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

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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*

**May 31, 2026  
Worship Service  
10:00 A.M.**



Worship Leader: Pastor Laura Ymker  
Lay Reader: Dana Kirkmeyer  
Ushers: Lois Baker, KimKay McCarty Martin  
Accompanist/Music Director: Melissa Gilbert  
Nursery: Janet Koostra, Melissa Zimmer  
Coffee Fellowship: Dennis & Sue Turton, Heather Weibel  
Treats: Carol Davidson, Mary Fry  
UCC Tellers: Dick Kloppel, 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.

*In Our Thoughts and Prayers*



† *Elaine Balzer and the Sixel family for the passing of Elaine's uncle, Ray, on May 21, age 94.*

***Fishing for Volunteers***

Hey all you FISH volunteers! **First Congregational UCC and Christ UMC's next**

**work together at the FISH Food Pantry is June 1-5 from 9:00-11:00 A.M.** If you'd like to help distribute food to families in need, **call Carol Davidson at 836-1862.**



## *Dear Congregation,*

At next Sunday's Congregational meeting, we will use **ranked-choice voting** to choose a name for our merged church. The Naming Committee wants to ensure that there are multiple names to choose from without having to hold multiple runoff ballots. We also want the winner to have the broadest support of the congregation. Ranked-choice voting makes this possible.

**With ranked-choice voting, each voter fills out one ballot and ranks the names in order: first choice, second choice, third choice, and so on.** If no name gets more than 50% of the first-choice votes, the name with the fewest votes is removed. When that happens, votes for the removed name are not lost. Instead, those votes go to each voter's next highest-ranked name that is still in the race. If no name has a majority after the votes are moved, the process repeats. The name with the fewest votes is removed, and those ballots are counted for the next-ranked name still in the race. **This continues until one name receives more than 50% of the vote and wins. Ranked-choice voting helps choose a winner with broad support.** Even if a voter's first choice does not win, their vote can still count for their next choice. **To vote, you must be a member of FCUCC or CUMC and attend the meeting either in person or via Zoom.** If you are attending via Zoom, please use this link and passcode: <https://us02web.zoom.us/j/88395995342>. You will vote using the chat feature on the Zoom screen, and **only a member of the Naming Committee will see and record your vote.** There is additional information about the ballot and voting in the attachment to the newsletter.

Thank you for your prayerful participation in this process. **We look forward to seeing you at the meeting on Sunday, May 31 following worship.** -The Naming Committee

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## *Frequently asked Questions*

### **If I rank five names, does that mean I voted five times?**

No. Only one vote counts per race. Your 2nd (or later) choice only matters if your 1st choice fails to get enough votes and is eliminated.

### **What happens if there's a tie?**

We will use the program RVC123 to tabulate the vote. RVC123 calculates a tiebreaker value for each name based on all voters' complete rankings. Each first-choice vote is worth 1. Each subsequent choice is worth 2/3 of the weight of the previous: 2nd choice = 0.667, 3rd = 0.444, 4th = 0.296, and so on. These values are added to create the tiebreaker score. The name with the higher tiebreaker score wins the tie.

### **Do I have to rank all the names?**

You can rank as many or as few as you want. Ranking additional names ensures that you still have a voice if your first-choice name is eliminated.

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### ***Handbell Adventure***

First, I would like to thank the congregations of our church for the support and applause we received for the “**Cantabellé Ringers**” this past year in church. Maintaining an active/performing choir continues to be my biggest hurdle. In the past, we have opened our doors to new members, but getting by the initial learning stage has been challenging and very few have become regular members. To try a new direction, I would like to offer a **Handbell Adventure Class** for interested church members and friends, old or young. **This will be a summer offering and all you need to do is contact Holly in the church office and express your interest.** You will be contacted and a time will be determined to try handbells with a real hands-on experience. Show your interest and come try it out! - **Dennis Dell, Director**

***Stock the West Elementary Food Pantry  
Now through June 19***

Donations are piling up! The pantry closes for the summer and we'd like to make sure the shelves are full before the doors shut. You can help by donating **non-perishable, kid-friendly foods** that store well through the summer:

- Chef Boyardee meals (pop-top)
- Canned tuna or chicken
- Canned stew or chili
- Mac & cheese
- Pasta & sauce
- Rice
- Cereal
- Shelf-stable milk
- Jelly
- Peanut-free snacks
- Manual can openers



**Donations** can be dropped off at the church in the West Elementary box outside the sanctuary. **OR scan the QR code** and enter **West Elementary Food Pantry** in the memo. **Your Christian Service board thanks you, as your generosity helps ensure local children enter summer with the food security they need and deserve.**



*Jesus Loves the Little Children...*



***Christian Education News***

**Sunday school aged children are invited to attend worship with their families.** Resources are available for kids with **Christ's Kids Bags** which hang on a stand near the back of the sanctuary. These bags contain paper, pencil, crayons, pipe cleaners and a book. These are easy for children to take to their seats. More stuff for kids is set up in the **Pray Ground** area along the right-hand wall of the church. The **Pray Ground** features coloring books, story books, stuffed toys and dolls, crayons, markers, lacing toys, a soft puzzle, and plastic connecting "blocks". The **Pray Ground** also has a table and chairs which makes it a perfect place for kids to hang out. **If your child(ren) use the Pray Ground, please sit nearby in case any supervision is needed. Nursery care is provided on for children through age 5. Nursery care will not be available on July 5.**

***"Fun in the Sun" Summer Water Party***

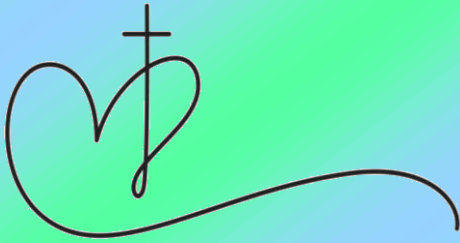
Mark your calendars for **Saturday, July 11 from 2:00 -5:30 P.M.!** This intergenerational event has **water fun for kids, shade for grownup conversation, and a pizza dinner** to top of the day!



You are invited to the **Installation Service of Pastor Laura Ymker** as the called minister of First Congregational United Church of Christ/Christ United Methodist Church. **This service will be held in our sanctuary on Saturday, June 27, 2026 at 2:00 P.M. with a pie social to follow in Fellowship Hall.**

**Please sign up to bring a pie! A sign- up sheet is on the table in the narthex. Thank you!**

*If you have the gift of music to share with the congregation, and would like to be part of Pastor Laura's Installation Service, please let her know so that a variety of music and musicians can be incorporated.*



### *From the Pastor*

I spent Memorial Day driving through the Little and Big Belt Mountains and going on two short hikes. Then I spent the next day watching reruns of *The Way Home*, a Hallmark series that is ending this season. It uses time travel to explore a family's generational trauma and the cultural changes that happen over the course of a few centuries. **It's one of my favorite shows.**

**This coming Sunday, we will be exploring the first of the three spiritual figures who appeared on the Mount of Transfiguration.** Pentecost, the Jewish feast of Shavuot, celebrates the giving of the law on Mount Sinai. **We will meet Moses and the Israelites around that mountain and primarily learn from metaphors within the story.** At least, that is how I expect the sermon to shake out as of Wednesday when I write this.

**In the congregational meeting following service, we have an opportunity to decide what story will be told about the naming process.** Will it be a story filled with division and conflict, strong opinions and hurt feelings? **Or will it be a story filled with love and honor, listening and kindness?** Each of us gets to decide what role we'd like to play in this story and how we'd like to be remembered in the congregation's history. **Let's follow the way of Jesus together.**

May God continue to pour out the Spirit in our midst. May we dream big Spirit-inspired dreams and let our future be guided by the vision of the Spirit — **a vision where the congregation is guided by love, joy, peace, patience, kindness, goodness, faithfulness, gentleness, and self-control.**

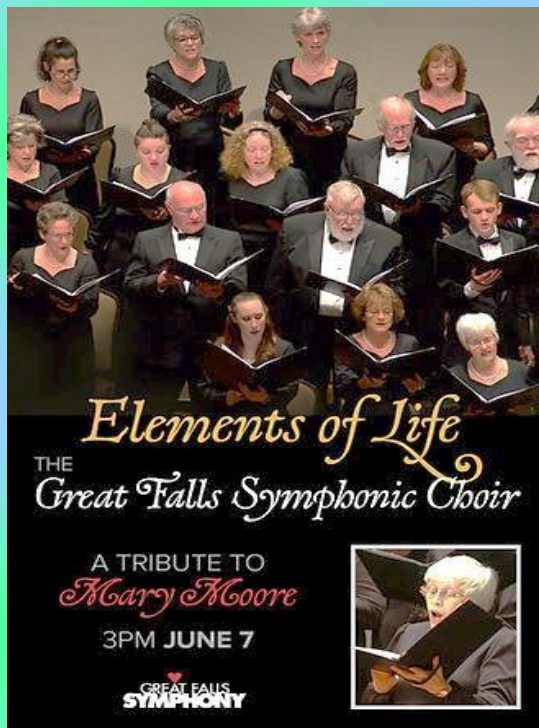
**Pastor Laura**

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### *Discussion With the Pastor*

Thank you to those who had input for days and times that would work to meet with Pastor Laura for discussion on **How We Learn to Be Brave** by Mariann Edgar Budde. **The second discussion will be held in the Fellowship Hall on Thursday, June 4 at 5:30 P.M.** See you there!

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### *Special Tribute to Mary Moore*

After more than a year, the Great Falls Symphonic Choir returns to the spotlight with a standalone performance, **Elements of Life.**

**On June 7 at 3:00 PM, the choir takes the stage at First Congregational United Church of Christ under the direction of Jon Harney. The concert honors the legacy of Mary Moore while celebrating the return of a dedicated choral tradition in Great Falls.**

From the grandeur of Handel and Bruckner to the haunting beauty of Pärt and Whitacre, the program explores **love, faith, grief, joy, and connection** through some of the choral repertoire's most compelling works!

Tickets available now at

[www.gfsymphony.org/elements-of-life](http://www.gfsymphony.org/elements-of-life).

### *Summer Time = Vacation Time*

With summer fast approaching, staff may start scheduling time off. If you plan on stopping by, **please call ahead of time** to make sure the doors are unlocked and the office is open. Thank you!



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### *Members In Need*

We have several folks who would like a **ride to and from church**. Faces that haven't been seen sitting in the sanctuary on Sundays is in part, due to lack of transportation. Let's help get these members back to church and show them they are loved and cared for.

There is also a **member in need of house cleaning**. The first bit is coming up fast as a bedroom needs deep-cleaning (dusted, carpets cleaned, windows washed) before an upcoming surgery. After that, the schedule would be **one day a week, 2-3 hours per day**.

**If you can, or know of someone who might be able to help, please call the church office.**

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### *New Member Class*

**Pastor Laura will be holding new member classes on June 14 and June 21 after worship.** To become a new member, **you only need to attend one of these classes**. Each class will involve learning about the **United Church of Christ** and the **United Methodist Church**. **Rev. Paul Holland will share more about the Methodist Faith**. For planning purposes, if you are interested in attending either class, **please let Holly in the office know**. Thank you.

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## *Sample Ballot for voting on a new church name*

This is what the ballot will look like.

<b>Ballot for Naming our Merged Church</b>					
Voting Instructions					
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Rank the names with the 1st choice being your most preferred to the 5th choice being your least preferred.</li> <li>• Rank as many or as few names as you wish.</li> <li>• Fill in no more than one oval for each name or each column.</li> <li>• For your 1<sup>st</sup> choice, fill in the oval in the first-choice column.</li> <li>• For your 2<sup>nd</sup> choice fill in the oval in the 2<sup>nd</sup> choice column, and so on.</li> <li>• Do not rank any names twice or give any two names the same rank.</li> <li>• If you make a mistake, ask for a new ballot. Do not erase or cross out any mistakes you make.</li> </ul>					
Names	1 <sup>st</sup> Choice	2 <sup>nd</sup> Choice	3 <sup>rd</sup> Choice	4 <sup>th</sup> Choice	5 <sup>th</sup> Choice
Disciples Quest Church	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
First Congregational United Church of Christ – Christ United Methodist Church	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
Harmony Church	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
River of Grace Community Church	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
United Spirit Community Church	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>

Incorrectly marked ballot

**Do Not**  
rank a candidate  
more than once.

1	2	3	4	5	✘
●	●	●	●	●	
○	○	○	○	○	
○	○	○	○	○	
○	○	○	○	○	

**Do Not**  
give multiple  
candidates the  
same ranking.

1	2	3	4	5	✘
●	○	○	○	○	
●	○	○	○	○	
●	○	○	○	○	
●	○	○	○	○	

Correctly marked ballot

	1	2	3	4	5	✔
CANDIDATE A	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	●	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	
CANDIDATE B	●	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	
CANDIDATE C	<input type="radio"/>	●	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	
CANDIDATE D	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	●	
CANDIDATE E	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	●	<input type="radio"/>	

## *Coming Up*

### **Sunday, May 31**

10:00 A.M. Worship Service

Congregational Meeting to vote on church name  
with Coffee Fellowship immediately following.

### **Monday, June 1**

1:00 P.M. Christian Service, Parlor

7:00 P.M. Stewardship Board, Zoom

### **Wednesday, June 3**

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

1:30 P.M. Pinochle, Fellowship Hall

6:00 P.M. Youth Group end of year BBQ (2900 9<sup>th</sup> Ave. S)

### **Thursday, June 4**

12:00 P.M. Facilities, Fellowship Hall

5:30 P.M. Book Discussion with  
Pastor Laura, Fellowship Hall