

The Good News

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

Worship Service August 25, 2024 9:30 A.M.



Combined with Christ United Methodist

Unified Leadership with
Rev. Lynne Spencer-Smith and Rev. Dawn Skerritt
Scripture: Joshua 24:1-2a, 14-18
Acolyte: Kaeden Dunn
Lay Reader: Dennis Dell
Usher: Steve Gettel
Accompanist: Sharman Tokerud
Nursery: Gracie Kuszmaul, CJ Mollohan
Tellers: Liz Lee, Ed Venetz

Blessing of the Backpacks and School Supplies

Calling students of all ages and grades! Bring your backpacks or collection of school supplies to church this Sunday. There will be a special blessing of the backpacks during the Children's Time.

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



School Supplies for West Elementary

Imagine a school with enough school supplies. Imagine a level playing field for all students. **Great Falls Public School classes begin next week.** Many families, especially those at West Elementary, will not have enough funds to purchase the school supplies needed to start school. As you are out and about and see the great sales on school supplies, **please think about purchasing a few items to donate to West Elementary.** The students, parents, and West Elementary faculty will be grateful to get the new school year off to a great start. Supporting our future generation is a great "WHY" in supporting our church mission. Plus, the smiles on kids' faces when they receive something new which is their own, are priceless. **Donated school supplies may be placed in the box marked West Elementary to the left of the Sanctuary doors.** Your Christian Service Board appreciates your support of West Elementary.

In Our Thoughts and Prayers



† Our sympathy in the death of former Christ United Methodist member, **Bill Salonen**, who passed away peacefully on August 13, 2024 at the age of 90. **A memorial service will be held at the GFHS Davidson Auditorium on Saturday, August 31, 2024, at 3:00 P.M., followed by a reception.** Guests are invited to wear (Bison) blue or sports apparel of their choice.

CHILD OF GOD



Christian Education News

Resources for children during summer worship continue to be offered. Quiet activities are found in Christ Kids Bags on the rack at the back of the sanctuary as well as in the Pray Ground area. Kids can color, read, cuddle stuffed toys and soft dolls as well as interact with other toys. **Families with children through age 5 have childcare provided in the church nursery.**

Mark your calendars! September 8th marks the beginning of another exciting year in Sunday School! In 2024-25, the Christian Education Board will sponsor one class for children ages 6-5th grade. Children in grades 6-8 are invited to participate as class helpers. One Sunday each month, all children are invited to take part in a “Theme Day” class focusing on service with games, songs and projects to benefit our church, our community and beyond! **Registration/information forms will be available soon in both digital and hard copy formats.** Please plan to fill these out for all children, even if they don’t attend Sunday School. The information is used to keep track of ages, birthdays, etc. Questions about what’s coming up? **Contact Janet Koostra at 406-727-8443 or janetkoostra@gmail.com.**

Sunday School Teacher Meeting Recap- Nine members of the congregation joined Rev. Lynne and Janet Koostra for a teacher meeting to prep for the beginning of the upcoming program year. **Rev. Lynne provided Safe Conduct training for attendees.** Curriculum plans were discussed. Finally, folks signed up to serve as teachers and helpers for fall Sunday School classes. **Another training for Safe Conduct will be held soon for those who were unable to attend this meeting.**



Upcoming Worship Schedule All services are at 9:30 A.M.

September 1 Joint summer worship, Christ UMC leadership, Holy Communion
This will be the final Joint Worship for the year. Beginning September 8, we will continue with combined worship at 9:30 A.M. Services going forward in the fall will incorporate leadership and elements from both worship traditions over time.

September 8 Rally Day and First Unified Worship of the fall.
We will continue to worship at 9:30 A.M. with our friends from Christ United Methodist Church.

September 15 Unified Worship

September 22 Abbreviated Unified Worship followed by a
Congregational Conversation about unification of Christ UMC and First Congregational UCC



Choir Potluck and BBQ

As the choir prepares to start up for the season, all singers and their companions are invited for an end-of-summer potluck and BBQ at the home of Sue Skees and Dennis Dell (3917 17th Ave.

S) on Wednesday, September 4 at 6:00 P.M. Bring your own meat to grill, a side dish to share, your own plates and utensils. Daiquiris will be provided. If you have a different beverage preference, bring it along. **The choir will be singing in worship on September 8 and regular rehearsals begin September 11 at 7:15 P.M.**

What's with the QR Codes?

We have recently been utilizing a QR code as an option to access our worship bulletins. By accessing the bulletin (which includes the hymns and newsletter information), we save paper and usage of our aging copier. **To access the bulletin, use the camera on your smart phone, point the camera on the QR code and click the connect button that will appear on your screen.** This will take you to the on-line document. **Paper bulletins will continue to be available and the material will still be projected on the wall.**

Rally Day Garden Party! September 8, 2024



Save the date for our annual Post-Summer Rally Day on Sunday, September 8. **We will have our first fall unified worship at 9:30 A.M. with the choir singing.** After worship, we'll make our way to Fellowship Hall for food and fun. With the theme "Garden Party" be prepared for activities related to growth, flowers, yummy fruits and vegetables and, as always, fun for all. **Our friends from Christ United Methodist Church will be joining us in worship and for the festivities.**

Grief Support Group

Find help and encouragement after the death of a loved one. A GriefShare support group is a safe, welcoming place where people understand the difficult emotions of grief. At a GriefShare group, you'll find understanding, guidance, relief, and the support to navigate the challenges of grief. **Linda Redding of Christ United Methodist is leading a 13-week group beginning September 13. The group will meet on Fridays, from 1:30-3:30 P.M. in the church parlor. For more information, please call the church office or email Linda at lindakredding@hotmail.com.** To learn more about GriefShare, please visit griefshare.org.



Fall Book Study

With all the talk about a potential merger of some fashion with Christ United Methodist Church, we realize that we are about to enter uncharted territory. Beginning September 9, we will explore the writing and insights of Tod Bolsinger who has used the lessons of Lewis and Clark and the Corps of Discovery as a model to help churches navigate their way through new directions in ministry and mission.

The course will be offered both in person and on Zoom.
There will be six sessions, 2 weeks apart.

**In-Person sessions will be Monday's beginning
September 9 at 10:30 A.M.**

**Zoom sessions will be Tuesdays beginning
September 10 at 6:30 P.M.**

Each session will be 90 minutes.

Zoom information:

<https://us02web.zoom.us/j/85796035444?pwd=gF1halCbV7ulOGNFHeutGVaUof9Nd.1>

Meeting ID: 857 9603 5444

Passcode: 590718

Books can be purchased at your usual sources. You are encouraged to support local bookstores (they may have to order it for you so don't wait until the last minute) or online stores selling used books (betterworldbooks.com; bookshop.org, etc.).

Pre-registration is not required but helpful. Please see the sign-up sheets on the Welcome Table in the Narthex and in Fellowship Hall. You can also simply contact the church office to let us know you'll be joining us on the journey.

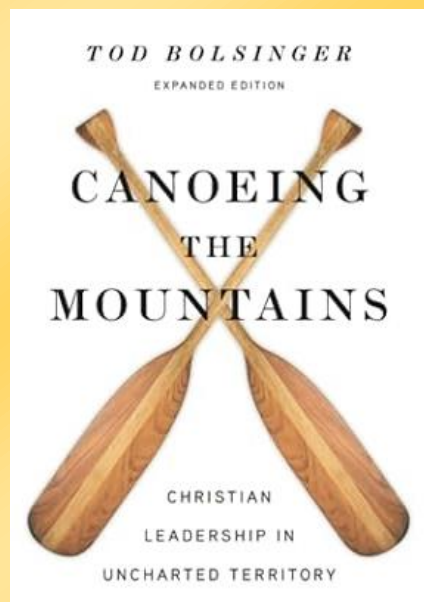
137th Conference Annual Meeting September 26-29, 2024

If you are interested in being a delegate to represent First Congregational United Church of Christ at this year's Conference Annual Meeting, **please contact Dick Kloppel or Karen Spencer.** Registration will be paid for by the church though delegates are in charge of their lodging. The Conference has reserved blocks of rooms, held at a discounted rate, at the following hotels:

Best Western Plus Clocktower Inn, 2511 1st Ave. N., Downtown Billings. \$169/night. To reserve, call 406-259-5611 and request CAM Conference group block.

Super Stay Plus by Best Western, 3040 King Ave. W., West End Billings. \$150/night. Reserve by calling 406-294-9090 and request CAM Conference group block.

Reservations must be made by September 1 for the discounted group booking rate.



Relationship with Christ UMC

This past Monday, our Church Council approved a formal response to the proposal set forth by Christ United Methodist Church in late July. Our response affirms the direction of Christ UMC's proposal, recognizing that we are in a time of Holy Experimentation as we figure out how to expand our relationship towards a potential merger into a future federated church. The highlights:

- No major decision will be made until we have had time to conduct a thorough congregational process and allowed for congregational vote(s).
- Affirmed the continuation of Rev. Lynne as pastor of both congregations and future pastoral selection would be through a process of search and call (UCC process)
- Seeks clarification of Rev. Dawn's future time with Christ UMC
- Seeks clarification of definition of United Methodist presence (pertains to ownership of property)
- Expresses the ongoing retention of denominational relationships
- Establishment of unified budget for 2025 supported by church members' giving and other financial assets as determined by each church
- Requests that both churches conduct a fall stewardship campaign in anticipation of a unified budget
- Continued unified leadership on boards and eventually council
- The offering of a unified congregational conversation on September 22 to facilitate the presentation of information to both congregations with allowance for independent congregational discussion

If you are interested in reading the full response, you can find it here:

<https://drive.google.com/file/d/1dqryegk2MzZGssKc65mLWJOrRr5kDXi5/view?usp=sharing>.

Coming Up

Sunday, August 25- Friday, August 30

Great Escape Adult Camp at Christikon

Wednesday, August 28- School Starts!

1:30 P.M. Pinochle, Fellowship Hall

Friday, August 30-Monday, September 2

Pride Camp at Camp & Retreat Center

Monday, September 3- Labor Day

Office closed
