



The Good News of United Spirit Community Church



A Federation of Christ United Methodist Church & First Congregational United Church of Christ

Volume 2026

September 2, 2026

Issue 34

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*like us on Facebook: First Congregational United Church of Christ-Great Falls, MT
Christ United Methodist Church Great Falls*

September 6, 2026

Worship Service

Communion

10:00 A.M.



Worship Leader:
Pastor Laura Ymker

Lay Reader: Dick Kloppel

Ushers: Dale Dallmann, Susan Thomas

Accompanist/Music Director: Melissa Gilbert

Communion: The Holland Family

Coffee Fellowship: Bill Tiskus, Dennis & Sue Turton

Treats: Shirley Davis, Mary Fry

UCC Tellers: Steve Gettel, Dick Kloppel

Christ UMC Tellers: Rosemary Neilsen, Jeanne Nobbs

The service will be live-streamed on both church Facebook pages and a recording of the livestream will be available on YouTube later in the day and on the United Spirit website.

In Our Thoughts and Prayers



† Sympathy to **Liz Lee and family** in the loss of Liz's nephew, **Justin McCulley**, who passed away last week in hospice care, after two months without nutrition.

Coming Soon

Discussion groups for **members of the LGBTQIA+ community** and others who were at one time part of an expression of faith that taught that members of the LGBTQIA+ community are in one way or another unacceptable to God. **These groups will hold space for individuals to work through theologies that harmed themselves or others and develop new theologies that serve them. Please contact Pastor Laura for more details.**

Bible Study Begins

Bible study resumes on September 9 at 10:00 A.M. in the church parlor. The study will look at six faith stories in Genesis starting with Adam and Eve. If you wish to read more than the Bible for the study, you can read Amy Jill-Levine's book Genesis: A Beginner's Guide to the Beginning. The plan would be to start the conversation from a DVD with Amy Jill-Levine starting our conversation. Pray the DVD arrives as it is on backorder. All are welcome to attend this study, led by Rev. Paul Holland.



Christian Education News

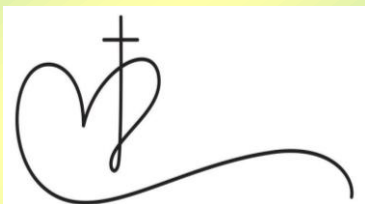
This week all children will attend worship on September 6. There is no nursery care due to the Labor Day holiday.

Sunday School begins on September 13! The Christian Education Board has made a few changes in paperwork and processes. In addition to a re-vamped registration form and media release, the board has created a COVENANT outlining responsibilities and expectations for teachers, parents and the board itself. There will also be a new sign in/sign out process. Class rules and curriculum will be the same. Children will also attend worship once each month when they will participate with new songs. **Registration packets will be available on September 6 and 13.**

“Gracious Space” is in our future!

Beginning on Thursday, September 17, Pastor Laura is hoping to start an evening conversation we call “Gracious Space” on the first and third Thursdays of the month. Gracious Space will be a place to re-examine, re-imagine, and re-form our faith in an environment where we stubbornly insist on believing that God will always be “more good” than anything we can imagine and where we also commit to believing the best about other people and other expressions of faith.

Participants will be asked to watch a video or listen to a podcast about the night’s discussion before arriving. Links to the teaching will be shared in the newsletter just like we’ve been doing for Sunday’s music. Currently, Pastor Laura is considering “The Faith of Gen Z” and “Enslaved People & the Making of the Bible” as topics for our first two discussions. She plans on having us alternate between discussions that involve biblical scholarship and history and those that have to do with faith in our contemporary setting. **Each discussion will stand alone; participants are not expected to come to every discussion. You can join as you are able or interested and not fear missing out.** We hope to see you there!



From the Pastor

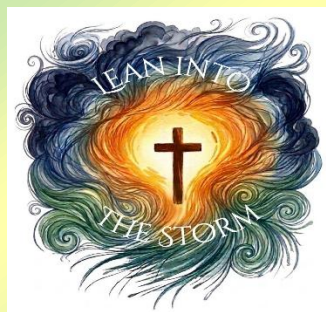
This past Sunday we contemplated God’s great love that encompasses all Creation and challenged ourselves to grow in the knowledge of the love of God until we know its width, length, height, and depth. **We blessed our animals and gave God thanks for the gift they are to us.**

This coming Sunday, on Labor Day weekend, we will delve into more bits of wisdom that I’ve learned along my spiritual journey. **Wisdom chooses the good of tomorrow over the comfort of today.** What else does it choose?

May God bless you this week as you discover the all-encompassing nature of Divine love. May your love expand until it loves all as God loves all. May you become ever more merciful and filled with peace. *Pastor Laura*

Celebrate “The Great Outdoors” on Rally Sunday

It's time to gather again to start the program year! **On September 13, the Church Growth and Vitality Board will host the annual Rally Sunday Celebration during coffee hour.** This year we'll lift up God's good creation with the theme **“The Great Outdoors”**. Boards will showcase **Autumn, Winter, Rocks, Wild Flowers, Snow Skiing, Campfires, Trees, Gardening and Hiking.** Join in **guessing games, activities, crafts, and many delicious snacks.** You might even win a gift certificate to Luna Coffee or Cassiopeia Books! Plan now to join the fun with our entire church family!



“Lean Into the Storm” 141st United Church of Christ Conference Annual Meeting September 25-27, 2026 in Helena

Seeking delegates to represent United Spirit Community Church at this year's UCC Conference Annual Meeting in Helena. This is a great opportunity to see the work of the conference in action and to meet our friends in Christ around the state. **This year's meeting is hosted by Plymouth Congregational Church.** There will be a meet and greet Thursday evening, September 24 at the church. Workshops take place during the day on Friday followed by a banquet that evening. **Rev. Dr. Sarah Lund**, Minister for Disabilities and Mental Health Justice in the UCC, will keynote on Saturday morning and lead a workshop Saturday afternoon. **Rev. Jennifer Sowell**, Associate General Minister for Love of Church, will preach on Sunday and lead a workshop on Saturday.

If you are interested in attending this year's Conference Annual Meeting either in person or virtually, **please contact Moderator Karen Spencer or Pastor Laura.** Cost of registration will be paid for by the church. Delegates are responsible for their lodging. Names of delegates need to be submitted by **Monday, September 14th.** Final reservation deadline is Thursday, September 18.

YOUTH DELEGATES WELCOME!

***Both Congregational and Methodist members and friends are encouraged to attend as guests.
Guests will not have a voice but can still see the inner working of our conference.
Registration not required for guests.***



Town Pump has selected FISH to be part of the 25th Anniversary of “HELP THOSE IN NEED” Challenge. **Town Pump will match all donations to reach \$30,000.00 that FISH receives September 1-November 30.** What a great way to double your gift & help FISH. Donations can be made through the church with “FISH” in the memo or sent to **P.O. Box 662, Great Falls MT 59403.**



Quilt Raffle

United Women in Faith is sponsoring a quilt raffle. The quilt is on display in Fellowship Hall and will be raffled during coffee fellowship on December 6. Tickets are 1/\$1.00 or 6/\$5.00. All proceeds will benefit local charities. Please see Jeanne Nobbs or Carolyn Dowdy for tickets. Need not be present to win.

A Sure Foundation

A reflection on *A Sure Foundation*, (the UCC's handbook for relationships between pastors and congregations). As the handbook begins to discuss behavioral covenants, it says, "Much of the time, congregants **treat each other with kindness and grace, observing boundaries of appropriate behavior and striving to respond to conflict faithfully.** Such graces include the importance of **telling one's own truth and listening respectfully to others' truths, holding confidences appropriately, assuming good intent, seeking reconciliation directly from one who has hurt another, and approaching matters in a spirit of prayer.** Sometimes, however, certain behaviors undercut the values the congregation professes to hold, such as **gossip, slander, "parking lot" conversations** that denigrate decisions made or those who made them, and **inappropriate comments** to or about one another (including pastoral leadership or the wider church)."

This paragraph is a wonderful reminder of the ways healthy relationships are built. My hope is that you will always **feel welcome to come to me directly to express sadness, frustration, or disagreement about any decisions I make.** I love to chat about beliefs, relationships, and church services. I love to get to know you all better and learn how you experience God's presence in your lives. It helps me be a better preacher; it helps me be a better pastor.

Conversations that avoid direct communication are not as productive. They circle around and around without the situation that is being discussed ever being able to be solved. Often they end up in **broken relationships, broken trust, and bruised hearts.** Instead, may we always choose to **speak the truth in love to each other, directly and kindly** (Ephesians 4:15).

Pastor Laura

"Justice Isn't Blind: Race and Inequality in the Federal Criminal Justice System"



**Sponsored by the Progressive
Ministerial Association
Presented by Hank Branom,
Criminal Defense Attorney
United Spirit Community Church –
2900 9th Ave S. Great Falls
October 1, 7:00-8:30 P.M.**

A person can be subject to a federal criminal prosecution based in part upon their ethnicity and where they live. With six federal jurisdiction reservations, this has an impact upon our native neighbors in Montana. This presentation will delve into the impacts of federal criminal law upon Native Americans from the 1880's to the present day. It will also address the current immigration prosecutions occurring in our state and elsewhere.

Coming Up

Thursday, September 3

8:00 A.M. Pray with the Pastor, Sanct.

9-10 A.M. Pastor Laura Office Hours

Sunday, September 6

9:00 A.M. Fellowship Board Mtg.

10:00 A.M. Worship Service

11:00 A.M. Coffee Fellowship

Monday, September 7- Labor Day (Office Closed)

Wednesday, September 9

10:00 A.M. Bible Study, Parlor

12:30 P.M. Pray with the Pastor, Sanct.

1-2 P.M. Pastor Laura Office Hours

1:30 P.M. Pinochle, Fellowship Hall

6:00 P.M. Youth Group

6:00 P.M. Handbells

7:15 P.M. Choir Rehearsal

Thursday, September 10

8:00 A.M. Pray with the Pastor, Sanct.

9-10 A.M. Pastor Laura Office Hours

12:00 P.M. Facilities Committee

1:00 P.M. Church Growth & Vitality
