
The Good News

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

Worship for October 17, 2021 “Renewed! For Creativity”



Serving in Worship
Lay Reader: Syneva Heupel
Ushers: Bill Walters, Dave Neagle

In-Person, at church, live worship at 9:30 A.M.
and will be livestreamed onto our Facebook page.

A recording of this version will be available on YouTube later in the day.

A pre-recorded, abbreviated version of this service will be available on NBC at 9:30 A.M.
(it may be on your TV guide as something other than our church’s worship service.)

For those who will be worshipping in person at church, remember to wear your face mask
and plan to observe physical distancing.

We are also continuing to register everyone upon arrival (in case we need to do some
contact tracing) and will keep the ventilation system running.

Because our ventilation system draws fresh, outside air into the building, remember to
dress accordingly.

We appreciate everyone’s efforts in helping us maintain a safe environment for gathering.

Trunk or Treat

Sunday, October 17th is the last day to sign up to bring a decorated car to Trunk or Treat, scheduled
for **Saturday, October 30th from 1:30-3:30 P.M.** in the church parking lot. **Please let Janet
Koostra know if you are interested, 727-8443 or janetkoostra@gmail.com. Thank you.**



The Fellowship Board Needs Your Help

The church’s Fellowship Board is spread pretty thin. Can you help them out? You
don’t have to commit to being on the board, just volunteer to lead a Sunday fellowship
time after church. **Duties would include: set up the coffee, arrange for treats, clean
and sanitize afterwards. If you would like to lend a hand, please call KimKay
McCarty Martin at (701) 260-2833.**



Christian Education News

Children begin in Sunday school this week. After spending time with Rev. Lynne,
younger children will learn more about “Jonah and the Big Fish” with teacher Liz
Lee. Older kids will learn about the history of the UCC, then spend time decorating
Sunday school Room #5.

Volunteers Needed – Middle School Career Fair, October 20th

Sponsored by United Way of Cascade County, the purpose of the career fair is to expose 8th grade
students to a broad variety of career pathways. Volunteers for mock interviewers are needed. This
is best suited for people who can listen to students and provide constructive feedback. Plan to:

Work with 3-6 students for 30-minute intervals to teach the process of interviewing

Commit at least 1 hour of your time on Wednesday, October 20th

To volunteer, please register at <https://forms.gle/YmAfdy3bapfsY3HV7>

Thanksgiving Basket Offering Project

For the 4th year in a row, our Sunday school will participate in a Thanksgiving Basket Offering project, co-sponsored by the Christian Education Board and the Christian Service Board. This project provides Thanksgiving dinners for 6 food-insecure families identified by the Great Falls Public Schools. Christian Service provides turkeys, pies and help with food delivery. Each week, Sunday school children are asked to bring different items to help make up a Thanksgiving dinner.

October 17th: please bring canned vegetables—corn, green beans, peas

October 24th: Canned fruit

October 31st: Mashed potato mixes

November 7th: Stuffing mix

November 14th: Turkey gravy mix

November 21st: Canned cranberries



Monetary donations are also great! If your children are not attending Sunday school but you would like to have them participate in this service project, please contact Janet Koostra at 727-8443 or janetkoostra@gmail.com to arrange a time to drop off donations. This is a fun and easy way for children to take part in a service project while learning about helping others. Hope to see your corn and green beans this Sunday!

Bridge, Anyone?



Beginning October 20th, we are planning to play bridge on the 1st and 3rd Wednesday mornings at the church from 10:00 A.M.-1:00 P.M. All are welcome! Please call Syneva Heupel if interested, 453-7200 or 870-9075.

Meal Train News

Liz Lee is now the coordinator for Meal Train, with Nadine Haffeman as co-coordinator when Liz is unavailable. The meal train is used for organizing volunteers to bring meals to individuals after significant events such as birth of a baby, death in the family, illness or surgery.

Story Time with Julie Yard

Join Julie Yard from “Mister Sisters” at **2:00 P.M. on Saturday, October 16th at Our Savior’s Lutheran Church (1326 1st Avenue N.)** for story time, songs and coloring. The young and the young at heart are welcome. Children must be accompanied by an adult. Enter the building on 1st Avenue N. Masks are required.



Happy Anniversary!

Today (October 15th) marks the fifth anniversary of my serving as your pastor. That means we have travelled through half a decade together. We’ve worshipped, prayed, sang, celebrated life (both new and ending), Bible studied, laughed, cried, broke bread (in fellowship and at the Table of Christ) Zoomed, served one another and the community, welcomed new members and said farewell to those who have moved on, and we are making our way through a pandemic. What a journey this is!

According to my Terms of Call (contract) and our policies, I am eligible to take sabbatical leave for up to three months now that I have completed five years with you. I will be taking that leave beginning May 23 through August 22, 2022. The council will be making arrangements for worship leadership and pastoral coverage during that time.

AND.... There’s more!

We will be receiving a Clergy Renewal Grant offered through the Lilly Endowment’s National Clergy Renewal Program at Christian Theological Seminary! The grant will fund all of my sabbatical activities as well as the cost of pastoral coverage during my time away. The full official press announcement is below but I wanted to share some of my own thoughts and clear up some rumors that are floating around.

First the rumors:

I am not resigning.

I will not be gone for an entire year. Our sabbaticals are for three months.

We will not be expecting the pastor of Christ UMC to pick up more responsibilities since we will be hiring a sabbatical supply pastor. (If you hear of any other rumors rolling around, please check with me before passing them along and encourage the person you heard them from to be in touch with me so we can keep rumor-anxiety out of the air.)

Now, my thoughts:

Sabbaticals, in and of themselves, are tremendous gifts to both pastors and congregations. Studies have found that pastors who regularly take time off, including extended periods of time for sabbatical, experience less burn-out, serve their congregations with more energy and creativity. They are less likely to be involved in misconduct or breaches of ethics. Congregations who allow for sabbatical leave for their pastors are also found to have stronger lay leadership.

Although I LOVE being with you and serving as your pastor, I am so looking forward to this time away. Greg and I have a variety of experiences planned for our time of renewal. I'll be sharing more details in the months to come but basically, we'll be exploring some National Parks, strengthening some horseback riding and handling skills, and spending time with family in the place of our ancestors while learning more about those who lived there before we did. The entire time is wrapped up under a theme of "The Way Home." The theme is based on a Celtic thought of "The Way" as a journey to discover one's true self and the reality that, in coming to Montana, I have returned "home" to the western landscape.

I am so very grateful for both the sabbatical time away and the funds that will help Greg and I engage in three months of renewal.



And now the official press release:

Christian Theological Seminary Announces 190 Congregations Awarded Lilly Endowment 2021 Clergy Renewal Program Grants

Christian Theological Seminary, an ecumenical seminary based in Indianapolis, today announces 190 U.S. congregations have been selected to receive grants through the Lilly Endowment 2021 National Clergy Renewal Program and the Clergy Renewal Program for Indiana Congregations. The grants help congregations honor and support their pastors by funding a respite from persistent ministerial duties and enabling pastors to engage in a period of extended reflection and renewal. Recipients may use the respite for activities that allow them to reflect and renew while engaging in activities such as travel, scholarly research or immersive experiences with different cultures and traditions.

"Pastors play a critical role in nurturing and guiding their congregations' work in the Christian tradition, while tending to the soul and psyche of individual members within the congregation," says Christopher L. Coble, the Endowment's vice president for religion. "These grants facilitate an opportunity to celebrate pastors for their extraordinary service while making it possible for these men and women to step away from congregational demands and invest in rest and renewal. For more than two decades, these grants have shown that such respites support the vitality of pastors and reinvigorate their congregations as well."

Congregations in the 2021 programs represent diverse Christian traditions, including Roman Catholic and Eastern Orthodox parishes and congregations from more than 24 Protestant denominations. Bringing a collaborative element to the grant program, congregations and their pastors worked together to determine how the pastors will use the grants to replenish, restore and renew their ministries.

Pastors may also use time away from their congregations to explore new spiritual disciplines, invest in focused time with loved ones and engage in immersive experiences that enhance their enthusiasm for preaching, ministry and leadership.

Popular activities selected by previous grant recipients include domestic and international travel and encounters with nature. Activities have facilitated enhanced cultural understanding, exploration of church heritage and other activities that aim to enrich pastors and their congregations.

Pastors also plan to use the awards to fund domestic and international travel. For example, one pastor will travel with family to visit his home country of South Korea - where he will continue his study of martial arts - as well as Israel, Asia Minor, and other biblical destinations. Another pastor will travel to Scotland to explore the historic scriptoriums on the islands of Iona and Lindisfarne and then prepare her own manuscript of the Sermon on the Mount incorporating her explorations of biblical text, Celtic lands, and personal history.

In addition to travel as a form of renewal, some pastors will use time away from their congregations to engage in new spiritual disciplines, focus on time with loved ones, and study topics that renew their excitement for preaching and congregational life. Activities for congregations include exploring their own spiritual stories, sharing meals together, focusing on intergenerational relationships, and engaging their local communities through service. Dr. Robert Saler, director of the Lilly Endowment Clergy Renewal Programs at Christian Theological Seminary in Indianapolis, noted that the grant programs integrate elements of support, trust and encouragement which are all indicators of healthy congregations. "The programs are engineered to honor an innate human need to balance active service to others with periods of reflection and renewal. Animated by a spirit of gratitude and generosity, this program provides a means for congregations to show appreciation for their leaders and actively invest in their pastors' health and energy for continued ministry," Saler says.

Since Lilly Endowment introduced the Clergy Renewal Program for Indiana Congregations and National Clergy Renewal Program grants in 1999 and 2000 respectively, more than 3,200 congregations across the nation have participated in the programs. Congregations in the 2021 national program received grants totaling almost \$9 million. The grants honor the immense amount of energy, time and leadership that pastors invest in their congregations.

Congregations were invited to apply for program grants of up to \$50,000. The application process allows congregations to be actively engaged in designing and developing their pastors' renewal experiences. An inspiring element of the program is the ability for congregations to allocate up to \$15,000 of the grant to fund interim pastoral leadership, as well as renewal activities within the congregation. Pastors' families can also participate in the renewal activities.

Christian Theological Seminary has administered the Lilly Endowment Clergy Renewal Programs since 2012. "As our nation and our world navigate complex health, environmental and geo-political threats, these grants enable pastors and their congregations to actively partake in the gifts of retreat and renewal that are so needed today," Saler says.
