

SPECIAL POINTS OF
INTEREST:

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From the Moderator: Mic Dawson

FAITH FORMS

This was the theme for the annual meeting of the Montana-Northern Wyoming Conference held at the UCC churches in Sheridan and Buffalo, Wyoming that I had the privilege to attend recently.

There were too many well planned, inspiring workshops to be able to attend them all. One I heard great feedback on was “Faith in Action” led by Dan Cohn and Emma Kerr-Carpenter of our congregation. Many felt it should be a full day event. Kudos, Dan and Emma!

I did attend a workshop presented by Kimi Harris, also of our congregation, on how/what can we bring from the camp experience back to the local churches. Some things from the mountain top experience will translate. What are they? How do we foster them?

Another event that impressed me was a conference call with Rev. John Dorhauer, the General Minister and President of the UCC, who had some interesting things to say about “dying” mainline Protestant churches. He noted that the “impulse of the UCC is to create unity where the world sees division” and that the Holy Spirit has not abandoned the UCC. He said that we need to look outward to the community that needs what we have to offer.

He additionally noted that death is not the end; that dying is a process at the end of which is resurrection. He described a death with dignity where legacy is honored while a resurrected life is contemplated. Words for us to adhere to when re-imagining how we do church.

May 6th Art Walk

Friday, May 6th 5:00 P.M.-9:00 P.M.

Hey folks. This May’s Art Walk will be very special for us as our church organ will be the star!! Yes, members of the Yellowstone Chapter of the American Guild of Organists (including our own Barbara Gulick) will be playing iconic, classical organ music at regular intervals throughout the evening. We will also feature another of our members at this Art Walk—potter Brent Long. Finally, fine art photographer Rick Zimmerman, from Billings, will have some of his amazing landscape photography on display.

What a unique opportunity for us to show off our churches organ to the community. Tell everyone. Call everyone. Email everyone. Facebook everyone. Send smoke signals. Come, have a glass of wine, relax, and enjoy some really, really fine music.

Members of the Art Walk committee would like to thank all of those who donated funds and art to help pay the annual dues. Also, thank you to those of you who bid on the art during our silent auction. We are fully funded for another year of Art Walk!!

Edward Barta

Rev. Michael Mulberry, Sr. Minister

Faith Formation

At the Montana-Northern Wyoming Conference meeting this past weekend, Rev. Dr. Ivy Beckwith, the Team Leader in Faith Formation at our national offices in Cleveland, presented on faith formation at one of our evening meals. I was disappointed that the leadership of a workshop prevented me from hearing her presentation the next day because I found myself nodding my head in agreement with almost everything she said. Rev. Beckwith articulated things about church life I knew but had not yet put into words.

“Faith formation” is the new language used in Christian education to define how we are trying to lead out and walk with our children and youth. Rev. Beckwith defines “faith formation” as helping children to love God and walk in the way of Jesus. In a local church that has very few children show up from Sunday to Sunday that can seem impractical, but we actually have many children connected to our life and ministry. And, as people who look at church life are telling us, we have to begin seeing our congregation as beyond our four walls.

So the first place we have to recognize that faith formation takes place is in the home. Rev. Beckwith reminded us that the most important way we can form a child’s faith is through our example, our modeling. She invited us to be more intentional by doing something radical in front of our kids and telling them we do those things because that is what people who love Jesus do. In a culture where Christianity is becoming known for exclusion, hatred, and violence, this intentional defining of our faith is critical.

Of course the other place where faith formation happens is in the community of our local church. Rev. Beckwith turned to Peter Block, an author who has written extensively about community. Block defines community as 1) socially interdependent; 2) a people with shared or common history, practices, and experiences; 3) people have personal relationships of depth—folks who can be counted on, they are good neighbors.

Rev. Beckwith went on to describe five characteristics she believes are an important part of a Christian community that is faithfully about faith formation. I am hoping to explore and explain those more as we come together in worship.

Gratitude from Rev. Mike

First of all, just this second to last week of April, we were an incredibly active church. Thanks to all of those people who made church work day such a grand success! I have a great picture sent to me of a number of people, sitting out on the front stairs of the church, taking their rest after a hard day's work. I immediately posted it to our Facebook page.

Special thanks goes out to Bonnie Daniels and Brian Bross for organizing this incredible day of work in our church. I saw some before and after photos and was just in awe of the work done. Our church building is the bones by which we get much of our ministry and mission done in the church. We are stronger just from this work done.

Thirty-two people showed up! I heard of the energy and atmosphere of life that surrounded the whole day. Folks were actually asking when we were going to have the next work day! Wow!

Thanks also to those people who participated in the wider church by attending and leading out the Montana-Northern Wyoming Conference meeting in Sheridan and Buffalo, Wyoming. As always, thanks to Rev. Marc Stewart, our Conference Minister and a member of our church, for his leadership and work in putting this meeting together. Kim Harris provided leadership throughout the meeting.

Dan Cohn and Emma Kerr-Carpenter led out a workshop that not only had great attendance but is now being asked for as a day long experience across the conference! Thanks also to Laura Keating and Julia Kehoe for their work in putting this workshop together. People came out of the workshop just "wowed" by it. I am also grateful to the people who attended that now bring back wisdom to our local church: Lyla Dyer, Mic Dawson, Rev. Cheryl Stewart, Rev. Bill Hawk, Sophia Heilman, and Barb Gulick. I apologize if I missed out on any of the people who participated in a very meaningful Conference Meeting. Of course, we also owe gratitude to the leaders and members of each of the churches in Buffalo and Sheridan and Rev. Jill Bierwith for providing so much organization and planning.

Thanks to those people who helped lead out an incredibly meaningful Sunday service while I was gone. Thanks especially to Sister Mary Dostal for her message and ministry and to Virginia Bryan for leading us through the service. Thanks to Bonnie Daniels as liturgist, Kayla Janowski (VISTA volunteer) as Scripture reader, and Brian Bross as the one who provided time with our children. In trying to put this worship service together, Erin Lambert, Director of Programs at the YWCA, gave me posters we shall now post in our women's bathrooms. It is one more way we make our church a safe place!

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.

What an incredible amount of ministry we have going on at our church! So many of you do a great job of not only leading and working but also participating to create a soul force for God's love and compassion. Thanks for all of the work you do!

Youth and Young Adults

The youth are beginning to wind down for the program year with a busy month of May ahead of them! We had a great month of April! We had many families come join us for family fun night at Skate World and the older youth went Paintballing for their April mystery event! We also had 14 high school youth start their round of Our Whole Lives. We also helped with Spud Sunday at Mayflower which helped the Sunday school kids raise over \$1,000 towards their new playground!

Coming up in May the older youth will be finishing up their OWL class on Friday, May 6, 6:30-10 pm. We will be helping with Camp Sunday at First Church on May 8. Youth Sunday and Senior Sermons will be at First church on May 15 and Mayflower on May 22. The older Youth will be having their final fundraiser, Pipes and Pizza on May 15 at 5:30 at First Church. Come join us for an evening of homemade pizza and theater organ music and silent movie. Cost is \$20/person. Contact the office or Kim for tickets.

The older youth mystery event is May 22 and is \$50. Clue: strap in and don't close your eyes! We have had to cancel our camp work day twice due to bad weather so we will be helping out on May 21 for camp opening. We have 6 youth from our youth group joining the conference mission trip to Mexico this summer, June 22-29.

Worship Highlights May

Sixth Sunday of Easter~ White Sacrament of Holy Communion Scripture: John 14:23-29: "Faith formation in a faithful community"	May 1, 2016
Seventh Sunday of Easter/Camp Sunday~ White	May 8, 2016
Pentecost Sunday/Youth Sunday~ Red	May 15, 2016
Trinity Sunday/Choir Appreciation Sunday~ White Scripture: Romans 5:1-5: "Naming God through life well-lived" Liturgist: Scripture Reader: Jenny Moodie	May 22, 2016
Ninth Sunday in Ordinary Time Scripture: Galatians 1:1-12: "Barbarians at the gates" Liturgist: Walt Gulick	May 29, 2016 Scripture Reader:



Camp Mimanagish Schedule

Important Dates This May

5/6 ArtWalk at Billings First Church

5/8 Camp Sunday

5/10 **Diaconate Meeting** 7:00 pm
Lib

5/12 **Concert by Lee Hancock** 7:30 pm

5/15 **Senior Sermon Sunday**

5/15 **Pipes and Pizza Fundraiser**
5:30 pm

5/17 **Council Meeting** 7:00 p.m. Library

5/22 Older Adult Sunday, Choir Appreciation

5/30 Memorial Day Office Closed.

Camp Opening 5/20-5/21

Kick Off Weekend 5/27-5/30

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



We will host four families with a total of sixteen people; only four are younger than first grade, so we'll need to provide lots of food for hungry eaters.

We start hosting May 1; we have the first four days this time. We need more volunteers. We still need two nights of suppers, side dishes and vegetables, and evening and overnight hosts.

We haven't had this many guests before, not since Penny and I have been coordinators.

Training for Family Promise Volunteers will take place May 10, at First United Methodist Church, at 6:30 to 8:30.

This is all I have to say, except a hearty big THANK YOU to everyone who has so generously volunteered their time, talent, money, and meals. Wow. I nearly forgot a letter I got this week from FPYV:

On behalf of Family Promise of Yellowstone Valley, thank you for your generous donation of the Fly Fishing Basket with Monte Dolack that you valued at \$775 for our annual Beach Blizzard Benefit. Your contribution is deeply appreciated and vital in Family Promise's work to assist homeless families achieve and sustain independence. ... This year's Beach Blizzard raised over \$120,000...

Dan Struckman

Mayflower Circle

Mayflower Circle will meet May 17, 2016 at the Conference Office 2016 Alderson Ave. The meeting begins at 1:00 pm. All members of the church and their friends are welcome to come. The program will be Billings School District #2 with speaker Superintendent Terry Bouck who will tell us what is going on in our school system and answer any questions we might have. Call Myrle Theimer at 245-3650 if you have any questions.

Spiritual Director-In-Residence

I recently had the pleasure of attending the Annual Meeting of the Montana/Northern Wyoming Conference in Sheridan and Buffalo, Wyoming, enjoying the hospitality of both these congregations. Meeting new and reconnecting with established clergy and lay leadership friends was certainly a large part of that pleasure as we gathered in Christ's name to do the work of Christ's church. Two members of the national church staff expanded that pleasure with their presence and highly relevant presentations. Ivy Beckwith shared much wisdom and experience on faith formation as a life long process through storytelling, ritual, and relationships in a variety of settings beyond the "Sunday school" model—at home, in church, and in worship. How do we model and communicate our faith to each other and especially to our church's children through storytelling, ritual, and relationships?

Barbara Gulick, MRE, DASD

Successful Workday at the Church!!!

Buildings and Grounds Committee of First Congregational United Church of Christ - Billings First Church - was overwhelmed by the enthusiastic response to the first 2016 All Church Work Day held on 23 April! We had over 30 participants, with several more persons offering to help another day since they were attending the Annual Conference.

The weather cooperated to provide a warm, sunny day for outdoor work. Trees were trimmed, weeds removed, planting beds revitalized and windows washed. Indoors the choir rooms were given a true Spring cleaning with choir members sorting through music, robes, and miscellaneous items, along with washing windows and mopping floors.

A Fellowship Hall kitchen crew scrubbed the range and ovens until they gleamed! Kinda makes one reluctant to use them and get them dirty again :-). Cupboards were cleaned, dishes and supplies sorted and all surfaces of the range hood were cleaned. The crew even moved the refrigerator to clean behind and under it and literally mopped themselves out the door! A contingent of workers vowed to continue the clean-up of the kitchen - whoopee!

New lights were installed to replace burned out bulbs everywhere, especially in the Fellowship Hall. It's amazing how much brighter it is in the Fellowship Hall with clean windows and lights that actually work! Water fountains were cleaned, the library bookshelves were cleaned and books sorted and pews cleaned. So much work for our church was done!

We gathered together for lunch around noon. The outdoor crew really needed a break from the sunshine and heat and everyone needed nourishment. Everywhere I looked, people were laughing and seemed to be truly enjoying each other and the day! Several persons suggested we do this again and guess what? This was called the first 2016 All Church Work Day because there will be a second 2016 All Church Work Day in the Fall - probably sometime in October. Buildings and Grounds Committee will be sure to let you know when we have set the date. In the meanwhile, we want to say "God Bless and Thank You" to everyone who worked so diligently. Our Church is truly blessed!

MAY BIRTHDAYS

Sun	Mon	Tue	Wed	Thu	Fri	Sat
1	2 Elizabeth Lay	3 Richard Barry Alice Lyon Jade Smith	4 Jim Deverinero Jack Hall Barbara Krieg Marilyn Richardson	5 Wayne Gustafson Matthew Konen Bill Ruff	6 Ryan Duffy	7 Pamela Gustafson
8 Leslie Krieg	9 Chris Hingle	10 Trevor Berg	11 Weston Smith	12 Nick Eliason	13 Guthrie Brown Emily Hanson	14 Philip Diede Hillary McLeod
15 Hayley Kemmick Evelyn Lile	16	17	18	19 Mason Moodie Marlee Moodie	20 Dillon Mitchell Matt Tobin	21
22 Mitch Eliason Pat Hagan Jerry Howland	23 Jeanice Cousins	24	25 Tyler Reitz	26 Mira Murphy	27 Lorraine Yates Barbara Heiser Jennifer Tolton	28
29 Clair Howard	30	31 Saphire Barry Brynn Bellingham Perry Guthridge Pari Kemmick				

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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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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!



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