

The Good News

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Issue 05

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

February 4, 2024 Fifth Sunday of Epiphany Worship Service 11:00 A.M.



Minister: Rev. Lynne Spencer-Smith

Scripture: Mark 1:29-39, Isaiah 43:18-21

Lay Reader: Peter Johnson

Ushers: Dale and Nancy Dallmann, Steve Gettel

Organist: Tyler Menzales

Choir Director: Cindy Stevens

Nursery: CJ Mollohan, Mackenzie Noble

Fellowship: Dennis and Sue Turton

Tellers: Carol Shipley, Nancy Zadick

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



Four Chaplains Memorial Service Sunday, February 4th at 2:00 P.M. Church Sanctuary

This non-denominational service celebrates the true story of four World War II U.S. Army Chaplains. Sponsored by American Legion Post 341, this service honors those men who joined together despite their different beliefs. In February of 1943, the U.S.A.T Dorchester sunk in the cold Atlantic. Lt. George Fox, Lt. Alexander Goode, Lt. John Washington, and Lt. Clark Polling, brought hope in despair and light in darkness. Quickly and quietly, they spread out among the soldiers, trying to calm the frightened, tend the wounded, and guide the disoriented toward safety. When the ship went down, the four chaplains, who had given their life jackets to others, linked arms offered prayers. Of the 902 men aboard the U.S.A.T Dorchester, only 230 survived.



Christian Education News

This week, children and youth will begin in Sunday School since February 4 is Communion Sunday. Then all children will join their families for the sacrament of Holy Communion and the conclusion of worship. As usual nursery care will be provided for children through age 5.

In Our Thoughts and Prayers



- † **Bob and Janet Koostra** as Bob continues to recover at home from abdominal surgeries.
- † Family and friends of former member **Don Joyner**, who passed away January 13, age 84.
- † Family and friends of **Doug Murtle, friend of Revs. Greg and Lynne**. Doug passed away unexpectedly last week from complications following surgery.
- † Family and friends of **Rev. Jack Ivey, classmate, friend and colleague of Rev. Lynne and Greg**. Jack passed away last week.

Fishing for Volunteers



Hey everyone! I know it seems like we just had our turn, but just letting you know that our next turn to work at the **FISH Food Pantry is February 5-9, from 9:00-11:00 A.M.**

If you'd like to volunteer and distribute food to families in need, **please call Carol Davidson at 406-836-1862**. Wearing a mask is fine, too... I will probably be wearing one at the window. Thank you so much if you can help!



Soup-er Bowl of Caring Offering

On February 11 you can help tackle Hunger! It's not just Super Bowl LVIII, it's the Soup-er Bowl of Caring! This nationwide offering collects donations for a wide variety of organizations fighting food insecurities. **This year's donations to First Congregational United Church of Christ will go to the FISH Food Pantry.** Following worship on February 11, children holding soup kettles will be stationed at the sanctuary doors to receive the Soup-er Bowl of Caring Offering. Checks can be written payable to FCUCC with Soup-er Bowl in the memo. Donations can also be made using PayPal through our website. Please prayerfully consider participating in the Soup-er Bowl.

Camp Sunday Silent Auction Items Needed

We are seeking donations of items for a silent auction to raise camp scholarship funds. Gift baskets are great. Homemade, specialty items are wonderful (think of something you've knitted, crocheted, sewn, wood working, pottery, painting, etc.) Home-made foods are nice (Rev. Lynne will probably have a pie on the table). Gift certificates to local businesses or services. Gifts certificates for personal services (think house cleaning, window washing, snow removal that you can offer to do for someone else). Be creative and generous. 100% of the funds raised in the silent auction will go directly to our Camp Scholarship funds to help folks get to church camp.

If you have something you'd like to donate, contact Rev. Lynne by February 15 and let her know what you are donating and what the opening bid should be. Donated items should be brought to the church by the 15th so we can set them out on the tables for Sunday, February 18 (the week before Camp Sunday). Bidding will begin on the 18th.

Questions? Contact Rev. Lynne

Celebrating Black History

You are cordially invited to attend the 14th annual Black Heritage Celebration, sponsored by the Alma Smith Jacobs Foundation and the Great Falls Public Library. Please join us as we pay tribute to the struggles and achievements of Black Americans. **This annual celebration is scheduled for February 8, 6:00 P.M., at the Great Falls Public Library Cordingley Room. Admission is free.**

Our goal is to celebrate and educate with historical information, music and food. Kate Hampton of the Montana Historical Society will be the main speaker. The Great Falls Gospel Choir and Alexander Temple Church of God in Christ Hip Hop dancers are scheduled to perform. We will offer a sampling of “Soul Food” to those interested.

As always, the audience is an important part of any program. Your attendance insures our program will be a success. Please join us for a night of celebration, knowledge and community unity.

Best Regards, Kathy Reed
President, Alma Smith Jacobs Foundation



Merger Messages

On Sunday, February 11, we will hold a Congregational Conversation about the potential merger with Christ United Methodist Church. This is the first time that members of the congregation (outside of the Council leadership) can enter into formal conversation, ask questions and hear more about the proposal. Please plan to attend so you can be a part of this very important conversation. It has the potential to shift who we are as a church and how we function. **The Zoom link will be available in next week's newsletter.**



The Talking Points that were developed by a task force of UCC/CUMC members have been published in the January newsletters. Please review those talking points. If you no longer have your newsletters, you can access them through our website at <https://greatfallsucc.org/newsletter-archive>. Hard copies of the talking points will be available on the Welcome table in the church narthex.

When we gather on February 11, we will also be spending some time exploring the Strengths, Weaknesses, Opportunities and Threats that come to mind in considering a merger with Christ UMC. Please give the following some thought so you can contribute to the conversation.

Listening Points (SWOT)

Strengths: How would our congregations be strengthened through a merger of some kind? What existing strengths might come to light?

i.e. more people in worship on an ongoing basis makes for more effective worship experience

Weakness: How might our congregations be weakened through a merger of some kind? What weaknesses might be revealed in a merger?

i.e. Lack of familiarity with each other's history and polity

Opportunities: What opportunities might you imagine could emerge through the merger of the congregations?

i.e. Christ UMC could engage in a process of discernment to become a Reconciling congregation and the UCC could use this as a refresher course for ONA

Threats: What might feel threatening about a potential merger?

i.e. Challenge to ONA status of UCC

i.e. UCC's History of partnership with DOC that went badly

Ash Wednesday, February 14

Our Ash Wednesday service of **Meditation Stations and Impositions of Ashes** begins at **5:30 P.M.** There will be a **Stone Soup Supper at 6:15 P.M.** Please consider bringing some canned or frozen vegetables to Fellowship Hall **prior to** the service. No fresh vegetables, please.

Shhhhhhh, It's a Secret

Our Choir Director, Cindy Stevens, has announced it's time for her to retire from church choir directing. She will be with us through the end of April. We'd like to present her with a gift of our appreciation. If you would like to contribute to that gift (which is yet to be determined) **donations can be made to the church designating it "Cindy's retirement."** And keep it quiet. We want to have a great surprise for Cindy on her last Sunday with us.

Coming Up

Thursday, February 1

4:00 P.M. Joint Facilities, Fellowship Hall

Sunday, February 4

9:30 A.M. Christian Ed Board, Parlor

10:45 A.M. Youth Sunday School, Parlor

11:00 A.M. Worship, Communion

12:15 P.M. Worship Board, Parlor

2:00 P.M. Four Chaplains Memorial, Sanctuary

Monday, February 5

1:00 P.M. Christian Service Board, Parlor

FISH Week, February 5-9, 9:00-11:00 A.M.

Tuesday, February 6

12:45 P.M. Reading, West Elementary

Wednesday, February 7

10:00 A.M. Bridge Group, SS Wing

1:30 P.M. Pinochle, Fellowship Hall

6:00 P.M. Youth Group, SS Wing

6:00 P.M. Handbells, Choir Room

7:15 P.M. Chancel Choir, Sanctuary

Thursday, February 8

6:00 P.M. Black Heritage Celebration, GF Public Library, Cordingley Rm.

Friday, February 9

4:00 P.M. Fellowship Board, FH
