

Montana - N. Wyoming Conference
United Church of Christ

CONFERENCE NEWS

Together in Spirit - January 16, 2025



DEPTH OF FAITH

Rev. Dr. Tony Clark, Conference Minister

Happy New Year! There is a quietness in this early January, perhaps because of the snow, perhaps because of the cold, perhaps because of the short days. The holiday hubbub has passed, decorations are coming down, family and friends have gone back to their work-a-day lives, and our government is returning to its performances of certifying elections, swearing in officials, and mourning a president.

During President Carter's funeral, I heard favorite words from Paul's letters that I have read at many funerals. Carter's grandson read Romans 8:38-39, telling us that nothing can separate us from the love of God in Christ Jesus. Rev. Andrew Young, who is an authorized minister in the United Church of Christ, read Ephesians 4: 31-32, telling us to be kind, tenderhearted and forgiving as Christ was.

The quietude of early January will not last forever. The day of national mourning closes with the setting sun, and our nation's next weeks will include honoring one of our nation's greatest prophets, Rev. Dr. Martin Luther King, Jr., on the same day of the inauguration of a president who seems unaligned with either King or Carter. How that Monday is spent, and whatever our nation faces after that day, like Paul, I am convinced that neither rulers nor powers will separate us from the love of Christ. How we display that love to neighbors, friends, frenemies, and even enemies will reveal the depth of our faith.

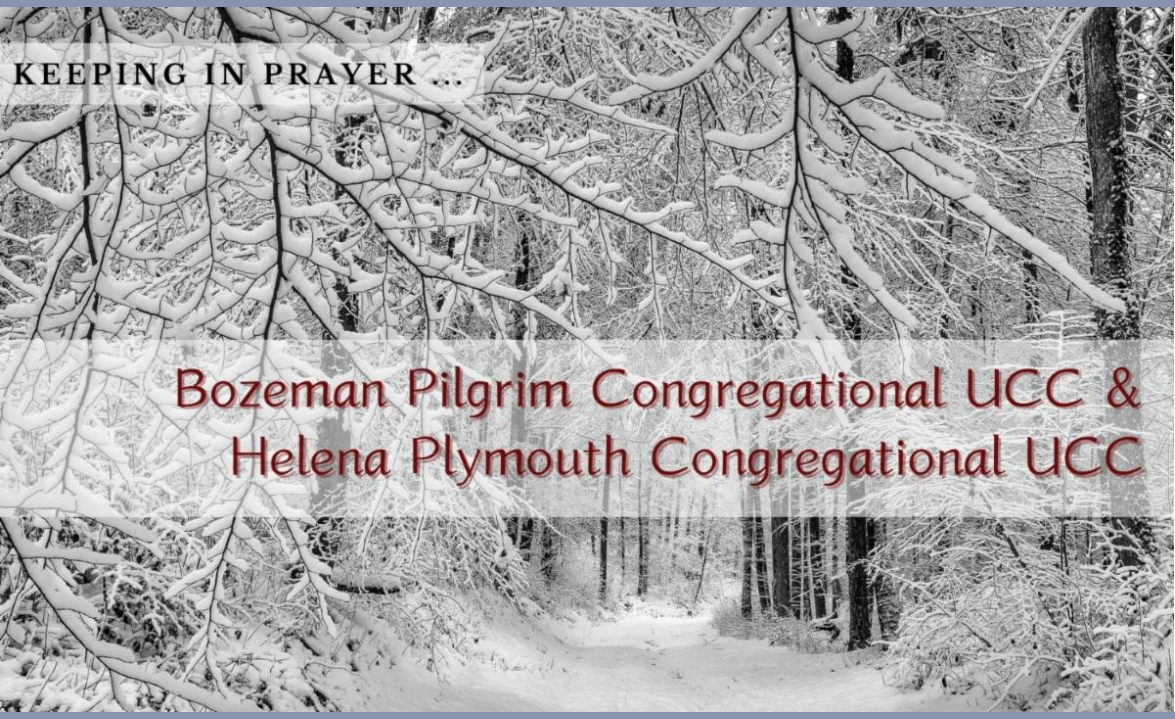
My faith has often been challenged by the actions of our government. I cry out to God, praying for humane actions toward those living under the injustices of a powerful government. I pray that Christians of all stripes will find their ways into kindness, tenderheartedness, and forgiveness, and that we all might put away falsehood, and speak the truth to our neighbors (Eph. 4:25).

Blessings on your 2025; may you live in the love of Christ,
Pastor Tony

JANUARY						
S	M	T	W	T	F	S
			1	2	3	4
5	6	7	8	9	10	11
12	13	14	15	16	17	18
19	20	21	22	23	24	25
26	27	28	29	30	31	

JANUARY

- January 20 - Martin Luther King Jr. Day - Office Closed
- January 21 - Green Team @ 3:00 pm
- January 22 - Clergy Zoom Open Forum @ 9 am
- January 22 - Board of Directors @ 6 pm
- January 28 - Church and Ministry @ 3:30 pm





CPC 2025 BOUNDARY AWARENESS TRAINING VIA ZOOM

REMINDER: Boundary Awareness Training 2025 - via ZOOM

**February 4 from 9am to 2pm PDT / 10am to 3pm MDT
(will include breaks)**

We're excited to, once again, provide this Boundary Training, led by [Margaret Marcuson](#) and based in Family Systems - now via ZOOM!

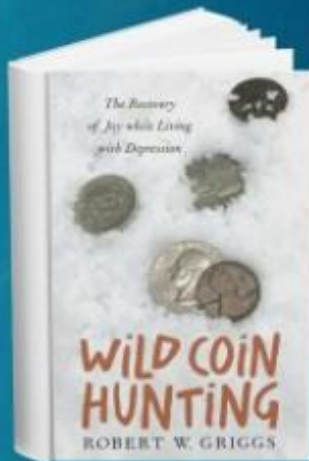
Those who have attended it the past two years have given it high marks, and by having a three-year cycle with the same trainer, we are able to share similar vocabularies across the conference.

This year, we're **providing the training via Zoom**, for those who have struggled to attend in person in years past.

Cost is \$100

The ZOOM link will be sent to all participants via email prior to the meetings.

Register Now!



READING INTO THE NEW YEAR:

*Wild Coin Hunting: The Recovery of Joy while
Living with Depression* by: Robert Griggs

Thursday, January 23rd | 3:30 PM Eastern



KinShift.

— MUSIC —

Dear Fellow Pastors and Music Ministers of the United Church of Christ,

As we prepare to step into a pivotal moment in history, we at Kindred UCC in the St. Louis, Missouri area, feel called to offer a gift—a new song that we hope will inspire, strengthen, and unite your congregations as we navigate the challenges and opportunities ahead.

So, it is with great joy that I introduce our first release from KinShift Music, a new ministry of Kindred UCC dedicated to supporting faith-based communities with music rooted in the progressive Christian values of equity, unity, justice, mercy and humility. This song, titled *Love is Greater Than Fear*, is inspired by 1 John 4:18: "There is no fear in love; perfect love casts out fear."

We have been singing *Love is Greater Than Fear* in our church since October, and it became a powerful anthem of resilience and hope the Sunday after the election. Amid tears and anxiety, it called us to stand, clap our hands, and declare, "We're not going back."

This coming weekend, as Martin Luther King Jr. Day coincides with the presidential inauguration, we'll share the accompanying video with our congregation for the first time.

And now, before we release this song to the general public, we are sharing it with you.

Here's how you can join us in spreading this message of courage and love:

1. **[Download the audio file and sheet music](#)** to teach *Love is Greater Than Fear* to your congregation.
2. **[Watch and share the video](#)** You can play it in your church services this weekend or any time you feel it's needed.
3. **Stream the song** on Spotify, Apple Music, and other platforms. Use it as personal inspiration and share it with your networks.
4. **Help us spread the song.** Post it on social media, email it to friends and colleagues, and most importantly, sing it out loud. Let it power our movement of love and justice.

For those of you in the midst of raging fires and those recovering from hurricanes and other natural disasters, we see you, our hearts are with you, and we believe this song could support your communities when it's right for you.

We know the work of Christ remains the same, regardless of who occupies the halls of power. We are called to include all in the body of Christ, to do justice, love mercy and walk humbly with our God. But we also recognize that the road ahead may be challenging, requiring more courage, unity, and action than ever before.

We pray that *Love is Greater Than Fear* will offer your congregation the fortitude and faith to meet this moment.

Thank you for your partnership in ministry and for all you do to live out the radical, inclusive love of Christ. May this song be a source of strength and inspiration for your community, just as it has been for ours.

In faith and solidarity,

Rev. Monty Jackson

Pastor, Kindred UCC

Founder, KinShift Music

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The UCC's 2025 Climate Hope Art Contest for Children and Youth

We have officially launched the UCC's 2025 Climate Hope Art Contest for children and youth. Our theme this year is "Planting Seeds of Hope." We'll accept art submissions from February 2nd to March 14th. Like last year, we will have winners for different age groups and an overall winner who will receive an all-expense paid trip to visit Washington, DC with a parent or guardian. (Last year's winner had two members of congress personally ask her for a poster of her artwork, so that they could hang it in their offices!) The winning art will additionally serve as the logo for UCC Climate Hope advocacy work throughout 2025.

[Register now for your church to participate!](#)



Rev. Dr. Tony Clark - Conference Minister
Jennifer Penfield - Administrator & Registrar
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