

FIRST
CONGREGATIONAL
UNITED CHURCH
OF CHRIST (UCC)

SPECIAL
POINTS OF
INTEREST:

- AdventFest
- Church Bazaar
- Stewardship
- Faith Engagement
- Worship November
- Second Sunday Lunch

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THE *Congregationalist*

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From the Moderator: Mic Dawson

Wordplay (Round Two)

In October we observed Reformation Sunday, reformation here being a noun but I think it's useful for Billings First Church to consider the use of reformation as a verb, as in re-formation.

I think all of us in our lives have found ourselves in a situation where we need to re-form ourselves, where we've come to the end of a phase or plan and need to envision a new way of working and being. And that's where we as a congregation find ourselves at this time; the old forms of doing things don't work and need to be reviewed and revised. Boards and committees that are supposed to have several members have far less and those people get burned out trying to function under an old work model. And because of this, many people decline when the Nominating Committee calls – that would be Ron Burnam at present. But most all members are willing to do something sometimes when presented with a task that needs doing.

Considering this, Church Council will be looking at ways to re-form the work model of the church to reflect what members of the congregation are willing and able to commit to doing for the life of the church.

AdventFest December 4-6

Friday, December 4, 5:00 p.m. – 9:00 p.m. Art Walk

Alaina Buffalo Spirit will be exhibiting her paintings in the Narthex. Live music and Refreshments.

Saturday, December 5, 10:00 a.m. – 3:00 p.m. Christmas Bazaar

See article on page 5

Sunday, December 6, Noon – 2:00 p.m. Festival of Giving & Sweets Bazaar

This is an expanded version of the former Alternative Christmas Fair and organized by the Board of Outreach. In addition to opportunities to give to those agencies we support there will be music, games, activities for children, and a food court in the Fellowship Hall.

The Board of Outreach is pleased to announce that the Neighbors in Need offering has been well supported. As of October 26, \$ 777 has been received. The Board thanks all who have contributed.

Time With Teresa

- Ballad of the Mayflower

By Linda G. Paulsen

There was a ship, Mayflower by name; Hey, Ho! Took a trip, she crossed the main; Hey, Ho! Full of people seeking peace, Praying for freedom to increase. Hey, Ho, Dee-o, Dee-o! The Pilgrims came to Plymouth Rock; Hey, Ho! Simple people, sturdy stock; Hey, Ho! To be free they crossed the sea, Thanked the Lord on bended knee; Hey, Ho, Dee-o, Dee-o! How when the crops were gathered in; Hey, Ho! A dinner party did begin; Hey, Ho! Pilgrims, Native Americans, pumpkin pie, Turkey, venison, corn, oh my! Hey, Ho, Dee-o, Dee-o! Bet you thought my song was done; Hey, Ho! But I've really just begun; Hey, Ho! Ever since that autumn day, Thanksgiving has been here to stay, Hey, Ho, Dee-o, Dee-o! HAPPY THANKSGIVING! GOD IS GOOD! May His Spirit Fall Afresh on you - Teresa

- **Hangings of the Greens!** Following worship on Sunday, Nov. 22 we'll deck our church out in all her glory for the coming Christmas season. Please take the time to lend a hand-it happens pretty quickly with all of you!
- On Oct. 22 I attended a workshop on **guardianship, conservatorship, dementia, power of attorney** and other issues regarding aging in Montana. There is an overwhelming need for volunteers willing to serve as guardians for those who can no longer make their own decisions. If you are interested please let me know, or contact Big Sky Senior services and ask for the Yellowstone County Guardianship Council.
- **Worship opportunity at West Park Saturday Nov 7th @ 2:00 pm.** We have begun a new worship service at West Park every month at 2:00pm with Holy Communion. Join me Nov 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. It's been so fun! Join us. Thank-you!
- **Primetimer's Older Adult Lunchtime! 11:30am Nov. 19th @ Red Robin.** If you don't want to drive at night, how about during the day? Monthly on the 3rd Thursday at 11:30am. All Older Adults 55+ are welcome to meet at a local restaurant to share fellowship and lunch! RSVP the church office or me by Wednesday. TRANSPORTATION AVAILABLE
- GRIEF EDUCATION AND SUPPORT GROUP MONDAY'S @ 4:00pm @ Conference Office. All are welcome. No charge.
- **Primetimer's Studytime~ Sunday mornings @ 10:00 in Teresa's office.** Curriculum focus is what God would want for us as we pass from middle-age towards the final quarter of our lives, according to scripture references.
- **Primetimer's (55+) Dinnertime~Famous Dave's. Come out for an evening of fellowship. Make some new friends and get to know others better. Transportation available. RSVP to Teresa**
- **Primetimer's Winetime~ Happy Thanksgiving!!**
- **PRAYER CONCERNS:** For the family of Alice Roberts, Michael Brown, Myrle Theimer, healing for Susan Betz, For those facing change of address, grieving, with financial concerns. We pray for the Church, Staff, and Leadership.
- **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!
- *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 to get a voucher. Suggested rides: Church, Primetimer events, funerals, doctor, senior lunch program? HOME-BOUND Older Adult Primetimer's 55+) only.*
- I attended a workshop on suicide prevention, presented by the American Foundation for Suicide Prevention. This included the first results about every suicide in Montana for 2014 by Montana's Suicide Mortality Review Team. If you would like me to present this material to your group, I'd be happy to do so. Let me know.

Rev. Michael Mulberry, Sr. Minister

Over the last few months I have shared how leaders function in the shaping of healthy congregations. Leaders are important. They are like the major organs in the human body—providing vital purification, circulation, and function. Leaders, like organs, however, are not the only thing that make for good health.

Every member of a congregation provides healthy behaviors that provide a baseline for health and well-being and immunization against toxicity and disease. In healthy congregations, people respond graciously and truthfully (rather than judgmentally or secretively). In healthy congregations, people develop caring relationships across generations (rather than willful transactions). In healthy congregations, people empower others (rather than dominate or cure them).

Forgiveness is an important way that healthy congregations respond graciously and truthfully. The purpose of forgiveness is absolution of guilt, the reconciliation of brokenness, and the creation of a new future. According to Scripture, forgiveness is an act of release or removal to free up possibility. It is the hope for transformation. Forgiveness recognizes that lines will be crossed, hurt will happen, tempers will be lost, and unkind words or actions will be shared. If these were the final words, healthy community life might not be possible. But these are not necessarily the final words.

It is important to relationship in power dynamics, forgiveness might not even be possible. So when it forgiveness is freely given, it is done in a thoughtful and intentional manner. To forgive another is to say in some way: “I have been wronged by you. I have the right and reason to end any connection between us. I have the right and reason to demand from you a payment or an apology. My sense of dignity and my values require nothing less. Nonetheless, I refused to let the wrong consume me in resentment. And I refuse to let the wrong come between us. I give no assurance that I’ll be able to forget the wrong that you’ve done. I demand no conditions. I want to open the door to tomorrow.”

Archbishop Desmond Tutu once said, “Forgiveness is taking seriously the awfulness of what has happened when you are treated unfairly. It is opening the door to the other person to have a chance to begin again. Without forgiveness, resentment builds in us, a resentment which turns into hostility and anger. Hatred eats away at our well-being.”

Living in systems, as we do, we are emotionally connected to one another. Forgiveness is not a private act. A conflict between parties or persons belong to the community as well as to specific disputants. Forgiveness is finding a way to discover that the other is a human being like oneself. Forgiveness is focused on regaining the other. Forgiveness restores.

While forgiveness takes one, the actual act of reconciliation takes two. Forgiveness may be extended, but reconciliation may still not happen. The offender may not seek forgiveness, or once given the offer, may not accept it. Reconciliation most likely happens if there is mutual interest in restoring a relationship.

For that reason, truth-telling is an important part of forgiveness. True reconciliation cannot take place unless one or both parties are willing to be honest about the harm caused and the will for reconciliation.

Henri Nouwen also connects forgiveness with generosity. He notes that the word generosity includes the term “gen.” The term is also found in gender, generation, genes, general, and generativity. The term comes from the Latin genus and the Greek genos, referring to our being of one kind. “True generosity,” Nouwen said, “is acting on the truth—not on the feeling—that those I am asked to forgive are kinsfolk, and belong to my family.”

Healthy congregations then, recognize that failures will occur throughout the community of faith. The goal is not to go unscathed. Forgiveness provides a culture of well-being that allows for resilience, an opportunity to bounce back and begin again with the new thing God is seeking to do.

Youth and Young Adults

We have had a fantastic month and are looking forward to many wonderful things coming up with the youth! We had our second church family fun night at the pumpkin patch and corn maze the second Friday of October! Our November church family fun night will be at In Good Glazes on November 6, 6-8 pm. Snacks and refreshments will be provided, cost is what ever you choose to paint. Average cost is \$10-25. We had 40 youth and adult leaders come together for the conference fall youth retreat this past weekend at camp Mimanagish! What a great weekend learning how to tell our stories and weaving them together as we wove baskets together. The older youth had their first mystery event which was messy night in September! We have another older youth mystery event on November 15, 3-5 pm. The older youth were also blessed to have Ron and Judy Burnam come share about their work in Africa on a Wednesday evening. Our youth want to get to know you and for you to get to know them. We are really trying hard to bridge some solid relationships between our youth and adult members this year!! Come and join us and share your story with us in a Wednesday! We also have youth Sunday coming up on November 15 where we will be sharing our concern for the environment and what we did and learned on our mission trip this past summer to Monterey, California! We will also be taking a youth special offering that day to help continue to support the youth programming costs. We also had our first fundraiser towards the conference ride mission trip this weekend. Thank you to everyone who came out and supported us at the soup and salad luncheon. Thanks to your generosity of the youth raised almost \$700 to go towards the mission trip this summer. Contact Kim for more ways to be involved with our youth this year from providing meals, to chaperoning events, to family fun nights, to coming and spending time with them on a Wednesday, or attending a sporting event, concert or theater production the youth are participating in!

Stewardship Campaign 2016: Trust in the Promise

Our stewardship campaign is well underway and I am thinking about all the programs and activities for which we are stewards. First and foremost there is the Sunday Service with its music programs--Chancel Choir, Melody Choir, the Bell Choir; Sunday school for young and old, the Forum.

There are the Primetimers and Winetimers, Mayflower Circle, youth groups both preteens and teens, a Wednesday Rest Service, a service at Westpark, and study groups. The Boy Scouts, Community Day Care, the Humanists, Family Promise, Gamblers Anonymous, and the ArtWalk all count on us.

Our members support the Food Bank, Habitat for Humanity, Global Village, Montana Organizing Project, Women and Family Shelter, and the lists go on and on. Families depend on the Church for counseling, marriage ceremonies, baptisms, and funerals. This is a list of just some of what the Church does.

We are busy and active, as individuals and as a church, trying to make Christ's presence felt in the community. Be thoughtful of these programs and activities as you make your pledge for the coming year.

If you have not received a pledge card in the mail, please call the Church.



Billings First Church Bazaar

Important Dates This November

- 11/1-8 **Family Promise Hosting Week**
- 11/8 **Second Sunday Lunch** following worship in Fellowship Hall
- 11/10 **Diaconate Meeting** 7:00 pm Library
- 11/10 **Conference Listening Session 7 pm**
- 11/17 **Mayflower Circle Meeting**~ Conference Office
- 11/17 **Council Meeting** 7:00 p.m. Library
- 11/19 **Primetimer's Lunch Time** 11:30 a.m. at Red Robin . RSVP to Teresa.
- 11/19 **Primetimers Dinnertime** 5:30 pm at Famous Daves. RSVP to the church office or Teresa.
- 11/22 **Hanging of the Green's**
- 11/26 **Thanksgiving Office Closed**
- 11/27 **Downtown Christmas Parade, Billings First will be open.**

Time to start thinking about Christmas soon! We are busy planning our 3rd annual Holiday Bazaar!!! The date will be Dec 5th, from 10:00-3:00. Anyone who wants a table at this bazaar should contact Cynthia Crist at cristj4c@gmail.com or 406-245-6357. Spaces are still \$30.00. If you need one of our tables, its an extra \$5.00. Be sure to get yours early as space is limited. We're getting great response already, so sign up now!

Second Sunday Lunch November 8

2nd Sunday Lunch! November 8th following worship in Fellowship Hall! Council and Stewardship will provide turkey dinner with all the trimmings. Please bring your appetite and enjoy!!! COUNCIL & STEWARDSHIP members to setup and clean up. We look forward to sharing food and fellowship with everyone!



Catchy Headline

My problem with these Family Promise articles is getting someone to read them. Tell you what. You read this and I'll sing you some of the latest song our choir is working on. One in Swahili, of course. O Sifuni Mungu!

Here's the news: This Sunday, Nov. 1, we will set up after church service for a week of FPYV hosting. Four families this time. We have some new furniture to boast about. We have a new cart in the storage room. One of those big shiny stainless steel carts, about 2 feet deep, 6 feet high, with five shelves. Four wheels to move it around. We will put the bedding and some of the other room furnishings on the cart and simply move it from room to room, thus making an hour-long effort last about 55 minutes. I am always amazed at the number of helpers who put the rooms together after church.

Into Fellowship Hall Penny and I plan to move in a giant new used florid couch. It should be much

more comfortable for anyone who has to wait in the giant Fellowship Hall for a late arrival or for any host who doesn't want to sleep in the windowless Day Care laundry room. We haven't a plan for the old couch. Not yet. We may donate it.

The Methodists got a big screen television to replace the modestly sized television. I'm not sure what the payoff will be, but perhaps it will work better. Or larger.

The good news is people from our congregation stepped up to host all of the evenings and overnights and to provide all of the meals for our guests. This makes being the facilitator a good job to have.

Thanks to everyone! If you didn't help this time, perhaps we'll get you next time. We host about every three months.

Dan Struckman



“Gratitude can transform common days into Thanksgiving, turn routine jobs into joy, and change ordinary opportunities into blessings.” — William Arthur Ward

“Make it a habit to tell people thank you. To express your appreciation, sincerely and without the expectation of anything in return. Truly appreciate those around you, and you’ll soon find many others around you. Truly appreciate life, and you’ll find that you have more of it.” — Ralph Marston

Mayflower Circle

Mayflower Circle will meet November 17, 2015 at Conference Office 2016 Alderson Ave. The meeting begins at 1:00 pm. Jonathan Peart will be speaking about “Set in Stone” On the Trail with Lewis and Clark. Guests are always welcome and you are encouraged to bring a friend. Call Myrle Theimer at 245-3650 with ques-

Spare Change for Real Change

You may have seen the great success downtown Billings has had in moving from a model of enforcement-only approach for the chronic inebriate population to an approach that seeks to help people move to treatment. As a result, the Downtown Billings Alliance won the Pinnacle Award at the International Downtown Conference in San Francisco this year. One of the pivotal players in that movement has been the employment of the new Resource Outreach Coordinator, Joel Simpson. Joel’s unique gifts as a person of Native ancestry who also just happens to be an addictions counselor and behavioral health consultant has made the work of our downtown police officers even more rewarding. Fifteen thousand dollars of Joel’s salary is paid for by Spare Change for Real Change.

As a citizen of the downtown, Outreach Committee has agreed to help raise money for Spare Change for Real Change in a unique way. Every first Sunday of the month, all loose change offering (coins) will go to Spare Change for Real Change. We will also be placing a large glass jar in the narthex for all forms of loose change people might want to contribute beyond this monthly offering. It may not be much, but it will reflect a way that we regularly contribute to the great ministry that is happening in downtown Billings. We show ourselves once again to be gracious givers.

Spiritual Director-In-Residence

In November we celebrate Thanksgiving Day. It’s a national holiday whose central feature is the sharing of a meal in remembrance of the gifts that we have received and for which we are thankful.

The Norman Rockwell version of Thanksgiving pictures an extended family gathered around a table well endowed with a traditional Thanksgiving meal of turkey and all the trimmings. In reality, many families are not able to gather around a table for a meal together. I’ll leave the reasons to your imagination. However, whom-ever you choose to share your Thanksgiving meal with becomes family for that meal, just as we do as a church family when we celebrate communion. More importantly, giving thanks is not limited to special occasions either at church or at home. It begins with developing an “attitude of gratitude,” a daily mindfulness of all the gifts of life which leads to an awareness of the constant presence of God. Thus our prayer becomes conversation, both listening and being listened to. Yes! Barbara Gulick, MRE, DASD

NOVEMBER BIRTHDAYS

Sun	Mon	Tue	Wed	Thu	Fri	Sat
1 Paige Cooper-Cole Patricia Morledge	2	3 Alex Elison	4 Judy Doll Scott McCallum	5 Hunter Eliason	6 Dan Erickson William Smith-Mickelson	7 John Crist Breanna Rolandson
8 Jeff Lokken	9 Stan Eliason Shelby Lubbers	10 Phyllis Bakko Pat Larmoyeux Jaeli Lokken Tom Tollefson	11 Carmen Barry	12 Paige Fredlund Marguerite Ostermiller	13	14
15	16	17 James Court	18	19	20	21 Donna Degner Sherm Oland Jock West
22 Ceci Bentler Colton Eliason	23 Fred Betz Penny Struckman	24	25 Bradly Blaesius Jan Paulsen	26 Rachel Court	27 Gary Coats	28 Zoe Erickson Trevor Krieger
29 Karen Fried Stewart Taylor	30					

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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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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!



www.firstchurchbillings.org

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Worship ~ November and December

Rest: Every Wednesday at 12:10 p.m. Join us for this ½ hour service.

All Saints Sunday~ White

Sunday, November 1 Ruth

Totenfest-We remember the saints who passed over this last year and learn what it means to be "Ruth."

Pledge Sunday~ Green

Sunday, November 8 "Trust in the Promise"—the spiritual practices that make for grace and life.

We join together as a community to pledge our financial resources to the life and well-being of this beloved, historical, prophetic, and courageous church.

Youth Sunday~ Green

Sunday, November 15

Older Youth from Mayflower and Billings First share their faith and experiences from their Blue Theology delegation this past summer.

Reign of Christ Sunday~ White

Sunday, November 22 "Belonging to a Different World-Raging against the machine"

At his trial, Jesus tells Pilate that he may be a king but not of the systems and structures he sees before him. What in the "world" is Jesus talking about? Join us for the decorating of the church after worship in preparation for our Advent season.

First Sunday of Advent~ Dark Purple

Sunday, November 29, Elizabeth Sunday

The Advent Worship Team leads us through the Sundays of Advent with the "bit" players who may not get the press clippings that other characters in the Biblical stories get. We begin with

Faith Engagement:

Faith Engagement: Service Provider Panel Discussion and Resource Fair

Learn more about how to help service providers in Billings aid those experiencing homelessness or poverty, particularly those with mental health challenges or are American Indian. This event will be hosted Tuesday, November 17, 2015 from 8:30 a.m. through 1:00 p.m. at First United Methodist Church at 2800 4th Avenue N. For more information contact Shametrious Long at 406-237-6105 or Vista6@ci.billings.mt.us.

The Jesus Seminar ~ January 8-9 2016

Reserve January 8-9, 2016!

The Jesus Seminar is coming to Billings First!

The Ethics of Paul: Bernard Brandon Scott and Art Dewey

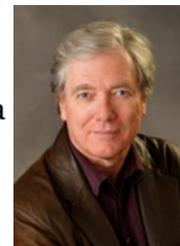
Paul is being re-discovered as the radical egalitarian, anti-imperialist he was. As scholars recognize that much of the material attributed to Paul was not actually from his own pen, we begin to see how strongly Jewish and how anti-establishment Paul truly is. Come to hear two pre-eminent Christian scholars from the Jesus Seminar as they “unearth” the ethics of Paul.

The cost will be \$75 total for lectures on Friday evening, two on Saturday morning, and a lecture and Q & A on Saturday afternoon. This is a great opportunity to learn about the latest in Biblical scholarship. Costs for separate lectures may be designated at a later time.

Bernard Brandon Scott is the author and editor of many books, including *The Real Paul: Recovering His Radical Challenge* (2015!) and *The Trouble with Resurrection*. A charter member of the Jesus Seminar, he is chair of Westar’s newly established [Christianity Seminar](#). He served as chair of the Bible in Ancient and Modern Media Section of the Society of Biblical Literature, as well as a member of several SBL Seminars including the Parable Seminar and Historical Jesus Seminar. He holds an A.B. from St. Meinrad Seminary and School of Theology, an M.A. from Miami University, and a Ph.D. from Vanderbilt University.



Arthur J. Dewey is a distinguished teacher, writer, translator and commentator. He is co-founder of the Healing Deadly Memories Program, a unique project that conducts workshops on how to deal with the question of anti-Semitism in the New Testament. A specialist on the historical Jesus and the Gospels, he has also taught and written extensively on Paul, the Gospel of Peter, the Gospel of Thomas, the Acts of John, and on the oral, written and electronic gospel. He served as co-chair of the Bible in Ancient and Modern Media Group of the Society of Biblical Literature and was the recipient of a Wheeler Grant for investigating and reporting on Religion in the Media, a seminar surveying the use and abuse of religion in print journalism. His poetry has appeared in the Christian Century. His poetic perspective, on the Saturday Morning Edition, has been heard for over a dozen years on the Public Radio Station WVXU (91.7) in Cincinnati.



Forum Dialogues with Mike and Paul

Following the Intergenerational event Sunday, November 1, the Forum series on science and religion, “Painting the Stars,” will come to a close on November 8. It has been a series that has elicited some spirited discussion, so come to the climactic session.

On November 15, the Reverend Mike Mulberry will tell his story! Last fall, many members told their story, but our ministerial staff was not among the tellers. That will change.

In part, Mike Mulberry’s story will lead Forum into a new series on St. Paul, a series that promises to uncover some exciting new interpretations about how Paul matters today. Reverend Mike will show a DVD involving Marcus Borg and John Crosson’s interpretation of Paul on November 22, and discussion based upon that series will continue into December. The series will lead toward the visit by the Jesus Seminar scholars to our church, described elsewhere, January 8 and 9.

Good discussion is happening at Forum, so come join us.