

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

Volume 2026
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February 25, 2026
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Issue 08
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*like us on Facebook: First Congregational United Church of Christ-Great Falls, MT
Christ United Methodist Church Great Falls*

March 1, 2026

**Second Sunday of Lent
Worship Service**

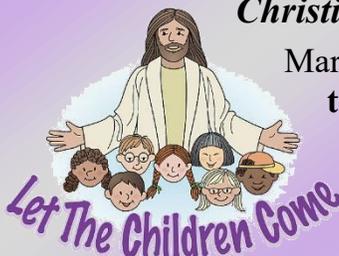
10:00 A.M.



Worship Leader: Rev. Sara MacGilvra Branom
Lay Reader: Dr. Kelly Quick
Ushers: Harry & Connie Brauer
Communion: Lois Baker, Hank Branom,
Rosemary Neilsen, Jeanne Nobbs, Kelly Quick
Accompanist/Music Director: Melissa Gilbert
Sunday School: Janet Koostra, June Rovero
Nursery: May Harris, Lily Yelvington
Coffee Fellowship: Bill Tiskus, Dennis & Sue Turton
Treats: Sandy Nicolai
UCC Tellers: Kristine Berntsen, Nancy Zadick
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.

Christian Education News

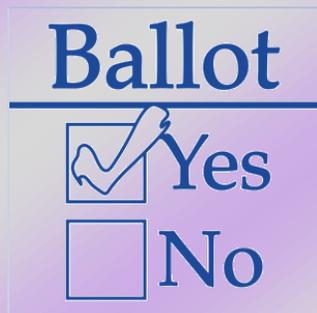


March 1 is Communion Sunday. **Children will begin in Sunday School with teachers Janet Koostra and June Rovero.** The class will begin a new unit, "Water Wonders", that will focus on Bible stories that feature water as a major element of the story. **Children will join their families for the Sacrament of Holy Communion and the conclusion of worship.**

In Our Thoughts and Prayers 

† *Our sympathy in the death of United Church of Christ member Mae Fifield, February 19, age 93.*

† *Pete, the son of Sue Turton's friend is going to the Mayo Clinic for bladder cancer surgery.*



***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.

Youth Lock-In This Week

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. Contact Janet Koostra at 406-727-8443 or janetkoostra@gmail.com.** Registration forms are 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.**

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.**

Upper Room Chat Group

Do you read the *Upper Room*? Would you be interested in a group that uses text messages to chat about the daily reading? The Christian Education Board has been asked to find out if "Upper Room" readers would like this kind of group. All you need is the devotional book and a phone that can text. Members of the group would share their feelings, comments, questions and interpretations of each day's entry. Please contact Janet Koostra (406-727-8443 or janetkoostra@gmail.com) who will help get the group organized.



Friends,

Last October when I preached the first Sunday after Pastor Lynne's retirement I said, "we are not a church in a 'in a between time,' we continue as the church caring for one another and our community." **Pastor Laura Ymker begins her ministry with us next Sunday March 8th, and she comes to a church inspired by the gospel caring for one another, our community and world.** St. Francis of Assisi is quoted as saying, "preach the gospel at all times; when necessary, use words." I think that is an apt description of our church.

From October to March we celebrated **Advent, Christmas, Epiphany** and have now entered **Lent**. A stewardship campaign was completed, **a budget passed, the Methodists approved the new bylaws and voted for Federation.** The UCC folks will vote this coming Sunday. We had a **Christmas pageant that was so good an encore for the following week was requested by the congregation, bells have rung, choir has sung, visitors have become new friends** and we are trying new things with worship music. In the background **Boards have met, the prayer team prays, pinochle is played, sandwiches are made, children and youth ministered to, and a new copier purchased.**

The Holy Spirit will continue to lead us with Laura as our next pastor. I am so looking forward to this next chapter of our church. Be sure to introduce yourself to Pastor Laura, remember to wear your name tag on Sundays as we welcome her, and the adventure of being the church continues.

**With a grateful heart,
Rev. Sara MacGilvra Branom**



"In the Moment"- a Mindfulness Retreat Saturday, March 21 8:30 A.M.-3:00 P.M.

Sign up now for the annual one-day retreat sponsored by the Church Growth and Vitality Board. The gathering will offer participants the opportunity to experience ways to be present and stay focused "in the moment" through activities that can bring hearts, minds and souls closer to God. A variety of simple activities will include **chair yoga, labyrinth exploration, singing, prayer, and Aboriginal dot painting,** as well as other every-day approaches to enhance focusing the spirit. **The retreat will be held Saturday, March 21 from 8:30 A.M. -3:00 P.M. Breakfast and lunch will be provided. Cost is \$25/ person. Last day to sign up is Wednesday, March 18.**



Shake, Rattle, and Roll! Family Promise of Great Falls is planning the spring SOC-HOP and preparing for another great evening of food, dancing, silent auction, and family fun! **This annual fundraiser will be held on April 25th, 2026 at The Elk's Lodge, in the heart of downtown Great Falls. Ticket prices are \$25 for individuals, and table sponsorships are available beginning at \$500 per table.** Appetizers provided by Clark and Lewie's.

All proceeds benefit homeless families. Serving our Community. Honoring our Promise.

Easter Basket Ministry Hopping Our Way

Look for the Easter Egg display in the narthex (church entryway) this Sunday! Colorful Easter eggs will sport tags listing items that will be included in gift bags for some of our church members- elders, shut-ins, and other special folks from both of our congregations. Want to participate? **Choose one (or more!) eggs, purchase the items, and return them to the church by March 22.** Volunteers will also be needed to deliver these fun Easter surprises! **Please let Janet Koostra know if you would like to be an “Easter Bunny” and help make deliveries.** Let’s brighten this holy time with this special outreach ministry to some of our most beloved members!



Please note there is NO Youth Group this Wednesday evening, February 25, so that adults can finalize plans for the Lock-In.

During the month of March, Youth Group will be held at 2900 9th Ave. S.

Coming Up

Thursday, February 26

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

Friday, February 27-Saturday, February 28

Youth Lock-In, First UMC, 610 2nd Ave. N.

Sunday, March 1

9:00 A.M. Fellowship Board, FH

9:15 A.M. Choir Rehearsal

11:00 A.M. Special Congregational Mtg.

11:30 A.M. Coffee Fellowship

11:30 A.M. Worship Board, Parlor

Monday, March 2

1:00 P.M. Christian Service, Parlor

Wednesday, March 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, **2900 9th Ave. S**

6:00 P.M. Handbells

7:15 P.M. Choir Rehearsal

Thursday, March 5

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

Sunday, March 8- Daylight Savings Begins

Laura Ymker leading worship as our Pastor!