

The Good News of First Congregational UCC and Christ United Methodist Church

Volume 2025

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

We will not be celebrating Holy Communion this week. Join us next week to that sacrament as part of Rev. Lynne's farewell worship service.

October 5, 2025 Worship Service 10:00 A.M.



Dr. Kelly Quick leading worship

Scripture: Psalm 72:1-2, 7-8, 12-13, 17
Isaiah 11:1-10, Luke 10:21-24

Lay Reader: John Baker

Ushers: Judy Feiden, Rebecca Marinko

Acolyte: tbd

Accompanist/Music Director: Melissa Gilbert

Sunday School: tbd

Nursery: May Harris, Lily Yelvington

Coffee Fellowship: Dennis & Sue Turton

Treats: Elaine Balzer, Dennis Dell & Sue Skees

UCC Tellers: Carol Shipley, Ed Venetz

Christ UMC Tellers: Rosemary Neilsen, Jeanne Nobbs

The service will be live-streamed on both church Facebook pages and a recording of the livestream will be available on YouTube later in the day and on the UCC website.



Christian Education News

This week, children will begin in worship. **Janet Koostra will share a children's message.** The Sunday School lesson will be "The Parable of the Mustard Seed". Sunday School is for children age 5-grade 6. **Nursery care is provided during the worship hour for children through age 5.**

In Our Thoughts and Prayers

† The Search and Call Committee and the person whom God is preparing to be our next pastor.

Church Merger - Now What?

Dear Friends,

I begin by expressing my heartfelt gratitude for all the hard work and effort that has gone in to getting us to where we are with the merger of our two congregations. **Thank you especially to members of the Exploration Committee and the Church Council who have been working on bylaws and the name selection process.** I woke up on Sunday anticipating that we would be experiencing a decisive moment for our church. It was indeed decisive but not in the way many of us thought it would be. The short version is that we decided not to decide on a name—not just yet. It's clear from the comments and concerns raised at the meeting on Sunday that we are not at a place where we can come to a vote on a church name without causing division among us.

The decision to not decide did not come easy. It's a reminder that the ways of God are not always clear nor are they without difficulty. New life usually comes with some pain and discomfort. Sometimes what we feel with the emergence of new life is a sense of grief about what is lost with the change, even when the change is hoped for. Some of that grief for me is the realization that I will not accompany you into the fulfillment of the federation. It's perhaps one of the hardest letting-goes I've ever had to face. I have no doubt that the current leadership and the congregation is fully capable and will continue the work with faith and diligence. I also know that God will be with you all along the way. **My prayers will continue for the discernment of God's will for this church.**

There have been several times in my life where I've come to realize that the thing that I wanted the most and thought was what God had in mind for me just wasn't to be. Looking back on those times, I can see that what eventually came to be was the right thing. It was not always the easy thing or the most evident but the right thing. So, I embrace this decision to not decide with the realization that God is still speaking and is perhaps asking us to be quiet for a while. I trust you will eventually come to a decision about a name that will be fitting and acceptable. I trust the bylaws and articles of incorporation will fall into place sometime in the future. **I know that the shared ministry that was started almost fifty years ago and that we have been working to unify over the last two years will thrive and be a faithful expression of God's inclusive love in Great Falls and beyond.**

For now, I imagine a time of rest from the stresses of naming a new church. I hope that it will be a time of gentleness and healing. I pray for God's reconciling spirit to guide you into the future of God's dream for you and this church. May you continue to be open to that spirit and those dreams.

Rev. Lynne

A Heart-felt Thank You

I would like to offer my sincere gratitude to the **Exploration Committee**, the **Church Council** and **Rev. Lynne** for the tremendous amount of work they have been doing for the merger/federation and naming process. They have done research, crafted documents, and so much more. And with care and thoughtfulness, all concerned did the very best they could to do what is in the best interest of our combined congregations. I applaud their diligence and perseverance while offering my support. **Special thanks to Moderator Karen Spencer for her unparalleled leadership in all of this.**

Sincerely, Janet M. Koostra

If you would like to arrange a ride to Rev. Lynne's retirement celebration on Friday, October 10, please call the church office and we'll see what we can do.
Thank you.

Dear Church Family,

Many thanks to all who attended Sunday's congregational meeting regarding selection of a church name. While we did not arrive at a name, we gained valuable understanding and insights through the heartfelt words shared by members. To all who remained engaged and attentive throughout the lengthy discussion, I applaud your commitment. Your presence and participation demonstrate the strength of our fellowship and our collective dedication to the mission of our church.

Let me also express my appreciation to Hank Branom for gently guiding us through parliamentary procedures, giving all an opportunity to speak. The Church Council will discuss where we go from here at their October 20th meeting. **Should you think of any new name suggestions in the interim, please make note of them for future consideration.**

Grace and peace,

Karen Spencer, Moderator



CROP Walk

Sunday, October 5

1:00 P.M. at Elks Riverside Park

It's back! It's been a few years since there's been a CROP Walk in Great Falls. Central Christian Church is bringing it back. **If we work together, we can end world hunger.** That's why we're participating in the CROP Hunger Walk to support Church World Service and help families who are struggling with hunger. Please join us with your steps and your donations.

Together we will provide more meals for the growing number of people in our community who need them and create greater food security in communities around the world. Please donate to our team today! ***Amanda Gosik, Emily Comstock and LeAnn A Budeski***

Register to walk or donate at

<https://events.crophungerwalk.org/crophungerwalks/team/central-christian-church-4>

More information is available on the Welcome Table at church.

Extra! Extra! Directories Are Here!

Our new combined pictorial directory is hot off the press! Stop in the church office to pick one up or stop by the table in the narthex on Sunday to get your copy from members of the Church Growth and Vitality Board! **One per household, please.**



Party Helpers Needed

You are all invited to help the Christian Education Board throw an **Indoor Trick-or-Treat Party** for our church children and kids from both West and Lincoln Elementary Schools. We need help decorating doors around the church's interior, helpers to hand out the treats and folks to donate goodies, too. **This fun**

afternoon is planned for Sunday, October 26 from 2:00-4:00 P.M. Please look for a sign-up sheet in the narthex or call **Janet Koostra** (or should it be "Boo"-stra?) **406-727-8443** or janetkoostra@gmail.com. "Boo"-lieve me; you'll "witch" to be part of the fun!



Our Culture of Generosity

Folks did not waste any time putting their Reverse Offering gift to good use.

Here are two stories. One is an example of tenacity, and the other is about understanding “small” things make a big difference. There are more stories to share reflecting the creativity, kindness and generosity of our congregations. Meanwhile, thank you for what each of you do as you live

your lives helping people in our church and community.

#1) Amount of money in envelope: \$5

What I did with the money:

I chose to buy a \$10 bus pass to give to a housebound elderly parishioner to help her be more independent.

Why I chose this act of kindness.

Giving her this option, she said she “really appreciates.”

What did you gain or learn from this experience?

Buying the pass was challenging. The street and sidewalk at the bus depot were under construction so after many different attempts I had to find a bus at the parking garage and buy it from a driver.

#2) Amount of money in envelope: \$5 and I added \$5

What I did with the money: Gave it to Lincoln School

Why I chose this act of kindness.

Because there are students unable to get a book or pay their library fine.

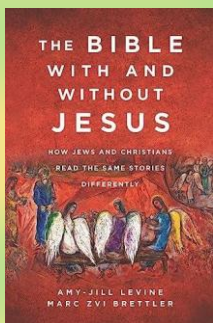
What did you gain or learn from this experience?

How something small can make someone happy and maybe have a good day!

This is a thank you note from Lincoln School: “We will be using this generous donation of \$10 to go towards helping student’s library book fines. Thank you. A. C. - Admin Assistant”.

Dreaming God’s Dream

The 2026 Stewardship Campaign is underway. Please remember to complete pledge cards and Opportunities to Serve forms **by October 19**. Thank you.



Bible Study Continues

Starting Wednesday, October 1, Bible study will continue. For guidance, we will be using *The Bible With and Without Jesus* by Amy-Jill Levine and Marc Zvi Brettler. The subtitle is how Jews and Christians read the same stories differently. The first session will be introducing the topic and getting text in the format best for you. It is possible to just read the Bible passage and not the book and still come and learn and grow. **Bible study will be on Wednesdays, from 10:00-11:30 A.M. in the church parlor.**



Philippines

Silliman University is a private Christian university located in Dumaguete City in the Philippines. Affiliated with the United Church of Christ in the Philippines (UCCP) yet committed to religious freedom, Silliman is known for its strong academic programs, particularly in fields such as education, law, medicine, and the arts, as well as its commitment to research, community service, and environmental sustainability. The Divinity School of Silliman University has a long tradition of educating theologians and students for ministry in the UCCP. The Silliman University Divinity School is noted for its innovative centers in justice and peace, clinical pastoral education, mission and inter-cultural studies in Asia, and music and liturgy. It continues to be a leading institution in the Philippines, attracting both local and international students.



Ulaanbaatar, Mongolia- The Coldest Capital City in the World

The United Methodist Church's Mongolia Mission Initiative held its annual meeting August 29-31 in Ulaanbaatar, marking its 23rd anniversary with historic milestones, joyful worship and renewed commitments to the future. Clergy and laity from across the vast nation celebrated the ordination of a mission elder, the recognition of two newly licensed mission pastors and the commissioning of seven lay ministers.

The Global Ministries-supported mission initiative is currently a network of 11 congregations and five mission organizations serving Mongolia's people through education, health care, leadership training and community development. Key Methodist outreach ministries include a 24-hour hospice facility, a new faith community in Zavkhan Province outside of Ulaanbaatar, and the Kairos Center, which offers classes, afterschool programming, a gym and community space.

Neighbors In Need

Carry each other's burdens, and in this way you will fulfill the law of Christ.

-Galatians 6:2

The Neighbors in Need offering supports ministries of justice and compassion, with one-third of the offering given to the Council for American Indian Ministries and the remaining two-thirds supporting UCC justice ministries.

The Council for American Indian Ministry (CAIM) is the voice for American Indian people in the UCC. CAIM provides Christian ministry and witness to American Indians and to the wider church. Justice issues that affect American Indian life are communicated to the whole UCC by CAIM. Historically, the forebears of the UCC established churches and worked with Lakota, Dakota, Nakota, Mandan, Hidatsa, Arickara, and Hocak in North and South Dakota, Wisconsin and northern Nebraska. Today there are 20 UCC congregations on reservations and one urban, multi-tribal UCC congregation in Minneapolis, Minnesota. CAIM supports these local churches and their pastors.

In addition, CAIM strives to be a resource for more than 1,000 individuals from dozens of other tribes and nations who are members of other UCC congregations and to strengthen their participation in the life of the church.

The Love of Church Ministries (LOC) of the United Church of Christ supports congregations and other settings of the church in doing justice, seeking peace, and building vibrant faith communities that are welcoming to all. From the National Setting in Cleveland, Ohio, Love of Church is responsible for supporting local churches with worship and faith-forming publications, resources, research and development, and education. The ministries and services of the Love of Church Ministries are central to the identity of the United Church of Christ.

The UCC Office of Public Policy and Advocacy in Washington D.C. is funded in part by gifts to Neighbors in Need. The goal of the UCC Washington D.C. Office is to make a better world possible by addressing the systemic injustices we face as a country and as part of the world.

The UCC Washington Office was called into being by a resolution at General Synod 10 in 1975. This predecessor body to Justice and Local Church Ministries, then called the Office for Church in Society, was created to assume a leadership function for social action concerns in the UCC and to provide resources to the national, conference and local churches. Foremost among the tasks assigned to the office was identifying, analyzing and forecasting emerging social issues which call for the attention of the denomination.

Today the UCC staff in Washington D.C., in partnership with UCC staff, Conferences, Associations, congregations and individual UCC members, continues this mission by monitoring and seeking changes in legislation at local, state and federal levels through a variety of coalitions and working groups. The policies that guide this work are crafted by UCC members who gather for General Synod to pray, reflect and discern a faithful response to God's call through resolutions and pronouncements on the issues facing our world.

We will collect this offering during the month of October. Please mark donation NIN.



With a grant from Neighbors in Need, West Park UCC in Cleveland was able to make the cost of its 2022 Civil Rights pilgrimage more affordable for the 26 people who signed up.

Coming Up

Thursday, October 2-Sunday, October 5

Conference Annual Meeting, Missoula

Friday, October 3

4:00 P.M. Fellowship Board, FH

Sunday, October 5

9:15 A.M. Choir Rehearsal

11:15 A.M. Worship Board, Parlor

Monday, October 6

1:00 P.M. Christian Service Board, Parlor

Wednesday, October 8

10:00 A.M. Bible Study, Fellowship Hall

1:30 P.M. Pinochle, Fellowship Hall

6:00 P.M. Youth Group, FUMC downtown

6:00 P.M. Handbells

7:15 P.M. Choir Rehearsal

Friday, October 10

5:30 PM. Rev. Lynne's Retirement Celebration,
Heritage Inn, 1700 Fox Farm Rd.
