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THE *Congregationalist*

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From the Moderator: Mic Dawson

RESILIENCE AND ADHOCRACY

Rev. Mulberry has suggested a book for Council to read preparatory to a Council retreat, "Resilience – Why Things Bounce Back" by Andrew Zolli. The premise is that shocks can't be avoided but better shock absorbers can be built

Billings First Church finds itself in something of a state of shock – the old, tried and true methods of operating are no longer permitting the Church to function in comfortable, familiar ways. New ways of being and acting are required to maintain the Church's mission and even its existence. We have staff whom we love and who serve us well but we aren't able to pay them what they deserve for their services.

At this time the Church needs to be nimble in addressing the situation we face and this is where "adhocracy" comes in. The term comes from Alvin Toffler (remember the 70's and "Future Shock"?) and Henry Mintzberg. According to Zolli "It's characterized by informal team roles, limited focus on standard operating procedures . . . selective decentralization . . . and a general intolerance of bureaucracy." Again, according to Zolli, "We usually bias towards toward bureaucracy, rather than away from it." This can be very uncomfortable when the "rules and regulations" don't seem to apply but it can be necessary when trying to move quickly. As Bette Davis said in "All About Eve" "Fasten your seatbelts it's going be a bumpy night" The members of Billings First Church have never been afraid of a bumpy ride!

Lenten Recital Series and Soup Luncheon

Our annual FRIDAY NOON LENTEN RECITAL SERIES will begin on Friday, February 20. Programs are as follows:

Friday, February 12	RMC Concert Choir and Chamber Singers, Dr. Steven Hart, Director	Friday, March 4	Barbara Gulick, Organist
Friday, February 19	Laurel & Aaron Linde, Clarinet Duo	Friday, March 11	Palma Wolvertson, pianist
Friday, February 26	Rosie Weiss, violinist & Lee Hancock, pianist	Friday, March 18	Karen Poling, pianist, Brad Brown, baritone soloist, & Students from St. Charles Indian Mission School

Recitals begin at 12:05 in the sanctuary. A soup and bread luncheon will be available following each program in the parlor/library of the church. Soup is catered by Soup and Such. Suggested donation \$5.00.

This is a long-standing program of our church, and well received by music lovers in the community. It happens only because we have musicians from Billings and the surrounding area who are willing to share their talents in a program for which they receive no remuneration. Please remember to thank these performers for their generous gift to us all!

Special thanks also to Breanna, Kim, Steve, and the women of Mayflower Circle, all of whom play a big role in getting everything lined up and set for the Series and lunches to follow. Plus the faithful members of First Church who assist with serving lunch and clean up following each program. We are blessed in this community!

Time With Teresa

- Did you know I maintain a Certification in Thanatology (CT) credential from the Association for Death Education and Counseling (adec.org)? What the heck is Thanatology? Webster's definition: "Thanatology is the scientific study of death. It investigates the mechanisms and forensic aspects of death, such as bodily changes that accompany death and the post-mortem period, as well as wider psychological and social aspects related to death, including the study of the needs of the terminally ill and their families."
- Planning our funeral services and talking with our families about how we want our death to be is a difficult thing for many. For how long, and do you want to be on a ventilator? Do you want to use a feeding tube? How much CPR do you want? I can help. I'll be planning a workshop in the coming months, but I'm always available for 1:1 planning, or helping you talk to your family. May the Holy Spirit fall afresh on you EVERY day! Peace, Pastor Teresa
- THANK-YOU Sue Bailey for the great presentation you did on Medicare. We are lucky to have such expertise in our midst!
- Home-Bound? Need A RIDE? It's SUPER easy to use our Transportation Ministry. A cabbie will show up just when you request~ Please call the church office or me @ 861-5578 to get a voucher. Suggested rides: Worship, Primetimer events. HOME-BOUND Older Adult Primetimer's 55+) only.
- Worship opportunity at West Park Saturday 02/06@ 2:00 pm. MONTHLY worship service at West Park at 2:00pm with Holy Communion. Join me the FIRST SATURDAY OF THE MONTH in the Lower Level in the Chapel. If you would like to provide music or participate in worship, or help serving communion, let me know. I would appreciate YOUR HELP! All are welcome!
- Primetimer's Studytime~ Sunday mornings @ 10:00 in Teresa's office. Looking for something different? Our curriculum focus is what God would want for us as we pass from middle-age towards the final quarter of our lives.
- Primetimer's Dinnertime~ Bull Mountain Grille out in the Heights for a change! Located at 2376 Main Str. I thought we'd stay close to the homes of our heights families. Feb. 18 Thurs. @ 5:30pm. Please join us for a time of fellowship, food, and fun! Come make some new friends. Limited transportation is available.
- Primetimer's Winetime~ At the home of Barbara & Walt Gulick Feb. 25, Thurs. @ 5:30pm. Please bring an appetizer to share. Beverages provided. Come make some new friends! Limited transportation is available. Thank you, Doug & Liza McClelland for hosting January.
- PRAYER CONCERNS: We pray for the Church, Staff, and Leadership. Please keep Heather Hodges, Evelyn Lile, Terri Smith, and the Heald Fitzgerald families in your prayers. In your mercy, Lord, hear our prayers. Amen.
- 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.
- Home Communion-If you would like to share communion in your home, please let Pastor Teresa or the Rev. Mike know. We'd love to see you!

"Being fully awake and conscious in the dark days of winter can be challenging. Unknowing and mystery are often uncomfortable experiences. We have all had winter seasons in our lives when what was familiar is stripped away and we have to hold grief and open ourselves to the grace of being rather than doing. Winter calls us to trust that fallowness and hibernation are essential to our own wholeness." --- Christine Valters Painter

Mayflower Circle

Mayflower Circle will meet February 16, 2016 at the Conference Office 2016 Alderson Ave. The meeting begins at 1:00 pm. the program will be "Mission Trip" by Ron & Judy Burnam. Guests are always welcome and you are encouraged to bring a friend. Call Myrle Theimer at 245-3650 with questions.

Rev. Michael Mulberry, Sr. Minister

Gratitude

Every month now it feels like I am extending gratitude to a number of people who help pull off great mission and ministry at our church. I know there are far more people who should be thanked for the everyday ministry that goes on at our church. They are no less worthy of thanks. These are just people who helped pull off some events I have put forward that required some faith on their part that it was worthy of their time. When you are still a new guy, I cannot express the gratitude for that faith in me.

Thanks to Sue Betz, Rev. Cheryl Stewart, Rev. Tracy Heilman, and Bonnie Daniels for helping to pull off the highly successful Jesus Seminar. Cheryl and Bonnie even brought in baked goods for the participants and created an extra level of hospitality that showed up in positive evaluations from the participants.

Thanks to Brad Blaesius, Vivian Smith, and Kim Harris for the extra work they put in for the Twelfth Night Feast. Kim put her faith in me for a new event that was not originally on the calendar. And many thanks to Webster Crist for all of his beautiful music and his friend Maddie. They added so much to the event. Brad Blaesius is just an incredible volunteer at our church who shows up, works hard, and never seeks the limelight. He is a saint in our midst. Vivian Smith joins as a new member and then starts right in helping out with a youth fundraiser! How cool is that? Parents and youth from Mayflower and First helped to pull off a spectacular event that I hope remains a staple at both churches.

Building Capacity

Just this past month I have put before three of our committees ideas and potential structure narratives that help lead out their work for our church. I sent Finance and Endowment committees a list of ten items I would be glad to lead, facilitate, participate in, or just get out of the way as they do them. These ideas are an attempt to move us out of vexing over our budget shortfall to pro-active initiatives that might help plan for our future. Some of the ideas are rooted in past initiatives this congregation used at one time. Some of the ideas are from Rev. Stephen Gray, a stewardship expert within the United Church of Christ. And some of the ideas are based on successful initiatives I have used in other churches. As I wait for their response to these proposals, I have five more ideas I want to share with them.

The other structural narrative was shared with Diaconate at its last meeting. I proposed dividing up the work of Diaconate into two areas: worship and pastoral care. That is not to say that Diaconate will do all the work of worship and pastoral care at our church. It is a hope that they will help organize and facilitate the work of the whole church as we prepare for and celebrate worship and as we care for one another. For example, pastoral joys and concerns from worship should find their way into the prayer chain the next week. And joys and concerns from the prayer chain should find their way into worship the following week. And how many people actually know we have a prayer chain?

In preparing for worship, there are so many small, quantifiable tasks that could be given over to people who want to feel like they belong to the church by helping with the church's work. Almost every young adult I have asked to read Scripture for Sunday worship has written back to talk about what an honor it is to be asked. We shrink the pool of people in worship when fewer and fewer people have responsibilities for what goes on every Sunday. So why wouldn't we ask as broadly as possible to increase worship attendance?

My hope and prayer is that more and more people find a place at our church where they know the small, ongoing task they provide is essential to the work of our church. Otherwise, we become just like many of the evangelical churches we criticize where the congregation is an audience enjoying or critiquing the work done by the staff. We must build capacity. I hope you will join me in carrying out that task.

Youth and Young Adults

Whew, January was somewhat of a month to recover from our busy month in December! Our Older Youth spent the month practicing and preparing for the 12th Night Feast which was held on January 24. Wow, what a great evening that was!! Almost 100 guests were hosted by Lord Malcolm and Lady Sophia to a wonderful evening of entertainment including a joust and saints and an amazing dinner prepared by the parents and served by the youth. Our deepest gratitude goes to all the parents and adult volunteers that helped with food preparation, donations, costumes, decorations and preparation. We also want to give great thanks to everyone that attended, your support is greatly appreciated! We hope you all had a wonderful evening and we look forward to making this an annual event!

Coming up in February we are busy once again!

On February 1 we will be having a parent meeting for all parents of K-2 and 4-6 grade parents for Our Whole Lives at 6:30 pm at Mayflower UCC for classes we will be holding in February. If you are interested in having your child in the class and/or to get more information on the class please attend!

We have our Family Fun Night at Bricks and Minifigs on Friday, February 12. We will have time to play and build with legos and everyone gets to take home a figure they build! Cost is \$9/person and is from 5:30-7:00 pm. Please RSVP to Kim or the office by Feb. 10.

The Youth will be holding Soup Bowls outside of worship on Sunday, February 7 for Souper Bowl Sunday. Bring all your loose change to support these great causes. The money raised for First Church UCC will go to support the Food Bank and the money raised for Mayflower UCC will go to the HUB.

The older youth will be having their Annual Sweetheart Dinner on Sunday, February 21 at Mayflower UCC. Come join us for a wonderful four course meal from the Colonial Days and an evening of great entertainment and talent!

The older youth will also have their mystery event on February 28, 3-5 pm. Information and clues will be coming in the mail!

Spiritual Director-In-Residence

I was intrigued by one of the recent Jesus Seminar speakers in his explanation of the function of the Nicene Creed in the 4th century Roman Empire. It was likened to the loyalty oath to the emperor that the Roman military took. It was important to the Emperor Constantine to unify the religiously fragmented empire with a religious "loyalty oath." The specifics were not important to Constantine, but having a religious "loyalty oath" was. The resulting creed is still used in contemporary liturgical churches. Whether those who recite this creed as part of Sunday worship believe the specifics of the creed or recite it as a loyalty oath to the church of Jesus Christ is an interesting question, but an even more interesting question is: what is the loyalty oath of those of us who belong to a non-creedal church, such as our United Church of Christ? What are the spiritual practices that we have covenanted together to observe? What are the spiritual practices that build community? The first, I think, is to "show up." Be there, pray, participate, and pay attention. Listen and take the risk of learning something new, especially from someone of another generation or whose life experience is different from your own. The second is to practice Christian hospitality as the arms of the Christ who invites everyone to His table. Be a host in your church home to welcome and serve others, not a consumer to have your particular expectations met, for, in doing so, you will find that you have been blessed beyond your wildest expectations. Thirdly, be responsible for the health of the community by contributing to it with your time, your talent, and your treasure. Be open to the giving and receiving of the gifts of others, and, especially, those of God. What other spiritual practices would you add? Please email them to me at bjgulick@bresnan.net, snail mail them to me at 2018 12th St. West (59102), or hand them to me in writing at church. I'll be delighted to share the spiritual wisdom of the congregation in the March Congregationalist.

Barbara Gulick, MRE, DASD



Our Whole Lives Class

Important Dates This February

- 2/4-11 **Breanna gone on vacation**
- 2/9 **Diaconate Meeting** 7:00 pm Library
- 2/10 **Ash Wednesday 6 pm at First English Lutheran**
- 2/12 **Lenten Recital~ 12:05 pm**
- 2/16 **Council Meeting** 7:00 p.m. Fellowship Hall
- 2/17 **Lenten Study** At Mayflower
- 2/18 **Primetimer's Dinnertime** 5:30 p.m. at Bull Mountain Grill, rsvp to Teresa or church office.
- 2/19 **Lenten Recital Series~ 12:05 pm**
- 2/22 **Billings Symphony Chorale Concert 7:30 pm**
- 2/25 **Primetimers Winetime** 5:30 pm at the home of Walt & Barbara Gulick. Bring an appetizer to share, wine provided.
- 2/26 **Lenten Recital Series ~ 12:05 pm**

Our Whole Lives Classes K-2 & 4-6th Grades Coming in February!

A short and informative Parent's informational meeting will be held on **Monday, February 1st, 6:30 pm** at Mayflower Congregational for **all** parents of K-2 and 4-6 grade children.

OWL is a UCC Lifespan Human Sexuality & Self-esteem Training. *Our Whole Lives* teaches the skills to make informed and responsible decisions about behavior and sexual health. It equips participants with accurate, age-appropriate information in human development, relationships, personal skills, sexual behavior, sexual health, and society and culture.

Grounded in a holistic view of sexuality, *Our Whole Lives* not only provides facts about anatomy and human development, but also helps participants clarify their values, build interpersonal skills, grow open interfamily dialogues and understand the spiritual, emotional, and social aspects of sexuality. Please call Kim Harris (855-4317), Anna Nentwig (696-2729) or Christine Sopko (701-261-9090) for more information.



For Your Calendar:

- Monday, February 8th, 2016: Coordinator's Meeting at THE NEW DAY CENTER!!!!!!!!!!!!!!
- Saturday, February 13th, 2016: Beach Blizzard
- Friday, March 4th, 2016: Grand Opening at THE NEW DAY CENTER!

FPYV Current Families:

- **Kat:** Attalie (2). There are no known allergies for this family. Kat attends an evening group on Monday nights and may begin to attend other evening groups throughout the week. However, for now she should be on the bus the nights that she doesn't have group.
- **Ken:** Liam (2). There are no known allergies for this family. Ken has generally been working Friday through Monday from 8-6 and will be getting his own transportation to the church after work. Ken attends evening groups on Mondays and Tuesdays at the moment. He may attend more as time goes on. Both he, and his son, will need dinner saved for them on the days that Ken works and attends group!
- **Kim:** Michael (8). There are no known aller-

gies for this family. Kim work's varying shifts throughout the week and once her schedule is finalized I will provide more information. Kim sometimes attends evening groups; she drives herself to the church on the nights that she does this. Tyler has transitioned out of network into stable housing! We are so excited for him! Kim and Michael are going to be moving into our transitional housing in the coming weeks. Tyler may come for overnights at the church on special occasions but I will let you know if he does.

- **Nicole:** James (11), Jeramie (6), and Alex (4). There are no known allergies for this family. Nicole currently has Jeremie part time on varying days and the boys go to their days every other weekend. On Tuesday, Nicole attends a group from 7-830. She will eat dinner at church, go to group, and be back to church by 9pm. Nicole also attends an evening group on Wednesdays, though we aren't sure of the exact times yet! Nicole's family has other evening groups throughout the week, on these nights she will drive herself to the church.

Worship Highlights ~ February

We finish up our narrative on food justice on the first Sunday in February and continue the study and practice on Wednesdays through Lent. With Lent will bring a series of story sermons. Stories have this incredible, open-ended power to understand symbols and metaphors in a way that is both individual and collective. I hope it might also open up all of our faith stories to hear what you need to hear during this Lenten season.

Fourth Sunday after Epiphany ~ Green **January 31, 2016**
 Scripture: Hosea 4:1-4; 6:5-6; I Corinthians 6:1-3, 12-13a: "Paul and Food Ethic: Does your food dominate you?"

Transfiguration Sunday ~ White **February 7, 2016**
Our Whole Lives Sunday
 Scripture: Luke 9:28-36; 2 Corinthians 3:12-4:2: "It's Trans Sunday"

Ash Wednesday ~ Purple **February 10, 2016, 6:00 p.m.**
First English Lutheran Church
 Scripture: Joel 2:1-2, 12-17: "Again we keep this solemn fast."

First Sunday of Lent ~ Purple **February 14, 2016**
Renewal of Vows Following the Worship Service
 Scripture: Luke 24:28-31; 1 Corinthians 12: "What Are Our Food Rules?"

Second Sunday of Lent ~ Purple **February 21, 2016**
 Scripture: Luke 4:1-13: "40 Days in the Wilderness"

Third Sunday of Lent ~ Purple **February 28, 2016**

Lent Wednesday Night Studies: 6:00 p.m.

Ash Wednesday, February 10: First English Lutheran

Wednesday, February 17: Mayflower

Wednesday, February 24: Billings First

Wednesday, March 2: First English Lutheran

Wednesday, March 9: Mayflower

Wednesday, March 16: Billings First

"Eat food. Not too much. Mostly plants." With that seven-word maxim, US-based journalist Michael Pollan distills a career's worth of reporting into a prescription for reversing the damage being done to people's health by today's industrially driven Western diet. Pollan offers an answer to one of the most urgent questions of our time: What should I eat to be healthy?

Intentional and mindful practices around eating food can be found in both the Jewish and Muslim traditions. In a misreading of Paul, Christians have largely abandoned all of kosher practice. Our creation narrative tells us we were made out of fertile soil (adamah) and holy breath (ruach). How do we return to ancient practices that remind us of our identity as people made out of fertile soil and practicing health and life and building our social fabric with food? Michael Pollan's book, *In Defense of Food*, was recently made into a movie shown on PBS. We will

use his movie as a resource during our Wednesday Lenten series with our sisters and brothers from Mayflower Congregational UCC and First English Lutheran Church (ELCA). Throughout Lent, we are going to return to the practice of "fasting" so that we might remember who we are, whose we are, and how food connects us to neighbor and the good earth. We will offer different levels of commitment. Many faith communities are now using "Daniel Fasts" as a way to check into our health and well-being. If you are willing to enter into this high level of commitment, you can see a resource for a Daniel Fast here: <https://goo.gl/wpNcLg> or look at the document that is included in this issue of *The Congregationalist*. Or maybe you want something that brings you into a deeper relationship with God and food, but do not think the Daniel Fast is for you. You can follow along on this daily Lenten devotional for food: <https://goo.gl/qvEkRC>. Or, if that all just seems to be too much, maybe you can covenant to be more intentional and mindful about your food rules and practices during Lent. All of this is about developing a food ethic, practice, and rule that brings life and health to you, to your neighbor, and to the world. What an amazing thing it is when sisters and brothers dwell in unity!

FEBRUARY BIRTHDAYS

Sun	Mon	Tue	Wed	Thu	Fri	Sat
	1 Susan Betz	2	3	4 Lisa Chapman Lisa Kemmick	5 Joan Hughes Cameron Ostermiller	6 Marcy Brown Dazalyn Degges
7	8	9 Dawn Chapman Katherine Howland Bill Howland	10 Harry Andersen Rose Poppler	11	12 Ken Brown Jori Lokken Dick Stratford	13 Amy Evangelisti Maybelle Reichenbach Terri Smith
14 Loraine Armstrong Elvera Burnham	15 Alice Lundgren	16 Christy Jaeger	17	18 Lily Harris	19	20 Sophia Heilman
21 Jase Norsworthy Ava Shearer	22 John Burg Lyla Dyer Laura Mellor	23 Ron Burnam	24 Virginia Montague Samantha McLeod	25 Steve Plaggemeyer	26 Dorothy Florey David Solberg	27 Henry Crist Tiffany Degges Sydney Emond
28 Finnian Bentler Cindy Krieger	29					

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Billings First Church

First Congregational United Church of Christ (UCC)

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

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An "Open & Affirming/Peace with
Justice" Church



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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 February Congregationalist is here!

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