

The Good News

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

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

September 8, 2024

9:30 A.M.

Rally Sunday Garden Party

The Choir is Singing!

Sunday School following the Children's Message

Food, Fun and Fellowship after Worship



Rev. Lynne Spencer-Smith and Rev. Dawn Skerritt

Scripture: Genesis 2:4b-9, 18-23

Acolytes: Lily Borland, Elvis Light

Accompanist: Dean Jardee

Choir Director Jason Webster

Sunday School: Janet Koostra, Erin Borland, June Rovero

Nursery: Gracie Kuzmaul, CJ Mollohan

Tellers: Ed Venetz, Nancy Zadick

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

Christian Education News



Welcome back to Sunday School! **September 8 is the first day of Sunday School for children age 5- grade 5!** Children will begin in worship where they will share a time with Pastor Lynne. Then children and teachers will head to Sunday School for a "Welcome Back" class time. **Nursery will also be in full swing for youngsters through age 5 with care providers CJ Mollohan and Gracie Kuzmaul.**

Parents/guardians will need to fill out registration forms for both nursery and Sunday School children. Adults are also asked to fill out an information form. Hard copies of all forms are on a table in the narthex (entryway) in front of the Pride flag. We also hope to have the forms available in a digital format, too, to help save paper! **All forms should be returned by September 29.** Following Sunday School and worship, everyone is invited to join the Rally Day fun in the Fellowship Hall with food, games, activities and prizes! It's a wonderful way to kick off our program year! Questions? Call, text or email Janet Koostra at 406-727-8443 or janetkoostra@gmail.com. We can't wait to share another fun and educational year with everyone!

Welcome Gracie!

Introducing our new nursery staff employee, Gracie Kuszmaul. Gracie and her family moved to Great Falls from Utah a little over a year ago to be closer to family. She is a sophomore at Great Falls High School where she plays soccer, varsity softball and earns excellent grades. She is the oldest of three children. She started in the nursery on August 18. Stop in and tell Gracie hello!

Ecclesiastical Council for Barbara Gulick
Billings First Congregational UCC and Zoom
Thursday, September 5, 2024
5:30 – 7:00 P.M.

In the United Church of Christ, the authority to ordain ministers and to grant ministerial standing is given to Associations. In our case, the Montana - N. Wyoming Conference acts as an Association. Our Church and Ministry Commission has been meeting with Barbara Gulick as a Member-in-Discernment to guide her preparation and call to authorized ministry. Barbara has prepared an ordination portfolio for review by the Church and Ministry Commission, and is recommended as a candidate for an Ecclesiastical Council. Delegates from local churches are invited to the Ecclesiastical Council to examine Barbara's ordination paper and to ask questions about her faith, practices, and readiness to serve as an authorized minister, and then vote to approve or disapprove her for ordination.

The registration deadline will be open through September 4, 2024 at:

<https://www.mnwcucc.org/ec-gulick>

If you will be attending virtually, please also register with zoom for the meeting link.

[https://us02web.zoom.us/meeting/register/tZMpdeGhrjIqGdTJty_qFhAag_ySVWOET9-C](https://us02web.zoom.us/join/zoom/register/tZMpdeGhrjIqGdTJty_qFhAag_ySVWOET9-C)

Barbara's ordination paper available to all prior to the ecclesiastical council at this link:

https://drive.google.com/file/d/1_3md0uIGPaqIrk6iNgPurkkO5IG9qRGP/view



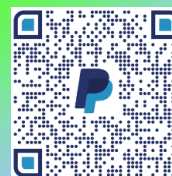
**FEED THE
HUNGRY**

West Elementary Food Pantry Drive

After a great summer, the West Elementary Food Pantry has empty shelves to begin the school year. As you are grocery shopping, please add a few extra items to your basket. The items the pantry needs most are listed below. Full tummies learn more and enjoy learning.

- 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 29th.**



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” Book Study

Begins Next Week!

Monday, September 9, 10:30 – Noon, in the Parlor

Tuesday, September 10, 6:30 – 8:00 P.M. on Zoom

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

Meeting ID: 857 9603 5444 Passcode: 590718)

Registration is not required but is helpful. **We currently do not have anyone signed up for the zoom sessions. Please contact Rev. Lynne if you are planning to participate on Zoom so she knows whether or not to keep this option available.**

Join with others in the reading and discussion of “Canoeing the Mountains: Christian Leadership in Uncharted Territory” by Tod Bolsinger. When the Corps of Discovery headed into the west, they were sure they would find a waterway to the Pacific Ocean. What they found instead was mountains. Lots of mountains. If they were going to make their way to the Pacific Ocean, they would have to adapt. The church (not just our own!) is facing similar challenges. What we have found along the church’s journey in mission is not what we expected. It is uncharted territory! **Tod Bolsinger uses the lessons of Lewis and Clark and the Corps of Discovery to help guide churches through times of uncertainty into the future.** *You are responsible to purchase your own book. Start reading at any time. The first session will not require any advance reading.*



Women’s Coffee

Saturday, September 14 at 10:30 A.M.

Morning Light Coffee

Share a favorite vacation spot or trip

Fishing for Volunteers

Hey everyone! Just letting you know that our next turn to work at the FISH Food Pantry is **September 16-20 from 9:00-11:00.** **If you'd like to volunteer and distribute food to families in need, please call Carol Davidson at 836-1862.** Thank you so much if you can help!

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.**



Dear Members of First Congregational UCC and Christ United Methodist,

One of the most important this a congregation can do is take steps to ensure the safety of its congregants, staff, and church property. **The UCC Church Council is forming a task force to investigate our church's safety and security needs.** This may include conducting a safety assessment and developing policies and procedures necessary to prevent or deal with threats and emergencies. **The Council invites interested First Congregational and Christ United Methodist members/friends to join the task force.** We are particularly interested in folks experienced in safety planning and security systems. **If you would like to participate, please get in touch with Holly in the church office by September 13.**



Town Pump has again selected FISH to be a part of the "Be a Friend In Deed, Help Those in Need" Campaign. **Between September 1-November 30, Town Pump will match every donation, up to \$25,000, given to FISH.**

Coming Up

Thursday, September 5

4:00 P.M. Joint Facilities, Fellowship Hall

Monday, September 9

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

1:00 P.M. Church Growth, Fellowship Hall

1:00 P.M. Christian Service, Parlor

6:00 P.M. Business Affairs, Zoom

Tuesday, September 10

6:30 P.M. Canoeing the Mountains, Zoom

Wednesday, September 11

1:00 P.M. Prayer Meeting, Parlor

1:30 P.M. Pinochle, Fellowship Hall

6:00 P.M. Handbell Rehearsal, Choir Rm.

7:15 P.M. Choir Rehearsal, Sanctuary

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

With Each Word a Child Reads, They Are Gaining Knowledge

Imagine Volunteering Together and Building Readers



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. In the 2023-2024 school year, the GFPS piloted a group tutoring model in two elementary schools. The evaluations from students, teachers, principals, and volunteers are showing positive results, and both schools—and their volunteers—want to continue Building Readers next year. For 2024-2025, they aim to add five

more elementary schools to the project, including West Elementary School. 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

So far we have Dennis Dell, Sue Skees, Lila Byers and Dan & Sharon Oakland. If anyone is missed, please let Karen Venetz know at kvenetz183@gmail.com or (406) 868-5989.

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.