

BEHOLD! SMYRNA

August 2026



UNITED CHURCH
OF CHRIST

Dear Smyrna Folks,

I'm writing to you from Pilgrim Cove Camp on the shores of Lake Pocatello just outside of McCall Idaho. I can't think of a better place to introduce our theme for August worship than this stunning corner of God's creation.

For the five weeks of August, we will celebrate the Season of Creation during worship. Here are the themes for each week, along with some "extra credit" suggestions in case you are interested in exploring each week's theme more deeply.

Sunday, August 2nd — All God's Critters, Job 38:39–39:30

Animals — both wild and domesticated — reveal God's joy, wisdom and care. We will have a special visit from service dog Red.

Extra credit: Read the chapter "Cemetery Crows" from the book *Forest Euphoria: The Abounding Queerness of Nature* by Patricia Onaniwu Kaishian

Sunday, August 9th — Eyes on the Stars, Psalm 8

The vastness of space, the planets, stars, sun, and moon invite us to consider the breathtaking immensity of God's grace and love.

Extra credit: Watch the movie *Hail Mary*

Sunday, August 16 -- Tongues in Trees, Matthew 6:25-34

Worship outside in Smyrna's grove as we experience how plants teach us God's life-giving and patient ways.

Extra Credit: Befriend a tree or other plant as you would a person — call it by name and talk out loud with it, spend time with it without expectation, bask in your love for it and its love for you.

Sunday, August 23 — Glory in the Garden, selections from Genesis 1-2

Even before humanity appeared on the scene, God called all creation "good." Our worship on this day includes a participatory Pageant of Creation.

Extra Credit: On YouTube or another music service, listen to the song *Gentle Arms of Eden* by Dave Carter and Tracy Grammer. Find and read the lyrics of this alternate telling of the creation story.

Sunday, August 30 — Joining Creation's Song Romans 8:18-25

All creation praises God's glory. How are we invited to join that sacred song?

Extra Credit: Using art materials you have on hand, show yourself as part of creation. Let your imagination run (perhaps literally!) wild — take a selfie in a natural setting, use natural materials to create a 3-d collage, paint a self portrait of yourself as one of the global community...

See you in church!

Blessings,
Pastor Jennifer

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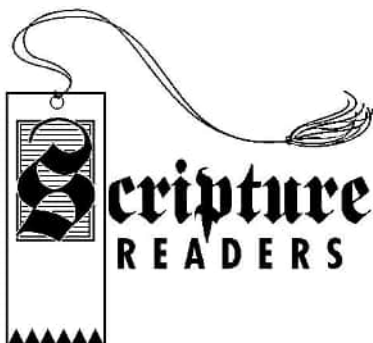
Pastor Jennifer gave us the news a few months ago that due to the mold issues at Camp Adams, we might want to plan a different worship service site for our summer service. We landed on just using our Grove at church as a different venue.

On August 16, we will set up tables by the kitchen door for potluck items and use our very own kitchen like we do the hall at camp. For those with accessibility issues, we have the sidewalk to help walkers or canes set up their seats in a safe space. Tech is looking into ways to help with audio assistance. Our trees can shade us if the sun is an issue.

So we still get the wonderful experience of being outside for our 10:30 am service on August 16, followed by a picnic.



The railings are on! The deck is almost done.



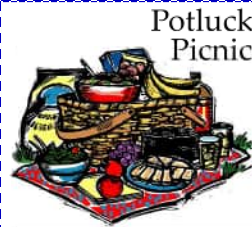
August 2	Janet Bess
August 9	Susan Johnson
August 16	Karyl Carlson
August 23	Mary Namit
August 30	



Knutselen — to [DIY](#); to put something together out of whatever is available at the time, often for fun.

Put together your very own knutselen art project out of the many things available at the next Artful Soul Saturday!

Have you an art or craft to share that aligns with our watchwords — meaningful, easy, fun? Talk to Karen, Christine, or Pastor Jennifer to be added to the 2026-2027 calendar.



BLUE ACRES FARM
Friends of the Farm Event
Harvest Picnic Potluck
Saturday, August 15th,
2026

2:00 to 4:00 Picnic Potluck

Live Music

1:30 to 3:00ish Dave Norman

4:00 to 8:00 BAND

"Anything Goes"

Bring a chair and a dish to share.

Sunday 8/16/26

7:00 to 9:00 Breakfast on the patio.

Blueberry pancakes.

If you are coming please give us a text with how many....for supply reasons. Thank you.

Look forward to seeing you!
Jeff and Tina Marshall

Camp Adams Updates

Many people have been wondering what's happening with Camp Adams this year. Unfortunately, we discovered that most of the buildings at camp had unhealthy levels of mold. This year has been a journey of mold investigations, remediation, and decisions about how to move forward. While all of this has been moving along the Camp Adams and Outdoor Ministries Team has been supporting Natalie and Brendan with decision making and updating the Conference Board as significant financial decisions have been required.

Our first priority has been to provide adequate housing for Natalie and Brendan. The existing house has been deemed no longer habitable, although there is a portion of the house that can be made usable as office space. Therefore, when people drive in to camp the first building they see will be the office, not a residence. A new residence is being built behind the current house. After much research and Board approval, a pre-made frame will be delivered from Canada, to be erected by local contractors. Much of the interior finishing will be done by volunteers, to help with cost savings. The house is energy-efficient and as sustainably made as possible.

Natalie and Brendan have been living in an Airstream trailer throughout the winter and into the summer. They are eager to have a house by the end of fall, which is our goal.

All of the cabins in the Nate Creek site, as well as the Administration Building, have had mold remediation completed. We were pleased to find that they are all structurally sound. In the cabins, only the bathrooms had to have the flooring and drywall removed. The Ad building is down to its frame, but is in better shape than we feared.

The cabins need to be brought up to code for electrical and plumbing standards; the plan is to install heat pumps and appropriate insulation to have year-round potential use and to help prevent mold growth. The bunk beds no longer meet code, either, requiring new arrangement of beds. We are looking at creating sleeping space in the upper levels of cabins, with stairs and exits that meet code. Bathrooms will be remodeled to enable non-gender use and increased accessibility.

We understand that people have wanted to come out to at least enjoy camp this summer for day-use activities. Unfortunately, the Adkins Lodge has had to be the storage space for Natalie and Brendan's possessions. Additionally there have been unexpected plumbing issues in Adkins, which are finally resolved. Without access to bathrooms and running water the camp can't be open.

By the end of August the camp will be able to be used by churches for day use. We will also be looking for volunteers for camp work projects. And yes, our expectation is to be able to resume summer camping programs in 2027! We also hope that these upgrades will create a place where church-related and outside groups will again want to hold retreats and events.

All of this requires a significant investment of money. We are very fortunate to have the endowment from the easement, which we have been able to draw upon to move forward with the necessary work. We are working with the National UCC on a Capital Campaign, which you will hear much more about soon, to replenish what we have had to borrow from the endowment. We are also moving forward with developing a solid, active Camp Adams Alumni group.

Please note that Camp Adams has a new website address: campadamsoregon.org

We hope to see many of you at Camp Adams again soon. We have this treasured land to steward for future generations for spiritual growth and renewal

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.)

A Daily Dose of Inspiration

Subscribe to UCC Daily Devotionals here <https://www.ucc.org/daily-devotional/> to receive a short, inspiring email every morning from the national United Church of Christ. Pastor Jennifer contributes to these, so once or twice a month you'll see a familiar face. In her visit in July, Pastor Caroline Murphy quoted one of Jennifer's recent writings. Here it is in its entirety. <https://www.ucc.org/daily-devotional/>

Recipe for Desperate Times

by Jennifer Garrison | published on Jun 17, 2026

The king commanded all the people, "Keep the passover to the Lord your God as prescribed in this book of the covenant." No such passover had been kept since the days of the judges who judged Israel, even during all the days of the kings of Israel and of the kings of Judah; but in the eighteenth year of King Josiah this passover was kept to the Lord in Jerusalem. – 2 Kings 23:21-23 (NRSV)

We gathered out of desperation, because we did not know what else to do. The news was bad, and getting worse. We could not see a way forward. The damage we had kept locked inside for so many years had come seeping out in ways that felt dangerous, debilitating.

So, one evening we came together. We sat in a circle of chairs. We sang an old song and a new one. We heard laments and stories about strong women and a fable that made us, unexpectedly, laugh. We lit candles. We dipped our fingers in a bowl of water. We prayed. And then someone found some leftover cupcakes covered in orange frosting, so we ate. The times are still desperate, but we are navigating better now.

It was desperate times for King Josiah's people, and because he did not know what else to do, he reminded them of the simplicity and strength of the rituals of their ancestors. Josiah's resurrected passover was different than our little ritual, but it was also the same: Circle. Song. Scripture. Fire. Water. Prayer. Food shared.

Now, as then, these things do not make desperate times less desperate, but they do shine a light so we can see a path through them.

Prayer

Dear God—Give us circles, song, scriptures, fire, water, prayers and food shared in your Name. Amen.

Kitchen Update

We managed to get the rolling doors up due to a special tool that helped us raise the VERY heavy core that holds the sections of the door. After 3 hours we had the core, retractable doors and supports secured once again. All this due to the new countertops. Teamwork works !!



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



**Holding
in our
Prayers**

- Paul and Mary Ashton
- Barack Holt and Family
- Anne Stronko
- The Crispin Family
- John Farrell (Janet Bess' brother)
- Christine Albright
- Winter Pebley
- Jeannie Rogers' brothers, Steven and John, and Mother Marj Watkins

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.

August 2026

Holidays in United States, smyrnaucc.cal@gmail.com

Aug 2026 (Pacific Time - Los Angeles)

Sun	Mon	Tue	Wed	Thu	Fri	Sat
26	27	28	29	30	31	1
2	3	4	5	6	7	8
CH: Honor T/M Yoder Reunion 10:30am - Worship	WA: Elaine & Joel D 7pm - AA/AO Meeting	BD: Lisa H 10am - Office hours 11am - Office meeting - Jen		10am - Office hours		BD: Emily Y 10:30am - Soulful Art @
9	10	11	12	13	14	15
CH: CE 10:30am - Worship	7pm - AA/AO Meeting	10am - Office hours 11am - Office meeting - Jen 7pm - Diaconate		10am - Office hours		BD: Susan C
16	17	18	19	20	21	22
Meaning Makers camping trip @ Milo McIver State Park, CH: WF T/A F: Jeannie R WA: Kyle & Heather A Worship/potluck in the Grove 10:30am - Worship	BD: Bill C 7pm - AA/AO Meeting	10am - Office hours 11am - Office meeting - Jen		BD: Adam M BEHOLD DEADLINE 10am - Office hours 7pm - Church Council Meeting	WA: Derek & Heidi C	BD: Twyla B
23	24	25	26	27	28	29
10:30am - Worship	7pm - AA/AO Meeting	BD: Oliver H 10am - Office hours 11am - Office meeting - Jen	WA: Deb & Steve P WA: Kyle & Heather A	BD: James Y 10am - Office hours		
30	31	1	2	3	4	5
BD: Carly I CH: Diaconate 10:30am - Worship 4pm - Fifth Sunday Canby	7pm - AA/AO Meeting					