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# The Good News

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

**Unified *Abbreviated* Service of  
First Congregational United Church of Christ  
and Christ United Methodist Church**

**September 22, 2024**

**9:30 A.M.**

**Followed by Congregational Conversation**



Ministers: Rev. Lynne Spencer-Smith

Rev. Dawn Skerritt

Scripture: Acts 2:1-12

Lay Reader: Cara Dunn

Ushers: Dale and Nancy Dallmann

Accompanist: Dean Jardee

Choir Director: Jason Webster

Sunday School: Janet Koostra, Gwen Valley

Nursery: Gracie Kuszmaul, CJ Mollohan

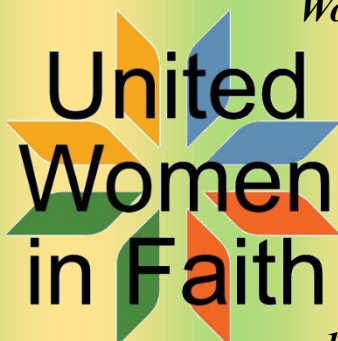
Fellowship: Verna Kessner, Kim Kay McCarty Martin

Tellers: Paul Haffeman, Carol Shipley

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

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## ***Women In Faith This Week***



**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 3<sup>rd</sup> 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. *Join us this Thursday, September 19 at 1:00 P.M. We can't wait to see you there!***

***Important Congregational Conversation***  
***This Sunday September 22, approximately 10:00 A.M.***

Following an abbreviated service, everyone is invited to remain in the sanctuary for some updates and general Q&A. There will be time after that for each congregation to hold their own conversations; Christ UMC in the Fellowship Hall and UCC in the Sanctuary. Fellowship refreshments will be available. Some significant updates in the ongoing conversation:

- Beginning in October, Holly will publish a unified newsletter containing information from both congregations
- A unified budget will be prepared for 2025
- Rev. Lynne is taking the lead on all worship services
- Now through the end of October, Rev. Dawn will participate in 2 services per month (honoring her ½ time appointment with Christ UMC) and will preach once in October
- Christ UMC is contributing financial support for unified worship and newsletter expenses
- Unified ministries will continue to take shape with Christ UMC representation on boards
- Members of both congregations are invited to participate in all activities, regardless of who is offering them

Christ UMC's leadership has offered a response to our Council's latest requests which included some clarification around Rev. Dawn's timeline and changing responsibilities; sharing of financial information; and obtaining an appraisal of our portion of the property and building. **Details of this response will be discussed at the Congregational Conversation this Sunday.**

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***Christian Education News***

**Children age 5-8<sup>th</sup> grade will spend the morning in Sunday School.** Sunday School and worship will be abbreviated (about 30 minutes) to make extra time for continued discussion regarding merger plans. For program year 2024-45, the Christian Education Board has adopted the theme “Caring For . . .”. Once a month a special lesson for children age 5- 8<sup>th</sup> grade will focus on “Caring For” a part of God’s creation. **Our first special lesson is “Caring For. . . Ourselves”.** Activities will include a story, making a collage, decorating mirrors and a song. **Friendly reminder that parents and guardians must sign children out of Sunday School. Registration forms for Sunday School, nursery, and parent/guardian information forms are due by September 29<sup>th</sup>.** Hard copies are available on the table in the narthex in front of the Pride flag. Digital copies are also available—please email Janet Koostra at [janetkoostra@gmail.com](mailto:janetkoostra@gmail.com).

**Childcare Available for September 22 Meeting.** Our wonderful nursery staff, CJ Mollohan and Gracie Kuszmaul will provide childcare on September 22 following worship for the joint congregation discussion about the potential merger between First Congregational and Christ UMC. **Kids will go to the Sunday School wing for snacks, activities, and a movie.**

**Parent Night at Youth Group is Wednesday, September 18 starting at 6:00 P.M. with a barbeque.** All youth in grades 6 -12 and their parents/guardians are invited for a night of food, fun and important information. Youth Group is still looking for a few dependable adults to be helpers as well as other folks to donate snacks for weekly gatherings.

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Town Pump has again selected FISH to be a part of the  
“Be a Friend In Deed, Help Those in Need” Campaign.  
**Between now and November 30, Town Pump will match every donation,  
up to \$25,000, given to FISH.**

*Canoeing the Mountains*  
*by Tod Bolsinger*  
*Book Study*

**Next Session: Monday, September 23, 10:30 A.M. in the Parlor**  
Participants are reminded to bring back their Spiritual Gifts Assessment  
from the first session and read Chapter 1.

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*Special Worship Offering on September 29*

**Dr. Kelly Quick** will be presenting the message on Sunday September 29, bringing reflection and examples of activities from Pride Camp. Plan to attend and learn more about this successful ecumenical event that was held just this past summer as part of the Montana-Northern Wyoming Conference Outdoor Ministries.

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*Grief Support Group*

Please make note that GriefShare will NOT meet on Friday, September 27.

The group will meet this Friday, September 20 and will resume on October 4 at 1:30 P.M. in the parlor. For more information, please call the church office or email Linda at [lindakredding@hotmail.com](mailto:lindakredding@hotmail.com). To learn more about GriefShare, please visit [griefshare.org](http://griefshare.org).

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*Family Promise*  
*September News*

We've officially entered the "ber" months and are ready for a successful fall and winter season. We have two new families in our shelter with a total of four children. **On Thursday, November 21, from 5:00 P.M.-8:00 P.M., we are hosting an awareness event at the University of Providence Student Center.** A Night Without a Bed is planned with the help of students from local high schools and will feature partner organizations. The goal is to raise awareness about familial homelessness and the services that are available to those in need in our community. Everyone is welcome to attend. We plan to have several organizations with interactive booths for people to view life through the lens of a person in crisis. **Tiffany Wilkson will be asking for holiday donations for our two shelter families.** One mom with three kids and another mom with mom kiddo. We'll be needing items to put together holiday meal baskets, and of course some presents for the kids. **Our holiday appreciation party will take place in November for donors, supporters, and volunteers.** We will open our Day Center for light appetizers and holiday cheer! **For more Family Promise Great Falls news, please visit [www.familypromisegf.org](http://www.familypromisegf.org).**

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*West Elementary Food Drive*

The Christian Service Board continues sponsoring a food drive for the West Elementary Food Pantry. This collection will go on for another week or so. Items needed the most are:

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

Ramen  
Chili – with a flip top if available  
Can openers

Please place food items in the narthex in the West Elementary bin. If you would like to make a monetary donation, please make the check to UCC and mark the memo to WE food drive or scan this QR code and mark the notation as WE food drive. Your generosity of food fills the children's imaginations with caring thoughts instead of empty stomachs. West Elementary School is very grateful to you for your generosity. **Food Pantry donations are planned through September 29<sup>th</sup>.**



**Next weekend, September 26 – 29, The Montana-Northern Wyoming Conference will gather in Billings for the 139<sup>th</sup> Annual Meeting.** The meeting is co-hosted by First and Mayflower churches with some additional support for some meals and hosting by other churches in the area. It's going to be a big deal.

You will be represented by lay delegates **Dean Jardee, June Rovero** (who will be participating virtually), **Carol Shipley, and Ray Young.** In addition, **Hank Branom and Denise Jackson** will be there as members of the Board of Directors. This meeting will mark the conclusion of Hank's term as Conference Moderator. Denise continues her term as chair of the Committee for Outdoor Ministries. **Rev. Sara Branom and I will be attending as clergy delegates.** I'm actually checking off two boxes because I'm a member of the Board, serving as secretary. During the meeting, **Liz Lee** will be part of the slate of nominees to be elected to serve in Conference leadership. She has been nominated for Human Resource ministry. Carol Shipley has been nominated to serve as General Synod Delegate. Dean Jardee will be part of the Conference Minister Search Committee who has recommended that Tony Clark be called as our Conference Minister. There will be A LOT of folks from Great Falls present and active in Billings.



As you can see by the logo, the theme of this meeting is about creating a culture of call. Looking at the list of folks who have responded to an invitation to serve the church from Great Falls, I wonder about what is it about who we are as a community of faith that fosters such leadership. I'm no expert in the development of church leadership but this is what I've seen over the years.

People are willing to serve:

- When they believe in the mission
- When the efforts of the organization has benefited them personally
- When they know the organization is making a difference in people's lives
- When they know that what they can offer (time, insights, talents) will be honored and utilized well
- When they know the organization is utilizing resources well and with integrity

I've also discovered that people have a sense of call to what the organization is doing. They usually have a passion for something and recognize that there's a need that that passion can fill. Author Frederick Buechner put it this way:

*"The place God calls you to is the place where your deep gladness and the world's deep hunger meet."*

That's when I think about our own church and the people that are involved in the various ministries we offer. The folks who love food and feeding people and creating an atmosphere of hospitality fulfill their calling on the Fellowship Board. Folks who love kids and faith fulfill their calling on

the Christian Education Board and teaching Sunday school. People who get a kick out of working with numbers and organizing physical resources make great treasurers and Business Affairs Board members. People who have a passion for worship and the care of souls may just have a call to ministry. You get the idea.

We are in the midst of our stewardship campaign. We are in the midst of the conversation with Christ United Methodist about the possibility of merging our ministries. We are in the midst of exciting times. What is it that you gives you deep gladness and how can you bring that together with the needs of the world (or the church)? Stewardship is about more than money and budgets. It's a ministry and mission. Certainly, money and budgets are part of what makes the ministry and mission happen. So, too, do your passions and the sharing of your gifts, talents and time. If you've set the Opportunities to Serve form aside, thinking that there's nothing there for you, think again. Spend some time thinking about what gives you great joy then pick up that form and look at the needs. There is somewhere that those two things will come together.

Let us continue to imagine together that we are creating a culture of love and service and within that, a culture of call where people's gifts are called forth, honored and used to create a world of extravagant love and grace.

Have a blessed week. Rev. Lynne

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### ***Coming Up***

#### **Thursday, September 19**

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

#### **Friday, September 20**

1:30 P.M. Grief Support, Parlor

#### **Sunday, September 22**

10:00 A.M. Congregational Conversations

#### **Monday, September 23**

10:30 A.M. Canoeing the Mountains Book Study, Parlor

#### **Wednesday, September 25**

1:30 P.M. Pinochle, Fellowship Hall

6:00 P.M. Youth Group

6:00 P.M. Handbell Rehearsal, Sanctuary

7:15 P.M. Choir Rehearsal, Sanctuary

#### **Friday, September 27**

NO Grief Support

***Holly will be out of the office September 26-30.***