

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*

Consecration Sunday- Dreaming God's Dream October 19, 2025 Worship Service 10:00 A.M.



*(please remember to bring your completed pledge card and
Opportunities to Serve form to church with you)*

Minister: Rev. Sara MacGilvra Branom
Scripture: Romans 12:4-8, Psalm 46
Lay Reader: Susan Thomas
Ushers: Jeanne Nobbs, Linda Redding
Accompanist/Music Director: Melissa Gilbert
Sunday School: Erin Borland
Nursery: May Harris, Lily Yelvington
Coffee Fellowship: KimKay McCarty Martin, Doris Motley
Treats: Vilma Ackerman, Linda Redding
UCC Tellers: Liz Lee, 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.

In Our Thoughts and Prayers

† **Rev. Joe Lawson** passed away October 12. Our sympathy to his son **Joseph**, daughter **Deb Norman**, and his grandchildren.
† **Allie Storle** having had surgeries to remove kidney stones.
† **Peggy Floen** is recovering from hip replacement surgery.
† Our sympathy to **Ray Young** in the death of his sister in law, **Susan Mossey Quick**, October 11.
† **The Prayer Chain is continuing its ministry and will have its monthly meeting on Tuesday, October 21 at 1:00 P.M. in the parlor.** All are welcome to be part of our Unified Prayer Chain. Our meetings are times of sharing joys and concerns, lighting candles and offering prayers. Sometimes there are tears but there is laughter, too. There is time for silence and time for chatting. It is a nice experience to pray together.



Christian Education News

This week, Sunday School students (children age 5-grade 6) will begin in worship. They will share a message with **Janet Koostra**, Christian Education Coordinator. **Erin Borland** and a helper TBA will lead children through the lesson “A New Creation” from the book of Revelations. **Children through age 5 are invited to spend time in the church nursery during worship.**



Friends, as we seek our next pastor the Church Council asked me and I agreed to be the Interim Supply Pastor providing pastoral care and be a part of the pulpit supply team among other duties. As events happen in your life that you need pastoral support please let Holly know at the church office and she will keep me apprised and I'll contact you if requested. **If an emergency happens, defined as a death or accident - something unexpected that needs prompt attention - please text me at 406-788-9053.** Texting is the best way to reach me as I have blocks on for incoming calls due to telemarketers, etc. I am grateful for and trust your judicious judgment as we walk together.

Periodically, I'll pass along a devotion from the United Church of Christ to include in the newsletter, as I have this week with a devotion from Rev. Kaji Douša, Pastor at The Park Avenue Christian Church, NYC. Or a book recommendation that you might find interesting, or something else I haven't thought of yet for the newsletter.

As we live in these times I claim, pretty much daily, "Be still and know I am God" Psalm 46:10 which is certainly easier said than done. Nonetheless, when we are intentional to slow our thoughts, take some deep breaths, turn off social media and TV and sit in quiet, space is created to rest in the holiness, the sacredness of God, something the world is incapable of providing. God is always present to us yet our distractions diminish our awareness of the Holy beside us. My prayer for all of you, myself, our country and world is we would be still to find God's assurance and direction in order to respond to injustices, worry and fear as the Gospels teach us. This may be a courteous conversation navigating differences, and sometimes flipping tables. Our world and our church have been in these places before - be assured God is with us. Peace and Blessings, **Rev. Sara MacGilvra Branom**

United Church of Christ Daily Devotional: Rock Steady- Kaji Douša

Come to [Jesus], a living stone, though rejected by mortals yet chosen and precious in God's sight, and like living stones, let yourselves be built into a spiritual house. – 1 Peter 2:4-5a (NRSV)

Some of the most harmful messages I've witnessed don't sound like outright attacks. They masquerade as concern. They show up cloaked in piety. And far too often, they target the most beautiful, God-created parts of us. But the scripture tells a different story. Jesus was rejected. Not by God, but by the world. And that rejection didn't take away his holiness. In fact, it made him the cornerstone, the essential piece of something new and sacred. That's your story, too. You are not less-than. Not broken. Not a mistake to be corrected. You are a living stone. You are seen, known, chosen, and precious to God. The voices of judgment will always try to shout louder. But you weren't built for shame. You were built for love. May our churches build the kind of spiritual house that reflects that. Where every stone is cherished. Where dignity isn't debated. Where the doors are wide open, and every single person belongs.

Prayer: God who builds and blesses, remind me that I am not defined by rejection. Help me let go of the lies others have spoken over me. Build me into something holy. And may I help create a world that reflects your love. In Jesus's name. Amen.

West Elementary Thanksgiving Baskets

Our Thanksgiving Baskets collection for West Elementary School begins this Sunday. Each year, the Christian Education Board and the Christian Service Board team up to sponsor 7 Thanksgiving Baskets for our partner school, West Elementary. As in previous years, you will find a "Turkey Board" on display in the narthex. It will be covered with paper turkeys, listing items needed for the baskets as well as options to donate money. The money is used to purchase items not donated plus additional food items (cereal, bread, etc.) for basket recipients. The Sunday School class will organize the baskets on November 16. A huge thank you to the Christian Service Board for providing turkeys and pies. And to the congregation: thank you for your past support and we pray for your continued support into the future.



Thanksgiving Potluck

Sunday, November 16, 5:00-7:00 P.M.

Hosted by our unified Fellowship Board, turkeys and hams are provided.
A sign-up sheet with a potluck breakdown is on the table in the narthex.
Invite your family and friends and plan to join us!

Dear friends,

What a weekend! Thank you so very much for the retirement celebration, the hugs, the tears, the gifts, the cards and, most of all, the love. Greg is thankful for the Montana Club gift card and I'm sure we'll be redeeming it soon. We have found the perfect place in our home for the "Spirit Horse" painting and I'll be scheduling my trip to Sweet Grass soon! Thank you to the Fellowship Board for the cake and delicious baked potato bar after church and the Sunday School children for the never-wilting flowers. I am privileged to have served with you these past 9 years and will continue to hold you in prayer as the future unfolds. I reiterate from Sunday's scripture, "The one who started a good work in you will stay with you to complete the job." (Philippians 1:6) I am excited to see the future God intends for you and have faith that it will be blessed. You and the future of the church are in good hands.

Greg and I have enjoyed some time with family. Next week, we'll hit the road for Utah and spend a little bit of time with my mother. Then we'll travel to Lake Tahoe and enjoy a week in that beautiful place before returning home to Great Falls and settle in for the winter. We have some household chores to take care of as we settle into life in retirement and figure things out as we go. We are grateful for your prayers for us. Love to you all.

Lynne

Rev. Lynne's email is now revlynne@mac.com. Until the new pastor is in place, church related communication should be sent through Holly at greatfallsucc@bresnan.net

United Women in Faith

Our monthly meeting is this **Thursday, October 16 at 1:00 P.M.** Representatives from the newly opened **Baatz Block Apartments** will explain this new opportunity in our community. **We are collecting items that can be used in their "Welcome Baskets":** digital clocks, 20 piece set of flatware, wall clocks, command wall hooks, laundry baskets, oven mitts, cutting boards, can openers,

plastic plates, paper towel holders, 10" skillet, microfiber cloths, shower curtains. **These items should be new.** Other items on the wish list are **gently used** coffee pots, mugs, drinkware, books, board games bedding, bath towels, laundry supplies, & cleaning supplies. **Please bring any of these items on Thursday, October 16 to help this much needed housing option take off.**

Retirement Dinner Wrap-Up

The Retirement Party honoring **Rev. Lynne Spencer-Smith** was truly a night to remember, filled with laughter and tears, warm memories and heartfelt gratitude as church members and friends celebrated the ministry of Pastor Lynne. Many thanks to the planning committee: **Karen Spencer, Lila Byers, Jenn Goss, Greg Smith, and Janet Koostra.** Gratitude to Lila Byers and Jenn Goss for the lovely decorations. Lila also organized the delicious dessert buffet (thanks to all who brought treats!). Jenn printed nametags and guest envelopes. Thank you, **Holly Garcia,** for office support. Applause to Greg Smith for the wonderful video, opening prayer and contact with the Heritage Inn! **Rev. Dr. Tony Clark** shared words about Lynne's involvement with the Montana-N. Wyoming Conference and offered a beautiful closing benediction. Super job by **Dean Jardee** as MC—and also for the very clever parody song! **Bravo to the "Asthmatic Winds" Bottle Band: Karen Spencer, Dennis Dell, Connie Langevin, Liz Lee, Barb Swaby and Janet Koostra.** Good save, **Eric Dunn,** for taking care of the electric keyboard and microphone. And a shout out to Tom Johnson and his mom Betsy Rogstad for managing the drinks table. And a standing ovation to all who contributed to Lynne's gifts! She received a week at her "happy place, **The Sweet Grass Ranch in the Crazy Mountains, an amazing painting of "Spirit Horses" by Oglala Sioux artist Ivan Long,** and a "mad money" gift card. Thank you again to everyone--It was a collaborative effort that made a great evening possible!



Fishing for Volunteers

Christ United Methodist Church will be working at the FISH Food Pantry the week of October 20-24, from 9:00 A.M.-11:00 A.M. If you are able to volunteer and help distribute food, please contact **Rosemary Neilsen at (406) 403-1553.** Thank you!

Love Knows No Borders

Our Conference Minister **Rev. Dr. Tony Clark** is traveling to Washington D.C. this month. I'm sharing with you his letter to Conference clergy with the details about the purpose of his trip. **Briefly, if you are concerned about recent events with due process and immigrants' rights, this is an opportunity to make your concerns known to Montana's Congressional delegation.** If computers are not your thing, letters and postcards can be mailed directly to the address provided.

When the United Methodist Church has similar events please send the information to Holly to include in the newsletter for those interested in participating.

Thanks. Rev. Sara

Hi Folks. At the end of the month, I will be travelling to Washington, D.C., to meet with other Conference Ministers, our DC office, and legislators. We are focusing on immigrants' rights, particularly around due process and the people of color who are being inadvertently swept up in ICE raids. I'd love to be able to hand our legislators letters from our church members!

This [link](#) will give you more info on "Love Knows No Boundaries" campaign to reach out to our legislators. There are downloadable letters, letterhead, and postcards for you to write something personal. There is also a link to write your concerns digitally. If you collect letters or postcards from

your church, please mail them to [United Church of Christ Office of Public Policy and Advocacy, 100 Maryland Ave NE Suite 330, Washington, DC 20002](#), so they arrive before **October 27**.

I am not sure that I will meet directly with any of our legislative delegation; however, be assured that the staff of the Washington Office will make sure our legislators receive your letters.

Thank you, Pastor Tony



Reverse Offering Stories of Generosity

Here is another report highlighting the generous acts brought about by church members giving away Reverse Offering money.

Amount of money in envelope: \$5

What I did with the money: I bought some upholstery material strapping material for about six bags for the needy. I bought school supplies for West Elementary to use as needed.

Why I chose this act of kindness: As an ex-teacher I know how children feel when they don't have what they need. Also, the purpose of helping with the needy is on my church groups.

What did you gain or learn from this experience? Helping does open your eyes to how lucky we are and don't realize it.

Neighbors in Need Offering

Gifts to Neighbors in Need support the United Church of Christ's ministries of justice and compassion throughout the United States. One-third of NIN funds support the Council for American Indian Ministry (CAIM). The other two-thirds of the offering support a variety of justice initiatives, advocacy efforts, direct service projects, and grants. Neighbors in Need grants are annually awarded to UCC churches and organizations doing justice work in their communities. **We will collect this offering during the month of October. Please mark donation NIN.**



Holiday Help

The Unified Worship Board is asking for volunteers to help decorate the church for the holidays. **If you are able, please come to the church on Tuesday, November 25 at 1:00 P.M.** Any remaining decorating will be completed the following day.

Coming Up

Thursday, October 16

1:00 P.M. United Women in Faith, FH

6:30 P.M. Ecumenical Book Study,

Central Christian Church, 1025 Central Ave.

Sunday, October 19

8:45 A.M. Christian Ed. Board, Parlor

9:15 A.M. Choir Rehearsal

3:00 P.M. Stewardship Board, Zoom

Monday, October 20

6:30 P.M. Church Council, Zoom

Tuesday, October 21

1:00 P.M. Prayer Meeting, Parlor

Wednesday, October 22

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

1:30 P.M. Pinochle, Fellowship Hall
6:00 P.M. Youth Group at First UMC
6:00 P.M. Handbells
7:15 P.M. Choir Rehearsal

Holly is out of the office October 24-27