

SPECIAL POINTS OF
INTEREST:

- **Camp
Mimanagish
Schedule**
- **Worship
Highlights**
- **VBS**
- **New Mem-
ber Orienta-
tion**
-

INSIDE THIS
ISSUE:

From the Moderator	1
Senior Minister Rev. Mike	2 & 3
Youth and Young Adults	4
Family Promise	4
Christian Edu- cation	6
June Birthdays	7

THE *Congregationalist*

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From the Moderator: Mic Dawson

HOW WILL YOU CHOOSE?

At the Annual Meeting in January there was discussion of the difference between pledged income and projected expenses. The largest item in the budget is for staff – the least desirable place to make reductions.

Church Council and the Personnel Committee have considered the subject prayerfully and have decided that before taking any action in regards to staff, we would return to the congregation with a “Pledge Plus” campaign. We are asking that members of the congregation consider, again prayerfully, how they might increase their pledges to ensure that the quality staff we enjoy can be retained and compensated for the services they render to us.

In this campaign, we are asking that a pledged amount be committed in order to know what funds are available. While throwing extra cash in the collection basket is great, Personnel and Finance need to know the amounts available to work with. Asking for a percentage increase in current pledges has been discussed but the feeling is that people know what they are able to afford and be counted on to do what they are able.

You will hear more about this in services – don’t everybody go on hiatus for the summer! But I will say it – wherever you may go and whatever you may do, have a safe and happy summer.

VBS: Creation with God in Our Community

We will be having Vacation Bible School Monday, June 6 - Wednesday, June 8. from 9-noon each day at Mayflower UCC . We will be looking at how we can have fun and serve God right here in our community. On Monday we will learn about how we use music to praise God and how it can help people who are struggling. We will be making our own musical instruments and playing musical games! On Tuesday our friends from Zoo Montana will be coming out to share with us how God is found in the creatures of the earth and what they do for our community. We will have games, crafts and snacks all about our animal friends. On Wednesday we will wrap up VBS with a field trip to St. Andrew's church to learn about taking care of God's Creation and feeding God's people. We will learn what they do with their community garden and labyrinth and possibly plant our own pumpkin patch which we can come back and harvest pumpkins from in the fall! Come join us for an amazing time this year at VBS!! Cost is \$15/child and is open for kids in K-6th grade. Register by calling the church office or Kimmie at 406-855-4317.

Rev. Michael Mulberry, Sr. Minister

Summer Reading

This summer we are going to begin a book study at West Park Village. Once we affirm the day and time with staff at West Park Village (presently on vacation) I will get that out to the congregation. The whole congregation is invited to this study.

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.

If you would like other summer reading, I strongly recommend some of the texts our congregation has been studying with Walt Gulick in Adult Forum or through Rev. Bill Hawk's study or even in worship and devotion: Grounded: Finding God in the World—A Spiritual Revolution by Diana Butler Bass, Searching for Sunday: Loving, Leaving, and Finding the Church by Rachel Held Evans, Oil and Honey: The Education of an Unlikely Activist, by Bill McKibben, Illuminating the Way, by Christine Valters Paintner, Spiritual Defiance: Building a Beloved Community of Resistance, by Rev. Robin Meyers.

We are also being asked to grow more deeply into the race conversation and struggle by our General Minister and President, Rev. John Dorhauer. It is one of the reasons I chose Weems' great text. I would also recommend Ta-Nehisi Coates' book, Between the World and Me and a classic, God Is Red: A Native View of Religion by Vine Deloria, Jr.

Pick one or two. Go deep. Start conversations. Open your heart for transformation.

Shalom,

Mike

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

Gratitude from Rev. Mike

- Thanks to Kim Harris for leading out worship on two successive Sundays (Camp Sunday and Youth Sunday). I am especially grateful to Kim for how she facilitated the voices of two of our youth so that they might be able to share with the congregation.
- Thanks to Rev. Steve Gordon for covering for me while I was away at Abe's graduation.
- Thanks to Bonnie Daniels and all the great work she continues to do in organizing issues and concerns around our building and building use.

Getting Ready for the Fall—Sacred Places

Steering Committee

Behind the scenes there will be a Steering Committee 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

Along with that reading, we will be convening dinner groups again in the fall. I am asking Breanna to bring that together. If you are willing to be a host for one of those dinner groups, please contact her in the office so we can begin to bring those groups together. 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.

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 two 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 let me know. Who knows? Maybe we’ll have so many people signed up we’ll have to take three tours! Wouldn’t that be great? We’ll aim for about seven people on each tour.

Ongoing Needs

Erin Lambert, Director of Programs at the YWCA, shared that they always have very specific needs for women trying to escape abusive relationships.

The YWCA is always in need of

Diapers

Cleaning supplies

Stop-gap clothes like sweats, undergarments, etcetera, just to get people by.

You can drop those off at the YWCA, generally, from 9:00 a.m. to 4:30 p.m., Monday through Friday at 909 Wyoming Avenue in Billings.

Youth and Young Adults

The Youth had a very busy, but fantastic month of May! We had 12 Older Youth finish up their 10-12 grade Our Whole Lives class. On May 8 the Older Youth prepared and led a Camp Sunday at First Church! What a wonderful service with a yummy gourmet S'mores bar afterwards. Thank you to everyone who shared testimonials about camp and a huge Thank You to everyone who donated towards the Healthcare center at camp. We raised a little under \$650, the work is currently underway at camp and will be ready to go by youth camps!

May 12 was the start of a whirlwind busy week for our youth. The began the week with Youth/ Graduation Sunday where we heard thoughtful Senior Sermons from William and John. Congratulations to our First Church Graduates: Addy Cooper, Angelo Betz, Anna Stagg, John Degges, Marika Degges (in Memory) and Nikita Degges. That afternoon the youth started making homemade pizzas right after church for their Pipes and Pizza fundraiser that evening. We had over 50 people come support the youth and enjoy an evening of pizza and wonderful theater organ music and a silent movie by Steve. A huge thank you to Steve for donating his time and tips to help benefit the youth mission trip. Thank you to everyone who came out to support the youth as well, we made around \$980.

On May 21 we finally made it up to camp for our work day! We had 10 youth and parent come help open camp from the winter. We spent all day opening up cabins and cleaning the dining hall, but we are excited to say that camp is open and ready to go for the season. We did however come home to an alarming site that evening as the hail storm had hit heavily around Mayflower and totaled many of the youth's cars that were parked in the parking lot.

We ended the busy week on the next Sunday with Youth/Graduation Sunday at Mayflower where we heard great Senior Sermons from Ryan, Miles, Mariah, Kye and Anna. Congratulations to our graduates; Anna Jurovich, Kye Graf, Madison Gilg, Mariah Alberty, Miles Hansen, Ryan Roche and Tiffany Dyce. That afternoon we had 6 Older Youth participate in the mystery event where we went out to Lockwood and did 6 amazing zip line courses!! We ended the month with a fun year end party at Play Live Nation where we got to spend 2 hours eating pizza and playing various video games.

Spiritual Director-In-Residence

Recently Rev. Mike Mulberry preached on Psalm 8, whose words were an important part of my faith formation. "When I look at your heavens, the work of your fingers, the moon and stars that you have established; what are human beings that you are mindful of them, mortals that you care for them? Yet you have made them a little lower than God, and crowned them with glory and honor." (vs. 3-5). I discovered these words when I was in high school at Senior High Youth Conference, and they were a revelation to me. The practice of Morning Watch, where we gathered to sing, pray, and hear a short message before scattering on a beautiful rural New Jersey campus for our own quiet time of reading, reflection, and prayer. This practice of reading, reflection, and prayer became my first intentional spiritual practice. Later, when I was super-busy juggling marriage, children, home, and career, the norm became prayer on the run, as in Malcolm Boyd's "Are You Running With Me, Jesus?", published the same year as my marriage to Walt. The balance between contemplation and action had moved from more contemplation than action to more action than contemplation. The last 20 years have brought me back to a more contemplative spiritual practice that undergirds and mutually complements my acting in faith. Every once in a while, I feel "dry." The relationship with God is not working. I find that I am not hearing the "voice-of-God-within." Then it is time to alter my intentional spiritual practice—do a "change-up" in baseball lingo. Is your intentional spiritual practice working for you? If not, maybe it's time for a "change-up." I would be happy to explore what that might be for you.

Barbara Gulick, MRE, DASD



Camp Mimanagish Schedule

Important Dates This June

6/6-8 Vacation Bible School at Mayflower

6/5 Worship is at 10 am

6/8 **Buildings and Grounds** Meeting 6:30 pm

6/11 **Downtown Strawberry Festival** 8am -4pm

6/14 **Diaconate Meeting** 7:00 pm Lib

6/21 **Council Meeting** 7:00 p.m. Library

6/19- July 3 Rev. Mike will be on vacation. July 4 Office Closed

Creative Arts Camp 6/2-6/5

Seasoned Adults Camp 6/9 (Optional Overnight 6/8)

Grandparents & Me 7/6-7/8

Family Camp 7/8-7/10

Young Adults Camp 7/8-7/10

Mini and Me Camp 7/12-7/14

2/3/4 Grade Camp 7/12-7/16

5/6 Grade Camp 7/17-7/23

7/8/9 Grade Camp 7/24-7/30

10/11/12 Grade Camp 7/31-8/6

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



This month's musing has nothing but a lot of non-sequiturs.

- If I had to be homeless I'd want to be homeless today, when the weather is mild. Trouble is, the mild spring weather would also be ideal for those who would prey upon me, take my possessions. Like my cell phone, my bedding, my clothing, my money.
- Come to think of it, no time is good for being homeless.
- It's hard to climb out of homelessness because it's hard to find an apartment to rent and a job that pays adequately.
- I am proud that our church helps a huge list of other churches, temples, Mosques and synagogues nationwide to care for homeless families. We are ecumenical! We play well with others!
- In Billings, Family Promise is the only rescue program that will keep men together with their families.
- This last period we had 17 people living in our church for Family Promise.
- A different time we had just one person. We took her to breakfast at McCormick's.

- Whether we have one or seventeen guests we need almost the same number of volunteers. Takes about 200-250 hours of volunteer time each go around.
- We got the red wall locker from the choir room. It is in the hall near the day care laundry room. It holds five of the big cot mattresses. You know, standing on end. I couldn't think of a better use for it because it has no shelves.
- We replaced the broken DVD player but we haven't hooked it up yet.
- Bought mattress pads and plastic mattress covers to replace the ones tattered and torn.
- Got six wastebaskets for the sleeping rooms.
- Thanks to Building and Grounds committee for ensuring that the Fellowship Hall kitchen is in tip top shape.
- Our volunteers do an excellent job of cleaning up the Sunday school rooms after the hosting week. Now we need to be sure to do the same for the kitchen area, you know, sweeping, wiping, mopping.

Dan Struckman

Called To Care

Our congregation has an opportunity to deepen our caring ministries through training in the UCC "Called to Care" program. Our trainer is Patricia Mitchell, a UCC minister awaiting call and presently residing in Utah. We are in the process of setting up the training schedule for the lay visitation ministers and wish to include any who feel called to care for members and friends of our congregation through existing ministries or possible new ministries. If you wish to be included, please contact Barbara Gulick at 259-3622 or bjgulick@bresnan.net. Our existing ministries include:

Lay Visitation to the Homebound. The Lay Visitation Ministry Team was commissioned and oriented in April. We delivered May baskets on May 1 as part of our monthly visits to our homebound members and friends. More visitors, especially men, are desired. Barbara Gulick coordinates this ministry.

Care Group. These volunteers provide meals for the bereaved and recently hospitalized. There is an opportunity to care for the family of Thomas Miller as he undergoes treatment for pancreatic cancer. Carrie Miller has provided the website on which you can learn particular needs and sign up to provide meals at <https://mealtrain.com/zqm02d>. You can also receive updates and send messages to Thomas and Carrie at www.caringbridge.org/visit/thomascampbellmiller.

Prayer Chain. The Prayer Chain is a telephone tree ministry set up by Bonnie Conn (406-373-6740) to communicate prayer requests. It is a wonderful ministry for those who are homebound to keep in touch with each other as well as to pray for whatever and whoever needs prayer. If you are not a part of the telephone prayer chain and would like to be, please call the church office weekday mornings at 245-6477. If you would like to be part of the e-mail prayer blast, please e-mail Rev. Mike Mulberry at mmulberry@firstchurchbillings.org. If you have a prayer request please contact Rev. Mike Mulberry at his e-mail address, at the church weekday mornings (245-6447) or on his cell (770) 203-0297.

Care Cards. When you attend Sunday morning worship, be sure to sign the cards that are set out in the Narthex (church-ese for lobby). Everybody can do this! Rev. Mike Mulberry coordinates this ministry, and Marcy Brown champions it.

Christian Education

The amount of excitement and outpouring of resources for the Church Garden has been beyond my wildest expectations. Over 2 dozen members of the church family have contributed either through time, expertise, or materials. I have 17 plants I have been fostering that were gifted by members of our church family. We have the plants, we have soil, and we have enthusiastic gardeners of all ages ready to go. By the time this article goes to print, I am hoping that the Blessing of the Seeds and the planting of the garden on May 22 will have been a time of great bonding and growth, and will have gone off without a hitch.

Soon will come the hardest part - the unglamorous work of maintenance and upkeep. This is the part of the gardening season where many hands will be needed in watering and weeding. The fruits of our labors will be few for many months and we may not see any produce this year. But that does not mean that our work has been in vain. As we know from the bible, God's work is often deep and slow, taking many generations to bear fruit -- so it may be with our garden.

If you would like to be a part of this work, we are in need of folks who are willing to help water the garden. We have morning and evening watering times available and we will train even the blackest of thumbs! Email me (ekerrcarpe@gmail.com), call me (916-200-9103) or find me at church to sign up! Gardeners will continue to meet in the church at 5:15 on Monday evenings, all are welcome!

WANTED: Responsible, compassionate adults who enjoy having fun with children or teenagers. Need to be willing to color, talk about faith, and sing. Must be available on Sunday Mornings from 9:45 to 11am during the Fall or Winter. Compensation: all-you-can-drink coffee and meaningful relationships

JUNE BIRTHDAYS

Sun	Mon	Tue	Wed	Thu	Fri	Sat
			1 Janet Berger Rhett Moak Karen Norsworthy	2 Taylor Brown Jessie Howland Betty Lindsey	3 Vic Redinger	4 Fred Lenhardt Ginny Udem
5 Cindy Crist Jerry Dobesh	6 Sara Gunderson Michael McCallum	7 Don Stanaway Bill Bartlett	8 Mic Dawson	9	10 Erik Eliason	11 Paul Dunphy
12 Gary Doll Josh Waetzig	13 Ryan Reitz Hank Williams	14 Gerry Mangis	15 Annie Tollefson	16	17 Addison Norsworthy	18 Ron Arneson
19 Bob Lough	20 Kent Boughn Betty Chapman Tanner Osborne	21	22	23	24 June Butler Bill Hawk Ashley Reitz	25 Isabella Whitworth
26 Clair Howard	27	28	29	30 Wilma Fender Laverne Royer		

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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

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!



Your June Congregationalist is here!

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Worship

Tenth Sunday in Ordinary Time~Green

June 5, 2016

Sacrament of Holy Communion

Scripture: Galatians 1:11-24

“Roman newspapers tell the story”

Eleventh Sunday in Ordinary Time~Green

June 12, 2016

Scripture: Galatians 2:11-21

“Don’t let it get deep into you”

Twelfth Sunday in Ordinary Time~Green

June 19, 2016

Commissioning of Missionaries to Nogales

Scripture: Galatians 3:23-29

“God dreams”

Thirteenth Sunday in Ordinary Time~Green

June 26, 2016

Rev. Bill Hawk preaches before Jan and Bill head off to Hawai’I where Bill begins his interim work!

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 10 and July 17, from 9:00-9:45 a.m. Free childcare is provided. Just let Rev. Mulberry know if childcare is needed. If you wish to join but cannot attend the orientation, please let Rev. Mulberry know. Future orientation sessions can and will be provided.

Strengthen the Church Offering

Strengthen the Church Offering on June 19

Strengthen The Church (STC) is a special mission offering to reimagine and build the future of the UCC. Shared at the conference and national levels, STC largely supports youth ministries and full-time leaders for new churches in parts of the country where the UCC voice has not been heard.

As God calls our congregations to be the "church" in new ways, your generosity will plant new churches, awaken new ideas in existing churches and develop the spiritual life in our youth and young adults. STC funds will also be used to award grants to help congregations communicate the "God is still speaking," message. Our congregation may wish to apply for a grant as we live into what it means to be a downtown "urban pioneer" church.

We will receive this offering on Father’s Day, Sunday, June 19.