covenant, which is poured out for many for the forgiveness of sins."

(Want more? Read Matthew 26:17-30 and Matthew 26:31-27:26)

You hear these familiar words each month as we celebrate communion together. Read them now four times in the Lectio Divina style.

First, for what has your attention right now in your life.

Second, for a word or phrase that strikes you about this passage.

Third, for what the passage says about where you are, and who you are at this time.

And fourth, for what God invites you to do or change in your life through this passage.

Friday, April 18

Good Friday. Jesus is crucified.

Matthew 27: 45-46 From noon until three in the afternoon darkness came over all the land. About three in the afternoon Jesus cried out in a loud voice, "Eli, Eli, lema sabachthani?" which means "My God, my God, why have you forsaken me?". (Want more? Read: Matthew 27:27-66)

In his darkest hour, Jesus felt alone and abandoned. In your prayer today, speak directly to Jesus.

Acknowledge and ask forgiveness for times you have turned from him or betrayed him.

Saturday, April 19

Holy Saturday. Jesus lies in the tomb.

Scripture says nothing about what Jesus did this day and there is no scripture reading for this day. You may want to allow yourself to consider what Jesus' followers might have thought and felt, not knowing (as we do) the "end" of the story. Alternatively, during your prayer time, you may want to light a single candle, and meditate on the illumination cast by even one small flame. How has God been steadfast, even in times of seeming absence?

Sunday, April 20

Easter Day! On this exhilarating, although at times bewildering, day we celebrate the resurrection of the Risen Christ.

Matthew 28: 5-7 The angel said to the women, "Do not be afraid, for I know that you are looking for Jesus, who was crucified. He is not here; he has risen, just as he said. Come and see the place where he lay. Then go quickly and tell his disciples: 'He has risen from the dead and is going ahead of you into Galilee. There you will see him.' Now I have told you." (Want more? Read Matthew 28:1-15)

Although the angel's first words to the women are "do not be afraid," still the women leave the tomb, "afraid."

How does the resurrection touch you with fear or awe? How does it touch you with joy or amazement?



**No matter who you are,
or where you are on life's
journey, we welcome
you.**



- Paul and Mary Ashton
- Pat Bullard
- Beryl Fisher
- Genevieve Freeman
- The Holt family
- Murlene Liechty
- **Jeannie Rogers' brothers Steven and John**
- Anne Stronko and Roger Marin
- The Crispin family

If you know anyone who should be on the prayer list in the Behold, please let Jeannie or Elaine know. If they would enjoy receiving cards notify someone in the Diaconate.

Mission Statement

Smyrna United Church of Christ is striving to be:

- ♦ A place of peace, where we offer to all an extravagant welcome wherever you are in your life journey regardless of your ethnicity, marital status, religion, gender, race, age, disability, national origin, or sexual orientation, and where we teach the stories of God's love and call on our lives.
- ♦ A spiritual haven, where we accept and care for all people and God's creation in an outreach of grace.
- ♦ A lighthouse of God's compassion, where worship, teaching, learning and spiritual growth take place in community, powered by thought and action.
- ♦ A Christian people, working for God's realm in ecumenical harmony with other people of faith and conviction.

Sun	Mon	Tue	Wed	Thu	Fri	Sat
30 April 2025	31	1 BD: Dave Akers BD: Spencer Chapin 10am - Office hours	2	3 12 pm Memory Cafe 10am - Office hours	4 All Church Retreat - Friday, 5:30 - 8 pm, Sat, 9:30am-	5
6 C.H: Mission & Outreach F: Clites 10:30am - SS: Jeannie 10:30am - Worship	7 BD: Robert Holman 7pm - AA/AO Meeting	8 10am - Office hours	9 W.A: Paul & Melissa	10 10am - Office hours 12pm - W, F, Luncheon 7pm - Church Council	11	12 BD Kassondra Heilman BD: Philip Daniels
13 BD: Joshua Barber BD: Penelope Enfield C.H: Christian Education Palm Sunday 10:30am - SS: Kristin 10:30am - Worship	14 BD Anne Stronko 7pm - AA/AO Meeting	15 BD: David Howard 10am - Office hours	16 BD: Violet Humphries	17 10am - Office hours	18 BD: Sarah Phillips	19 BD: Kara Tellinghausen Mem: Reserved
20 C.H: Womens Fellowship Easter Sunday One Great Hour of 10:30am - SS: Debi 10:30am - Worship	21 7pm - AA/AO Meeting	22 BD: Ginger Redlinger 10am - Office hours	23	24 10am - Office hours 12pm - W, F, Lucheon	25	26
27 C.H: Diaconate Team B 10:30am - SS: Rebekah 10:30am - Worship	28 7pm - AA/AO Meeting	29 10am - Office hours	30 BD: Michael Hall	1	2	3