
The Good News

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September 11, 2024

Issue 37

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

Unified Worship Service
First Congregational United Church of Christ
and Christ United Methodist Church
September 15, 2024
9:30 A.M.



Take up your
cross

Minister: Rev. Lynne Spencer-Smith

Scripture: Mark 8:27-38

Lay Reader: Susan Thomas

Ushers: Lois Baker, Jeanne Nobbs

Acolytes: Kaeden Dunn, Bailey Schrader

Accompanist: Dean Jardee

Choir Director: Jason Webster

Sunday School: Noël Walker, Linda Grossman

Nursery: Gracie Kuszmaul, CJ Mollohan

Fellowship: Dave & Debbe Rothweiler

Tellers: Steve Gettel, Noël Walker

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

Rally Day... Wow!

Thank you to everyone who contributed to and participated in our Rally Day Celebration last Sunday. The place was blooming with great joy and our “garden” was flourishing!



Christian Education News

The first week of Sunday School was a welcoming, wonderful time shared by 17 children ages 6-12 and 4 adults. After learning what “Welcome” means, the class worked together to decorate the wall at the bottom of the stairs to extend welcome to others. Check it out! **This week, children will begin in worship, experience Pastor Lynne’s message then join Noël Walker and Linda Grossman for a lesson about “Ruth”.** Starting this week, adults will be asked to sign children out when they pick them up from Sunday School. And don’t forget! **Registration forms for Sunday School and Nursery plus adult information forms are due by September 29.** Hard copies are available in the narthex (entryway) and digital forms will be emailed this week.

Youth Group News

All youth grades 6-12 are invited to join the fun with the combined Methodist and Congregational Youth Group! The first meeting is scheduled for Wednesday, September 11 from 6:00-8:00 P.M. and will feature an ice cream social. Parents Night will take place on Wednesday, September 18 from 6:00-8:00 P.M. and will feature a bbq. Even if you don't have a kid in Youth Group, you can participate in this ministry in several simple ways. The group would appreciate **donations of snacks** such as individual servings of crackers, chips, cookies, etc. or fresh fruit like apples and oranges. Even more, the youth would love to **include adults in their group each week**. Dedicated leaders **Kelly McKeehan and Tom Skerritt** plan the lessons and activities but need several more adults to ensure compliance with Safe Gatherings (similar to FCUCC Safe Conduct) protocols. Adults can help in **discussion groups**, **transport kids** to the corn maze or **escort high school students** to an evening coffee time. Please contact Janet Koostra at 406-727-8443 or janetkoostra@gmail.com if this a ministry you're interested in.

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.**



Women's Coffee

**Saturday, September 14 at 10:30 A.M.
Morning Light Coffee
Share a favorite vacation spot or trip**

Notice of Special Congregational Conversation

September 22 following an abbreviated worship service

Please plan to participate in a presentation of the latest developments in the conversation for the potential merger of Christ UMC and First Congregational UCC. **Following an abbreviated worship service, both congregations will remain in the sanctuary for a presentation about where we are at this point and a general Q&A session.** Then, we'll separate into congregations for further discussion. Christ UMC will have their conversation in Fellowship Hall and FCUCC will remain in the sanctuary.

Canoeing the Mountains by Tod Bolsinger Book Study

It has begun! **Every other Monday at 10:30 A.M. in the Parlor. Next session is September 23. We will NOT be offering the Zoom sessions on Tuesday nights.** If you weren't able to attend the first session and are still interested, jump on board for the second session on September 23. **You'll want to read chapter one of the book.** Get the book from your favorite book source.

Fishing for Volunteers

Our week at the FISH Food Pantry is September 16-20 from 9:00-11:00 A.M. If you would like to distribute food to families in need, please call Carol Davidson at 836-1862.

Pastoral Relations Committee

The Pastoral Relations Committees exists to: **Advise** and support the Minister(s); Provide a means of communication for member(s) to Minister(s); Function as a mediating body in instances of conflict involving staff or members of the congregation; Provide guidance for the professional development and continuing education of the Minister(s); Make recommendations for Ministerial compensation and benefits to the Business Affairs Board and the Church Council. **The committee is meeting on September 16 at 10:00 A.M.** If you have anything to share, please contact any of the members: **Dick Kloppel, Karen Spencer, Nancy Zadick or Steve Gettel.**

August 31, 2024 Financial Highlights First Congregational United Church of Christ

Income

Pledges Actual YTD	Pledges Budgeted YTD	Pledges Budgeted Total Year
\$118,567.00	\$124,775.00	\$187,162.00

Other Income

Actual YTD	Budgeted YTD	Budgeted Total Year
\$20,142.00	\$18,962.00	\$28,443.00

Memorial Board Donation

Actual YTD	Budgeted YTD	Budgeted Total Year
\$90,980.00	\$60,653.00	\$90,980.00

Total Income

Actual YTD	Budgeted YTD	Budgeted Total Year
\$229,689.00	\$204,390.00	\$306,585.00

Expenses

Actual YTD	Budgeted YTD	Budgeted Total Year
\$192,123.00	\$203,800.00	\$305,700.00



Thank you to all who support the church through financial gifts. As a way to keep everyone informed, the Business Affairs Board will be providing periodic financial updates in the Good News. Here's where we stand in regards to overall income and expenses in relation to our budget. **If you'd like to see the detailed financial report as of the end of August, scan the QR code.**

Women In Faith

Women in Faith (WIF), a long time women's group in Christ United Methodist Church, is a fellowship of women who meet every month on the 3rd Thursday at 1:00 P.M. in the Fellowship Hall. This month they are having a special program to spotlight homeless children and how some are being housed at the Missouri River Youth Home. The executive director, Stacie Eckenstein will tell us about the Kairos Youth Home and how we can connect with them. **Mark your calendars for September 19 at 1:00 P.M. to join this group of caring women.**



A Message from the Worship Board:

The worship board has been meeting with members of Christ United Methodist to plan for ongoing joint worship services this fall. **Through our meetings, we've created a "unified" worship board.** Though our services are very similar, there are a few differences. Starting this fall unified services will include meaningful and important traditions from each of our congregations.

The Board is also working with Janet Koostra and Pastor Dawn Skerritt to grow the involvement of youth from both churches in worship. Beyond acolyting, the younger students might help with Sunday morning usher duties like greeting members and helping with the collection. Older students might serve as lay readers. We aim to provide church youth with opportunities to serve and form strong connections with adults in the congregation. Janet will provide more information to parents and youth about signing up for service opportunities.

Coming Up

Thursday, September 12

4:00 P.M. Unified Worship Board, Parlor

Friday, September 13

1:30 P.M. Grief Support, Parlor

4:00 P.M. Fellowship Board, Fellowship Hall

Saturday, September 14

10:30 A.M. Ladies Coffee, Morning Light

Sunday, September 15

10:45 A.M. Christian Education, Parlor

3:00 P.M. Stewardship Board, Zoom

Monday, September 16

6:30 P.M. Church Council, Zoom

Wednesday, September 18

10:00 A.M. Bridge, SS Wing

1:30 P.M. Pinochle, Fellowship Hall

6:00 P.M. Youth Group/Parent Night

6:00 P.M. Handbell Rehearsal, Sanctuary

7:15 P.M. Choir Rehearsal, Sanctuary

Thursday, September 19

1:00 P.M. Women In Faith, Fellowship hall

Friday, September 20

1:30 P.M. Grief Support, Parlor

With Each Word a Child Reads, They Are Gaining Knowledge

Imagine Volunteering Together and Building Readers

Please note: All training sessions and background checks are at the Great Falls Public School District office at 1100 4th Street S.

Please see the dates and times below.

Volunteers are needed to join the reading program at West Elementary. The goal is to build strong readers in elementary school so that all children leave elementary school with solid reading skills and habits. Here's how it works: A group of at least 5-7 adults each agree to spend 1 hour per week in an elementary school. The adults each cover a day of the week and cover or trade with each other when their schedule changes or one person goes on vacation. This means the young readers get extra practice every day of the week—and get to know at least 5 wonderful volunteers in our community! Volunteers have one student at a time join them to practice reading skills for 5-10 minutes. Volunteers see about 5-7 children in that hour. Before meeting the young readers, volunteers complete a 90-minute training, complete a background check at GFPS, get a tour of the school, and meet the school Principal.

- **Training starts the week of September 16, 2024**
- **The Building Readers program is scheduled to begin October 1, 2024**
- **Background checks through the school district are necessary to participate.** They are provided at the GFPS district office at 1100 4th St. S. Go to the HR office at the east end of the main building (door M). If you've had a background check through the school district, you should be okay, unless it's been quite a while since you have volunteered.
- **What you can do in the meantime:** Check your schedule to see if you are available for training the week of September 16. Get your background check done before then.

If you are interested in volunteering for 2024-25 Building Readers program, please contact the church office or email Sharon Oakland at dsoak02@gmail.com or Karen Venetz, kvenetz183@gmail.com

Questions about the reading program should be directed to the Great Falls Public School District office at (406) 268-6000

Initial Session for New Volunteers	Refresher Session with New Materials for volunteers from 2023-2024
Monday, September 16, 2024 12:00 P.M.-1:30 P.M.	Thursday, September 19, 2024 12:00 P.M.-1:00 P.M.
Thursday, September 19, 2024 4:00 P.M.-5:30 P.M.	Monday, September 23, 2024 12:00 P.M.-1:00 P.M.

ALL SESSIONS ARE AT THE DISTRICT OFFICE- 1100 4th Street S.

West Elementary Food Pantry Drive Continues

Items Needed Most:

Jelly	Cup of Soup	Canned soup – with a flip top if available
Cereal	Pasta sauce in a jar	Canned fruit and vegetables
Ramen	Can openers	Chili – with a flip top if available

Place items in the narthex in the West Elementary bin