

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

Volume 2026
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January 28, 2026
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Issue 04
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*like us on Facebook: First Congregational United Church of Christ-Great Falls, MT
Christ United Methodist Church Great Falls*

February 1, 2026
4th Sunday after Epiphany
Worship Service
10:00 A.M.
Worship Leader:
Rev. Paul Holland
Lay Reader: Dana Kirkmeyer
Ushers: Bruce & Linda Grossman
Communion: Dale & Nancy Dallmann,
Lois Baker, Rosemary Neilsen
Accompanist/Music Director: Melissa Gilbert
Nursery: May Harris, Lily Yelvington
Sunday School: Teacher TBD
Coffee Fellowship: Dennis & Sue Turton,
Heather Weibel, Bill Tiskus
Treats: Linda Redding, Carol Shipley
UCC Tellers: Liz Lee, Carol Shipley
Christ UMC Tellers: Rosemary Neilsen, Jeanne Nobbs



**HOLY
COMMUNION**



Call to Church Conference

Christ United Methodist Church and Rev. Dawn Skerritt invite you to this called Church Conference to **vote to move forward with Federation with First Congregational United Church of Christ**. The meeting is scheduled for **Thursday, February 5, 2026 at 7:00 P.M. in the Fellowship Hall (2900 9th Ave. S)**. *The meeting will be presided by Rev. Karen McRae, District Superintendent.*

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



- † *Prayers for peace in our country, our world, and every weary heart.*
- † *Cara Dunn's mom, Marge Kline, fell and broke her femur, and had have a redo of her recent hip replacement using a different type of joint replacement along with pins.*
- † *Kim Kay's weeks old grandson is having serious heart issues.*

News from Search and Call

If you were not in church on Sunday, you missed a **big announcement** from the Search and Call Committee. We have found the person we would like as our next called minister, and **Laura Kae Ymker** (pronounced Emker) would love to be our spiritual leader! She will be in Great Falls for her candidating weekend February 7 and 8. She completed her Member in Discernment at the UCC Church in Red Lodge with her Ecclesiastic Council held on January 17. Her ordination will occur in the near future. **The committee is excited for everyone to meet Laura and there will be an opportunity to do that on February 7. At 9:30 A.M., the Council will have brunch with her and from 1:00 to 4:00 P.M., members and friends of the church are invited to a dessert open house.** Both events will be in the Fellowship Hall.

Laura received her BA in history in 2007 and her Masters of Divinity in 2021. She comes to us with a diverse theological background. One of the most meaningful to her is time spent as a recovery ministry leader in Hoboken, NJ where participants included people in recovery from heroin, nicotine, alcohol, and sexual addictions; depression; codependency; and abuse, leading a small church, organizing worship for weekly large group meetings that had the format of a church service. She brings many lessons learned here into her future ministry.

In her profile, Laura stated, “My curiosity, adventurous spirit, and desire for spiritual authenticity have led to me experiencing multiple traditions (Hyper-Calvinist, Baptist, Nondenominational, Lutheran, Charismatic, Episcopal, Quaker, UCC), living in multiple states (SD, DC, VA, NY, CA, NJ, WY, MT), and working in a variety of fields. These experiences led to my appreciation for diverse theology, provided experience in administrative tasks necessary to run a church, and enabled me to better understand people. In recent years, I’ve started looking forward to settling down and staying in one place.”

Be sure to **attend church on February 8** because Laura will lead worship. A meeting of the congregation will then be held where questions can be asked of the Search and Call Committee, and a vote will take place on whether the church approves Laura Ymker to be our called minister.



Christian Education News

Children will begin in Sunday School on February 1, which is Communion Sunday. They will join their families for the Sacrament of Holy Communion and the conclusion of worship. Nursery care will be available for children through age 5.

Camp Scholarship Fundraiser

The Camp Scholarship Fundraiser on January 18 was a SOUP-er success! **Through the generosity of our lunch crowd, almost \$700 will be used to help kids get to camp this summer!** Many thanks to all the donors and a giant round of applause to the many chefs who provided soup, desserts, bread and crackers. Full bellies made for wonderful fellowship. The Christian Education Board and camp families offer gratitude and appreciation for your generous participation.

Soup-er Bowl of Caring

It's time to tackle hunger once again with our annual Soup-er Bowl of Caring offering. **Soup-er Bowl of Caring is a nation-wide event that works to battle food insecurity each year on Super Bowl Sunday.** Around the country, churches, scout troops, non-profits, and many other groups implement fundraisers to collect food donations and dollars for food pantries in their own communities.

Our two congregations have participated in this event for more than ten years to benefit the FISH Food Pantry. **Following worship on Sunday, February 8, kids from Sunday School will greet you at the sanctuary doors with soup kettles in hand to accept donations to help FISH.** Donations can also be made with cash, checks (written to FCUCC with "soup-er bowl" in the memo, or through our website. **100% of donations will go to FISH to help hungry neighbors in our community.** Our great teamwork can help the hungry in Great Falls score a win against hunger!



14th Annual Four Chaplains Memorial Service

Sunday, February 1, 2026 at 2:00 P.M.

Church Sanctuary (doors open at 1:15 P.M.)

This non-denominational service celebrates the true story of four World War II U.S. Army Chaplains. **Sponsored by American Legion Post 341, this service honors those men who joined together despite their different beliefs.** In February of 1943, the U.S.A.T Dorchester sunk in the cold Atlantic. Lt. George Fox, Lt. Alexander Goode, Lt. John Washington, and Lt. Clark Polling, brought hope in despair and light in darkness. Quickly and quietly, they spread out among the soldiers, trying to calm the frightened, tend the wounded, and guide the disoriented toward safety. When the ship went down, the four chaplains, who had given their life jackets to others, linked arms offered prayers. Of the 902 men aboard the U.S.A.T Dorchester, only 230 survived. **Guest Chaplains will include Montana Air National Guard, the Jewish Community, and 341st Wing at Malmstrom Airforce Base.**



Friends, I'm sharing some wisdom I read this week from the UCC – Professional Chaplains and Counselors Newsletter. Rev. Sara

Kintsugi is the Japanese art of repairing broken pottery by mending the cracks with lacquer mixed with powdered gold, silver, or platinum, celebrating the breakage as part of the object's unique history rather than hiding it. This practice embodies the philosophy of wabi-sabi, finding beauty in

imperfection, and symbolizes resilience, showing how mended items become stronger and more beautiful, often seen as a metaphor for life's healing process. We are all like kintsugi art. Healing, recovering, is a testament not to perfection, nor erasure, but to grace. We are restored by love, made whole by presence and shining with the gold of God's mercy. Holy One, may we understand our brokenness is not the end of the story but the beginning of a new one.

Members of Christ United Methodist Church and First Congregational United Church of Christ,

The Exploration Committee has concluded its work on the Bylaws for our federating churches. They are a blend of the practices of our congregations and are informed by the Constitution and Bylaws of the United Church of Christ and The Book of Discipline of The United Methodist Church. The drafting of these Bylaws was a collaborative effort by members of both congregations, the Exploration Committee, the Church Council, and leaders from our denominational conferences.

The Exploration Committee recognizes that we are merging two congregations, but they remain affiliated with our two denominations. It is this premise that guides the internal management and operating procedures for our officers and boards, ensuring that important differences are recognized while articulating how we operate as a single congregation. Just as our operations have changed in the past, they will continue to evolve, and the bylaws will reflect those changes.

Based on the congregation's charge to the Exploration Committee, we ask that these bylaws be adopted as written. The Exploration Committee is prepared to answer questions at a Special Meeting of the congregations in March. Further, the Committee recommends that the federated church operate under these bylaws for a calendar year, and during that time, the Exploration Committee will seek feedback from the boards, officers, and congregation on their effectiveness. If you receive email communication from the church office, you will receive this message and an electronic copy of the Bylaws. **If you would like a paper copy, please contact the church office.**



In the spirit of our federating churches and with God's love and grace,
The Members of the Exploration Committee

Coming Up

Thursday, January 29

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

Sunday, February 1

8:45 A.M. Fellowship Board, FH

11:15 A.M. Worship Board, Parlor

2:00 P.M. 4 Chaplains Service, Sanctuary

Monday, February 2

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

7:00 P.M. Stewardship Board, Zoom

Wednesday, February 4

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

10:00 A.M. Bible Study, Parlor

1:30 P.M. Pinochle, Fellowship Hall

6:00 P.M. Youth Group, 610 2nd Ave. N

6:00 P.M. Handbells

7:15 P.M. Choir Rehearsal

Thursday, February 5

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

7:00 P.M. Christ UMC Meeting, FH

Saturday, February 7

9:30 A.M. Church Council Brunch, FH

1 - 4 P.M. Dessert Open House, FH