

FIRST  
CONGREGATIONAL  
UNITED CHURCH  
OF CHRIST (UCC)

SPECIAL  
POINTS OF  
INTEREST:

- Conference  
Annual  
Meeting
- Worship in  
August
- Camp  
Mimanagish
- Adult Edu-  
cation

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# THE *Congregationalist*

VOLUME 28

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AUGUST 1, 2015

## From the Moderator: Mic Dawson

### DOWNTOWN ABBEY

I hope you have had the chance to read the article on the Fremont Abbey Arts Center that has been in the narthex recently. If not, I encourage you to do so; it has good points to consider while we engage in a discernment process for re-designing and re-furbishing our building.

One point Nathan Marion, the subject of the article, makes is that a church is not owned by a single person, its purpose is for the good of the community – “to support people, help people, building the neighborhood and the community.” He goes on to describe the process of re-designing church buildings along an abbey concept.

Benedictine abbeys are operated according to the rules of St. Benedict who placed great emphasis on the reception of guests. The abbeys are a place where guests are received, invited to pray and be in company with the residents of the abbey.

We as the congregation are stewards of an established downtown building but we as the existing congregation are hard pressed to support our building financially. There’s no realistic strategy for growing our numbers rapidly enough to garner all the funds necessary for deferred maintenance and updates. Creative thinking and planning are required to be able to afford this building for our worship and mission purposes.

Looking outward to our downtown community for cooperative efforts to support our building aligns with the missions cited above – supporting people, building the neighborhood and the community. A church building can exhibit calm and rest which are required in our frenetic world. A church building such as ours can offer a place for the use of creative talents that might not find a place elsewhere at reasonable cost, where people can feel connected and in community. The possibilities are limited only by our imaginations and ability to move into new ways of being “church”

Take a look the article and start thinking how we might become “Downtown Abbey.”

## Time With Teresa

- **Need Some Help?** by Joyce Meyer - posted July 23, 2015 Behold, God is my helper and ally; the Lord is my upholder and is with them who uphold my life. Psalm 54:4 There are many people who have received Jesus as their Savior and Lord who will live their Christian lives and go to heaven without ever drawing on the power of the Holy Spirit available to them, never experiencing the true success God intends for them. People can be on their way to heaven, yet not enjoying the trip. We often look at people who have wealth, position, power, fame, and consider them to be totally successful. But many people who are viewed as successful still lack good relationships, peace, joy, contentment, and other true blessings that are available only in the context of a personal relationship with God through Jesus Christ. Self-sufficient people often think it is a sign of weakness to depend on God. But by drawing on the ability of the Holy Spirit, they could accomplish more in their lives than they could by working in their own strength. There are countless things we struggle with when we could be receiving help from the Holy Spirit. Many people never find the right answers to their problems because they seek out the wrong sources for advice and counsel instead of asking the Divine Counselor who lives within them for guidance. I encourage you to lean on God for everything, and that means little things as well as big things. Love God Today: The only way to experience the success God intends for you is to become totally dependent on the Holy Spirit. May His Spirit Fall Afresh on you~ Teresa
- **Worship opportunity at West Park.** We are leading out a new time of worship at West Park every month (except Holiday months) at 2:00pm with Holy Communion. Join us August 1 in the Lower Level. If you would like to provide music or participate in worship, or help serving communion, let me know. Thank-you!
- **Diaconate meets August 11th 7:00pm**
- **Primetimer's Older Adult Lunchtime! 11:30 am Aug. 13th at the Fancy Sushi Asian Fusion.** If you don't want to drive at night, how about during the day? Monthly on the 3rd Thursday at 11:30am. All Older Adults 50+ are welcome to meet at a local restaurant to share fellowship and lunch! RSVP the church office or me by Wednesday. TRANSPORTATION AVAILABLE
- **GRIEF EDUCATION AND SUPPORT GROUP MONDAY'S @ 4:00pm @ Conference Office.** All are welcome.
- **FYI-END OF LIFE CARE PLANNING WORKSHOP** Has been postponed until Fall.
- **MARK YOUR CALENDARS! 6th ANNUAL Primetimer's Combination Dinnertime and Wintertime POTLUCK at Bill & Teresa's house August 27, 6:00pm.** We will provide fried chicken, beverages, and tableware. Please bring your favorite dish to share. Bring your swimsuit and a towel if you want to take a dip in the pool. All Primetimer Older Adults (55+) are welcome! TRANSPORTATION AVAILABLE
- **PRAYER CONCERNS:** Family of Terisa Hawk, Family of Bonnie Wamsley, Katie Blaesius, Alice Roberts, Bob Stagmiller.
- **Our Prayer Chain** can always use more prayers! Call Bonnie Conn 373-6740 if you would like to be a prayer or to request prayers for someone.

## THANK YOU

Evan, Kristen and Lucas Page would like to thank everyone at Billings First Church for the outpouring of gifts in celebration of Lucas' baptism. We are truly humbled by your generosity, and we are blessed to be a part of this congregation. We feel that the best way to establish a strong foundation for Lucas' growth is through the church, and we are lucky to be part of the group at BFC to help foster his growth. Thanks again and God bless.

## Rev. Michael Mulberry, Sr. Minister

Author and theologian M. Scott Peck wrote that “You don’t just build community; you rebuild it and rebuild it and rebuild it for as long as you have reason to continue to be together.” As I related in last month’s newsletter, good leaders are essential to building and rebuilding community. Leaders are health-promoters. The true mark of a leader is spreading health throughout the community.

In healthy congregations, leaders promote health through their presence and functioning. In systems theory, this kind of leader is defined as “self-differentiated”, a person who demonstrates a good stewardship of self.

There are many characteristics of a self-differentiated leader. Two of the primary characteristics are speaking from an “I position” and to focus on one’s own functioning while still staying connected to others. Good leaders define themselves, regulate their own anxiety, refuse to be coerced and refuse to coerce or threaten others, they learn how to step back to get a broader perspective, they focus on what they can do rather than being “victimized”, and they learn to accept solitude and standing alone.

All of that is to say that leaders take responsibility for their own actions, but are not responsible for how others function. For a long time, congregations have had a non-systemic view of leadership. Everything depended on how the pastor functioned. The people overfocused on the ordained clergy. The pastor’s role was to motivate the troops, to be the glue that kept the community together, to make the key decisions, and to bring happiness and good cheer to all. The ministry of the rest of the system was secondary.

Not only did the overfocus on clergy take attention away from the congregation’s ministry, it created a state of dependency and lethargy among the laity. Further, the pastor stood as a huge target for discontent. All error was pilot error. If there was disease, the pastor was identified as the patient. This cause-effect thinking and arrangement was neither good for the health of the congregation or the clergy.

In a systems approach, leadership is always co-created between leader and follower.

One of the leading thinkers in systems approach, Dr. Edwin Friedman, believed that in any organization when an imaginative and energetic member is sabotaged, someone at the top is “nice,” a peacemaker, someone who “has been filleted of their backbone, someone who treats conflict or anxiety like mustard gas—one whiff, on goes the emotional gas mask and they flit.”

True leaders do not take stands for fear of disturbing the peace. But if a leader takes a position, manages his or her anxiety, and functions imaginatively, the leader can influence the whole of the system in powerful ways.

As we seek to build and rebuild our community, we will continue to need true leaders who focus on their being (presence) and doing (functioning). At a place like Billings First, we are blessed to have so many people who are candidates to not only be good but great leaders. May we, as a community of faith, be aware of our own presence and functioning so that this leadership may come to full flower.

## From Montana Organizing Project

### **One last step to assure Medical Care for all Montanans**

You may know that the Montana Legislature passed the HELP Act to expand Medicaid for 70,000 Montanans who could not access the health care because they make too little in wages. The plan is different than most state plans and is subject to approval by a federal agency. The state is now compiling public comment on the HELP Act through September 7<sup>th</sup>. Live your faith by adding your voice to help worthy Montanans gain access to preventive and essential health care. For some, this will be first time in their lives they've had health coverage. Comments can be sent to Jo Thompson at [jonthompson@mt.gov](mailto:jonthompson@mt.gov). Additionally, there will be a public meeting to gather public comment in Billings on August 18<sup>th</sup> in the Community Room at the Billings Public Library. If you or someone you know is in the Medi-Gap, please contact Barbara Gulick at [bjgulick@bresnan.net](mailto:bjgulick@bresnan.net) or (406) 259-3622. More information can be found on the MT Organizing Project website at [www.montanaorganizingproject.org](http://www.montanaorganizingproject.org)

Health & Economic Livelihood Partnership Act  
Center for Medicare & Medicaid Services (CMS)  
or by regular mail to: The Department of Public Health and Human Services, Attn: Jo Thompson, PO Box 202951, Helena, MT 59620-2951

## Looking for Sponsor for Recycling & Coffee Hour

**Looking for sponsors to help pay for recycling and for coffee hour. These items are not part of the budget so we rely on your donations to help fund them. Thank you. The cost to sponsor these: Coffee Hour: \$20, Recycling: \$20. The sign up boards are located in the Narthex, please take a moment to sign up. Thank You!**

**Reserve January 8-9, 2016!**  
**The Jesus Seminar is coming to**  
**Billings First!**



## Camp Mimanagish Schedule

### Important Dates This August

**8/7 Billings First Is Open for the Art Walk**

**8/11 Diaconate Meeting** 7:00 pm Library

**8/18 Council Meeting** 7:00 p.m. Library

**8/13 Primetimer's Lunch Time** 11:30 a.m. at Fancy Sushi. RSVP to Teresa.

**8/20 Newsletter Deadline**

**8/21-23 Annual Conference Meeting** at Billings First Church.

**8/27 Primetimers Potluck** 5:30 pm at the home of Bill Baldi & Teresa Kennedy. Bring dish to share.

There truly is a week for everyone at Camp Mimanagish! If you've never refreshed your soul along the deep valleys of the Boulder, do yourself a favor and come to camp this year. It could just change your life.....FOREVER!

- Aug 2-8                    10, 11, 12 Grade Camp
- Aug 14-17                Women's Retreat
- Aug 14-17                Fishing Camp
- Sept. 18-20               Men's Retreat
- October 15-17          Fall Youth Retreat



One of the benefits of volunteering as a host in our church (yes, right in our church!) for Family Promise program that helps homeless families get a fresh start toward independence, is seeing the people later. I saw some people we helped at a grocery not so long ago, and they remembered me! One of the children pointed at me. "Mom!" he said. "Look! It's that guy from church!"

Actually it didn't make me feel good, at first. I felt ambivalent. For one thing, the kid was pointing at me. For another, he didn't remember my name. Well, I remembered his name, or thought I did. "Hi, George," I said.

"I'm not George," he answered. "That's Jorge," he said, motioning toward a smaller child, Jorge, the kid with a somewhat rounder face.

"Oh," I said. (I really liked Jorge. What a personality!)

I should have started this newsletter differently.

I should have began, 'One of the drawbacks of volunteering....'

If you haven't had a chance to volunteer, but are considering doing so, I recommend you speak to one of your friends who has done that. Here's a few tips for you if you are thinking about volunteering.

1. Overnight hosting is quite easy to do, in contrast with other tasks. To overnight host, bring a book and some pajamas. The homeless guests go to bed early, usually by 8 or 9, and get up around 5:30 or 6. In other words, you might not see them at all.

2. We have large cots with mattresses now for the adults, complete with sheets, blankets, pil-

lows, towels, and washcloths. As an overnight volunteer, you will have your own sleeping room. Your role is simply to be an adult presence. You are not expected to be more than a friendly person.

3. Evening hosting requires a bit more friendliness than the overnight host. If I were to put quantities on it, I'd say if the overnight host needs to be friendly at, say, level 5, the evening host requires friendliness at about, say 9. One simply needs to be able to chit chat with people who are working, going to school, buying a car, fixing up an apartment to move into, like that. In short, fairly ordinary folks getting onto their feet.

4. More difficult yet, helping set up the sleeping and living areas after church one Sunday, and taking it all down the next. Taking down is harder because we do it at 7 a.m., before church the last Sunday of our hosting week. This is going to get easier because Trish Nichols, a coordinator from First United Methodist Church, is buying a tall wheeled cart to hold all of the bedding! Instead of making 15 or so trips back and forth for bedding, we'll be able to do it in one trip. We always clean up the rooms by vacuum cleaner before and after each host week.

5. The most difficult job is providing meals. One signs up to bring a main dish or one of two side dishes for about a dozen people, or so. If someone forgets to bring a meal, we have some easy-to-prepare foods in the IHN cabinet in our church's kitchen.

Dan Struckman



“Clouds come floating into my life, no longer to carry rain or usher storm, but to add color to my sunset sky.”

~Rabindranath Tagore

“Blessed are those who give without remembering and take without forgetting.”

~Elizabeth Bibesco

“A good head and a good heart are always a formidable combination.”

~Nelson Mandela

## John McClelland Scholarship

Endowment Board announces McClelland Scholarship Recipients

Doug McClelland and Donna Forbes, McClelland Scholarship Committee Members recently announced the John F. McClelland Scholarship recipients for 2015-16. The scholarships are funded from an endowment that was established in 1983 to honor the life and ministry of the late Rev. McClelland, who was Senior Minister from 1959 until 1978.

Ezra Stewart, who will be Sophomore at Montana State University Billings will receive a \$3000 scholarship. Ezra is the son of Marc and Cheryl Stewart.

Maggie Dunphy, who will be a Sophomore at Seattle University, will receive a \$3000 scholarship. Maggie is the daughter of Amy and Paul Dunphy.

## Adult Education Opportunities

### JUST EATING?:

Practicing Our Faith at the Table

**Beginning Wednesdays this autumn, 6:30-7:30 and running for six to seven weeks.**

Just Eating? Practicing Our Faith at the Table is a curriculum for congregations that explores the relationship between the way we eat and the way we live, published by the Presbyterian Hunger Program, Church World Service, and Advocate Health Care (UCC). The study uses scripture, prayer and stories from the local and global community to explore five key aspects of our relationship with food:

the health of our bodies

the challenge of hunger

the health of the earth that provides our food

the ways we use food to extend hospitality and enrich relationships

the opportunities for action, renewal and transformation in our eating practices-as individuals and as faith communities.

Participant guides can be found here: [https://www.pcusa.org/site\\_media/media/uploads/hunger/pdf/justeatpart.pdf](https://www.pcusa.org/site_media/media/uploads/hunger/pdf/justeatpart.pdf) or call (406-245-6477)/email ([revmikemul@firstchurchbillings.org](mailto:revmikemul@firstchurchbillings.org)) Rev. Mulberry to receive a copy.

This educational experience is limited to 12 people. So please sign up in the church narthex to reserve a spot.

# AUGUST BIRTHDAYS

Sun	Mon	Tue	Wed	Thu	Fri	Sat
						<b>1</b> Laurel Reinholz
<b>2</b>	<b>3</b> Bill Baldi	<b>4</b>	<b>5</b>	<b>6</b> Thomas Miller Kevin Dowling	<b>7</b>	<b>8</b>
<b>9</b> Jean MacLeod	<b>10</b> Seth Reichenbach Walt Gulick	<b>11</b> John Smillie Clarence Krum	<b>12</b> Jan Duffy	<b>13</b>	<b>14</b> Susan Bailey	<b>15</b>
<b>16</b>	<b>17</b> Barbara Gunn	<b>18</b> Chris Montague Tim Bailey	<b>19</b> Molly Dunphy Ruth Lechner Claire Poppler	<b>20</b> Nikki Olson	<b>21</b>	<b>22</b> Seanan Dowling Chad Duffy
<b>23</b> Michael Deverinero Jane Jones Troy Blaesius	<b>24</b> Taylor Blaesius	<b>25</b> Katie Jacksha	<b>26</b>	<b>27</b> Hillary Barry Gayle West	<b>28</b> Ann Fulton Janet Dietrich	<b>29</b> Anna Stagg David Tolton Luci Scott Gerry Rhoades
<b>30</b> Nick Doll	<b>31</b> Julie Stickney Margaret MacDonald					

**We're now on facebook!**  
 Become a friend of "Billings First"  
 and get important information online and updated daily!

# Billings First Church

## First Congregational United Church of Christ (UCC)

*Theologically progressive, radically inclusive,  
committed to justice!*

310 N. 27th Street  
Billings, MT 59101

Phone: 406-245-6477

Fax: 406-245-6478

E-mail: [firstchurch@firstchurchbillings.org](mailto:firstchurch@firstchurchbillings.org)

**An "Open & Affirming/Peace with  
Justice" Church**

### Our Staff

**Rev. Michael Mulberry, Senior Minister**  
**Teresa Kennedy, Pastoral Care Associate**  
**Kimmie Harris, Youth/Young Adults**  
**Laura Blodgett, Chancel Choir**  
**Jo Lokken, Melody Choir**  
**Barbara Dobesh, Organist/Pianist**  
**Steve Plaggemeyer, Assistant Organ/Piano**  
**Susan Ogden, Parish Nurse**  
**Jan Duffy, Bookkeeping**  
**Breanna Rolandson, Administrative Assistant**  
**Barbara Gulick, Spiritual Director-In-Residence**

### Our Ministers

Every member of the congregation!



# Your August Congregationalist is here!

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## Worship ~ Autumn is Coming

Hard to believe that summer school vacation is soon coming to an end, and we will return to our regular worship time at 11:00 a.m. on the first Sunday in September. With that regular schedule come some creative ways to participate in our upcoming worship. Here are those opportunities.

### Calling all artists of all skill levels

Rev. Mulberry will be using the Creation lectionary this autumn. That lectionary contains four separate themes: earth, humanity, sky, and mountain. Anyone who would like to offer any medium to do an interpretation of the Scripture for those Sundays is welcome to do so. Rev. Mulberry is willing to supply an 8" X 10" blank canvas to get you started.

Here are the Scripture verses for each Sunday:

Sunday, September 6	Earth	Psalm 33:1-9
Sunday, September 13	Humanity	Psalm 8
Sunday, September 20	Sky	Psalm 19:1-6
Sunday, October 4	Mountain	Isaiah 65:17-25

Contact Rev. Mulberry at [revmikemul@firstchurchbillings.org](mailto:revmikemul@firstchurchbillings.org) or call 406-245-6477 if you are interested.

### Casting Call for all actors to be part of The Ready for Prime Time Players

For three upcoming worships, actors are needed to be part of one play and two separate Readers' Theaters. Each production requires three practices and absolutely no memorization.

Ages (two Elementary School, two Junior High to Adult, one female, one male): Four people are needed for "Sophie's Table." This play will be performed on Sunday, August 16.

Ages (Junior High to Adult): Four people are needed for "The Two Stories of Creation Found in the One Bible." This Readers' Theater will be performed on Sunday, September 6.

Ages (Junior High to Adult): Five people are needed for "Job and The Suffering of the Innocent." This Readers' Theater will be performed on Sunday, October 18.

Contact Rev. Mulberry at [revmikemul@firstchurchbillings.org](mailto:revmikemul@firstchurchbillings.org) or call 406-245-6477 if you are interested.

## TRAC Peer to Peer Recovery Support

### Statement of Need:

In an effort to support peers in their recovery journey, it is important they have access to sober activities that promote healing and wellness. Art is integral to Native cultures and promotes self-expression and healing. IT also promotes pride in your family and Tribal stories and helps express feelings and ideas. We are hoping the following could be donated to support our peers.

- Drawing pads
- Drawing pencils
- Erasers
- Colored pencils
- Scissors
- Assorted paints (acrylic, water color, etc)
- Paintbrushes
- Painting canvasses or water color book
- Paint mixing palettes
- Beads
- Buckskin
- Needles
- Fabric

## Annual Conference Meeting August

Our Conference Annual Meeting is one of those “sections” of holy ground where a person and a church can “get found” this year! Gathering in First Church UCC in Billings you will “get found” as we focus on the vibrancy of our hope and life, celebrate of our connections, and finding renewed strength for whatever yet might come.

Worship will uplift holy ground among us. Fellowship will offer opportunity to get found by others among us. Business will name what we can do for the best in the MT-NWY Association and Conference. Our vision and identity facilitator will help find some words that state what we are about to each other and to our wider communities.

Some holy ground we are already claiming is that we are:

- open and accepting of others,
- involved in the community,
- wanting to be visible,
- seeking stronger connections and relationship,
- committed to mission outreach,
- caring to grow in the faith with others

Come and discover together where we can go from these pieces of holy ground.

*-Rev. Marc Stewart, Conference Minister*

### Keynote and Special Guest Rev. Sue Artt



Rev. Sue Artt came to ministry as a 2nd, 3rd, or 4th career pastor – depending on how you count – after nearly two decades in executive leadership with Mobil Oil Corporation (now ExxonMobil), and running her own private leadership consulting practice – The Change Agency. Called to ministry in the wake of the 1999 Columbine High School shootings, Sue attended Eden Theological Seminary (2003-2006) prior to serving her first call as solo pastor for 500-member St. Paul United Church of Christ in Nashville, Illinois, a part of the Illinois South Conference. During her tenure with Illinois South, Sue was tapped to inaugurate the conference’s Finance Ministry, which, for the first time in the life of the conference, was able to paint a clear picture of their true financial picture for improved decision making. Sue also served as the Conference’s representative to the Local Church Ministries Board of Directors (2010 – 2013) prior to the commencement of the unified governance board in 2013. In April 2013, Sue resigned her pastoral role in Illinois to relocate “on a God-whim” to the mountains of Colorado. Landing in Denver in late July 2013 without position or place to live, two weeks later she was called to the just-opened Interim Conference Minister position with the Rocky Mountain Conference to start on September 1, 2013. Two months into the position – having already dealt with the massive fall 2013 mountain floods and having forestalled the pending financial foreclosure of the Conference’s largest asset (\$8MM camp LaForet for a \$680M debt), the Conference Board of Directors changed her title from Interim to Acting to indicate their ability to consider her for the permanent position after the interim period. The Conference’s search committee was commissioned in June 2015, and hopes to name their selected candidate no later than June 2016.