



GREAT SPIRIT

www.greatspiritpdx.com

Great Spirit Newsletter May 2021

Issue 12

Message to the Community

By Dr. Allen Buck

Osiyo Relatives,

We have some **good news** and some...

GOOD News... and then even more **good news!**

Your prayers and hard work have brought Great Spirit Church into this present moment. I celebrate you all and those who came before us to plant the seeds that are blooming now. I'm very proud to be a pastor with you. Thank you for walking with us. As we continue living into becoming a Native hub and spiritual family, it is my honor to share these 3 Good News announcements. Creator is always creating. These are big next steps in our church family and beyond. Spirit is with you and I experience Her a lot through the journey we've been sharing. I trust you do too. In a time of so much confusion and often bad news, I know we celebrate these together:

WORSHIP WITH US

We are putting weekly video check-ins and devotionals on our website, www.greatspiritpdx.com, under the "News" section and on Facebook. We are also inviting everyone to pause and pray with us at 11:00AM on Sundays. There is a new prayer request form on the front page of the website.

Phone: 405-431-9912

Great Spirit will re-opening for in person

worship on Sunday, June 13! That's right. Our plans are evolving based on the current situation(s), but we are confident that with the adaptations and precautions we're working on, we can be together safely again. Please get vaccinated if you're able. Plan to wear a mask. We will be able to share in ceremony and prayers. We will have to-go sack lunches instead of pot luck. This first service back in person will include a much needed memorial celebration and opportunities to share our grief, losses, tears, and hope. You're all invited. We will send out more specific information soon. *Mark your calendars for June 13, 11:00AM. Please bring tobacco and/or prayer ties. Pass it on.*

Monika Trujillo is becoming the Assistant Pastor for Great Spirit (officially July 1).

Creator has always raised up spiritual leaders from within the community. You all have experienced the Spirit through the gifts Monika has already been sharing with us as friend, family, leader, Director of Outreach, and more. I know you

will continue walking with her as she takes these next steps in serving Spirit with us. *Surround her with love and care. Pass it on.*

United Methodists of the Greater Northwest Area (Alaska, Idaho, Oregon, Washington) and beyond are collaborating with Indigenous people(s), Churches, and Tribes, to help create a **Circle of Indigenous Ministries**. *I am very excited to share that I've been invited to be the first Director*. Beginning July 1, I will be ½-time Pastor at Great Spirit and ½-time working to develop the Circle. This good hard work builds upon the beginnings we've found with our friendships, families, and shared values in the NA communities. We will resource and support the leadership and community development necessary to help dismantle racism and decolonize the church. *Please pray for these friendships and efforts. Pass it on.*

Great Spirit Family, you are witnesses and co-creators in what Creator has done, is doing, and will do. Pass it on.

Wado (Thank you), Blessings, Allen

Sack Lunch Team

Beginning June 13, 2021 we need a team of folks that can arrive at the church early Sunday mornings to make sack lunches. Please give your name to Monika and your availability, as only five people are needed each Sunday, and the days we need you will rotate. monikagreatspirit@gmail.com

FROM THE SINGLE BOARD

The Single Board held the April meeting at the church to "walk through" a plan for re-opening. Re-opening has been put on hold since then but the planning continues. Several Great Spirit members have helped to clean the Sanctuary and Fellowship Hall. Tables in the Fellowship Hall have been moved to give more open space. Chairs are being placed 6 feet apart in a circle in the Sanctuary. John Kochanowski has submitted the



Opportunities for Connection

- Pastor Allen and Monika Trujillo have posted sermons and "Pause and Pray" on the website and Facebook. Take a few minutes to view the website at: www.greatspiritpdx.org or facebook at: <https://www.facebook.com/greatspiritpdx>
- In-person services will begin again Sunday June 13th
- Outreach meetings on Zoom will resume Saturday June 12th and will be held every other Saturday

"Great Spirit UMC in-person worship Plan Phase 2.1" to the District Superintendent. We will rejoice when the Bishop and the DS approve re-opening. PBOT mandated sidewalk repairs around the parking lot are being completed this week. D and D Concrete submitted the estimated repair cost of \$2,373.

Great Spirit UMC is the Fiscal Sponsor for Fires Igniting the Spirit and Stronghold Peer Support in Chiloquin. Grants have been received on their behalf and dispersed to them allowing their missions to continue.

Utility and salary expenses continued during the lapse of in-person meetings. Donations, pledges and tithes can be mailed to Great Spirit UMC at: 3917 NE Shaver ST, Portland, OR 97212

Submitted, Helen Stewart

Happy Birthday!

- May 1 Gloria Marple
- May 5 David Collier
- May 12 Kathy Lesley
- May 17 Rebecca Satter

To add your name to the Birthday list, please let Helen Stewart know the important date. Anniversaries are important too!

BOTTLES AND CANS LADY (Helen Iles)

Have you stockpiled bottles and cans this past year not wanting to stand in line at the recycling station?

In April, Helen turned in \$500 for our Shared Giving Commitment bringing the total for 2021 to \$1,500.

Bottles and cans for recycling can be left at the church, preferably at the ramp door to the Sanctuary. If you would prefer, Helen will pick up bottles and cans from your location.

Please give her a call at 503-252-0026.

GREAT SPIRIT T-SHIRTS AVAILABLE

We have T-shirts! Sizes in stock now range from Large to 4XL. They are for sale at \$20 each. All proceeds go to further outreach efforts. If you are interested, please send an email message to Monika. monikagreatspirit@gmail.com.

MISSION

In April, Helen Iles delivered 112 pounds of Clothing and 31 pounds of hygiene items and toys to MainSpring Portland.

HISTORIAN NEWS – Let's keep in touch!

Helen Iles, church historian, welcomes submission of pictures or other documentation of events either at Great Spirit or associated with Great Spirit. She would like to include them in the archived scrapbooks. Events centered on Outreach, socially distanced gatherings and other occasions would be documented for when we reflect on the past "unprecedented" months.

Send notes or digital pictures to Helen Stewart (helkatstew@comcast.net) for inclusion in the archived books or submitted to the newsletter.

Great Spirit Outreach has a year of successes

Interview with Monika Trujillo

"I came on officially as the Director of Outreach in October 2020. Right away we had tons of ideas; anything from Great Spirit could do cemetery cleanup, or Great Spirit could be present somewhere in the public. But we were in a pandemic, so we were really focused on pandemic relief."

Outreach was happening before she came on officially as Director, Monika said. The first big project was 250 gift bags for elders in May of 2020, that Allen was a part of. "The elder bags had dried meat, dried berries, cedar and sage mixed together, a mask, a gift card, and a note from us. We were having difficulty distributing them." Allen had the idea to reach a greater number of elders by collaborating with [NAYA](#), who was actively distributing emergency food boxes twice a week. "I feel strongly about pairing with already established organizations. There's no reason for us to try and reinvent the wheel," Monika said. The Great Spirit gift bags were added to the NAYA food boxes, with a note from Great Spirit. "It worked. I got a call from an elder who is a veteran and lives over on Hawthorne. She had only been going down to the lobby twice a week to pick up the box and go back to her apartment. It was in there that she found the gift bag and our little note, which she put on the wall because it had contact information in it."

Outreach (continued from page 3)

Because of a grant that came to Great Spirit through the CARES ACT, Allen was able to purchase gift cards and hand them out to people in need in June 2020. That funding ran out and new sources had to be found to continue the work. "October is when we started to focus on what we could do for Christmas. I knew that I was already behind the deadline, but I applied anyway for the [station KGW](#) Great Toy Drive and put us on a wait list. From there, I put it out on [nextdoor.com](#) here in my own neighborhood that Great Spirit, an Indigenous-based church, was collecting toys for kids. I got a good response from our neighbors and I thought, 'Ok, we can really do this. We can make this toy drive happen.'"

"Shortly after that, Allen informed me that we got a \$2000 grant that could be used to buy toys for kids. I reached out to the [Bow and Arrow Culture Club](#), and got a tally of their youth. With the pandemic there were people out of work who wouldn't have the opportunity to shop for their kids. I purchased toys online and we were sorting them when I got an email from KGW that they had extra toys. There was something like 200+ toys: plush, dolls, games, books, all kinds of stuff. It's important that now we're on their list for next year as a non-profit eligible for toys so we won't have to use a grant."

"There were these giant blue bags full of toys in the middle of the sanctuary. We filled a pew with stuffed animals like llamas and unicorns and dinosaurs, all these faces. I said, 'This is the biggest audience this sanctuary has had in forever!'"

"Heather Gurko and her daughter JJ took on the task of what to do for the kids who are 13 and older. We had canvas bags with the beautiful Great Spirit logo on them. They filled 20 of those with \$25 gift cards, notepads, stickers, pen & pencil – things for journaling and stress relief – hat and gloves, and they brought them to the church so we were able to distribute those to kids who were older. In all we served over 200 kids with the Great Spirit toy drive. We ended up with about 80 toys left over, and NAYA was short so we supplemented what they had."

Donations

Great Spirit accepts donations. You can designate something specific, like outreach or women only. We also have a general fund, which is what keeps our lights on, the heat on, and the doors open, as well as emergency food services. On the website at [greatspiritpdx.com](#) scroll to the bottom of the page and click the DONATE button.

"During that same time we were getting a lot of requests for assistance for other places that we can help with, such as household cleaning supplies, supplemental food assistance, etc. And you know the capacity of our little church isn't easy to go all out. There were the Halloween treat bags that Helen Iles was a part of. Helen Iles is also very involved with a Portland

nonprofit called [Mainspring](#) that collects clothes, mostly for women, and they have a food pantry. We did outfit half a dozen families and their children with weather-appropriate coats and shoes." Other assistance Great Spirit was able to provide include an Indigenous and Veteran couple camping in Portland who needed an easy-to-carry tent and sleeping bags.

"The Columbia River tribes were in need of camping gear, coats, boots and foods that we began collecting. There are people camping along the river and my concern for them is that they are all heating and cooking with propane. I thought, 'Man, what would happen if there was a fire?' I reached out to Pye-Barker Fire and asked them for a donation. In late January Pye-Barker gave us 12 ten-pound fire extinguishers. Lana Jack came in from Celilo the same day, so she picked them up, and all the warm clothing they can use, and took them right away."

Monika said, "When I look at the time frame that it happened, from October to May, how much has happened, how much footwork went into that, and how much preparation, it was a lot."

The following is [an article from Greater NW News, Oregon-Idaho Conference](#).



Lee Bourgeau, a descendant of the Wallowa Band of the Nez Perce cries tears of joy during the return of Wallowa UMC to the Nez Perce Tribe on Thursday, April 29.

‘A blessing for our people to come back home’ By **Kristen Caldwell**

For generations the Nez Perce have told the story of their ancestors being forcefully removed from the Wallowa valley of what is now northeast Oregon due to white settlers’ colonization of their people and land.

When the U.S. government forced the Wallowa band of the Nimiipuu people to abandon their ancestral homeland more than 150 years ago, they looked back at the valley – one last time – with tears of sorrow in their years.

“They looked back and thought, ‘We may never see this land again,’” said Nez Perce Tribal Executive Committee Chairman Shannon Wheeler.

But as he looked out at the crowd gathered outside of Wallowa United Methodist Church last week, after the keys and deed to the church property were handed over to the Nez Perce (Nimiipuu) Tribe by The Oregon-Idaho Conference of The United Methodist Church, his words were filled with kindness.

“Those tears are OK,” he said. “They are tears of joy today.”



From left: Nez Perce Tribal Executive Committee Vice Chairman Casey Mitchell, Chairman Shannon Wheeler, Rev. Dr. Allen Buck an and Rev. Karen Hernandez, exchange greetings and the deed and keys to the Wallowa UMC property for the Nez Perce Tribe.

For more than 144 years Wallowa United Methodist Church served the community, ending up at its current location in 1940 and remaining there until the church closed in 2019. Congregants kept meeting in the community until early 2020 when the pandemic hit. The church owned the building – originally built in 1910 and owned by the Presbyterian Church – the lot it sits on, as well as a vacant lot behind the church until its closure, at which point the property came under the care of the Conference’s board of trustees.

Sage District Superintendent, Rev. Karen Hernandez, presented the deed and keys to the Nez Perce Tribal Executive Committee. Wallowa United Methodist Church has served the community well over generations with love and hospitality and she hopes it will continue to be a place of love and hospitality for the Nimiipuu.

“As United Methodists, we have much work yet to do on our slow journey toward right relationships with the earth and the children of God,” Hernandez said. “We are grateful that you, in a gracious spirit of friendship, are willing to meet us here as we take a small step toward justice. It blesses us knowing that this land, which was never rightfully ours, is now in your hands.”

Rev. Dr. Allen Buck, pastor at Great Spirit United Methodist Church in Portland and a member of the

Wallowa Blessing (continued from page 5)



Rev. Dr. Allen Buck hands out gifts during the Wallowa UMC land return ceremony to the Nez Perce Tribe on April 29, 2021.

Cherokee Nation, worked with tribal elders to create this event to honor the fact that the Nez Perce welcomed the opportunity to take over the church and its half-acre of land. He hopes that the Conference's actions help model how acts of repentance and decolonization can be done by others to begin healing relationships with indigenous communities.

"It's a good thing that the church is doing, but it also makes sense, right?" Buck said. "That's what you do for your friends."

Many members of the Nez Perce Tribe – some descendants of the Wallowa band – talked about the feelings of healing and hope they were experiencing just driving over the mountains into the Wallowa valley from Lapwai, Idaho. They expressed gratitude for the drum songs played and the fellowship shared.

Janet Black Eagle talked about arriving in Wallowa the night before and staying with friends and long conversations with distant relatives that lasted into the late night. She said she could hear the songs of her ancestors coming off the ground.

"There is something here that we're returning to," she said.

Casey Mitchell, vice chairman of the executive committee of the Nez Perce Tribe and a descendant of the Wallowa band of the tribe,



Wallowa UMC has been in this community for more than 144 years and at this location since 1940.

said their people called this area home for thousands of years.

The Nimiipuu people have connection to the land and water that is modern-day Idaho, Washington, Oregon and Montana. The Nez Perce Tribe was established by the treaty of 1855 and included land in the Wallowa valley, but as more white settlers moved to the area and the gold rush continued the tribe was pushed further out of the area by the U.S. government – often through violence – and is now headquartered in Lapwai, Idaho. The federally-recognized tribe has more than 3,500 enrolled citizens and spans about 770,000 acres in northcentral Idaho – a small fraction of

Gloria May Marek May 1, 1933 - April 30, 2021

We mourn the loss of Gloria May Marek, who died peacefully at the age of 88. She became a wonderful example of love and service for many years for our Church Community. Memories are flowing from the gatherings she hosted at her home on NE Failing as well as all the events and fundraisers she helped with. Gloria was an important part of our UMW unit, providing leadership and care. We extend our sympathy and best wishes for her family; we will always cherish her memory.

Submitted by Loretta Milton

OUR CORE VALUES

LOVE – Love is the way.

CONNECTION – All of creation is connected by Spirit. That spark of the Divine connects with all humanity and the rest of creation.

SPIRITUALITY – Without cultivation of the spiritual life, we become unbalanced. Active participation in the development of one's spirituality is critical for a whole life. We believe this happens best in community.

TRADITION – Those who have gone on before us leave legacies of the old ways and wisdom with those who become elders. We encourage, value, and listen to them, so our tradition(s) may continue to help shape and guide us, informing who we are and what we will become.

We seek to become and embody these values every single day.

what once was their homeland.

"It's a blessing for our people to get to come back home. A lot of us, we still call this our homeland. It's a feeling I don't get anywhere else

when I see the top of those (Wallowa) mountains," Mitchell said. "(This church) is just a small piece of land, but it means the world to us."

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