

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

Volume 2025
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November 12, 2025
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Issue 34
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*like us on Facebook: First Congregational United Church of Christ-Great Falls, MT
Christ United Methodist Church Great Falls*

November 16, 2025
Worship Service
10:00 A.M.

Worship Leader:
Dean Jardee

Scripture: 1 Peter 4:7-11

Lay Reader: Carol Shipley

Ushers: Dale & Nancy Dallmann

Accompanist/Music Director: Melissa Gilbert

Sunday School: Erin Borland, Janet Koostra

Nursery: May Harris, Lily Yelvington

UCC Tellers: Liz Lee, Carol Shipley

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.

Please note there is no Coffee Fellowship following worship this Sunday. You are invited to attend our annual Thanksgiving Potluck that evening at 5:00 P.M. in Fellowship Hall.

EMAIL CHANGE! Please use **greatfallsucc@gmail.com** for emails to the church office. Our bresnan.net email is no longer supported.

In Our Thoughts and Prayers 

† *The Hallett family are headed home! Lacey and Giddean continue to recover from a complicated pregnancy and early delivery in Salt Lake City however Lacey shares that Giddean is incredibly brave and shockingly strong and sailed through his time in the NICU!*

† JoAnn Gold remains in the hospital. Bill has moved to the Grandview and JoAnn will join him when she is able.



Christian Education News

This week children begin in worship. **Dean Jardee will present the children's message and lead a blessing of the food for the West Elementary Thanksgiving Baskets.** In Sunday School, children will sort and pack the blessed food. Following this service project, children will have a Thanksgiving lesson. **Nursery care will be provided for children up to 5 years old.**

**Christmas Pageant rehearsal will be in the sanctuary beginning at 11:15 A.M.
Please remember to bring scripts!**

Christmas Shoebox Ministry for BUMP

In this season of giving, one opportunity to serve others is the **Christmas Shoebox Ministry for Browning United Methodist Parish (BUMP)**. Each year many churches fill shoeboxes with numerous small gifts and wrap them to be shared with children and adults in Browning. There are several ways to help. 1.) Fill and wrap a box. 2.) Donate items. 3.) Donate money. 4.) Donate empty boxes. 5.) Help pack and wrap boxes. **A detailed instruction sheet is available on the table in the narthex which lists many options for gifts - hygiene items, hats, mittens, candy, age-appropriate books and games, and much more!** Each donor is encouraged to pick and choose from the list. **You are not expected to get everything on the list. VERY IMPORTANT!!! Individual items and filled, wrapped boxes must be marked for age and gender!!!** A donation jar and a tote are also available in the narthex. Checks can be made out to FCUCC and marked "Shoebox" and placed in the offering; cash may be placed in the offering if it is identified for "Shoebox". **This mission project will "wrap up" on December 7 and gifts will head to Browning on December 15. If you have any questions, please call the church office at (406) 453-4316 or Janet Koostra, (406) 727-8443 or janetkoostra@gmail.com.** Thank you so much for your continuing generosity!



Reverse Offering Stories of Generosity

Amount of money in envelope: \$10.00

What I did with the money: Gave it to Whittier Elementary for their milk program.

Why I chose this act of kindness: There are kids who want milk with their lunch but can't afford the 15 cents for it. Milk is not provided through the lunch program.

What did you gain or learn from this experience? It's important to give to children in need.

Pledge Update

The 2026 Stewardship Campaign continues. Members of the Stewardship Board will begin the process of calling folks from whom we have not yet heard. **Last year, we had 107 combined pledges between First Congregational United Church of Christ and Christ United Methodist Church for a total of \$258,080.00.** This year's pledge packets went to both churches for a single campaign. **To date, we have received 86 pledges totaling \$216,382.00. If you intend to financially support the CHURCH, its STAFF and its continued MINISTRIES, please return your pledge cards as soon as possible. Adjustments to pledges already turned in can be made by calling or emailing the church office at (406) 453-4316 or greatfallsucc@gmail.com.** Thank you.

Fishing for Volunteers

First Congregational UCC's next turn to work at the FISH Food Pantry is just before Thanksgiving, **November 24-26, from 9:00 A.M.-11:00 A.M.** If you'd like to volunteer and distribute food to families in need, **please call Carol Davidson at (406) 836-1862.** This could be a busy three days!!

In Other FISH News

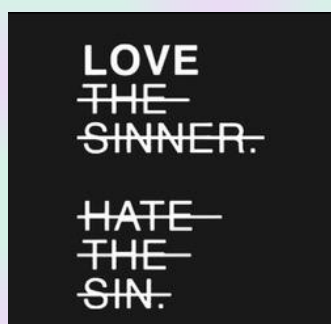
The last week of October was the best week this year for FISH with 45 clients, 69 adults and 61 children. We gave out over 3,000 lbs. of food! The first week of November we are seeing an increase in numbers compared to what we normally see at the beginning of a month. If we continue to see these increases, we could spend over \$50,000 this year just for food. You may have seen the Town Pump TV ads asking for cash donations to be made at their facilities to support Food Banks. We have been blessed over the years to be part their giving program where they match donations. **This year the challenge is \$25,000.** The FISH 10 churches have been able to match the challenge over the years. **We need your donation to be able to meet the \$25, 000 challenge that will give us a total of \$50,000.** When sending your check, make it out to FISH and send your donation to:
FISH P.O. Box 662 Great Falls, MT 59403, before November 28. You can also donate through the church or PayPal, indicating your donation is for FISH. Thank you.

United Women in Faith

Friendly reminder that our monthly meeting is on **Thursday, November 20 at 1:00 P.M. in Fellowship Hall.** This month's meeting will focus on helping to feed our community. Easy meal bags filled with non-perishable foods will support families in need right here in Great Falls. These bags will provide quick and easy nourishing options for those who may not always have access to them. **Molly Beck has volunteered to do all of the shopping. Monetary donations** will be accepted now through November 20 to reimburse Molly for the food that will be bagged up at the meeting. Food donations can also be brought to the meeting to be included in the meal bags. Canned items such as **turkey, chicken, cream of chicken soup, evaporated milk, diced tomatoes, mixed vegetables, green beans, black beans, kidney beans, pinto beans, tomato sauce, and tomatoes and green chiles** are key ingredients to the healthy meals planned for this outreach. Dry ingredients are: **box of garlic & herb biscuit mix (with seasoning packet), bouillon cubes, box of stuffing mix, instant mashed potatoes, gravy packet for two cups, and packet of chili seasoning.** Help us support this worthwhile cause and join us on November 20 at 1:00 P.M. **Everyone is welcome!**

Friends, I read this recently and it is a hard truth to hear, as the author intended. The irritating part is he's not wrong. In my defense, I do have strong feelings of who is getting things right in our world and who are the problem, and many would agree with me, and many would not and there is the crux of the situation. So, what to do? Loving another doesn't necessarily mean we agree with one another. But by not behaving unlovingly we do what Jesus taught us, not judging, not labeling, which empowers us to leave it to the holy mystery that is God to sort out. As much as this can make me twitch, mutter and roll my eyes as I wrestle and often fail being obedient to this really inconvenient truth, deep down as God's creation I know it is a life giving and life sustaining truth and is the only option to reconcile humanity with one another.

Keep praying for our world and its leaders (yes, all of them), pray for justice, pray for our own and others peace of mind and heart, lament, give thanks, implore ... and then be still and listen for that quiet voice in your soul. Rest...and when you get riled up again repeat the process. Peace be upon you all. Rev. Sara



"Imagine a world where every follower of Jesus simply ... loved."

*No loopholes. No theological disclaimers.
No culture-war camouflage.*

Just love. Real, Inconvenient. Unconditional love.

"Love the sinner, hate the sin" isn't in the Bible. Some pretend it is.

It sounds spiritual. It feels righteous. But it's not something Jesus ever said. In fact, it's one of those phrases Christians quote when we want to sound holy with actually not being holy. Because let's be honest - the "hate the sin" part always seems to get in the way of the "love the sinner" part. We love that phrase because it gives us permission. Permission to judge. Permission to label. Permission to love with an asterisk. It's a way of saying. "Of course I love you, but ..." and everything after that "but" usually sounds nothing like Jesus. Jesus didn't say, "Love the sinner, hate the sin."

He said, "Do not judge."

He said, "Love your neighbor."

*He said, "By this everyone will know that you are My disciples, if you love one another."
(John 13:35)*

When we "love the sinner, hate the sin," we're not just calling out sin - we're often calling into question someone's worth. As if loving others comes with fine print. As if God's love needs our approval first. News flash: It doesn't. The only sin Jesus ever seemed to "hate" was hypocrisy - the religious kind that builds walls between God and people. And the only sinners He ever scolded were the ones who thought they weren't sinners at all.

Imagine a world where followers of Jesus simply... loved. No loopholes. No theological disclaimers. No culture-war camouflage. Just love. Real. Inconvenient. Unconditional love. Because when we stand before God someday, God's not going to ask how effectively we "hated sin." God's going to ask how faithfully we loved people. And "I was busy judging them for You" won't hold up as an answer. Just love, God will sort the rest of it out.

-Pastor Brandon #love #loveislouder #LoveLike.Jesus



Pastoral Prayer

(Delivered by Rev. Paul Holland on All Saints Sunday. Many have asked that this be printed.)

That one that I loved, O God, is now with you. I can say that, not knowing “how” or “where,” but say it because it makes no sense that so rich and full a life would come to an abrupt end... except for memories. Still, I am bereft for she is not with me.

I listen to all the clichés of my friends, spoken to console me: “She is better off.” “She is past her pain and suffering.” “She is in heaven,” whatever that means. I listen and am not consoled. My grief is selfish. I want to feel her touch and hear her voice and see her smile. I am confident she is with you, and I am just as confident, O Lord, You understand how it is for me.

I cannot help recalling times I might have been gentler, softer, more thoughtful. I wish I could live some hours over. I wish I could say “I love you” just one more time. These failures I must accept.

“Time heals all things,” they say. I do not believe time does anything. You, O God, are Healer and Helper. You can heal me in time, help me through the lonely days and long nights. You can give me renewed zest for going on and entering into life once more.

“Thanks be to God who gives us the victory through our Lord Jesus Christ.” I believe that. But right now, I grieve; I am hurt; I am bereft. Thanks be to God who understands through Jesus Christ our Lord. Amen.

(Kenneth G. Phifer, *A Book of Uncommon Prayer*, Upper Room Books, 1981, pp. 106-107)

Coming Up

Saturday, November 15

2:00 P.M. Joe Lawson Memorial Service

Sunday, November 16

9:15 A.M. Choir Rehearsal

11:15 A.M. Pageant Rehearsal

3:00 P.M. Stewardship Board, Zoom

5:00 P.M. Thanksgiving Potluck

Monday, November 17

6:30 P.M. Church Council, Zoom

Tuesday, November 18

1:00 P.M. Prayer Meeting, Parlor

Wednesday, November 19

10:00 A.M. Bridge Group, SS Wing

10:00 A.M. Bible Study, Parlor

1:30 P.M. Pinochle, Fellowship Hall

6:00 P.M. Youth Group, 2900 9th Ave. S

6:00 P.M. Handbells

7:15 P.M. Choir Rehearsal

Thursday, November 20

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

6:30 P.M. Ecumenical Book Study, Central Christian Church