

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

Volume 2025
Church Office
(406) 453-4316
greatfallsucc@gmail.com

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PO Box 6303, 59406

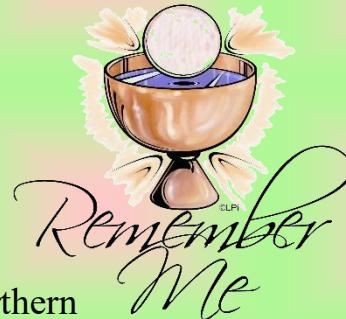
Issue 40
Rev. Dawn Skerritt
(406) 781-4524
revdawnskerrit@gmail.com

www.greatfallsucc.org

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

**January 4, 2026
Epiphany Sunday
Worship Service
10:00 A.M.**

Worship Leader:
Rev. Dr. Tony Clark, Montana-Northern
Wyoming UCC Conference Minister



Lay Reader: Dale Dallmann

Ushers: Randy & Caroline Houtz, Susan Thomas

Accompanist: Melissa Gilbert

Acolyte: Jullian Valley

Sunday School: Erin Borland, Sue Turton

Nursery: May Harris, Lily Yelvington

Coffee Fellowship: KimKay & Peddy

Treats: Lois Baker, Marilyn Sheffels

UCC Tellers: Steve Gettel, Paul Haffeman

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.

Happy New Year

On behalf of FISH, thank you for your kind and generous support. Your love and concern make this worthwhile organization possible. You have been generous to FISH in the following ways: contributing to the Town Pump challenge, volunteering at FISH when your week is scheduled, donating food, providing financial gifts, helping and attending the Loaves & Fishes dinner, and praying for our continued success in feeding families. **With your help, FISH did receive the \$25,000 for matching funds.** Thank you again for all your support and partnership in the program this past year. FISH Board of Directors



Angel Tree Blessings at West Elementary

Once again, our FCUCC and Christ UMC members have shared the true spirit of Christmas with the students and families of West Elementary. **The Angel Tree gift tags disappeared in record time, each one quickly claimed and lovingly fulfilled.** Because of this generosity, children from households facing hardship will experience the joy of being remembered and cherished this season. Through your kindness, they are receiving not only gifts but also the deeper blessings of love, compassion, and hope. Thank you to everyone who helped make this Christmas a season of light for our neighbors in need. Your faith in action continues to be a shining example of God's love at work in our community.

A special thank you to the Christian Service board for facilitating this loving project.



Christian Education News

Welcome to the New Year! January 4 is Communion Sunday so **children will begin in Sunday School**, then join their families for the sacrament of Holy Communion and the conclusion of worship. The holiday partying will continue as **children get to play Christmas Bingo** (we didn't have time on December 21). **Sunday School is for children age 5 through grade 6. Nursery care is provided for children through age 5.**

Soup Lunch Fundraiser Planned

The Christian Education Board is sponsoring a Camp Scholarship Fundraiser on Sunday, January 18. During coffee fellowship, a **SOUP LUNCH** will be served featuring a variety of soups, rolls, and dessert. Folks who attend may make a **free-will donation** to help grow our Camp Scholarship Fund. It's a delicious way to make camp more affordable for our kids and their families! Plan now to attend.

Thinking Ahead to Shoebox 2026

Shoebox Ministry 2025 was very successful, with 47 boxes for Browning from all of us. Want to get a jump start for next year? **Please save shoeboxes!** And this is a great time to take advantage of clearance sales to purchase hats, mittens, gloves, sweaters and sweatshirts! If you'd like to purchase sale items now, Janet Koostra can store donations at church for next December. **And a friendly reminder-these gifts are for children from infancy to adulthood!** There is also space for on-going donations of shoeboxes—bring them in anytime to help next Christmas!

Youth Group is Back!

Youth Group starts again on Wednesday, January 7 at 6:00 P.M. in the Fellowship Hall. Youth Group has been alternating between First United Methodist Church downtown and our facility at 2900 9th Ave. South. Their January home is at First Congregational UCC/Christ UMC. The group has averaged 16 youth each week with 4-6 adults. In December, they went Christmas Caroling after enjoying pizza and had a Christmas Party with a baked potato bar and white elephant gift exchange. Each week, they assemble sandwiches for distribution at First UMC Sack Lunch program. **Youth Group is open to kids grades 6-12 AND it's lots of fun!**

Save the Date

Many hands made light work (and fun work!) when it came to decorating the church for the Christmas season. **The Worship Board is inviting all who would like to help, DE-DECORATE the church on January 6 at 1:00 P.M.** Meet at the church to help take down, organize, and store until next year.

Renovated Phiwa Langeni

Then the one sitting on the throne said: I am making everything new. Write down what I have said. My words are true and can be trusted. -Revelation 21:5 (CEV)

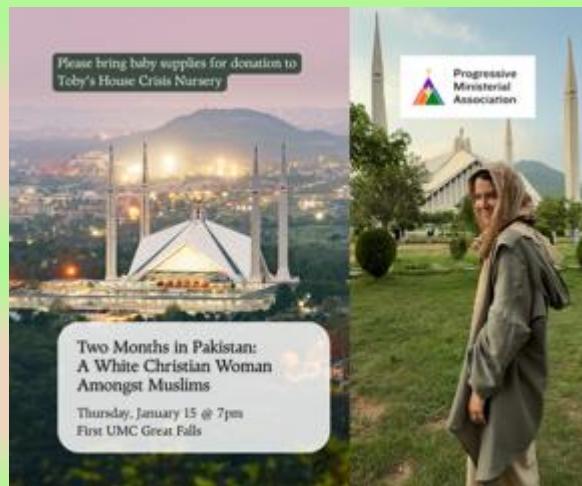
After buying her house, my friend's dad came into town to renovate her space to better fit her family's needs. The most obvious renovation was the gigantic hole he put in the wall between the dining area and the kitchen to create a wider passageway to improve the layout's flow.

He exposed the wall's ribs and tendon-like electrical wires going through the space, increasing the dust and particles of wall littering the floor as more light made its way through the space that once was a wall. Even with a protective tarp on the ground and the doors to the other rooms closed, the mess was spreading *everywhere* in whatever way it pleased. The slow progress left my friend anxiously wondering if this was a mistake.

Years later, she knows it was absolutely the right decision. I learned two main things about the whole process. One: even in its most disheveled state, her dad was demolishing bits of what used to be and moving toward a new vision of something better. Two: even as the walls came down, the integrity of the house remained intact and the structure stood firmly in place.

And so it is as people called to follow Christ. Our familiar walls must come down, sometimes with uncomfortable amounts of mess and anxiety. Rest assured! We're making space for God's vision. We can trust the integrity of that vision to sustain us through the thickest dust and uncertainty.

Prayer- Renovate our hearts, minds and spirits, Creative One, so that we may transform into the people you would have us be. Amen.



Pak Talk

Leigh Larson is completing her Master of Divinity degree and will be continuing for a Doctorate in Public Theology. Leigh spent two months in Pakistan in an immersive experience. She will discuss misconceptions Christians and Muslims have of one another and where these faiths agree and overlap.

The talk is sponsored by the Great Falls Progressive Ministerial Association and will be at First Methodist Church (610 2nd Ave. N.) on January 15 at 7:00 P.M. There will be a free will offering in support of Toby's House or bring baby supplies to donate.

Annual Reports

With 2025 closing out, one of the things I will be tasked with in the new year is the Annual Report booklet. Despite how I might appear sitting at my desk while working on this, I love doing the annual report. I try to be as accurate as possible (give or take a typo or two...or three). Here is how you can help: board chairs, please be thinking of this past year. The highs and lows, the hits and misses. Then start writing your report! **I am asking that reports are received by January 5. The Congregational Annual Meeting will be held on Sunday, January 25 following worship.** Thank you in advance for your cooperation and for making my job a little easier. Sincerely, Holly Garcia

2025 Pledges

Friendly reminder from the Stewardship Board: As 2025 comes to an end please consider completing your 2025 pledge as the financial statement indicates pledged giving is lagging as we go into the final two months of the year. **Thank you for your help to make this year's budget.**

GriefShare

Are you grieving the death of a loved one or know someone who is? A GriefShare support group is a safe, welcoming place where people understand the difficult emotions of grief. **Through this 13-week group**, you'll discover what to expect in the days ahead and what's "normal" in grief. Since there are no neat, orderly stages of grief, you'll learn helpful ways of coping with grief, in all its unpredictability—and gain solid support each step of the way. **Join Linda Redding beginning Thursday, January 8, from 10:00-11:30 A.M. in the Fellowship Hall.** For more information, please contact Linda at lindakredding@hotmail.com or (406) 868-1282.

Coming Up

Thursday, January 1- Happy New Year!

Office Closed

Sunday, January 4

9:15 A.M. Choir Rehearsal

11:00 A.M. Coffee Fellowship

11:15 A.M. Worship Board, Parlor

Monday, January 5

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

Wednesday, January 7

10:00 A.M. Bible Study, Parlor

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

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, January 8

10:00 A.M. Grief Group, Fellowship Hall

Friday, January 9

4:00 P.M. Fellowship Board, FH