

SPECIAL POINTS OF  
INTEREST:

- Worship Highlights
- Downtown Trick or Treat
- All Church Clean Up Day
- Stewardship
- Billings Alliance Sunday
- Neighbors in Need Offering
- Art Walk

INSIDE THIS  
ISSUE:

Stewardship	1
Senior Minister Rev. Mike	2 & 3
Youth and Young Adults	4
Family Promise	5
Mayflower Circle	6
October Birthdays	7

# THE *Congregationalist*

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## Stewardship 2017: Go and do the same

Go ---and do the same Luke 10:37

Luke 10:37 comes from the story of the "Good Samaritan" and is the theme of our 2017 stewardship campaign. This is the parable of the man who was robbed and beaten and left at the side of the road. A priest and a Levite passed by and avoided him, but a Samaritan comes and rescues the man. Jesus asks "Which of these three, do you think, proved to be neighbor to the man..." "The one who showed mercy on him." And Jesus said to him, "Go and do the same."

What an appropriate theme for our stewardship campaign as we focus on being a good neighbor in downtown Billings! We are being called to go and do the same kind of things for our neighbors through our church. We are being asked "to make a deep response to others and to God's presence and purposes at the center of our life. The parable invokes compassion for others based on a response to God's purpose for all to experience as much blessing as possible...Those who commit themselves to living according to these purposes become a blessing to the community and to themselves."  
(Adapted from Go---and Do the Same) Lyla Dyer

## Oct. 30th-Downtown Billings Alliance Sunday Wear Purple!

As a way of affirming our citizenship in the Downtown community, we will celebrate Downtown Billings Alliance Sunday! The color for DBA is purple so we encourage everyone to wear purple on that day. We will also be receiving the first-ever award given by Community Innovations for the hospitality we have provided Native American recovery groups. So come celebrate with us.

## All Church Clean Up Day October 8th

The next 2nd All Church Cleaning Day is scheduled for 8 October from 09:00 - 15:00 with lunch provided. We welcome everyone to participate for all or part of the day. Whatever your "interest" we can find an area for your talents! B & G hopes to have another great turnout to spruce up our church in time for the fall and winter church seasons.

## Downtown Trick or Treat Friday Oct. 28th 12-5pm

We invite all children to put on your best costume and come downtown to get all kinds of goodies and enjoy our church's "semi-scary" haunted house! If you are willing to help out with the event, please contact the church office!

## It is yet to be tried. Rev Michael Mulberry

*But this kind of demon only goes out by prayer and fasting~ Matthew 17:21*

*"The Pastor and the Faithful should not deceive themselves into thinking that they are a religious society, which has to do with certain themes; they live in the world. We still need - according to my old formulation - the Bible and the Newspaper."~ Karl Barth, Swiss Reformed theologian who opposed Adolf Hitler*

As I have shared, one of my ongoing spiritual practices is to seek out alternative media. In the work of justice, I believe it absolutely essential to find reviewers of current events whose interpretation is not open to the highest bidder. If I am seen as faithful, that faithfulness has been made possible through my work to do hard Bible study work but also to listen daily broadcasts like Democracy Now! at least twice a week. I set the bar low to make it very doable. Again, I believe spiritual practice is about what we do regularly, consistently, and persistently.

While we might be frustrated and depressed by the decline of the denominational church, I think it would be wrong to assume that that decline means that spirituality itself is on decline. That could not be more evident than with a Democracy Now! broadcast last week.

The broadcast began with the Standing Rock Protection/Protest and the understanding of that action as a prayer by the people who are participating. Brooks Berndt, the National Environmental Justice Minister for the UCC, came away from the site saying affirming that prayer is the driving force with the Standing Rock people and those who join them. An Americorps VISTA volunteer from Billings who has been to the site twice affirmed this as well.

Prayer, at its base level, is solidarity. We pray "with" and "for." And Julian of Norwich references prayer as a "onening ourselves to God." Prayer is living out the eternal reality and God's desire that we might know ourselves to be "one." Prayer is solidarity with and for humankind, God's good earth, and with the very Being of God. Prayer builds the bridge, opens the portal, makes real the profound truth that we are all in this together.

The broadcast moved on to talking about women and children who are immigrants and asylum seekers living in the Berks County Residential Center in Pennsylvania. These women and children are fasting to protest their detention. Fasting is a detachment from the Domination System. Fasting points to where life and goodness can be found and says, definitively, "Not here! I will not draw my sustenance and support from this system or place." Fasting is about freedom "from" to say that we will have freedom "for" the places where life and goodness can be found.

In two consecutive news stories, the two great spiritual practices of the Christian tradition were put on display—prayer and fasting. My reflection is that God's Spirit is moving, alive and at work, but cannot be anchored to activities within the local church. I believe the very best we can do in the local church is to seek out ways to connect ourselves with these movements in a way that brings them back to our ministry and mission.

We have too often cut off the political from the religious to our own deficit. For, as proven by two prominent news stories this past week, God's Spirit is seeking out justice through spiritual practice. If we do not see that or do not experience that, maybe it is because the spiritual practices of prayer

## Gratitude from Rev. Mike

- Thanks to Bonnie Daniels for all of the leadership, hard work, and organizing to improve all of the children's Sunday School rooms downstairs. And thanks to all of the people who helped with the painting and hard work. I am sure I don't know of everyone who helped but here are the people I saw during my time downstairs: Brian Bross as a faithful companion and co-conspirator, Tom Tully, Dan Struckman, Vivian Smith, Emma Kerr Carpenter and Mary Jane Taylor. I apologize for any names I have forgotten.
- Thanks to Virginia Bryan for all of her work in organizing and making possible Happy Meals to convey our love and compassion to individuals and families connected to our congregation.
- Thanks to all of those who hosted Crossroads Visioning Dinners during the month of September to date: Tracy Heilman, Susan and Fred Betz, Lyla Dyer, Bonnie Daniels and Brian Bross, Dan and Penny Struckman, Tim and Sue Bailey, Stewart and Mary Jane Taylor, Dave Shearer and Mic Dawson. Your hospitality continues to make for great reflection and community building.
- Thanks to Sophia Heilman for how she helps me pull off so many things on Sunday worship.
- Thanks to Ed Gulick for his hard work and vision as we continue to move forward with the Crossroads Project. Thanks to all of the Steering Committee members for all of the extra hard work they have done to facilitate this process. On behalf of our entire congregation, I am deeply grateful for your effort.

## Totenfest November 6th

On Sunday, November 6th, we will be remembering those people, members and friends and people closely connected to our congregation, who died over the last year. So that we do not forget anyone, we ask that people you would like to see commemorated be shared with Breanna Rolandson, our Office Administrator, by sharing the birth date, date of death, and an electronic photo that we might use for that day. I believe this has become a holy and sacred time in our church's liturgical year. We want to make sure that all are remembered to once again share in our community loss and

## Design Workshop October 15th

Chart the future of the historic life of First Congregational Church through design workshop in our Fellowship Hall at 310 N. 27th Street:

Oct. 15, 9 am – noon

These sequential workshops will envision the ministries we want to pursue and help us understand their spatial and programming needs. High Plains Architects will use the information to develop compelling scenarios for our building that are simultaneously visionary and grounded and based on resources available to our church.

## Announcement Policy

Mic Dawson, our beloved Moderator, has been asked to give the announcements every Sunday. Mic will either do them or ask someone else to do them. She has asked that all announcements for a given Sunday be sent to her the Wednesday before as a way of making everyone think ahead. We will still have announcements in the bulletin. Oral announcements will be collected and given by Mic. You can write her at her email at ([micdawson646@gmail.com](mailto:micdawson646@gmail.com)). Thanks to Mic for her willingness to do this!

## Youth and Young Adults

October is shaping up to be a busy month for our children, youth and families. We had a great rally day and kick off to our Sunday School year! We have altered our Sunday schedule slightly this year to help us keep consistency and structure to our Faith Formation.

- **We will be having melody choir for children preschool-6th grade every Sunday morning from 9:30-10 am downstairs.** We are really excited to also have Pamela Gustafson, Julie Solberg and Emma Kerr Carpenter planning on working with the kids at this time once a month on liturgical dances.
- **From 10-10:45 am the children will go to Sunday School** in our newly painted and spruced up Sunday School Rooms. A huge thank you to Bonnie Daniels, Brian Bross and Emma Kerr Carpenter who worked graciously and tirelessly on getting those rooms ready for our children. We have many Faith Formation offerings at the 10 o'clock hour for all ages. Downstairs we will be having Sunday School for Preschool-Kindergarten (ages 2-5) being taught by Addy Cooper and our Elementary class (grades 1-6) taught by Julie Solberg. Our teen class (grades 7-12) will be taught by Karen Stainton and Aaron Blakeslee meeting in Kim's office. We also have adult forum organized by Walt Gulick meeting in the parlor upstairs. Our children will be following along in their new Whirl curriculum with the lectionary and our teens will be watching the 80's movie Oh God this month and discussing the theological and scriptural themes found throughout the movie.
- **We will also be starting our Family Fun nights on October 14 at The Maize at Grandpa's Farm** from 5-7 pm. Cost is \$10/person includes the maze and a hot chocolate or cider, children 3 and under are free. Please RSVP to Kim by October 13. Family Fun nights are for families of all sizes, 1-50 and all ages!!
- **We are also proud to be a part of the Downtown Billings Association Trick or Treating on Friday, October 28, 12 noon-5 pm.** Please let us know if you are able to volunteer during that time to help hand out candy, help with our 'mini' semi scary haunted house and/or to usher people to our church corner on 3rd and 27th.
- **Our Older Youth (grades 6-12) will be continuing youth group every Wednesday, 6-8 pm** with dinner included. Meeting on the 1st and 3rd Wednesdays at First Church and the 2nd and 4th Wednesdays at Mayflower.
- **They will be leading out the worship service at First Church on October 2** for World Communion Sunday. Please join us as the youth share their hopes and thoughts on the world and especially focusing on some of their time spent this summer on the Mexico border learning and listening about immigration.
- **The Older Youth will also be helping with First Church clean up on Saturday, October 8.** We will be starting our monthly mystery events on Sunday, October 16. This month's clue is "Are you scared to get messy?" This will be at Mayflower from 5:30-7:30.
- **We will be participating in the conference Fall Youth Camp and Camp Closing on October 20-22** at Camp Mimanagish for youth in grades 6-12. We will be taking vans from Billings to and from Camp. Cost is \$75 and you can register at [www.campmimanagish.org](http://www.campmimanagish.org) Scholarships are available in needed.
- **We will also be hosting our first fundraiser of the year on Sunday, October 30.** We will be having a Soup and Salad luncheon and Halloween Carnival at 11:30 am - 1 pm at Mayflower. Cost for the luncheon is Free Will Donation and the Carnival is 4 tickets for \$1.00.
- **We are having some changes to Younger Youth Group (kindergarten-5th grade) this year.** We are only going to be meeting on the 1st Wednesday at First Church and the 4th Wednesday at Mayflower from 5-6:30 with dinner included. We will also be doing quarterly fellowship events for the younger youth group as well.

This year is shaping up to be another awesome one! Thank you to everyone for your support of our children, youth and families. Please contact Kim if you would like to help the youth by providing dinner on a Wednesday night!



## Art Walk October 7th

### Important Dates This October

10/3 Breanna Still on Vacation  
 10/8 Church Clean Up Day 9-3  
 10/11 Diaconate Meeting 7 pm~  
 Library  
 10/15 Design Workshop 9- 1 F.H.  
 10/18 Mayflower Circle 1:30pm~  
 Conference Office  
 10/18 Church Council 7pm~ Li-  
 brary  
 10/21-22 Council Retreat  
 10/20 Newsletter Due

Art Walk on October 7th will feature wildlife photographs by Cheryl Hudson and landscape paintings by Ruth Blott. The "Quintessentials" will provide classical music and food and bever-



Here are the dates in 2017 First Congregational Church will have families for Family Promise: January 29 to February 4; May 7-13; August 13-19; and November 19-25, 2017.

I hope everyone who is NOT a volunteer with Family Promise will also jot these dates into their 2017 calendars in order to coordinate our many church activities. If you see any conflicts in scheduling, please phone Dan Struckman at 256-3588. Thanks Dan

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## Worship

<b>Youth Sunday~ Green</b>	<b>October 2, 2016</b>
<b>World Communion Sunday</b>	
<b>Eighth Sunday in Sacred Place~ Green</b>	<b>October 9, 2016</b>
Scripture: Psalm 16	"Sacred Place as Home"
<b>Ninth Sunday in Sacred Place~ Green</b>	<b>October 16, 2016</b>
Scripture: 2 Kings 5:1-14	"Sacred Place of Strange Waters"
<b>Tenth Sunday in Sacred Place~ Green</b>	<b>October 23, 2016</b>
Scripture: Hebrews 13:1-2	"Sacred Place of Hospitality"
<b>Eleventh Sunday in Sacred Place~ Red</b>	<b>October 30, 2016</b>
Scripture: Luke 10:25-37	"Sacred Place of Risk"
<b>Downtown Billings Alliance Sunday Wear Purple!</b>	
<b>All Saints Sunday~ White</b>	<b>November 6, 2016</b>
<b>Totenfest</b>	
Ms. Laura Keating preaching	

## Mayflower Circle

Mayflower Circle will meet on October 18th at 1:00 at the Conference office 2016 Alderson Avenue. All women are invited to come. Our program this month is "My Spiritual Journey" with speaker Laura Keating. Laura is a very important part of our church. Come meet her and get to know her. If you have any questions, call Gerry Mangis 245-5530 or Myrle Theimer 245-3650

## Neighbors in Need (NIN) Offering October 20th

Neighbors in Need (NIN) is a special mission offering of the UCC that supports ministries of justice and compassion throughout the United States. One-third of NIN funds support the Council for American Indian Ministry(CAIM). Two-thirds of the offering is used by the UCC's Justice and Witness Ministries(JWM) to support a variety of justice initiatives, advocacy efforts, and direct service projects through grants.

Neighbors in Need grants are awarded to churches and organizations doing justice work in their communities. These grants fund projects whose work ranges from direct service to community organizing and advocacy to address systemic injustice. Funding is provided through donations to the Neighbors in Need offering.

Our congregation will receive this special offering on Sunday, October 20.

## Spiritual Director-In-Residence

Reading has the potential to be a spiritual practice. Reading and reflection can lead us into "reverie's holy space." Reading cultivates in us a place where we can hear our own inner voice. In reading we can develop compassion for "the other." Meditative reading calls for reading a short passage of poetry or prose and prayerfully "chewing" on it.

When we gather in book groups we share our insights. Others add theirs, and we all grow. First Church has three continuing book groups that I know of, two of which were started by Rev. Roy Smith in about 1982. The Sunday evening book group, affectionately known while Roy was among us as "Roy's Dirty Books Club", started out reading contemporary fiction. At present, this group reads a variety of books, using the Billings Public Library's book group "book bags." They meet in homes about every 4-6 weeks. Vic Redinger (656-5565) facilitates this group, which is just getting started for the season. New members are welcome!

Walt Gulick has facilitated the Tuesday morning breakfast group since Roy Smith's departure. It is a non-fiction book group, originally called the "Cultural Criticism" book group. Although most of those who participate are now retirees, the group still meets weekly in the church library at 7 a.m. in order to accommodate a few working persons. Over the summer the group finished reading Ari Shavit's "My Promised Land: The Triumph and Tragedy of Israel." On Tuesday, September 27, the group will begin discussing Matthew Crawford's "The World Beyond Your Head: On Becoming an Individual in an Age of Distraction." New members are welcome! Contact Walt Gulick at 259-3622 or wbgulick@bresnan.net.

In 2007, when I was in training for spiritual direction, I started a Women's Spiritual Growth Book Group. At first it was an evening book group that met at the church, but, when some of us stopped driving at night and we realized that we were all available during the day, it became a lunch group. We meet in homes for a salad lunch and discussion from 12:30 p.m. to 2:30 p.m. on the 1st and 3rd Thursdays of the month. This year is our year of Biblical literacy. On Thursday, October 6, we will begin discussing Karen Armstrong's "The Bible: A Biography." The second half of the year we will read Marcus Borg's "Reading the Bible Again For the First Time: Taking the Bible Seriously But Not Literally." New members are welcome! Contact me at 259-3622 or bjgulick@bresnan.net.

Barbara Gulick, MRE, DASD

# OCTOBER BIRTHDAYS

Sun	Mon	Tue	Wed	Thu	Fri	Sat
						<b>1</b> Marcia Spalding
<b>2</b> Clara Bentler Ezra Stewart	<b>3</b>	<b>4</b> Barbara Bryan	<b>5</b>	<b>6</b> Jim Paulsen Violet Krum	<b>7</b>	<b>8</b>
<b>9</b>	<b>10</b> Carolyn Tolton	<b>11</b> James Pickens	<b>12</b>	<b>13</b> Mary Jane Taylor	<b>14</b>	<b>15</b> Helen Bender
<b>16</b> Karen Irion Nina LaSeur	<b>17</b> Parker Gunderson	<b>18</b>	<b>19</b> Kathleen Blae-sius James Reineking	<b>20</b> Randy Hyvonen	<b>21</b>	<b>22</b> Carrie Miller Jo Lokken
<b>23</b> Thomas Solberg	<b>24</b> Eric Ramsett William Jaksha	<b>25</b> Betty Hamstrom	<b>26</b>	<b>27</b> Mike Gustafson	<b>29</b>	<b>30</b>
<b>31</b> Susan Ogden						

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# Billings First Church

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*Theologically progressive, radically inclusive,  
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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**

**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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