

SPECIAL POINTS OF
INTEREST:

- Camp
Mimanagish
Schedule
- Worship
Highlights
- John McClelland Schol-
arship
- Our Whole
Lives
- Unity Con-
cert

INSIDE THIS
ISSUE:

From the Moderator	1
Senior Minister Rev. Mike	2 & 3
Youth and Young Adults	4
Family Promise	5
Our Whole Lives	6
August Birthdays	7

THE *Congregationalist*

VOLUME 29

NUMBER 8

AUGUST 1, 2016

From the Moderator: Mic Dawson

These words from someone we trust raise our curiosity, from someone we're not sure about some apprehension. Something is going to be revealed to us and it may not be pleasant. Also, we're going to have to reveal something about ourselves, too, and depending on the situation, that can make us uneasy.

In the upcoming weeks and months we will be doing a lot of talking amongst ourselves, about who we are and our dreams for our church.

- There will be the group dinners where we meet in the warmth of each other's homes.
- There will be the congregational meetings on the Crossroads study for our building.
- Council has determined that congregational meetings will take place more often than annually.

We will have the opportunity –and the responsibility - to engage each other with open hearts and minds to determine our future as a congregation at 3rd and 27th, downtown Billings.

Sign up for the group dinners. Make every effort to **attend** the planning sessions.

Design Workshops and a Crossroads Study

The steering committee has met twice with High Plains Architecture to begin the study for the future of our facility and property. We are arranging to have two workshops (charettes), one in September and one in October. We will be developing three or four possible scenarios for the future of the church.

Extensive research is being done to assess the integrity of the building, to inspect the mechanical, electrical, and plumbing, to assess how the building is presently used, to compile utility data, to create a graphic computer model and a baseline energy model.

All of this will be presented to the congregation. A group of non-church members will be interviewed to better learn what needs of the community First Church is uniquely qualified to serve because of our location and/or our building. Two workshops are planned for participation by the whole church to learn what the present status of the building is and what are our strengths and weakness are. We will work in small groups to imagine our sacred space and to envision what our place in the community can be.

Your participation is essential to this process.

Lyla Dyer

Getting Ready for the Fall—Sacred Places

Steering Committee

Behind the scenes the Steering Committee has started working with High Plains Architects to prepare our congregation for brainstorming and visioning about what our building might look like out into the future. We have a good building, with good bones, but with some much needed changes to maintain for its general welfare and for the way God is moving in mission and ministry in the Billings community.

So we will need to prepare by building a stew. Our collective hearts and minds need to come together in a way that simmers and blends, develops and grows into the path God is placing before us. I believe that only happens in a community that works hard to discern how diversity meets unity.

Fall Reading

To that end, we will begin discussing what makes “a sacred place” and what makes and will make our building “a sacred place.” Belden Lane, Professor of Theology and History of Spirituality at St. Louis University, has written compelling texts around sacred place. I would like for all of us to begin reading his book, *Landscapes of the Sacred: Geography and Narrative in American Spirituality*, to begin asking ourselves, “What makes a sacred place?”

Dinner Groups—Sign up to participate with times that work!

Along with that reading, we will be convening dinner groups again in the fall. Thanks to all of you who shared your willingness to be a host for one of those dinner groups already! I want as many people as possible involved in those groups. While our initial groups were about “getting to know you”, these groups will be about short reading material I will provide for each group.

There is a sign-up sheet for those who will participate located in the Narthex with the available dates.

Worship and “Sacred Place”

This fall I will also offer a preaching series on “sacred places” and asking for your input. Many of these will be dialog sermons where I ask you to participate so that we might hear how place has defined your life. We want a church building informed by all of this wisdom.

Faith Community Tours

I will also seek out people who would be willing to go on three different faith community tours. We will visit three different faith communities and their buildings—some like ours, some not like ours—to see how they use their buildings to faithfully live out their ministry and mission. These tours will simply about observation and discussion about how other folks do it so that we might faithfully map out a path for ourselves. If you are interested in joining the tour, please sign up in the narthex!

Unity Concert August 20th

Volunteers and participants are needed for the evening Unity Concert on Saturday, August 20th. Faith ENGAGEMENT is providing a concert for the community to celebrate our concern and care for the homeless population of Billings. Volunteers are needed to help staff the concert. Volunteers are needed to provide musical acts for the concert! We have such musical talent that it would be great to showcase it with the work we are doing! Go to this website <https://goo.gl/qFbn3a> to sign up!

Gratitude from Rev. Mike

- Thanks to Edward Barta for jumping out and making phone call after phone call to get people to attend The Feast at The Fieldhouse Restaurant! We had 45 people attend, most of them from our church!
- Thanks to Edward Barta and Barbara Gunn for providing scholarships to those attending The Feast!
- Thanks to all of those who attended The Feast, listened to Ben's presentation, joined in the conversation, and made it such a wonderful evening!
- Thanks to Bonnie Conn for her continued work with the Prayer Chain! If you would like to be a part of the Prayer Chain, let Bonnie know or call the Church Office and we will let Bonnie know.
- Thanks to all of you who attended the Food Film series. Yellowstone Valley Citizens Council considers it an unqualified success, and so many members of our church made it so with your attendance and participation.
- Thanks to Barbara Gulick for organizing the Called to Care sessions we will be having in August!
- Thanks to so many of you for attending the Billings Mustangs Downtown Billings Alliance game and cheering me on as I threw out the first pitch!
- Thanks to Virginia Bryan for organizing our "Happy Meals" and for all of you who contributed food to uplift the spirits of people we dearly love.
- Thanks to Dan and Penny Struckman who always organize our time with Family Promise and to all of you who participated in our regular rotation this time around!
- Thanks to all of the people who are helping our church garden to grow and flourish!
- Thanks to Jesuit Volunteer, Julia Kehoe, for her presence among us and the hard work she did in our community. We now wish her well as she returns to Michigan.
- Thanks to those who are attending our Bible Study over at Westpark Village.
- Thank you to Bill Hawk and Barbara Archer for their worship leadership during my vacation in June. Thank you to Dan Struckman, Pat Burg, Webster Crist, John Smillie, and Jori Lokken for their gifts of special music this summer and to Barbara Dobesh for organizing them.

Happy Meal Ministry: Join Us!

"Happy Meal Ministry" delivers to families recovering from illness or during bereavement. We are looking for new participants in September. Please call or text Virginia at 690.1662 or email: vbryan1041@gmail.com.

Group Visioning Dinners

We still have many dates open for group visioning dinners. These are very important to begin talking about what we plan for the future of Billings First Church. Below you will find open dates and number of openings for people. If you would like to attend one please let Breanna in the office know.

August 4th: 2 More People Dinner 6:30pm	September 6th: 5 More People
August 7th: 3 More People Dinner 5:30 pm	September 14th: 6 More People
August 10th :3 More People Dinner 5:30 p.m.	September 19th: 4 More people
August 11th: 7 More People	September 22nd: 6 More People
August 13th: 2 More People	September 24th: 4 More People
August 20th: 2 More People	September 27th: 8 More People
	September 28th: 8 More People

Spiritual Director-In-Residence

The following comes from a spiritual director friend in an alumni Facebook group. She is not the author, but is sharing something that touched her at the time when we were students and continues to do so. Love is a discipline that must be practiced every day. In the tumultuous times when we feel we cannot hold on to love, others are praying for us. The net is there. Let us pray. Let us love.

I greet this day with love in my heart.
 I respond to the actions of others with love.
 Adversity and discouragement will beat
 against my shield of love and becomes soft as rain.
 My shield of love sustains me when I am alone,
 uplifts me in moments of despair
 and calms me in times of confusion.
 I awaken to the new day
 with vitality and joy of living.
 As my courage increases, my enthusiasm rises.
 My desires to greet the world overcomes every fear.
 I accept happiness from the sources made available to me.
 As I become stronger, I cast aside the shield
 and walk unencumbered among the family of humanity,
 giving and receiving.
 The radiation of unconditional love reawakens the joy
 of living in everyone I meet.
 I greet this day with love in my heart.
 Rev. Carol E. Parrish-Harra



Honoring our Seniors

Important Dates This July

8/2 Staff Meeting 1:30
 8/2 Group Dinner
 8/4 Group Dinner
 8/7 Group Dinner
 8/9 Diaconate Meeting~ Virginia Bryan's Home
 8/10 Group Dinner
 8/11 Group Dinner
 8/16 **Council Meeting** 7:00 p.m. Library
 8/20 Group Dinner
8/25-8/31 Breanna on vacation

Honoring our Seniors" Sunday will be held on Sunday, September 11, 2016. Diaconate and other church volunteers will provide transportation for our home-bound seniors and others to and from worship on that day. This date coincides with Re-Covenant Sunday. Please contact Virginia Bryan (text: 690-1662 or email: vbryan1041@gmail.com) or the church office if you would like to be included as a visitor or are willing to provide transportation

Camp Mimanagish

Women's Retreat 8/12-8/15
 Fishing Camp 8/12-8/15
 Geography of Grace 9/2-9/5
 Men's Retreat 9/16-9/18
 Fall Youth Retreat 10/20-10/22



We stayed overnight yesterday at our Church of the Fervently Religious with homeless families who belong to the program "Family Promise of Yellowstone Valley." This program allows families to live rent-free for a number of months by sleeping in a variety of Billings churches and synagogues that serve a week at a time on a three month rotating schedule.

In our case, P. and I slept on cots in a Sunday school room, as did the four families enrolled in the program. Takes about six volunteers each day to take care of the families: two to prepare an evening meal, two to serve as evening hosts, and two to serve as overnight hosts. Overnight is the easiest shift, goes from 8:30 p.m. until 7 the next morning. A van drops the families off and picks them up the next morning.

These days we have four adults and 9 children in the program.

We got to peek into one of the families' rooms and saw three children's beds all side-by-side and mom's bed near the door, protective.

Tonight the families are in for a real treat: Virginia Bryan is furnishing the meal and all of the fixings, Jane Moses and Lyla Dyer are the evening hosts, and Walt and Barbara Gulick are overnighers. I know everyone will enjoy each others' company.

Of course, the homeless families have a home base, a new day center to store their belongings and their own bathrooms. They also have a van to transport the kids to school and everyone to and from the variety of churches for spending the night. The nice thing about the churches is that many people, like us, get to share in caring for the families, interacting, talking, telling stories, but also the families get nice clean sleeping quarters, new each week. It's a pretty good system. The hosting occurs about every three months, so one doesn't get tired of doing it.

Dan Struckman

Windy Flats Gallery End of Season Event

Edward Barta & Barbara Gunn invite you to our end of season event at Windy Flats Gallery. Gallery is located at 259 Limestone Road, Nye MT. Saturday/Sunday August 27th & 28th. The time is 11:00 am– 6:00 pm both days. “Art– its worth the journey.”

Our Whole Lives Training

We are excited to offer Our Whole Lives Facilitator training for grades 7-9 & 10-12 in Bozeman August 12-14. If you are considering bringing Our Whole Lives to your congregation, have an established program or want to know more about this great opportunity for children, youth and adults, this training is for you.

Ann Hanson, UCC, and Laura Mentch, UUA, will lead this training sponsored by Bozeman’s Interfaith Our Whole Lives Committee (UCC and UUA). Home Hospitality will be provided. To save money for your congregation, registration \$275.

Online registration is at <http://bozemanowl.weebly.com/> We hope to see you in Bozeman this summer. Please contact me or registrar Katie Michael, katherine.michael@gmail.com, with questions about this training.

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 2016-2017. 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.

Maggie Dunphy, who will be a Junior at Seattle University, will receive a \$5000 scholarship. Maggie is the daughter of Amy and Paul Dunphy.

Unity Concert

Volunteers and participants are needed for the evening Unity Concert on Saturday, August 20th. Faith ENGAGEMENT is providing a concert for the community to celebrate our concern and care for the homeless population of Billings. Volunteers are needed to help staff the concert. Volunteers are needed to provide musical acts for the concert! We have such musical talent that it would be great to showcase it with the work we are doing! Go to this website <https://goo.gl/qFbn3a> to sign up!

AUGUST BIRTHDAYS

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

An "Open & Affirming/Peace with
Justice" Church

Our Staff

Rev. Michael Mulberry, Senior Minister

Kimmie Harris, Youth/Young Adults

Laura Blodgett, Chancel Choir

Jo Lokken, Melody Choir

Barbara Dobesh, Organist/Pianist

Steve Plaggemeyer, Assistant Organ/Piano

Jan Duffy, Bookkeeping

Breanna Rolandson, Administrative Assistant

Barbara Gulick, Spiritual Director-In-Residence

Our Ministers

Every member of the congregation!



www.firstchurchbillings.org

Your August Congregationalist is here!

The Billings Congregationalist (USPS) 056-160
Published Monthly
FIRST CONGREGATIONAL
UNITED CHURCH OF CHRIST (UCC)
310 North 27th Street
Billings, MT 59101-1292
Periodicals Postage: Paid at Billings, MT
POSTMASTER: Send changes to above address



Worship

Nineteenth Sunday in Ordinary Time--Green Sacrament of Holy Communion Scripture: Luke 12:27-34	August 7, 2016
First Sunday in Sacred Place~ Green Scripture: I Kings 21:1-18	August 14, 2016 "God owns the land"
Second Sunday in Sacred Place~ Green Scripture: Genesis 28:10-17	August 21, 2016 "The Elements of Sacred Place"
Third Sunday in Sacred Place~ Green Scripture: Psalm 90:1; Jeremiah 7:4; Psalm 84:5	August 28, 2016 "God as place/no place"
Fourth Sunday in Sacred Place~ Green Sacrament of Holy Communion Scripture: Exodus 3	September 4, 2016 "Sacred Place as Middle Earth/Center of the World"
Fifth Sunday in Sacred Place~ Green Recovenanting Sunday Scripture: Gospel of Thomas 77	September 11, 2016 "Sacred Place as Mask of the Holy"
Sixth Sunday in Sacred Place~ Green Scripture: I Kings 19:5-18	September 18, 2016 "The Sacred Place of Emergence"
Seventh Sunday in Sacred Place~ Green Scripture: Exodus 17:1-7; Isaiah: 35:1-2; Isaiah 2:2	September 25, 2016 "Sacred Place as Fierce Landscape"
Eighth Sunday in Sacred Place~ Green World Communion Sunday Scripture: Psalm 16	October 2, 2016 "Sacred Place as Home"
Ninth Sunday in Sacred Place~ Green Scripture: 2 Kings 5:1-14	October 9, 2016 "Sacred Place of Strange Waters"
Tenth Sunday in Sacred Place~ Green Scripture: Hebrews 13:1-2	October 16, 2016 "Sacred Place of Hospitality"
Eleventh Sunday in Sacred Place~ Green Scripture: Luke 10:25-37	October 23, 2016 "Sacred Place of Risk"

Bus Passes Needed

One of the things that is sorely needed among those in recovery in the Billings area is bus passes. Bus passes give people the freedom to get from one end of town to another, allow people the ability to access services and resources, and help those in recovery to get to regular meetings. Please let Rev. Mulberry know if you are willing to contribute. These are regularly requested among those providing recovery leadership in our community.

Bible and Book Study

Sundays, 3:00 p.m., August, 7, August 14

We continue our Bible/book study at Westpark Village. The whole congregation is invited to this study. Please read the accompanying Scripture verses (found at the beginning of each chapter) with the chapters.

We will be reading:

Week 4, Chapter 6, Certain Women

Week 5, Chapter 11, The Gospel of Mary

In *Just a Sister Away*, Weems reveals the timeless connection between today's women and their biblical sisters--and how to live a better life because of it.

Pledge Plus

The PLEDGE PLUS campaign is underway to increase our pledges by 15%. This is necessary to cover the deficit in our budget for 2016. PLEDGE PLUS was adopted by the Church Council as a way to cover the expected shortfall of \$31,000 in revenues for the remainder of 2016. We are faced with a difficult choice of reducing expenditures for staff or asking for an increase in our pledges.

We do not want to tell you how much to contribute. But to give you an idea of the amount that is needed, we would have this deficit covered if every current pledge unit gave an additional 15%.

We at First Congregational are proud of our role as Billings' oldest and first church. We are an important part of downtown Billings and many depend on us. We need your added support at this time.

Presently 14 members have increased their pledges with Pledge Plus. This covers about one third of the deficit. Please be as generous as you can.

NAME _____

DATE _____

I plan to increase my pledge for 2016 by \$ _____ for a total of \$ _____
_____ for the year. I will give _____ each month.

Return to:

First Congregational UCC

310 North 27th Street

Billings, MT 59101

Billings, MT 59101