

SPECIAL POINTS OF
INTEREST:

- Group Din-
ners
- Worship
Highlights
- All Church
Potluck
- Pledge Plus

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THE *Congregationalist*

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From the Moderator: Mic Dawson

Where do you see yourself in 5 years?

An uncomfortable question in job interviews and the unspoken response is “Uh, employed?” In the Sacred Space series being conducted in service in the upcoming weeks we will be examining that question, expressing our hopes, listening to others, exchanging ideas. It won’t be an uncomfortable situation – there are no right or wrong answers and the answers aren’t judged in any way.

Please come and be part of the conversation!

Buildings and Grounds & Church Clean Up Day

Hopefully you have noticed the new church step railings and the cleaned and re-sealed steps. Caulking of the steps should be finished this week. Rev. Mulberry would like to have a dedication of the new entrance, currently scheduled for 25 September.

Bellisimo, the Billings Community Handbell Choir, is moving back to their “home” church!

Troop 2 of the Boy Scouts worked with Bonnie at church Saturday, 6 August, from 09-13:00. They emptied the stage of all the accumulated “stuff” and mopped the stage floor anticipation of Bellissimo beginning practice the middle of September.

The Scouts also mopped the stairs from balcony to basement, the floors of the two storage rooms next to the Fellowship Hall kitchen and the FH kitchen floor. Penny and Dan Struckman also worked on the Family Promise storage area!

***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. Space is short! So much more happened. Check with any B & G member to learn more!

Blessings to all,

Bonnie Daniels Chairperson, Buildings & Grounds Committee

Recovenanting Sunday September 11, Sign Up to Participate

Recovenanting Sunday will offer an opportunity for all of our congregation to covenant to be a more dedicated part of our community.

We will have an Open House for the newly minted Sunday School rooms.

Sign up to be a liturgist, Scripture reader, part of the prayer chain, join our visitation ministry, “Called to Care”, be a part of our mission and outreach, be an usher or greeter, or any of a number of things where you would like to share your gifts with our wider community! Please come early, stay late, and join in worship as we celebrate our common covenant to be bound to one another in love and care.

Sacred Places

Dinner with Chuck Hollingsworth and Vicki Stoop from the Cornerstone Fund

Chuck Hollingsworth and Vicki Stoop from the national UCC Cornerstone Fund will meet with us for dinner on Saturday, September 10, at 6:00 p.m.! We have reserved a room at MacKenzie River Pizza Grill and Pub in the Heights, 405 Main St. Dinners run from between \$10-20 and beer and wine can be ordered as well. Call the church office (245-6477) to reserve a space as the room has space for about 30 people. This is an opportunity for us to learn how our church might facilitate a low-interest loan and funding for any building improvements we might make, particularly if our church wants to go greener! This is a great opportunity for us to learn from Chuck and Vicki what possibilities might be out there for a church like ours. Chuck joined us for the annual meeting that was at our church and was excited about the possibilities for a building like ours.

Crossroads Visioning Steering Committee

The Steering Committee is actively seeking out the current costs we incur as a congregation, the specs for our building, talking to wider community members about the needs in downtown Billings and beyond, and working together to facilitate a process for our whole congregation.

Crossroads Visioning Dinner Groups—Sign up to participate for September!

Breanna has set 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 have begun a preaching series on “sacred places” and asking for your input. Many of 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

We will begin taking faith community tours soon!

Every once in a grand while, the dream happens

In Sunday worship (August 21st), I asked all of you to share what makes this church a sacred place and what would continue to make this a sacred place. We had some great answers. But the two that filled my heart came from one of our resident theologians, Gage Duffy, interpreted by his mom, Nina Hernandez. Gage talked about the church as a center that then has us going out into the world to do those same things. Nina went on to talk about our church as a sacred place because of the way it accepts her interracial family.

The other answer came from a couple of our seniors, Marguerite Ostermiller and Evelyn Lile, who shared that this place had become sacred for them over the course of so many years teaching Sunday School as a spiritual practice.

I know that service may have seemed somewhat chaotic for some of you. But for me . . . wow.

That’s my dream. We have what it means to be a Christian in 2nd Grade, what it means to be a Christian as an adult mother of two children, and what it means to be a Christian during our senior years. All three showed their wisdom. All three answers came together in a whole that was rich and powerful.

Church is one of those few places where we can come together across generations and hear diverse wisdom. We see God moving through one facet on a diamond and sometimes get locked into thinking that we have seen the full brilliance, cut, and clarity of God’s love and compassion. Every once in a grand while, however, we become aware that there are many more facets. And the brilliance of God comes in ways that transform our minds and break open our hearts. For me, that’s part of the dream of what it means to be God’s Beloved Community.

Gratitude from Rev. Mike

- Thanks to all of those people who attended the Bible and Book Study at Westpark Village: Myrle Theimer, Mic Dawson, Katie Blaesius, Alice Lundgren, and Laurel Reinholz. We also had two people from other churches join us at Westpark! Thank you so much for your interest and enthusiasm.
- Thanks to Rev. Stacey Siebrasse and AmericaCorps Vista volunteer Kayla Janowski for leading all of us at the Unity Concert. Although it was not a great numerical success, I am so grateful to people who are willing to risk and try.
- Thanks to Maddie Alpert for her beautiful musical contributions to the Unity Concert and to Dan Cohn for joining her.
- Thanks to Steve Plaggemeyer for playing piano for and with me at the Unity Concert.
- Thanks to Barbara Gulick for helping to organize the Called to Care work and all of the people who made baked goods for the event, participated, and continue to work on our new Called to Care ministry. Thanks so much to Patricia Mitchell for leading us out in this form of care and concern.
- Thanks to all of those who hosted Crossroads Visioning Dinners during the month of August: Mic Dawson and Dave Shearer, Sue and Tim Bailey, Susan and Fred Betz, Lyla Dyer, Bonnie Daniels and Brian Bross, Pamela and Wayne Gustafson, John and Cindy Crist. Your hospitality made for great reflection and community building.
- Thanks to all of those who participated in the first dialog sermon. Thanks especially to Nina Hernandez for the work she did with her children to share their incredible insight.

Happy Meal Ministry: Join Us!

"Happy Meal Ministry" delivers to families recovering from illness or during bereavement. We are looking for new participants in September. Please call or text Virginia at 690.1662 or email: vbryan1041@gmail.com.

Announcement Policy

In whatever church I have served, the inevitable happens. Energy ramps up, life in the church starts to spring into action, and announcement time becomes longer and longer. In one of my former churches, filled with university professors, one of them would come forward every time there was a large crowd just to talk. She loved a crowd! Sometimes it seems impossible to contain. Those who always break the boundaries, go on and on during announcement time, seem to be the least aware. And we all know that they mean well. Worship is one form of our church life, our communal spiritual practice. Announcements are about our common work and life together. With fewer and fewer places where we see each other throughout the week, announcements become vital for sharing important church work.

To that end, 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) or cellphone 406-672-8430. Thanks to Mic for her willingness to do this!

Youth and Young Adults

We are so excited to get started on another great programming year! We will start up Older youth group (grades 7-12) on Wednesday, September 7 at First Church with dinner at 6 pm. We had members from the youth group participate a mission trip to the border this summer and this year we will be continuing our look at the issues at the US/Mexico border and immigration through sharing, guest speakers, discussion and service. We will continue our mystery event every third Sunday of the month for older youth, look for a list of clues for each month to be coming out shortly.

Younger youth group (grades 1-6) is going to change to having it every 1st and 4th Wednesday. The 1st at first church and the 4th at Mayflower. We will have it at 5 pm with dinner at 6! We will also do quarterly younger youth group activities throughout the year! We will continue our Family Fun Nights the 2nd Friday of every month starting in October. A calendar of events and cost will be coming out shortly.

We are very excited for our new Sunday School classes with a specific class for preschool/ kindergarten and elementary (1-6)! Classes will begin in September 18, 10-10:45 am. If you are interested in helping teach please contact Kim. We will also begin a teen class (7-12 grade) on Sept. 18 where they will be watching movies and discussing pertinent issues that the movie brings out. They will be doing this with adult forum at times throughout the year as well.

Spiritual Director-In-Residence

In this season of much political news and rhetoric, it is sometimes difficult not to find ourselves fearful, anxious, or angry at times. All of these emotions can sometimes be misdirected to persons groups, or institutions that we love, and so it is best not feed them. To remain calm in the midst of the storm, here are some suggestions from Spiritual Director Nancy Wiens:

- If you find yourself resisting/fearing/judging/anxious about something that you hear in the political realm this, I invite you simply to visualize putting it down at your feet, step away from it, and return to a strong felt-experience of God that elicits love in you (your favorite place in nature, hugging someone you love, making a fabulous contribution in your work place, deep inner contentment...)
- Experiment to see if any inclinations to sarcasm, judgment, disdain, or disengagement can be melted by curiosity, wondering what those inclinations tell you is missing for you—what you long for and deeply desire.
- Instead of allowing anxiety, fear, or anger to mount in you, explore breathing in the brightest light you can imagine, and breathing out every wisp of contracting emotion and limiting belief.
- Build in a few extra minutes to your tasks throughout the day so that you can pause and take stock of what source is moving your actions.
- Make your choices about food, beverages, sleep, and exercise even more intentionally and with self-care so that they all nourish you, instead of aid any numbing you might unintentionally be seeking.
- Feast on something beautiful each day.
- Attune your ears to what you are grateful for in political speeches, family conversations, work collaborations, and nature. Share those gratitude's with someone you trust and ask about theirs.

Barbara Gulick, MRE, DASD



Honoring our Seniors

Important Dates This September

9/4 Worship time back to 11:00pm
 9/5 Labor Day; Office Closed
 9/6 Group Dinner
 9/9 Cornerstone Presentation: Mackenzie River in the Heights.
 9/11 All Church Picnic following worship
 9/13 Group Dinner
 9/14 Group Dinner
 9/15 Newsletter Due
 9/16-17 All Church Workshop
 9/18 Group Dinner
 9/19 Group Dinner
 9/20 Council Meeting 7 pm
 9/22 Group Dinner
 9/24 Group Dinner
 9/26-October 4 Breanna on vacation
 9/27 Group Dinner
 9/28 Group Dinner

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-Covenant 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

Group Visioning Dinners

We still have many dates open for group visioning dinners. These are very important to begin talking about what we plan for the future of Billings First Church. Below you will find open dates and number of openings for people. If you would like to attend one please let Breanna in the office know.

September 14th: 6 More People September 24th: 2 More People

September 19th: 4 More people September 27th: 8 More People

September 22nd: 2 More People September 28th: 8 More People



One of the funnest aspects of being a Family Promise Coordinator is getting to write a column for the church newsletter every month. Think of it. This column is read by . . . several people. Today's topic: organizing for success. My friends Terri and Steve Normand, Methodists, shared with me their Methodist method. Pun was accidental.

They use a portable, white, dry-erase board at their church. Along the top of the board they list the seven days of hosting. On the left side they list the meals and host shifts. Saves paper and, if people write plainly, everyone knows what opportunities exist for helping the effort.

Also at the bottom of the grid are places for people to sign up for setting up and taking down the guest sleeping rooms, and for laundry.

Would this idea be useful to us? Currently at our church we fix up a sign-up paper on a clipboard. I am thinking it might be useful for us to either scan our sheet and email it around or perhaps email a photograph of the white board as a reminder to those who have signed up.

Next hosting for us will be on Halloween. We get such a long stretch between because we hosted early this last time. One of the other churches in the network traded weeks with us.

Mayflower Circle

Mayflower Circle is beginning a new year with the first meeting to be September 20th at 1:00. The Conference Office at 2016 Alderson will continue to be our meeting place.

All women are invited to join our circle of friends. This meeting will be hosted by Mike Mulberry. Reverend Mulberry will also be the speaker. His topic will be:

“Where Do We Go From here?”

If you have any questions, please call
Gerry Mangis 245-5530 or Myrle Theimer 245-3650.

All Church Potluck September 11

The Board of Outreach has planned this year's All-Church Picnic at North Park to be a totally potluck meal with an emphasis on local food and “going green.” We suggest that you wear your picnic clothes to church and bring your dish with you to place in the warming oven or refrigerator as needed until time to go to the picnic site. What to bring:

1. Food: A-G, Main dish; H-M, Salads & Sides; N-Z, Dessert. Please provide a serving utensil to go with your dish. Let's celebrate our local garden and market harvest as you are able!
2. Table service: Reusable plates, cold beverage cups, and utensils. A word of grace - Outreach will provide paper and plastic for guests and those who forget. Paper napkins will be provided!
3. Blankets or chairs on which to sit. Table seating is limited.
4. Games: Croquet, badminton, and corn hole. If you have one of these, or another safe outdoor game, please bring it for some after-dinner fun. Congregations need to play as well as pray!
5. A grateful heart: grateful for harvest bounty and for the opportunity to come together as a community of faith to share a meal with each other and to extend hospitality to guests.

Study Bibles Available

Mike found a great price on the paperback version of the Study Bible he uses (Harper Collins New Revised Standard Study Bible with the Apocrypha) so he purchased six of them at \$20 per Bible. Three have already been purchased. If you would like one, please let Mike know (revmikemul@firstchurchbillings.org).

Bus Passes Needed

One of the things that is sorely needed among those in recovery in the Billings area is bus passes. Bus passes give people the freedom to get from one end of town to another, allow people the ability to access services and resources, and help those in recovery to get to regular meetings. Please let Rev. Mulberry know if you are willing to contribute. These are regularly requested among those providing recovery leadership in our community.

SEPTEMBER BIRTHDAYS

Sun	Mon	Tue	Wed	Thu	Fri	Sat
				1 Helen Fergus Charles Lechner	2 Paloma Whitworth Sophia Whitworth	3 Cheryl Degges Gary Grocholski Thomas Hughes
4 Derek Reichenbach Lydia Stratford	5 Jenny Moodie	6 Carol Hagan	7 Andy Reichenbach	8 Fern Meseberg	9 Steve Tobin Molly McCallum Nathan Reichenbach Donna Dobson	10
11 Lynda Handeland Pete Lacounte	12 Pat Baker Laurie Howell	13 Carolyn Williams	14 Ted Williams	15	16 Stuart Conner	17
18 Myrle Theimer	19 Carol Lubbers	20 Hannah Brown Jazten Lokken	21	22 Autumn Banks Shelby Reichenbach Jeffrey Rhoades	23 Jackson Royer	24 Dennis Olson Trent Krieger
25	26	27 Aidan Dowling Cathleen Kuras	28	29 Barbara Dobesh	30	

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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
Fax: 406-245-6478

E-mail: firstchurch@firstchurchbillings.org

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 September Congregationalist is here!

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Worship

Fourth Sunday in Sacred Place~Green **September 4, 2016**
Sacrament of Holy Communion
Scripture: Exodus 3 "Sacred Place as Middle Earth/Center of the World"

Fifth Sunday in Sacred Place~Green **September 11, 2016**
Recovenanting Sunday
Scripture: Gospel of Thomas 77 "Sacred Place as Mask of the Holy"

Sixth Sunday in Sacred Place~Green **September 18, 2016**
Scripture: I Kings 19:5-18 "The Sacred Place of Emergence"

Seventh Sunday in Sacred Place~Green **September 25, 2016**
Scripture: Exodus 17:1-7; Isaiah: 35:1-2; Isaiah 2:2 "Sacred Place as Fierce Landscape"

Youth Sunday~Green **October 2, 2016**
World Communion Sunday

Eighth Sunday in Sacred Place~Green **October 9, 2016**
Scripture: Psalm 16 "Sacred Place as Home"

Ninth Sunday in Sacred Place~Green **October 16, 2016**
Scripture: 2 Kings 5:1-14 "Sacred Place of Strange Waters"

Tenth Sunday in Sacred Place~Green **October 23, 2016**
Scripture: Hebrews 13:1-2 "Sacred Place of Hospitality"

Eleventh Sunday in Sacred Place~Red **October 30, 2016**
Scripture: Luke 10:25-37 "Sacred Place of Risk"

All Saints Sunday~White **November 6, 2016**
Totenfest Ms. Laura Keating preaching

New Staff Member

Personnel Committee celebrates the arrival of a new staff member to Billings First Congregational Church. Brigid Shearer, daughter of Mic Dawson and David Shearer, is our new nursery attendant! We think Brigid will make a great addition to the care and love expressed at our church. She is a graduate of the University of Montana at Missoula with a degree in social work. She has already been an important part of the work at Camp Mimanagish as a counselor and a camp assistant.

Sign up for Sunday School and Confirmation and get a free Bible!

Sign up for Sunday School and Confirmation on Sunday, September 11, Recovenanting Sunday, and get a free Bible. In an effort to be a religious literate community, Billings First Congregational wants to set up our children and youth with the stories, parables, and wisdom-telling of our tradition. Children who are pre-school and older who have not received a Story Bible will receive one on Sunday, September 19, Rally Day! Children who are 2nd Grade and older who have not received a Children's Bible will receive one on the same date. The same is true for young people who are 7th, 8th, or 9th Grade and older who have not been through the confirmation process. Those young people will receive a Study Bible. So make sure to call the church office (245-6477) to register your child or sign up on Sunday, September 11, Recovenanting Sunday! Sign up for Sunday School! Sign up for confirmation! Get a free Bible!

Rally Day!, September 18, First day of Sunday

This year we have the possibility of nine children under the age of six years of age who could populate our Sunday School classes. So we have decided to emphasize this age group in the purchase of our Sunday School classes.

This year we will be using the curriculum Whirl from Sparkhouse, a pre-K through 6th grade curriculum. Whirl uses engaging animations to teach the Christian Church year and Biblical stories. In teaching the Christian Church year, Whirl also links the Sunday School lesson to worship so that children are encouraged to link their faith to their daily lives.



At Billings First Church, we not only welcome and embrace children as an important part of our community of faith, but also challenge them to grow in religious and Biblical literacy.

Sunday School For High School Age

High School children will be using movies to explore issues and themes of faith. Karen Stainton and Suzie Eades will be providing leadership for this class.

These movies will include the comedy, "Oh, God!", the look at New Zealand culture and female leadership in "Whale Rider", and a movie that strongly resembles a modern day Christmas story in "Children of Men." Within all the different movies are humor, current events, and strong allusions to themes of faith. We hope and pray this class might help our young people develop a critical understanding of faith that includes humor, different images of God, and deeper wisdom about relationships and social justice.

Friends are always invited! Spread the word about this new opportunity for our high school youth.

Pledge Plus

Our Pledge Plus Campaign has raised \$13,970 towards eliminating the \$31,000 deficit in our budget for 2016. This money was raised by 22 pledges, that means we need another \$17,030 to reach our goal. We are faced with a difficult choice of reducing expenditures for staff. 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%. Please be as generous as you can as we start into this exciting fall season at the church. 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.

NAME _____

DATE _____

I plan to increase my pledge for 2016 by \$_____ for a total of \$_____.
_____ for the year. I will give _____ each month.

Return to:

First Congregational UCC
310 North 27th Street
Billings, MT 59101