

SPECIAL POINTS OF
INTEREST:

- Camp
Mimanagish
Schedule
- Worship
Highlights
- Buildings
and Grounds
- New Mem-
ber Orienta-
tion

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THE *Congregationalist*

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From the Moderator: Mic Dawson

MAKE YOUR PLEDGE PLUS NOW

Thank you to those of you who have increased your giving informally. It is important that we have completed Pledge Plus forms to know how to make budget plans. You can complete the form and send to Jan Duffy at the church or you can put it in the offering plate.

If the congregation will make up the deficit it will avoid one of two things occurring a) staffing cuts or pay cuts or b) Going back to Endowment to request further support. Neither of these is desirable which is why Council has determined to undertake this campaign.

Please consider how much you could possibly increase your pledge and get the information in to Jan as the bookkeeper so Council can track our financial condition.

And, again, thank you.

Bible and Book Study

Sundays, 3:00 p.m., July 10, July 17, July 24, August 7, August 14

This summer we are going to begin a book study at Westpark Village. The whole congregation is invited to this study. Please read the accompanying Scripture verses with the chapters.

We will be reading:

- Week 1, Chapter 1, Hagar and Sarah
- Week 2, Chapter 2, Naomi and Ruth
- Week 3, Chapter 3, Martha and Mary
- Week 4, Chapter 6, Certain Women
- Week 5, Chapter 11, The Gospel of Mary

For those of you who want to order and read ahead, we will be using what I view to be a classic for a solid and meaningful Bible Study—*Just a Sister Away*. The author, Renita J. Weems, is a Hebrew Scripture scholar, minister, and renowned public speaker. She was formerly a contributing editor for *Essence* magazine. If you would like to order the book through the church, I will ask Sue at Barjon's books to make an order on our behalf. Please just call the Church Office and let Breanna know and we'll ask you to reimburse the church at a later time.

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.

Outreach and Food Justice

The Outreach Committee decided to make food justice a focus of their work this year. In keeping with that focus, we continue the work through two big events in the Billings community and an invitation to help out the Yellowstone Valley Citizens Council.

The Feast! Sunday, July 17, 6:00 p.m., The Fieldhouse Restaurant

After much wrangling, we were finally able to set up a feast for about 30 people from people from Billings First Congregational, Mayflower, and First English Lutheran. First preference will be given to those who participated in the Lenten series, Michael Pollan's great movie, "In Defense of Food." Cost will be between \$25-30 per person and will involve Chef and Founder, Ben Harman, sharing the values of The Fieldhouse Restaurant and the importance of local and organic food. Ben will then be available for a question and answer session. If you have never eaten at The Fieldhouse Restaurant, this promises to be a great evening of food, friends, and information to help us all celebrate the joy of breaking bread together (Not as good as bread baked by Brian Bross but really good bread!). If you are interested, please call the Church Office (406-245-6477) or email Rev. Mulberry (revmikemul@firstchurchbillings.org). Please let us know if you participated in the Lenten series. Space is limited and we want to be fair to all three of the faith communities involved. So let us know as soon as possible of your interest and commitment.

Food Justice Film Series beginning Tuesday, July 12, Art House Cinema

Also, the Art House Cinema will be hosting a food justice film series in partnership with Yellowstone Valley Citizens Council (Revs. Siebrasse and Mulberry serve on the YVCC Local Food Campaign) on Tuesdays in July. Here is the schedule. Times are temporarily scheduled for 6:30 p.m. On Tuesday, July 12th, we will be watching the movie, Dirt!. Dirt! brings to life the environmental, economic, social and political impact that the soil has. It shares the stories of experts from all over the world who study and are able to harness the beauty and power of a respectful and mutually beneficial relationship with soil. But more than the film and the lessons that it teaches, DIRT! The Movie is a call to action. "When humans arrived 2 million years ago, everything changed for dirt. And from that moment on, the fate of dirt and humans has been intimately linked." On Tuesday, July 19th, we will be watching a short movie, Food Frontiers and some video shorts. Food Frontiers shares the way the community of Cody, Nebraska, found alternative ways to access fresh food. On Tuesday, July 26th, we will watch the movie Food Chains. Food Chains is the award winning documentary that reveals the human cost in our food supply and the complicity of large buyers of produce like fast food and supermarkets. Fast food is big, but supermarkets are bigger – earning \$4 trillion globally.

We hope you will continue to participate in all of these great events as a way of remember the good and gracious hand of God connected to the bread we break and the communion we find with each other and our planet around the table.

Vacation: Rev. Mulberry will be on vacation from Tuesday, June 21st to Tuesday, July 5.

During that time, Rev. Steve Gordon will be handling pastoral emergencies. Rev. Gordon can be reached at Mayflower: 406-842-8897.

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 host! Sign up to participate with times that work!

Along with that reading, we will be convening dinner groups again in the fall. I am asking Breanna to bring that together. Thanks to all of you who shared your willingness to be a host for one of those dinner groups already! Please contact her in the office if you are also willing. 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.

Breanna is also setting up a sign-up sheet for those who will participate by indicating not only your willingness but also the times that work for you.

Worship and “Sacred Place”

This fall I will also offer a preaching series on “sacred places” and asking for your input. 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!

Gratitude from Rev. Mike

Thanks to Brian Bross for all of his work to set up a teleconferencing system in the choir room.

Thanks to the congregation of Billings First Congregational Church for time designated in my call for vacation. I’m so thankful for the time to renew and refresh with my family.

Thanks to Dan Struckman and Sophia Heilman for the help with the audio-visuals on Sundays. I am also grateful to Sophia for her explanation of Greek mythology.

Hospitality

The Hospitality Committee is planning to make a church video. This will be a short video with upbeat music, hopefully videoed by some of our young adults. There will be an opening and closing statement about who we are and what we believe and whom we include. Then, we want to interview church folks of all ages. We want some of you to answer the question, "What do you like about Billings First Congregational Church?" So, please be thinking about that.... We plan to begin videoing this summer on some Sundays after worship.

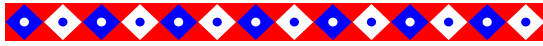
SAVE THE DATE SEPTEMBER 11, 2016 ALL CHURCH PICNIC

Spiritual Director-In-Residence

In last month's newsletter, Rev. Mike Mulberry announced a Fall 2016 focus on "sacred places" as preparation for the gatherings during which our congregation will discern the future of our building. This month I'd like to focus on the Native American spiritual practice of smudging which helps to define a sacred space. Smudging is done with a bundle of dried herbs, often sage and/or cedar, usually bound with string into a small bundle. Traditionally, the herbs are later burned as part of a ritual to purify or bless people and places. Also, according to tradition, when gathering herbs for ceremonial use, care is taken to determine the time of day, month, or year when the herbs should be collected; for example, at dawn or evening, at certain phases of the moon, or according to yearly cycles.

The practice of burning sacred herbs for ceremony has also raised issues about the religious freedom of Native Americans. Native American students in college dorms, for example, have often faced harassment and been forbidden from smudging due to university policies that prohibit the burning of candles or incense in college dorm rooms. However, we here at Billings First Congregational UCC do not have a policy that forbids the burning of candles or smudging as part of the ceremonies that take place here.

In peace and hope,
Barbara Gulick, MRE, DASD



Important Dates This July

7/4 Office Closed: 4th of July
 7/5 Staff Meeting 1:30
 7/14 Breanna out of Office
 7/17-24 Family Promise Hosting Week.
 7/19 **Council Meeting** 7:00 p.m. Library

Camp Mimanagish Schedule

Grandparents & Me 7/6-7/8	10/11/12 Grade Camp 7/31-8/6
Family Camp 7/8-7/10	
Young Adults Camp 7/8-7/10	Women's Retreat 8/12-8/15
Mini and Me Camp 7/12-7/14	Fishing Camp 8/12-8/15
2/3/4 Grade Camp 7/12-7/16	Geography of Grace 9/2-9/5
5/6 Grade Camp 7/17-7/23	Men's Retreat 9/16-9/18
7/8/9 Grade Camp 7/24-7/30	Fall Youth Retreat 10/20-10/22

New Member Orientation

Interested in joining Billings First Church as a new member? Join the movement! Contact Rev. Mulberry at revmikemul@firstchurchbillings.org or call the Church Office at 406-245-6477. Rev. Mulberry will provide orientation on Sundays, July 17 and July 24, from 9:00-9:45 a.m. Free childcare is provided. If you wish to join but cannot attend the orientation, please let Rev. Mulberry know. Future orientation sessions can and will be provided.



Family Promise of Yellowstone Valley

If you were thinking that such a large program to mitigate homelessness in the Yellowstone valley, that involves scores of churches in Billings and surrounding areas, that has its own day center, was going to be busy this summer, then you would be right!

In fact, we at First Congregational Church will be busy with Family Promise also, especially starting July 17. Practically as soon as you are reading this. And if you are like me (and please don't think I am being critical or insulting) you might be reading this in August. But by then July 17 will have passed. It's okay. We'll give you a chance to volunteer to help us next time around.

July 17 to 24 is the next week of hosting for our church. Yes, we will need all of the usual suspects to help us, and then some. All of the cooks, evening hosts, overnight hosts, breakfast makers, set-up and take down specialists, and especially cleaners. We like to clean the sleeping rooms be-

fore our guests arrive and we clean 'em again when they leave.

This time around we want to stress cleaning up the kitchen when our guests leave. No gravy, peanut butter, coffee grounds or crumbs. No bits of dried up meat, no gobs of hardened cream of wheat, no rubbery, blubbery soggy toast, no chicken breast or beefy roast. We want none of that stuff in the kitchen, you see. We want it clean as it can be.

Thanks to everyone who helped us in May with our record-setting 17 guests. This next time promises to be almost as busy. I counted 13 guests the last time I got a report from the FPYV office. Also, a special thank you to Mayflower Circle, who gave us a \$100. We bought bedding and a new video player for the living area.

Dan Struckman

Called To Care

As followers of Jesus, we are called to care for one another. “Called to Care” is a United Church of Christ program that helps us to develop a ministry of caring for members of our congregation and friends who call First Congregational their church home, especially those who, for reason of illness and/or age, are unable to gather with the congregation for Sunday morning worship. You may recall that earlier this year, Susan Betz, Bonnie Daniels, Karen Durfey, Lyla Dyer, Barbara Gulick, Walt Gulick, Pamela Gustafson, Vi Krum, Melodie Phipps, and Myrle Theimer were commissioned to begin this lay visitation ministry.

We now have an opportunity to take the next step—that is, to be trained in the skills of a ministry to which we are already committed and to expand our vision in terms of what it means to be a caring congregation. The Lay Visitation Ministry Team has selected Sunday, Monday, and Tuesday evenings, August 7-9, 6:00-9:00 p.m., in Fellowship Hall, for training sessions and invites all members and friends of the congregation to participate in these training sessions. Taking the training does not commit anyone to undertaking a particular ministry of caring at this time, but gives one the opportunity to discern whether this is a ministry to which you are called. Other UCC churches in our area are also invited to attend. There is no fee for members of our congregation, but there is a fee for other UCC congregations to participate in the training sessions.

Our trainer is Patricia Mitchell, who has been approved for ordination and is awaiting call. Now resident in Utah where her grandbaby is, she is experienced in the “Called to Care” program and is anxious to share it with us.

Because everyone who participates in the training will receive a significant collection of materials, it is imperative that we have an accurate count of those who will attend. Patricia Mitchell has also indicated that the sessions will be structured according to the number of participants. So, please register by notifying Barbara Gulick at 406-259-3622 or bjgulick@bresnan.net of your intention to attend these training sessions by Wednesday, July 27.

Mayflower Circle

Mayflower Circle has completed another successful year of interesting programs and successful fund raising projects. At our May meeting we were able to approve donations to the following organizations: Angel Fund-Billings High Schools, Billings Food Bank, Billings Police Protective Assn, Family Promise-First Church, Friends of Pompeys Pillar, Friendship House, Mt-Wyo Conference office, RMC Campus Ministry, MT Chapter of Suicide Prevention, First Church Youth and Youth Dynamics. These gifts total \$ 1,100. Thank you to everyone who supported Mayflower Circles’ fund raising efforts at our tables at the December Alternative Fair and at our bazaar tables at Mayflower Church.

Mayflower Circle also approved an additional \$1,200 for First Church’s Mimanagish Camperships and \$300 to Mt-Wyo Conference Camperships. This \$1,500 was provided as a gift in memory of Shirley & Jack Ryan.

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!

JULY BIRTHDAYS

Sun	Mon	Tue	Wed	Thu	Fri	Sat
					1 Paige Spalding	2 Judy Barnes Kay Doll Cynthia Foster
3	4 Tyler Guthridge	5 John Heine	6 Ralph Bowman Charles Hingle	7 Elizabeth Tollefson Phoebe Tollefson	8	9 Heather Ostemiler Patrice Schuman
10 Helen Robinson Margaret Sanderson	11 Zakery Ostemiler Cody Reitz	12 Barbara Gulick	13 Casey Cole	14	15 Julie Solberg	16
17	18 Louise McKelvie Victor Reichenbach	19	20 Jack Chapman Jr. Elizabeth Erickson Ashley Guthridge	21 George Gundersen Nancy Lacounte Marlene Pickens	22 Karen Stainton	23 Lauren Blaesius Margo McCallum Paige Montague
24 Jenna Reineking Phyllis Bellingham	25 Mike Fried Paisley Jaeger Celia Jaeger	26	27 Tina Reichenbach	28 Lyman Gillen	29 Beatrice Bentler	30

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

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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 July Congregationalist is here!

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Worship

Fourteenth Sunday in Ordinary Time~ Green

July 3, 2016

Sacrament of Holy Communion

Rev. Barbara Archer leading us in worship

Fifteenth Sunday in Ordinary Time~ Green

July 10, 2016

Scripture: Luke 10:38-42

“The Good _____”

Liturgist: Ron Burnam; Scripture Reader: Maddie Alpert

Sixteenth Sunday in Ordinary Time~ Green

July 17, 2016

Scripture: Hebrews 11:29-12:1

“You’re Surrounded”

Liturgist: Pamela Gustafson; Scripture Reader: Cody Solberg

Seventeenth Sunday in Ordinary Time~ Green

July 24, 2016

Scripture: Luke 11:1-13

“Prayer basics”

Liturgist: Judy Burnam; Scripture Reader: Alicia Pettys

Eighteenth Sunday in Ordinary Time~ Green

July 31, 2016

Scripture: Hosea 11:1-11

“Calling you by name”

Liturgist: Brian Bross; Scripture Reader: Julia Kehoe

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, register early. Registration fee is \$225 if paid by June 30th and increases to \$275 on July 1st.

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.

Pledge Plus

We are facing a deficit in our budget for 2016. After much consideration Church Council recently adopted PLEDGE PLUS 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. Please be as generous as you can.

NAME _____

DATE _____

_____ for the year.

I am willing to increase my pledge for 2016 by

_____ each month.

Return to:

First Congregational UCC

310 North 27th Street

Billings, MT 59101

Buildings and Grounds

Buildings and Grounds has been busy replacing light bulbs, broken sprinkler conduit, plugged toilets and various other routine repairs that seem to pop up. The sprinklers are now on so the front lawn is green and growing (so B & G gets to mow and trim it). The peonies in the front planter and the flowers around the church sign are also in bloom. We had help from Vi and Clarence Krum who showed up one day to plant and tend the flowers around the church sign board and Susan Betz who cared for the large front planter.

As of this writing (21 June) I'm in MA with our oldest daughter who is expecting her first child within a week! But...I received a text last evening telling me the last of the new railings was installed and photos look great! Next the granite will be washed and new caulking placed around / between the steps. Our church entrance will look new once again. Buildings and Grounds would like to thank the Memorial Committee for providing the funds to allow this project to happen.

The next All Church Work Day (or Second 2016 All Church Work Day) will be 8 October from 09:00 - 15:00 (9 am - 3 pm). Lunch will be provided. If you missed out on the fun in April you now have another opportunity! By the way - Brian will be reminding you so there is no chance to forget :-).

Remember, if you have any maintenance issues or notice something askew please contact either me or someone on the B & G Committee. My cellphone number is 206-619-7152 or email at bonnie70daniels@icloud.com. We are trying to get ahead of the burned out light bulbs!

Blessings,
Bonnie DANIELS
Chairperson, Buildings & Grounds Committee

Honoring our Seniors: Sunday September 11, 2016

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-Convenant 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