

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*

March 22, 2026

**Fifth Sunday of Lent
Worship Service**

10:00 A.M.

Worship Leader: Dr. Kelly Quick

Liturgist: Pastor Laura Ymker

Lay Reader: Melissa Zimmer

Ushers: Linda Larson, Dee MacGillivray

Accompanist/Music Director: Melissa Gilbert

Acolyte: Lily Borland

Sunday School: Janet Koostra, Cara Dunn

Nursery: May Harris, Lily Yelvington

Coffee Fellowship: Doris Motley, Peggy Seeley, Heather Weibel

Treats: Darlene Gardner, Dee MacGillivray

UCC Tellers: Kristine Berntsen, 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.

Retreat this Weekend

“In the Moment” spiritual retreat is Saturday, March 21, beginning at 8:30 A.M. The retreat is being facilitated by members of our newly federated congregation. Activities include the **Lord’s Prayer, Chair Yoga, Dot Painting, Sandwich Making, Singing, Labyrinth, and Bracelet Braiding.** The activities have been chosen as simple ways to allow participants to practice staying focused “In the Moment” on their own spirituality and connection to the Divine. **We’ll start with coffee, fruit and breakfast sandwiches in the Fellowship Hall before our spiritual exploration begins.**

One Great HOUR OF SHARING

Mission Moment: YWCA of Palestine –

Jalazone Kindergarten and Community Center (Continued)

The school and connected community center address the needs of over 80 children and their families within the camp. In a place that is often subjected to raids and night-time patrols by the Israeli military, children are not immune from the trauma the residents of the camp experience. As a result, the YWCA has added awareness and counselling sessions to regular classes to help improve the psychological well-being of the children there. The opportunities that the YWCA affords the community through the kindergarten benefit the children, their families, and the teachers as well, providing a safe space for play and employing techniques to cope with the stress of daily life living in sub-par circumstances of a refugee camp under military occupation. **The pride the children have when they dress up for their graduation ceremony is palpable.** They enjoy the celebration of their accomplishment, and anticipate their next stages of education and life better able and prepared for the challenges they will face.



Christian Education News

Children begin in worship on March 22. Following the Children's Message, kids will head to class. **Sunday School will host a special guest—Pastor Laura!** Kids will have a short lesson about Palm Sunday (which is March 29), then begin organizing Easter Baskets for some of our congregation's most beloved members. **Teacher will be Janet Koostra with helper Cara Dunn.**

Easter Basket—Last Call!

Please bring all donations for our Easter Basket Ministry to church by **Sunday, March 22**. **Children will begin to organize baskets during Sunday School and baskets will be ready for delivery by March 25.** Many thanks to all who have generously provided goodies to brighten the Easter season for 20 of our members.

Easter Bunnies Needed

Volunteers are needed to deliver Easter Basket gift bags to 20 members of our federated congregation. Basket recipients are both UCC and UMC. **Baskets will be ready for delivery on Wednesday, March 25 and should be delivered before Easter (April 5).** Please contact Janet Koostra, (406) 727-8443 or janetkoostra@gmail.com if you can help.

In Our Thoughts and Prayers

- † Our sympathy to Lois Baker in the death of her sister, Dete, age 93.
 - † Judy Feiden broke her foot.
 - † Hank Branom is recovering from shoulder surgery.
 - † Bob Dowdy is doing well after knee surgery.
 - † United States Military Personnel throughout the world.
-



Fishing for Volunteers

Hey all you FISH volunteers! First Congregational UCC and Christ UMC's next turn to work at the FISH Food Pantry is March 23-27 from 9:00-11:00 A.M. If you'd like to volunteer and distribute food to families in need in our community, **please call Carol Davidson at (406) 836-1862.** Thank you so much if you can help!



From the Pastor

I enjoyed my first “Cottage meeting” earlier this week, where I had the opportunity to begin to hear your stories. I’m looking forward to meeting many more of you in this way in the coming weeks. Hearing from you will help me prepare sermons and prayers that speak to our hearts and draw us closer to the Giver of Life. Getting to know you

will not just help you get to know me but will help me understand the local culture so I can better communicate God’s love in our community.

This coming Sunday, Dr. Kelly Quick will be preaching a sermon titled, “Not Quite Dead Yet.” I will be taking this opportunity to spend time with the youngest members of our congregation in Sunday School. Dr. Quick was scheduled to preach prior to my arrival and asked to be given the opportunity to keep this commitment. In the future, I will be preaching and leading the service whenever I am not on vacation or we have a special guest like a conference minister visiting us.

In this week, may you be inspired to ponder that God doesn’t just call us to love our neighbor as ourself but asks us to love the alien as we love ourselves. **God’s love is without borders, giving life to all.** Pastor Laura

Naming Survey

Last Sunday, Church Naming Surveys were passed out to all in attendance. If you didn’t make it to church that day, don’t worry! Your church naming info—explanatory letter and survey—are in the mail! **Please take the time to prayerfully consider your survey responses.** Return your completed survey to the church as soon as possible. Drop them off in the office or place them in the collection box on the table in the narthex. **Note: all surveys are due by March 29.** The Church Naming Committee will compile survey data and share results with the congregation. Many thanks for taking part in this very important activity. Questions can be directed at the Naming Committee: **Lois Baker, Steve Gettel, Janet Koostra, Rebecca Marinko, Kim Kay McCarty Martin, and Karen Spencer.**



United Women in Faith

Women in Faith are meeting this Thursday, March 19th, at 1:00 P.M. in Fellowship Hall. They are busy planning for their big Spring Luncheon and also the Bake Sale on March 29th. After the business meeting there will be a craft time to make individual place gifts for all guests. **The Luncheon theme is All about Honey so it is very appropriate that they will be making Bee Rocks!** The Bake Sale will offer wonderful goodies for your Palm Sunday or Easter treats. Please support all the baking that these women will be doing to raise money for local missions.

Jeopardy Fun for Everyone

Mark your calendars for all-church Jeopardy! **On April 19, during coffee fellowship, the Christian Education Board is sponsoring our 2nd all-church, intergenerational Jeopardy extravaganza!** And to add even more fun and some extra flavor to the day, **a bake sale will be part of the morning’s festivities!** Plan now to join the fun!



50th Anniversary Celebration

You are all invited! Christ United Methodist Church and First Congregational United Church of Christ are celebrating the 50th Anniversary of sharing a facility and sharing ministry! **The big day is April 12th and will begin with a re-enactment of members of the UCC caravanning to 2900 9th Ave S, where they will be greeted and welcomed by members of UMC.** The worship service will highlight special music and recollections of folks who participated in the event in 1976. The morning will end with a fried chicken lunch. **And after 50 years of partnership, we can also celebrate the beginning of our new era of federation!**



Ordination of Laura Ymker

You are cordially invited to attend the service of ordination of Pastor Laura Ymker on Saturday, April 25, 2026, at 11:00 A.M. at the Red Lodge Community Church. This very special service is a sacred ritual that confers upon Laura the status of authorized ministry in the United Church of Christ, **granting Laura the official title of “Reverend”.** A reception will follow the ordination. All are welcome to join in this amazing celebration!

Cottage Meetings

Thank you to all who have volunteered to host cottage meetings so far and to those who have signed up to attend. More hosts are needed so more gatherings can be scheduled. **Cottage meetings now available are:**

**Thursday, March 19
6:00 P.M.-8:00 P.M.
Marilyn Sheffels
1721 Ferret Way, 59405**

**Sunday, March 22
3:00 P.M.-5:00 P.M.
Lonnie & Shannon Anderson
2000 11th St. SW, 59404**

**Wednesday, April 8
2:00 P.M.-4:00 P.M.
June Rovero
2118 1st Ave. S, 59401**



Get to know **Pastor Laura** in a fun, low-key setting by hosting or attending! **Folks are asked to host 6-8 people for small group gatherings at their homes or at the church. Members can sign up to attend and spend a relaxed time getting to know Laura—and letting her get to know you!** Keep an eye on the sign-up area in the narthex and watch the newsletter for more information.

Crossing Boundaries for Neighbors

Jesus said to him, "Go and do likewise." Luke 10: 37b

In Luke 10:25, we are introduced to an expert in the law who asks Jesus, "And who is my neighbor?" This is not a casual question. This is a boundary question. It is the kind of question that people ask when they want to know how far our responsibility should go. Today, there are more than 13 million undocumented immigrants in the U.S. who, for decades, have embodied the Good Samaritan's actions; they heal wounds, feed the nation, take care of the elderly, raise children, lead with innovation, and contribute in multiple ways to society. Yet they are still despised by a government with a system of law enforcement that literally kidnaps, beats, and kills immigrants in detention centers and in the streets. The question becomes, "How are you responding?" Our faith in Christ must confront the structures that produce wounded bodies. When policies separate families, criminalize asylum seekers, detain children, or dehumanize migrants through rhetoric, the followers of Jesus must step up. They go and speak up before their representatives and reject efforts to dehumanize the immigrant community. We need changes that protect immigrants and human rights; put pressure on Immigration and Customs Enforcement (ICE) and Customs and Border Protection (CBP) to stay out of our

communities; and help to establish an asylum system that centers the sacredness of the sojourners' lives while tearing down the militarization of the border. This photo of the Faithful Resistance witness, which took place at the Capitol on February 25, shows one of the courageous actions (protests, making appointments with legislators, pressing for law changes) that people can do with their neighbors to stand up and speak out.



Do as Jesus asks; go and do likewise.

Coming Up

Thursday, March 19

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

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

6:00 P.M. Cottage Meeting, see info inside

Saturday, March 21

8:30 A.M. Spiritual Retreat at Church

Sunday, March 22

9:15 A.M. Choir Rehearsal

10:00 A.M. Worship Service

11:00 A.M. Coffee Fellowship

3:00 P.M. Cottage Meeting, see info inside

Monday, March 23

FISH WEEK, March 23-March 27, 9-11 A.M.

Tuesday, March 24

10:00 A.M. Mitten Makers

Wednesday, March 25

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

Holly will be out of the office March 27-31.