

The Good News

Volume 2020

August 19, 2020

Issue 30

Rev. Lynne Spencer-Smith
(406) 453-4316

E-Mail: greatfallsucc@bresnan.net

www.greatfallsucc.org

P. O. Box 6303, 59406

like us on Facebook at First Congregational United Church of Christ-Great Falls, MT

Worship
9:30 A.M.
August 23, 2020
12th Sunday after Pentecost
led by Christ United Methodist Church



Topic: Sunday Morning Worship
Time: 09:00 AM Mountain Time (US and Canada)

Email/text/call Rev. Lynne for log-in information

Worship At Home- August 23, 2020

Set your sacred space with:

- A green cloth for the season of growth
- A lit candle
- Your favorite Bible opened to Romans 12:1-8
- A small bowl and small pieces of paper
- A pen or pencil
- This image (or another one of many people):



Photo by [Rob Curran](#) on [Unsplash](#)

Settle in with your favorite renewing beverage. Take some deep, cleansing breaths. Be aware of the concerns that you are carrying on your hearts: for yourself, for family, for friends, for the community, the nation, the world, the church. Write those concerns on the small pieces of paper and place them in the bowl. Imagine that the bowl represents God's hands and that God will hold these concerns while you worship. You'll be using these for prayers later.

Call to Worship (*consider reading this responsively if you are worshiping with others*)

If not for God, I/we would be searching for a purpose in lots of dead-end places.

Our help is in the name of God, who made heaven and earth.

If not for God, I/we would be burdened with the idea that all of this life is up to me/us.

Our help is in the name of God, who made heaven and earth.

If not for God, I/we would look at the hard and mean things and say, “That’s the end of the story.”

Our help is in the name of God, who made heaven and earth.

I/We worship today to tell God’s story and receive renewed purpose, release, and hope.

Prayer

Gracious God, may my/our worship be what nothing else is...

a softening of the edges of doubt,

a tickling of your great mystery upon my/our innermost being,

a wordless answer to the great questions of life,

a tender blowing of the Holy Spirit,

an assurance that there is a better way to live together on this planet

and that you, O God, are that way.

May your presence be palpable today, frothy and dancing,

Alive with your great mystery.

May my/our prayers be authentic, heartfelt and healing.

May my/our tears be the morsels of confession that are just so good for the soul.

I/We am/are here with you and I/we am/are glad.

Amen.

Scripture – read Romans 12:1-8

Reflection

In the midst of the time of pandemic, we are concentrating a lot on bodies. We protect our bodies by distancing from the bodies of others, by wearing masks, by washing our hands... a lot! Spend some time reflecting on the many ways you have tended to the needs of your own body: feeding it, cleaning it, relieving it of waste, helping it rest, protecting it from harm, exercising it. Romans invites us to present our bodies as a “living sacrifice, holy and acceptable to God.” How is God asking that you use your body to extend the realm of God in this time of separation? How have others used their body to extend the realm of God to you in this time of separation? Take some time to ask God to bless you and your body for the ministry that will be done through you in the coming hours, days, weeks and months. Look at the image of the crowd of people. Allow yourself to feel the loss of not being able to gather with others in close physical proximity. Then shift to remember that whether the church is gathered or scattered, it is always the body of Christ in the world.

Prayer

Take the slips of paper that you placed in the bowl of “God’s Hands” and offer a prayer for each thing you have named. Give thanks for those who are meaningful to you. Give thanks for those who love and support you. Offer petitions for those in need. Pray for our country and the world.

Blow out the candle, remembering that God goes with you in a special way as you depart from this time of worship.

In Our Thoughts and Prayers



† We join with folks across the Montana-Northern Wyoming Conference in mourning the death of **Nancy Staigmiller** on August 17. Nancy and her husband, **Bob**, were central in outdoor ministries and Camp Mimanagish for many years. The Staigmillers were long time members at Miles City United DOC/UCC, Absarokee Community UCC, and then found a church community at Mayflower UCC with their move to Billings last year. They have three children: **Ken and Carmen Staigmiller** in Fairfield, **Joe**, and **Donna** in the Billings area.

† **Mae Fifield’s** son, **Terry**, passed away from cancer on August 17.

† **Gary Wyman** has moved to The Lodge.

† **Kyle Spiller** has returned to the states after being deployed to the Middle East since November of 2019. Thank you all for your prayers and wishes for his safe return.

Yay for the Great Outdoors!

We just finished up our second outdoor service for the year! **Over 70 people from both congregations gathered on the front lawn.** We're so grateful for everyone doing their part to stay safe and healthy. There was an abundance of lots of important things: lawn chairs, face masks, physical distancing (yay!), cheer, fellowship, love, and grace. *Thanks to Dana Kirkmeyer and Alan Korslien for the music, Dick Kloppel, Greg Smith, and Bill Walters* for setting things up (and taking them down), and all of you for your joy. Will there be more opportunities for outdoor worship? Stay tuned—we're talking about it!

Sacred Pace



One of the meditation/devotional books that I've been dipping into finished up a meditation with "I will embrace the grace of living at a sacred pace." It's been one of those little claims that settled into my soul as a very good aspiration.... Embrace the grace of living at a sacred pace.

Since early March, we've been lamenting that we are not able to gather in our familiar sacred space. I am so grateful for all of you for understanding the immensity of this decision and honoring it. So far, we've been able to say that no one has contracted the corona virus at a church event. I hope we can say that when this is all over.

In the meantime, we have been doing our best to create some sacred space in our homes and bring them together through technology. It's been a different pace. It's been a different rhythm. It's been a different experience. But the sacred is still there as the Holy Spirit blows where it will—including through cyberspace, phone calls, texts, letters, and cards. It is a different pace and it's a pace we may be taking for a while yet.

Rather than fret over how much I am missing getting back to worshipping in the sanctuary and working out of my office, I've learned that recognizing this way of doing things is as sacred as it was before the pandemic descended upon the land. It's not better or worse, just different. But sacred none the less.

I think about those of you who are preparing for school as educators, parents and students. My prayer is that you will find that the steps you take will set a sacred pace into this uncertain time. Each step you take will be upon holy ground as you move forward for God will be with you.

May all of us continue to live safely and well, and at a sacred pace. -Rev. Lynne



Rev. Lynne will be on vacation August 20 – 25.

For most of this time, she will not have access to cell coverage or the internet so if you have any pastoral needs, please contact Rev. Greg Smith (cell number in the church directory).

Re-Launch Committee to Meet

The Re-Launch (re-opening) Committee will be meeting this week to begin exploring the things that will need to be in place in order for us to be able to open up safely. *This committee is made up of volunteers from both UCC and CUMC congregations as well as the pastors from each church.* UCC volunteers include **Dave Neagle, Bill Walters, Michael Kutz, and Heather Levandowski.** CUMC volunteers include **Karen Smith, Jeanne Nobbs, Heidi LePard, and John Baker.** Joint Choir Director, **Cindy Stevens,** will also be on the committee. Please keep these folks in your prayers.

They'll be looking at the current COVID-19 situation in Cascade County as well as the state of Montana and the nation. They'll be reflecting on how each congregation has responded to the pandemic and how we have continued to be the church through a time of building closure. They will be sharing what they hope to accomplish as a committee on your behalf and in spirit of the risen Christ. They'll be looking at our digital presence and the gaps in that presence and the lessons we've learned from in-person (outdoor) services held over the summer. Then, they'll set forth a plan of action to move forward.

Keep an eye on the Good News for updates.

***Zoom Log-ins:
Book Study***



“White Fragility: Why it’s so Hard
for White People to Talk About Racism”
by Robin DiAngelo
Wednesdays at 7:00 P.M.

August 19 (*this is the last session*)
Ch. 11 (White Women’s Tears)
Ch. 12 (Where Do We Go From Here?)

Zoom login:
Topic: White Fragility Book Study
Time: Wednesdays at 7:00 P.M.

Email/text/call Rev. Lynne for log-in information
