

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

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

February 22, 2026

**First Sunday of Lent
Worship Service**

10:00 A.M.



Worship Leader: Rev. Paul Holland
Lay Reader: Dale Dallmann
Ushers: Lois Baker, Rosemary Neilsen
Acolyte: Kaeden Dunn
Accompanist/Music Director: Melissa Gilbert
Sunday School: Janet Koostra, Sue Turton
Nursery: May Harris, Lily Yelvington
Coffee Fellowship: Doris Motley, Peggy Seeley
Treats: Linda Larson, Karen McElroy
UCC Tellers: Steve Gettel, Dick Kloppel
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.

***Service and Stone Soup Supper
February 18, 5:00 P.M.***

*Ash
Wednesday*

Rev. Sara MacGilvra Branom will lead a traditional Ash Wednesday service of prayer and music concluding with the imposition of ashes. Following the service, the Fellowship Board is sponsoring a Stone Soup Supper.

In Our Thoughts and Prayers



† **Bob Dowdy** is recovering from knee surgery.

† Congratulations to **Brian and Stacy Hopkins** on the birth of their first grandson. **Arlo Soren** was born on February 16 weighing 8 lbs., 13 oz. **Proud parents are Sandor and Brittany Hopkins.**

Special Meeting of First Congregational United Church of Christ- Great Falls, MT

Members of First Congregational United Church of Christ are invited to a Special Meeting following worship on **Sunday, March 1 to vote to move forward with Federation with Christ United Methodist Church.** During the meeting members will also vote on the proposed bylaws that were sent out via email on January 27. **The meeting is scheduled for Sunday, March 1 in the sanctuary following worship.** Use the following link to join the meeting on Zoom:

<https://us02web.zoom.us/j/85077043682>

Meeting ID: 850 7704 3682

May and Lily will provide childcare for this Special Meeting.

Christian Education News



Sunday School children (ages 5-grade 6) will begin in worship on February 22. They will share a message with Janet Koostra before heading to class. The lesson for the day is "The Parable of the Sower". **Teachers are Janet Koostra and Sue Turton.**

Soup-er Bowl of Caring was a Big Win!

Many thanks to all who contributed to this year's Soup-er Bowl of Caring offering. **Donations totaled \$660.37! Yahoo! This will be a huge help to the FISH Food Pantry, which purchases food for approximately 25 cents per pound allowing them to purchase over 2,000 pounds of food to give away to hungry folks in Great Falls.** That's a big impact! Thank you to Sunday School children for making posters and for collecting the offering. Way to go, team, as we work together to tackle hunger!

Youth Lock-In Coming Up

Attention families of middle school and high school youth! **The Methodist/UCC Youth Group is sponsoring an overnight Lock-In on Friday, February 27 at First United Methodist Church, downtown (610 2nd Ave. N).** The event begins with dinner on Friday night and concludes after lunch on Saturday. **Games, songs, discussions and a lot of laughter** are just a few of the planned activities. **Kids don't have to be registered members of the Youth Group to join in, but all participants MUST fill out a registration form that includes permission from parents/guardians.** Interested? **Contact Janet Koostra at 406-727-8443 or janetkoostra@gmail.com.** Registration forms will be available in the church office. This event is sponsored by Christ United Methodist, First Congregational and First United Methodist Churches. **There is no cost for the weekend.**

Dear Folks:

I am glad that you have selected your new pastor, **Laura Ymker.** I am looking forward to her ordination and her installation as your pastor. And I am looking forward to knowing what ministry ("good trouble") you and she will get up to. Many blessings to you as you welcome her!

In peace and prayer-

Rev. Dr. Tony Clark, Conference Minister, Montana-N. Wyoming Conference, UCC

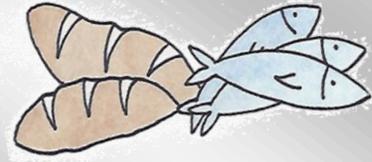
26th Annual Loaves & Fishes Dinner

Friday, March 20, 2026

4:30 P.M.-6:30 P.M.

Our Savior's Lutheran Church

1326 1st Avenue N.



An evening of good food, silent auction and raffles! **Free will offering.** All proceeds support FISH.

If you wish to donate crafts, gift certificates or anything that can be used for door prizes, raffles, and auction items, **please have items to Our Savior's Lutheran no later than Wednesday, March 18.** The church is open on Mondays and Wednesdays from 9:00-11:00 A.M.

"In the Moment"- a Mindfulness Retreat

Saturday, March 21

8:30 A.M.-3:00 P.M.

The Church Growth and Vitality Board is sponsoring "In the Moment-A Mindfulness Retreat" on Saturday, March 21, from 8:30 A.M.-3:00 P.M. at the church. The one-day event will include individual and group activities that will allow participants to explore personal and communal spirituality. **Fun and easy activities will help folks practice being present "in the moment" to focus hearts, minds and souls on their own spirituality and their relationship to God.** The group will spend time doing **chair yoga, music, the Lord's Prayer, art, crafts, making sandwiches and learning about the labyrinth.** **Breakfast and lunch will be provided. Sign-ups begin this Sunday, February 22. Cost is \$25/ person.** Honorariums are available. This retreat takes place just before Holy Week-what a wonderful way to prepare for Easter!

Easter Basket Ministry Hopping Our Way

Our annual Easter Basket Ministry is scheduled to begin March 1. Look for the display in the narthex which will be decorated with paper Easter eggs. Each egg is labeled with an item or items that will be used to make Easter gift bags for some of the folks in our congregations (including shut-ins and elders, to name a few). Goodies will include lip balm, small stuffed toys, candy, homemade cookies, and lots more! Items will be collected through March 22, when Sunday School children will help organize these fun Easter surprises. The bags will be ready for delivery by Palm Sunday and volunteers are needed to be the "Easter Bunny" and get these gifts to their special recipients! Thank you to all who have helped make this ministry a success through the years and those who will help continue the tradition in 2026.

Friends, I don't know much about poetry however, I do know when a poem speaks to me. This poem "Desiderata" was recently shared with me, and I hope it speaks to you as well. Peace to you in all that is your life at this moment. - **Rev. Sara**

Desiderata

Go placidly amid the noise and the haste, and remember what peace there may be in silence. As far as possible, without surrender, be on good terms with all persons.

Speak your truth quietly and clearly; and listen to others, even to the dull and the ignorant; they too have their story.

Avoid loud and aggressive persons; they are vexatious to the spirit. If you compare yourself with others, you may become vain or bitter, for always there will be greater and lesser persons than yourself.

Enjoy your achievements as well as your plans. Keep interested in your own career, however humble; it is a real possession in the changing fortunes of time.

Exercise caution in your business affairs, for the world is full of trickery. But let this not blind you to what virtue there is; many persons strive for high ideals, and everywhere life is full of heroism.

Be yourself. Especially do not feign affection. Neither be cynical about love; for in the face of all aridity and disenchantment, it is as perennial as the grass.

Take kindly the counsel of the years, gracefully surrendering the things of youth.

Nurture strength of spirit to shield you in sudden misfortune. But do not distress yourself with dark imaginings. Many fears are born of fatigue and loneliness.

Beyond a wholesome discipline, be gentle with yourself. You are a child of the universe no less than the trees and the stars; you have a right to be here.

And whether or not it is clear to you, no doubt the universe is unfolding as it should. Therefore, be at peace with God, whatever you conceive Him to be. And whatever your labors and aspirations, in the noisy confusion of life, keep peace in your soul. With all its sham, drudgery and broken dreams, it is still a beautiful world. Be cheerful. Strive to be happy.

by Max Ehrmann ©1927





Lent Word Search

E N S K F O R G I V E N E S S O O D F G
R O A W L Y K E R U S L O R Y I M B A I
P I S K R M E N O I X H E N A S H E S K
E X O E A Y K A R S S O R C D W A T T R
N B L E S A L N I K A L K E Y D E R I O
A S H W E D N E S D A Y O D T U D F N S
N E M Y O N P S R U M T A P R B E T G E
C R O L K U Y I E A S H P G O O D L A T
E R A O V S O R K C R U C I F I X I O N
D I S H I M K S L E M R E M B I P E R O
O S A M F L P A O D F S I L A E R N K I
C J E R O A S C G O O D F R I D A Y S T
R E Y A R P E R A M R A D E A W S I S C
U R S P E D R I L A T Y A J R E T S A E
C U S Y L E C F E L S O P E G O E Y C R
N S E A K S W I P R E K S S E L B V E R
I A R W E E K C R A J E R U H E G O F U
S L A Y A R T E B O S D I S C I P L E S
H E S A C T M O W S U R H O L P A N K E
A M B P E N R E I M E C N A T N E P E R

Word Bank

ASHES	DESERT	GOOD FRIDAY	PENANCE
ASH WEDNESDAY	DISCIPLES	HOLY THURSDAY	PRAYER
BETRAYAL	EASTER	HOLY WEEK	REPENTANCE
BLESS	FASTING	JERUSALEM	RESURRECTION
CROSS	FORGIVENESS	JESUS	RISEN
CRUCIFIXION	FORTY DAYS	PALM SUNDAY	SACRIFICE

Coming Up

Wednesday, February 18

- 10:00 A.M. Bridge Players, SS Wing
- 5:00 P.M. Ash Wednesday Service
- 5:45 P.M. Stone Soup Supper
- 6:00 P.M. Youth Group, **2900 9th Ave. S**
- 6:00 P.M. Handbells
- 7:15 P.M. Choir Rehearsal

Thursday, February 19

- 10:00 A.M. Grief Group, Fellowship Hall
- 1:00 P.M. United Women in Faith, FH
- 4:00 P.M. Church Naming Comm., Parlor

Sunday, February 22

- 9:15 A.M. Choir Rehearsal
- 11:00 A.M. Coffee Fellowship

Tuesday, February 24

- 10:00 A.M. Mitten Makers, Fellowship Hall

Wednesday, February 25

- 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 26

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

Friday, February 27-Saturday, February 28

- Dinner on Friday-Lunch on Saturday
- Youth Lock In, First United Methodist Church