
The Good News

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Issue 07

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

February 18, 2024
First Sunday in Lent
Worship Service
11:00 A.M.



Worship Leader: Dale Dallmann

Scripture: Genesis 22:17, 32:12, 41:49

Psalm 139, Matthew 4:1-4

Lay Reader: Susan Thomas

Ushers: Nancy Dallmann, Keith Storle

Organist: Tyler Menzales

Choir Director: Cindy Stevens

Acolyte: Anthony Storle

Youth Sunday School: Dean Jardee

Elementary Sunday School: Janet Koostra, June Rovero

Nursery: CJ Mollohan, Mackenzie Noble

Fellowship: Dave and Debbe Rothweiler

Tellers: Liz Lee, Nancy Zadick

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

New Faces in the Building

Due to some water pipes breaking at First United Methodist Church, they are not able to use their building until the necessary clean-up and repairs can be completed. First UMC is now worshipping at the former location of First English Lutheran Church and offering their ministry to the unhoused from that location. Their administrative work is being done in our building, utilizing Rev. Dawn's office and the conference room. If you see some new faces around the offices during the week, chances are, it's some of our friends from First UMC. Be sure to greet them and extend some of that great First Congregational United Church of Christ hospitality.



Christian Education News

On February 18, children will begin in worship. **This week, Janet Koostra will share a message with the children.** Then all kids will be dismissed to go to Sunday School. **Youth Class will meet in the parlor with teacher Dean Jardee while Elementary Class will meet in Sunday School Room 4 with Janet Koostra and June Rovero.** This week's offering will be designated for VJ Antonette Benarao, our mission sponsor child. On February 25, all children will attend our "Camp Sunday" worship service.

Attention Acolytes!

New and returning Acolytes will be blessed and commissioned during worship on Sunday, February 25. Plan now to come



Camp Sunday is just around the corner – February 25.

Do you have a beloved Church Camp story to share? Would you be willing to tell it yourself? How about writing it down and sending it to Rev. Lynne for her to use for camp Sunday?

Some things to think about:

How old were you when you first remember going to church camp?

What was one important learning you got from going to church camp?

Who were some of the important people you met at church camp?

How did church camp change your life?

Write down what you would like to share, leave it in the church office for Rev. Lynne or email it to her at pastor@greatfallsucc.org.

Silent Auction Reminder

There's still time to bring your Camp Scholarship Silent Auction items or let Rev. Lynne know what you are bringing. **Drop her a note ASAP so your item can be put up for bid this Sunday. Yes! The bidding begins this Sunday, February 18 and concludes on February 25 around 12:30 – ish.** We'll have a final countdown for bidding once everyone gets into Fellowship Hall after the service.

Here's just a few examples of what will be available: Some lovely water color paintings by Karen McElroy (ooooohhhh). A beautiful ballerina statue (awwwww). A Door County (Wisconsin) Cherry Pie from Rev. Lynne's kitchen (yummmm). And more!

In Our Thoughts and Prayers



† **Sereta Taylor**, friend of the church and former visitor, died of a stroke on February 5, age of 83. A funeral service will take place on Friday, February 16, 1:00 P.M., New Hope Lutheran Church.

† **Rev. David Munson**, former interim minister of First Congregational United Church of Christ is in hospice care with his family at his side. Please respect their privacy, connecting with them through prayer only at this time.

Widows Support Group

Linda Redding of Christ United Methodist is starting a support group for people who have lost their spouse or partner. It will be a time of discussion and sharing of experiences and feeling. **The first meeting is Friday, February 16, 2024 from 1:30-3:00 P.M. in the church parlor. For more information, please contact Linda at 406-868-1282.**



Our Relationship with Christ United Methodist Church

Thank you to everyone who participated in last week's Congregational Conversation about a potential merger with Christ United Methodist Church. We had some excellent conversations and a lot of engagement. What's next?

At their next meeting on February 19, the Church Council will be looking over the information that was gathered and go into some discernment about the next step(s) in the conversation.

Save the Date!

Annual Adult Retreat coming soon to First Congregational United Church of Christ! **Mark your calendars for Friday (evening), April 19 and Saturday, April 20. Co-facilitators are Rev. Lynne Spencer-Smith and Rev. Charles Wei of Plymouth UCC, Helena.** Watch for more details!



Church Growth wants to Grow—A GARDEN!

The Church Growth & Vitality Board is exploring the idea of starting a Community Garden! Where? On the west lawn of the church property. When? Spring 2025. Now for the "who". **The board seeks volunteers to help dream it, plan it, plant it, manage it.** We are considering sharing space with community members while also growing healthy produce to share with West Elementary and other area organizations. Want to help choose the garden's trajectory? Want to share your gardening knowledge and skills? Want to help make this dream come true? **Please contact Bruce Cole, 406-600-1885.**

FISH Thank You's

We have the best volunteers in our congregation who work at the Fish Food Pantry! Even though we weren't very busy last week, thank you so much to **Jack Armstrong, Elaine Balzer, Harry and Connie Brauer, Carol Davidson, Peggy Floen, Syneva Heupel, Liz Lee, Steve and Karen McElroy, Sandi Nicolai and Betsy Rogstad!** Our next time to volunteer is April 15-19.

Getting Grounded in Lent

I've never really understood the thing about giving stuff up for Lent. How is giving up something I enjoy supposed to make me excited about being a Christian? How does my ability to ditch caffeine or chocolate for 40 days help those who are suffering? Does that kind of sacrifice really help me be in solidarity with the suffering of the world? The more I think about the kind of "sacrifices" that we often do during Lent, the more it feels like I'm really approaching this season of reflection and solidarity from a position of privilege. I think a more effective way to do that would be to sacrifice living in my home or giving up eating pretty much what I want when I want and where I want. I have to confess, I'm not sure I'm ready to go to that extreme.

However, it would give me a great big understanding of how the over one-half million people who experience homelessness in the United States exist on a daily basis. It would give me a taste of what the 12.8% of the US population who are food insecure are facing. It would indeed be powerful to have a first-hand experience of how many folks in our country (and around the world) live. The difference is, I would know that at the end of those 40 days, it's all over for me. I would leave the street and the soup kitchen line and go back to comfort and abundance. Just that easy.

Instead, I would challenge us (myself included) to use Lent to become familiar with the underlying causes of homelessness and food insecurity. I'll be doing some good old internet searching and delving into government and non-profit informational sites like the USDA and the National Alliance to End Homelessness. I'll see where it goes from there. I'd invite you to let me know if you run across anything you find helpful.

In the meantime, our Lenten themes for worship will revolve around some of the basic elements of creation. I'm grateful that Dale Dallmann will get us started off this Sunday with "Sand" and the wilderness journey of Lent. Greg and I will be taking a short vacation and I'll be back in the pulpit on the 25th as we celebrate Camp Sunday and focus on "Water." The following weeks will include earth (or soil), wood, seeds and stones.

As you can see, some of our Lenten journey will be about becoming more grounded in creation as we move through the remaining weeks of winter and on into spring. For me, I'll also be grounding myself into a better understanding of some serious issues facing our community and nation.

How would you like to use this season to become more grounded in the intersection of the journey of life in community, in creation and in faith? May it be a rich and blessed journey.

Rev. Lynne



Nineteenth Annual Loaves & Fishes Dinner

An evening of good food, silent auction, and raffle

Friday, March 15, 2024

Our Savior's Lutheran Church

1326 1st Avenue N.

Servings: 4:30 P.M. and 6:30 P.M.

Free will offering

All proceeds support FISH



Coming Up

Friday, February 16

1:30 P.M. Widows Support Group, Parlor

Sunday, February 18

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

11:00 A.M. Worship Service

2:00 P.M. Chinook Winds Concert

Monday, February 19- President's Day

office open 8:30 A.M.-3:30 P.M.

6:30 P.M. Church Council, Zoom

Tuesday, February 20

12:45 P.M. Reading, West Elementary

Wednesday, February 21

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

1:30 P.M. Pinochle, FH

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

6:00 P.M. Handbells, Choir Room

Friday, February 23

1:30 P.M. Widows Support Group, Parlor

Sunday, February 25- Camp Sunday
