
The Good News

Volume 2023

November 1, 2023

Issue 43

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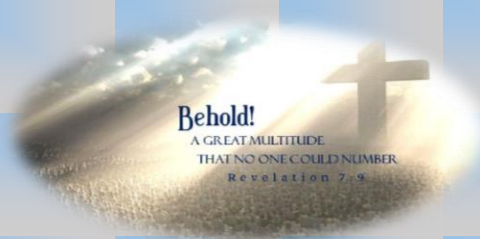
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November 5, 2023 Worship Service, 9:30 A.M.



Minister: Rev. Lynne Spencer-Smith

Scripture: Revelation 7:9-17

Lay Reader: Dick Kloppel

Ushers: Joan Dailey, Susan Thomas

Acolyte: Jullian Valley

Choir Director: Cindy Stevens

Accompanist: Tyler Menzales

Sunday School: (Elementary) Karen Spencer

(Youth) Dean Jardee

Nursery: Whitney Mulready

Fellowship: Verna Kessner, KimKay McCarty Martin

Tellers: Liz Lee, Carol Shipley

This will not be a Taizé service as previously announced. Our Taizé service has been postponed until after the first of the year. This is a regular service with the recognition of All Saints and Holy Communion.

The service will be live-streamed and a recording of the livestream service will be available on YouTube later in the day.

Fall Back! Daylight Savings Time Ends Sunday at 2:00 A.M.

Neighbors In Need



The Neighbors in Need offering, **which we will receive during the month of November**, supports the UCC's ministries of **justice and compassion throughout the United States**. Two-thirds of the offering is used by the UCC's Justice and Witness Ministries to fund a wide array of **local and national justice initiatives, advocacy efforts, and direct service projects**. Working with members of the UCC Justice and Peace Action Network, Justice and Witness continues its strong policy advocacy work on issues such as the **federal budget, voting rights, immigration, health care, hate crimes, civil liberties, and environmental justice**. Neighbors in Need also supports our American Indian neighbors in the UCC. One-third of the offering supports

the UCC's **Council for American Indian Ministries (CAIM)**. Today there are 20 UCC congregations on reservations and one urban, multi-tribal UCC congregation in Minneapolis, Minnesota. These churches and their pastors are supported by CAIM. **With your help, together we can help our Neighbors in Need. Donations can be made online or with a check written to the church. Please be sure to indicate NIN in the memo. Thank you.**

Update- Thanksgiving Baskets for West Elementary

Turkey tags have been gobbled up! More than half of the tags on the display near the sanctuary are gone! Almost half of the tags from Sunday School have been plucked! And it's not too late. **Choose one or more turkey tags, purchase the listed item(s) and return donations to the church by November 12.** Five turkeys have been donated and the Christian Service Board is poised to buy two more plus pies! Seven families from West Elementary will have a delicious dinner through your generosity. **Because of you, our church changes lives!** Thank you!



Veteran's Day Spaghetti Dinner

Friday, November 10th

5:00-7:00 P.M.

Hosted by Christ United Methodist Church

Cost is \$15 each or \$25 per family

Thanksgiving Potluck

Sunday, November 12th

5:30-7:00 P.M.

Hosted by First Congregational UCC Fellowship Board

Turkeys and hams provided.

A sign-up sheet with potluck breakdown is on the table in the narthex and in Fellowship Hall



Christian Education News

This week, both Sunday School classes will meet. Since it is Communion Sunday, both Youth and Elementary students will begin in Sunday School, then join their families for the sacrament of Holy Communion and the conclusion of worship. Sunday School offering will be used toward Thanksgiving baskets for West Elementary. **So far, students have donated \$9.66, with two more weeks remaining for this offering.** Families are also asked to check out the poster in Sunday School Room 4 if they would like to donate food items to the Thanksgiving baskets. Choose a turkey tag or tags, purchase the listed item(s) and return them to the classroom by November 12. This service project is off to a good start with 10 of 26 tags adopted! Thank you, turkey tag takers!

Christmas Pageant Rehearsals Start Soon

This year's Christmas Pageant rehearsals could begin the weekend of November 12. Families should watch for emails with more details. Please let Janet Koostra know if your children would like to participate, with some speaking roles available. Volunteers will be needed to help with costumes, set changes, kid wrangling, and helping the director. It's fun! It's festive! And it's an annual tradition as part of the church's preparation for Christmas to tell the story of the birth of Jesus through scripture, music, narration and actors. **The Pageant will take place on Sunday, December 17 during worship.**

Halloween Party a Howling Success

Nearly 20 children and many adults enjoyed treats, a scavenger hunt, games, prizes and a piñata at last Sunday's Halloween party! Many thanks to all who helped set up, brought food & games& treats and who attended. When it's party time—the more the merrier!

New Member Spotlight

This past Sunday, we welcomed some new folks into our membership. Over the next couple of weeks, we'll be introducing them to you, using their responses to a number of possible "get to know you" questions. Please take some time to introduce yourself and welcome them into the First Congregational United Church of Christ-Great Falls church family.



Heather Weibel

Heather was first drawn to our church because of our "All are welcome" message. She had learned about us from her friends, Sue and Dennis Turton, who had been inviting her to come and check us out for quite some time. She visited first on July 23 and has been an almost regular ever since. Heather works full time at Hobby Lobby and part time at Target. She likes to read, knit and play on her virtual reality headset. One of her favorite vacations was a staycation. As a

"claim to fame," Heather was awarded with the TOPS International Division award for losing over 80 pounds in 2022 and the Montana state queen for losing over 100 pounds total. Welcome, Heather!



Jenn Goss

Jenn and her daughter, Zurie, have been a regular and active presence in our midst for a little over a year. She first came because our location is close to their home but was drawn in because we celebrate and open communion table and our Open and Affirming designation. Jenn has been married to Jason for 15 years. Their daughter, the amazing Zurie, often accompanies Jenn to church and is eager to serve as an acolyte and participate in Sunday School. Her family also includes a son from a

previous relationship and his two children. They like to go camping and explore Montana together.

Jenn's favorite vacation wasn't exactly a vacation. Earlier this year, Jenn and Zurie and some friends went to California to see Reba McEntire at the Hollywood Bowl. It was supposed to be just a long weekend, but they missed our flight home and ended up driving. The trip ended up being one big mess from start to finish. But, since she's been a fan since the age of 10, she couldn't pass up the opportunity to see Reba in that iconic venue and have an adventure with her "mini-me" and some great friends. It is an experience she'll never forget.

Jenn is a huge music fan and enjoys many different genres. Her favorite (besides Reba!) is Bluegrass/Americana. She has always loved the banjo because it is a diverse, emotive instrument. She would love to be able to play it. She has a banjo but feels she is not patient enough to practice and build up mastery. Wouldn't it be great to just pick it up and play it?! She'll probably end up giving it to her son, who is a gifted musician.

Her claim to fame is having been on two music videos! When Jenn was 19, she moved to Nashville hoping to produce and direct music videos. She was fortunate enough to land a job at a production house and worked behind the scenes on a few videos and commercials. For a few of those, she was grabbed as an extra. She never made it big (or met Reba), and moved back to home to Montana two years later.



Noël Walker

Noël was drawn to this church for a few reasons. The first initial reason was honestly that we had a choir. She'd been searching for an opportunity to sing in a church choir since moving here. By 2021 she had started to resign herself to the fact that, much like a baby, COVID changes everything. The first Sunday she attended, though, she heard the announcement about providing food for the LGBTQ prom,

and she knew this church was different than what she was used to in the best way possible. So, the choir got her in the door, but the openness drew her in.

About Noël's family: She's married to a member of US Air Force. Together they have two kids, William who is 18 and starting his first year in college, and Violet who is 5 and just started preschool. Noël just started working this week at the Great Falls pre-release center as the education coordinator, and is really excited to be a part of something with the potential to positively impact both individuals and the community as a whole. This also feeds in to her personal interests, which could be summed up as "to move or be moved." She likes things where she can help or influence others or provide for a need. She enjoys music, gardening and canning, cooking, sewing, painting, reading, and being social.

Best Vacation: When Noël was in college, her dad took their family on a trip to Eaton's Ranch, a historical dude ranch outside Cheyenne, WY. They spent a week hiking, horseback riding, camping, playing games, making up silly songs, and just generally having an amazing time.

A job she would be terrible at would be station operator at the North Pole. Isolation and Noël do not get along. Similarly, she is not one to suffer in silence, so not having anyone to gripe to about the cold would be layers upon layers of misery.

Small things that make her life better: exactly that, little things. Finishing a job well, flowers growing, clean smells, kind words, thoughtful gestures, good conversation, the beauty of nature, feeling like she's good at something (regardless of whether or not she is).

Watch for more introductions in next week's Good News.

Because of You...

Earlier this year, our Stewardship Board decided to adopt the theme put forth by the United Church of Christ on their stewardship materials for 2023. The Board loved it. The Council loved it. I loved it. I still do. And I’m so appreciative of how it’s been embraced from the printed material for letters and worship to the videos. (By the way, if you didn’t catch the videos yet, you can still see them on our YouTube page or our website.) We’ve been looking around and giving thanks for the many ways our church changes lives in big and small ways.

Let’s not forget to look at our own lives. How is it that First Congregational United Church of Christ in Great Falls changed your life? Let me share a few of my own thoughts.

My heart and soul are continually brought to a place of gratitude because of the people I get to work with. A week does not go by that I don’t give thanks for the leadership of our church and our staff. They are committed, creative, passionate, thoughtful, talented and a lot of fun to be around. Because of our staff and leadership, my life and work are more meaningful.

Almost every year (sometimes twice a year), we welcome new members into our church. Their journeys are amazing and their reasons for wanting to become part of our church are heartwarming. The journeys often include something about us being open and affirming and how they experience that welcome upon first arriving. My heart is touched by their journeys and I have hope for the future. Because of your welcome and how it impacts others, my life and work is more meaningful.

Every church has a heart for hands-on outreach. Sometimes it’s building houses or feeding the hungry. I’ve seen our heart come alive through steps that have been taken to more personally engage the needs of the students, staff and faculty at West Elementary. Because our love of children and passion for public education (have you ever thought about how many educators and retired educators we have in our congregation?), this ministry with the folks at West is right up our alley. Because of your passion and compassion, my heart is in awe.

I have the best view in the room on Sunday mornings. I get to soak in the view of people who gather for worship and bring laughter, hope, histories of struggle and triumph, lives that carry bruises and healing, hearts that carry hope and sorrow. Every Sunday, the Holy Spirit weaves a tapestry of humanity right before our very eyes. It’s not perfect but it is holy. Because of you, my life is blessed.

How has your interaction with this human expression of God’s love been touched, maybe even changed? Think about sharing that story with someone sometime. It will be a good one.

Have a blessed week.

Rev. Lynne



Coming Up

- Thursday, November 2
- 12:00 P.M. Genesis Bible Study, FH
- 4:00 P.M. Joint Facilities, FH
- Sunday, November 5
- 9:15 A.M. Youth Sunday School, Parlor
- 10:45 A.M. Worship Board, Parlor
- Monday, November 6
- 1:00 P.M. Christian Service, FH
- Tuesday, November 7- Vote!
- 12:45 P.M. Reading, West Elementary
- 6:30 P.M. Church Growth, Zoom
- Wednesday, November 8
- 1:00 P.M. Prayer Meeting, Parlor
- 1:30 P.M. Pinochle, FH
- 6:00 P.M. Youth Group, SS Wing
- 6:00 P.M. Handbells, Choir Room
- 7:15 P.M. Choir, Sanctuary
- Thursday, November 9
- 12:00 P.M. Genesis Bible Study, FH