
The Good News

Volume 2024

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Issue 12

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

March 24, 2024

Palm Sunday Worship Service

11:00 A.M.



Everyone is invited to participate in the Palm Processional!

Get your bulletin and palm and gather in the Narthex before worship. Those not wanting to process are welcome to be seated in the sanctuary.

Minister: Rev. Lynne Spencer-Smith

Creation Worship Theme: Stones

Scripture: Luke 19:29-38, Psalm 118:1-2, 19-29

Lay Reader: Dick Kloppel

Ushers: Dale and Nancy Dallmann

Acolytes: Calvin and Anthony Storle

Organist: Tyler Menzaes

Choir Director: Cindy Stevens

Elementary Sunday School: Betsy Rogstad, Sue Turton

Nursery: CJ Mollohan, Mackenzie Noble

Fellowship: Dave and Debbe Rothweiler

Tellers: Steve Gettel, Paul Haffeman

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

In Our Thoughts and Prayers

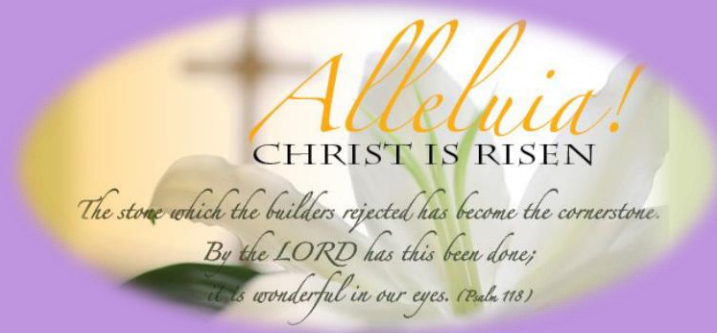


† Our sympathy to **Tom Hendricks, Sue Turton** and families in the death of Tom's wife and Sue's sister-in-law **Judy** who passed away March 16. **A memorial service will be held at the church on Tuesday, March 26 at 1:00 P.M.**

Maundy Thursday Service- March 28, 7:30 P.M.

Gather in person to participate in a time of service, communion and shadows. We will remember and experience some of the events of the night when Jesus gathered with those who knew and loved him on the night of his arrest. We will be sharing this experience with our friends from Christ United Methodist Church. **Everyone is welcome to attend and fully participate.**





Easter Sunday Worship

March 31, 9:30 A.M.

shared with

Christ United Methodist Church

Rev. Lynne preaching

Easter Coffee Fellowship to follow the service



Christian Education News

It's Palm Sunday! Children and families are invited to gather in the narthex with other congregation members for our annual Palm Sunday Processional! **Kids who made noise makers in Sunday School should get them from Janet Koostra before the parade.** Following the procession, older children will stay in worship while Elementary Class students will go right to Sunday School. (No Children's Message.)

This will be the final week that Sunday School offering will be designated for VJ Antonette.

Planned Giving Team

Members and friends of the church who have gone before us acted on the realization that First Congregational United Church of Christ played a significant part in their life stories. It is through their beliefs, compassion, and generosity that our operating budget is supported today. The earnings from monetary gifts and funds entrusted to our Memorial Fund Corporation are supporting this year's budget with \$90,000. **The Stewardship Board is in the process of forming a *Planned Giving Team* to develop a meaningful option for church members and friends to create a lasting gift to the church.** We are looking for folks to serve on this Planned Giving Team. If you are interested in helping guide this process for our church, contact the church office or Rev. Lynne.

Our Relationship with Christ United Methodist Church the "Merger or Shared Ministry" Conversation Continues

The pastors and key lay leaders of both congregations will be meeting with judicatory leadership (our Transitional Conference Minister and the UM District Superintendent) on April 11. Our hope is to explore the wider church's commitment to a merger or shared ministry and share concerns about pastoral leadership changes and the potential future of building ownership.

**If you have any questions or thoughts, please be in touch with
Dick Kloppel, Karen Spencer, Rev. Lynne or any of the Church Council members.**

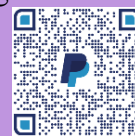
Please continue to hold both congregations and our leadership in your prayers.



Generosity. Imagine together.



Imagine together the meaningful impact your generosity can have on the good OGHS performs worldwide. **One Great Hour of Sharing carries God's message of love and hope to people in crisis.** Generosity is the rhythm of our lives: Receiving, Sharing, Grace, Enough, Do Good. We begin by receiving the gifts of life, friendship, love, and grace. And we end by sharing back. God has blessed us with abundance, always having enough of everything we need so we may also share. Imagine how your life reflects the Generosity of God. Let us imagine our blessings and grace together. Imagine having enough blessings and grace to be able to share. Imagine sharing your blessings and grace with OGHS's community response to humanitarian needs worldwide. Share your grace and blessings by supporting OGHS by check, on our website at greatfallsucc.org or by clicking on the QR code. **Be sure to mark your donation OGHS.** Source: Rev. Andrew Warner. 3/16/2021



Easter Basket Ministry

Friendly reminder that items for Easter Baskets are due now! **If possible, please bring any basket items to the church office by Thursday, March 21. If you can't bring donated items by then, please contact Janet Koostra at 406-727-8443.** Many thanks for the generosity of all who have donated to make this ministry possible during this holy Easter season.

Spring Retreat

"Seeking God: A Spiritual Practices Retreat"

Facilitator: Rev. Charles Wei, Plymouth Congregational United Church of Christ, Helena
Friday, April 19, 4:00 P.M. – Saturday, April 20, 7:00 P.M.

Cost: \$25 – scholarships available upon request.

We have opened registrations up to folks from Christ United Methodist Church and Fairfield UCC but you can still register as well. There is a registration limit of 30 people. Those who have registered can submit their registration fee to the church office. Please indicate "2024 Retreat."

Family Promise Announces...

Night Without a Bed: Homelessness Awareness. Saturday, March 23, 12:00 P.M.-3:00 P.M. University of Providence Student Center (1301 20th Street S.). Open to all age groups with interactive scenarios and a poverty simulator game. View the world through the lens of someone facing homelessness. Several organizations will provide information about services offered locally.

2nd Annual SOC HOP: Dinner, Fundraiser, Auction. Saturday, April 27, 5:30 P.M.-10:00 P.M. The Elks Lodge (500 1st Avenue S.). Tickets are \$50.00 each and are available on the Family Promise website at www.familypromisegf.org or in their office at 1019 Central Avenue.

Camp Registrations Now Available

For Our Youth:

➤ You and Me Intergenerational Adventures: July 5-8, 2024 at Mimanagish

(formerly Grandparents and Me) Cost \$290 per person – Registration Deadline: June 1, 2024. *No refunds after June 1.* A special time of intergenerational fellowship, spiritual renewal, and bonding as a community in a wilderness setting close to God. (Each youth must be accompanied by an adult. Multiple youth can “share” the same adult.)

Registration Link for You and Me Camp: <https://www.mnwcucc.org/youme>

➤ Youth Adventures Camp: July 9 – 15, 2024 at Mimanagish for Grades 3 – 12

(Grouped according to grade completed by May: 3-5th grades; 6-8th grades; 9-12th grades)

Cost \$475 – Bus ride optional at \$25 – Registration Deadline: June 1, 2024 *No refunds after June 1*

Registration link for Youth Adventures Camp: <https://www.mnwcucc.org/youth>

For the Adults (there are options for adults as well!):

➤ The Great Escape Adult Adventures: August 25 – 30, 2024 at Christikon

Details to come soon!

➤ Pride Adventures

More information coming soon for folks interested in a time for LGBTQ+ adults (18+)

Additional Options:

Other quality Outdoor Ministry Opportunities (not related to Montana-Northern Wyoming Conference) in an open and affirming atmosphere are available at Christikon (the Lutheran Camp up the canyon from Mimanagish). See their options at: <https://christikon.org/>. And at Camp Mimanagish through Singing Waters Montana. See the full listing at: <https://www.mimanagish.org/>

Scholarship Information:

If you are planning to utilize our camp scholarships we must know by May 1. Once we know how many people will be using the scholarship funds, we will know how much each camper will receive. Contact Rev. Lynne at pastor@greatfallsucc.org or Janet Koostra at janetkoostra@gmail.com to add your name to the scholarship recipient list. Camp scholarships are also available through the Conference at: <https://www.mnwcucc.org/scholarship>

Widows Support Group

Christ United Methodist Church would like to thank everyone who attended the Widows Support Group. **The next four-week session starts Fridays on April 19, April 26, May 3, and May 10, 2024. Time: 1:30 - 3:00 P.M. in the parlor.** For more information or if you would like to attend, please contact Linda Redding at 406-868-1282.

The New Commandment

Holy Week is a big and hard week in the seasons of the church. There's a lot of remembering of the last supper, betrayal, denial, arrest, beating, trial and crucifixion. We have a tendency to focus on the suffering and tribulation of the events of the last week of Jesus' week. What gets lost is the important gift that Jesus left with his disciples after they had shared the Passover meal. He began to tell them that he was going to be with them just a little while longer and then left them with instructions. "I give you a new commandment, that you love one another. Just as I have loved you, you also should love one another. By this everyone will know that you are my disciples, if you have love for one another." (John 13:34-35).

Jesus' final and lasting instructions to those who loved and believed in him were about relationship. It wasn't about how to pray. It wasn't about what needs to happen in worship. It wasn't about who can or cannot be part of the church or teach Sunday school or preach. It wasn't about church leadership structure or which hymnal to use. It was about how those who love and believe in Jesus relate to one another. Jesus seems to understand that when those who follow him love one another in ways that can be seen and known by others, the world will recognize them as his disciples. No secret handshake. No t-shirt. No lapel pin or bumper sticker. Just love.

That love looks like a teacher and healer who serves.

That love looks like one who forgives their betrayer.

That love looks like the one who maintains relationship with a denier.

That love looks like one who lives as an equal.

As we begin our journey into this Holy Week, may we carry with us the new commandment that Jesus gave those who love and believe him:
Love one another.



May the journey be deeply blessed. Rev. Lynne

Coming Up

Tuesday, March 26

10:00 A.M. Sewing Group, Fellowship Hal

12:45 P.M. Reading, West Elementary

1:00 P.M. Judy Hendricks Memorial Service

Wednesday, March 27

1:30 P.M. Pinochle, Fellowship Hall

6:00 P.M. Youth Group, Sunday School Wing

6:00 P.M. Handbells, Choir Room

7:15 P.M. Choir Rehearsal, Sanctuary

Thursday, March 28- Maundy Thursday

7:30 P.M. Combined Worship Service
