



First Presbyterian Church

# The Mustard Seed

## NEWSLETTER

Vol. 2024, Issue 1 First Presbyterian Church, Helena, Montana January 2024

### Point in Time census of the unsheltered

Our congregation has been asked to help serve a meal during the "Point in Time" census Jan. 25.

The Mission and Outreach Committee will plan the dinner. When plans are complete, we will ask for your assistance in providing food (if needed) and/or helping set up, serve our guests, or clean up. The M&O Committee would be grateful for any assistance you can provide.

Please watch the bulletins and/or the Monday newsletter for details.



### Musical Christmas

Above, carolers bring music to homebound friends; at left, Gabe Drynan provides the postlude music one Sunday.

### January Sermon Series

## "Won't You Be My Neighbor?"

Based on the ministry and mission of the Rev. Fred Rogers, aka "Mr. Rogers," this sermon series will explore lessons from the book "Mr. Roger's Neighborhood" during 4 workshops.

Watch for more details in upcoming bulletins and the weekly newsletters!

Won't  
You  
Be My  
Neighbor?



## **Coming Soon: ‘Movie Night!’**



Your Fellowship Committee is bringing back **MOVIE NIGHT** — with a twist: a movie and dinner!

Join in the fun Friday, January 19, beginning at 3:30 p.m., in the Youth Room at the church. After the movie, which promises to be very entertaining, those who want to will go out to dinner together. (Place to be determined.)

Barb Leland

## **Presbyterian Women are uniquely BOLD** **(Bible study – Organized – Leads – Denominational)**

The new year is here, along with new desires and new aspirations. We all look forward to a fresh start as a way to move on from the past and look to the future.

While you’re relaxing and browsing the Internet, take a minute to ponder about Presbyterian Women – the organization, the women and the networks that are PW – are emboldened to support Christ’s church and people with grace, vision and love. “PW are uniquely BOLD” is a short video available on PW’s YouTube channel.

Visit the [presbyterianwomen.org/bold](http://presbyterianwomen.org/bold) for a link to the video and to download a vibrant poster inspired by the video.

There’s a time for everything in life. In the same manner that God

“makes his sun rise on the evil and on the good (Matthew 5:45),” He allows seasons to change and new beginnings to ascend.

The Peace of Christ be with you,  
sincerely, Carol Gneckow, Moderator (406) 422-9914.



**SARAH CIRCLE**

**Tuesday, Jan. 2, 10 a.m.**  
**(Contact: Sheryl Eriksen)**

**REBEKAH CIRCLE**

**Thursday, Jan. 4, 10 a.m.**  
**(Contact: Merle Korizek)**

**H**appy New Year! We look forward to the new year...the possibilities seem endless, new things are on the horizon (not all good or fun ones!) and some things continue to evolve.

2024 will bring technology changes, continued conflict in the world and a presidential election. Here, at the corner of Rodney and 11<sup>th</sup> in FPC, the Pastor Nominating Committee will spend significant energy and time on the search for your future permanent pastor. Committees like Mission and Outreach will offer a range of opportunities to serve and contribute. Building and Grounds will keep a close eye on the campus and taking care of maintenance. Admin will oversee the budget; Personnel will support your employees while Fellowship hosts potluck and fun events. Christian Ed and the worship team will seek new ways to teach about Jesus Christ. Deacons will keep doing what they do so well; caring for the congregation.

How about you? What will you be doing for Jesus? God has given us 52 weeks to worship our Lord and savior Jesus Christ. 365 days to read the Bible all the way through and 365 days to offer prayers for others (and for ourselves). What will you do with all those gifts?

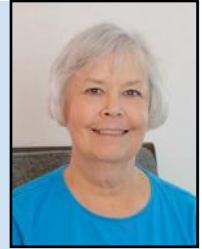
This poem by Rev. Howard Thurman is one of my favorites. May it serve as a guide for our work this coming year.

## **The Work of Christmas**

When the song of the angels is stilled,  
When the star in the sky is gone,  
When the kings and princes are home,  
When the shepherds are back with their flock,  
The work of Christmas begins:  
To find the lost,  
To heal the broken,  
To feed the hungry,  
To release the prisoner,  
To rebuild the nations,  
To bring peace among others,  
To make music in the heart.

God bless you!

Pastor Janet Potter, Interim Pastor



## Cuddle Buddies

The Mission & Outreach Committee is asking your help to make additional Cuddle Buddies.

Alayna Hutchings is a local 8-year-old girl who has an inoperable malignant brain tumor. This amazing young lady plans to visit hospitals in all 50 states and distribute gifts in the pediatric ward. We will donate our Cuddle Buddies to her to give on one of her future visits. Packets of fabric, a pattern and instructions will be offered to anyone in the congregation willing to cut out the Buddies on Jan. 7. They should be returned the following Sunday, Jan. 14, and we will gather on Thursday, Jan. 18, to stuff them.

Your help at any stage of the process would be greatly appreciated.



**“Warm Hearts”** is a drive for new blankets and towels to gift the poor on Valentine’s Day. The drive, which begins Dec. 31 and ends Jan. 28, is an ecumenical ministry of the Sisters of Charity of Leavenworth Associates of Helena.

Donated new **twin-sized** blankets, bath towels, hand towels and washcloths will be collected during January and distributed through organizations such as The Willis Cruse House, Family Promise, God’s Love, Florence Crittenton Home, Good Samaritan Ministries, Rocky Mountain Development Center, the Friendship Center and YWCA.

Please help us fill the box which has been placed in the Fellowship area.

## FPC Elders

**Barb Leland Butch Plowman**

**Mary Stiles** (Education chair) **Sheryl Eriksen** (Fellowship chair)

**Jim Meyer** (Administration chair) **Karen Witte** (Mission chair)

**Jeff Chaffee** (Personnel chair) **Patti Borsberry**

**John Coefield** (Building & Grounds chair; Nominating chair)

**John Gneckow**, Clerk of Session

## FPC Deacons

Julie Chaffee  
Candace Coefield, moderator  
Lonna Weidemann

Joy Edgar  
Merle Korizek  
Carole Massman  
Vicky Bryan

BJ Burns  
Kathy Chambers  
Jill Cook

# MINUTES OF THE SESSION FIRST PRESBYTERIAN CHURCH (PCUSA) HELENA, MONTANA

**December 19, 2023**

The regular meeting of the Session of the First Presbyterian Church of Helena was called to order on Tuesday, December 19, 2023, at 6:30 PM by Reverend Janet Potter.

Pastor Janet opened the meeting with prayer and a short worship service in the sanctuary. Following the worship service, the Session members moved to the meeting room where Pastor moderated the meeting.

There was a quorum with the following Elders present: Arlyn “Butch” Plowman, Sheryl Eriksen, Barb Leland, Mary Stiles, Patti Borsberry, John Coefield, Karen Witte, and Jim Meyer. Elder Jeff Chaffee attended on zoom. Also in attendance: Clerk of Session John Gneckow, Deacon Joy Edgar, and Treasurer Leo Potter.

**APPROVAL OF DOCKET:** Pastor Janet added approving minutes of the November called Session and Congregational meetings, CLC pastor salary information, and reports of visits to other church services. A motion was made, seconded, and passed to accept the docket with the additional items added.

**APPROVAL OF MINUTES:** A motion was made, seconded, and passed to approve the minutes of November 21, 2023, Session meeting.

## **CLERK’S REPORT:**

	Active Membership as of October 31, 2023	103	
	Active Membership as of November 30, 2023	103	

**INTERIM PASTOR’S REPORT:** Pastor Janet reported her activities during December:

Continues a weekly prayer time on Thursday mornings at 11:00 AM.

Attended Presbytery committee meetings.

Attended Advent planning team meeting.

Attended Mission & Outreach, Building & Grounds, Fellowship, Deacon, and Admin meetings.

Met with the PNC.

Moderated a Called Special Session meeting and Special Called Congregational meeting.

Attended the Thanksgiving Dinner served at FPC.

Trained, ordained, and installed Vicky Bryan and Jill Cook as Deacons.

Planned and led a Blue Christmas Worship Service on December 14.

Wrote letters to the Montana Department of Commerce and Helena Mayor and City Council in support of the Good Samaritan Ministries proposal to open and operate a shelter for homeless women.

Communion	93	47 in person, 37 online, 9 at home
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## COMMITTEE REPORTS:

**Administration Committee:** Chair Jim Meyer reported. A written report was submitted to Session.

Treasurer Leo Potter noted FPC had an operating revenue of minus \$3902 for November. Donations for the month were \$14,453. The net operating revenue was negative because of increased utility costs and elevated expenses primarily for elevator services. After 11 months of the year, the operating deficit is just over \$21000 compared to a budgeted negative amount of \$38,750 for 2023.

The proposed budget for 2024 was presented for anticipated expenses of \$290,349.79. It includes estimated costs that would be incurred for an installed pastor for a full year. Projected income is \$252,250.

**ACTION ITEM:** The committee motion to accept the proposed budget for 2024 as presented was approved.

PNC asked for guidance for an effective salary (stated salary plus housing allowance) range for an installed pastor. The effective salary may have a limiting effect on people who will be interested in applying to be the pastor of FPC. After some discussion and questions to the Treasurer, Session suggested a top of \$70,000.

Next Meeting January 10, 2024, at 4:00 PM.

**Building and Grounds:** A written report was submitted. Chair John Coefield reported.

A historical sign is to be installed on the lawn in front of the Ewing Street window.

Further discussion on Active Shooter Training was tabled until the January meeting.

FPC is looking for a new cleaning contractor.

The next meeting is January 10, 2024.

**Christian Education Committee:** Did not meet in December.

**Congregational Fellowship:** Chair Sheryl Eriksen reported, and a written report was submitted to Session.

No future date set for bingo. Considering having a movie night. Hand and Foot card games continue every Friday at 1:30 pm.

A fifth Sunday church potluck will be held on December 31 after worship. Non-alcoholic beverages will be used to toast in the New Year.

The next meeting will be January 10 at 2:00 PM.

**Memorial Committee:** Kathy Chambers submitted a written report to Session.

The committee voted to replace the heavy glass on the Communion table with a lighter plexiglass sheet.

Accepted a framed picture of Jesus from Joy Edgar in memory of her grandmother. The picture has been hung in the Narthex.

The committee has voted to increase the number of committee members. A list of potential members will be considered at the next meeting.

The church has received a memorial gift in memory of Lillian (Gay Lily) Cavagnolo. Pastor Janet will follow up with acknowledging the gift.

Pastor Janet reported that a congregation member volunteered to pay for the equipment upgrade for the broadcasting of Sunday services.

Next meeting will be in January 2024. Date and time to be determined.

**Mission Committee:** Chair Karen Witte reported. A written report was submitted to Session.

The Outreach Activities Survey results are being compiled for presentation to the membership on January 7, 2024.

Also on January 7, the congregation will be asked to help with making more Cuddle Buddies for distribution by Alayna Hutchings.

Discussed and approved to participate in the Warm Hearts Ministry through the Sisters of Leavenworth. The mission request is for blankets and towels for the unsheltered in the community.

**ACTION ITEM:** Permission to participate in the collection of blankets and towels for the Sisters of Charity of Leavenworth during January. Motion passed.

The committee received a request for volunteers to provide a meal on January 25 for the Points In Time annual census of unsheltered people in Helena. FPC has volunteered to provide soup at a location outside of FPC.

The next meeting is January 8, 2024, at 1:00 PM.

**Nominating Committee:** Chair John Coefield reported that the commit-

## **Session Minutes (continued from page 7)**

tee work is on hold during the holidays. They do have three people who are willing to serve on the Board of Deacons, but still need three people to fill the Elder positions for Session.

**Personnel Committee:** Chair Jeff Chaffee reported there was no meeting in December.

**Worship Committee:** No report submitted to Session.

Pastor Janet reported that the Advent committee did great work. She was particularly impressed with the organization for decorating the church for Christmas. Now we need to take down and put away the decorations.

Nineteen people attended the Blue Christmas service, four of whom were not church members.

**Deacon Report:** The minutes of the November 12, 2023, meeting were submitted to Session as well as activity reports for November.

During November, communion was served to three people at Touchmark, four people at Son Heaven and two at home. One person was visited in the hospital. No meals were supplied. Currently Deacons cannot do communion at Edgewood or Cooney due to norovirus.

**A motion was made, seconded, and passed to accept the committee reports.**

### **Old Business:**

Pastor Janet reported on the members who were sent a letter of their pending move from active status to the inactive status. A motion was made and seconded to move the following members to inactive: Nicole Carpenter, Andrew Carpenter, Lexsey Carpenter, Sarah Coefield, Steven Foster, Jaclyn Haven, Glenn Phillips, Sandy Phillips, and Margaret Snyder. The motion passed.

### **New Business:**

FPC donated unused glass communion cups to Plymouth Congregational church for their use.

Pastor Janet indicated she plans to hold a Town Hall meeting in January following a worship service. The date is presently undetermined.

Session voted to hold the Annual Congregational meeting February 11, 2024, following the worship service.

Elder Barb Leland, “Butch” Plowman, Karen Witte, and Clerk John Gneckow reported on church services that they have recently attended outside of FPC Helena.

Among the observations were the attendance numbers, differences in mu-



sic presentation (praise bands vs. choirs), length of sermons, and the celebration of communion. A couple of the churches were noted as having coffee and pastry sales before worship. The money goes for youth or church missions.

A motion was made, seconded, and approved to adjourn the meeting.

The meeting was closed with prayer by Pastor Janet at 8:15 PM.

The next Regular Session Meeting January 17, 2024, at 6:30 pm.

John Gneckow

Clerk of Session



*Thank You for  
Your Generosity*

Thank you for your  
faithful giving to  
the ministry of  
FPC Helena.

Your financial support makes the proclamation of the gospel possible throughout the world! Our November net giving is below.

	Nov. 2023	YTD
Income	\$20,481	\$217,069
Expenses	<u>\$24,383</u>	<u>\$238,331</u>
	\$(3,902)	\$(21,262)

The online giving program can be found on the [fpchelena.org](http://fpchelena.org) website.

If you have any questions, please contact Treasurer Leo Potter at 815-980-5236.

*This is the day that the Lord has made:  
let us rejoice and be glad in it!*

**OPPORTUNITIES  
FOR GIVING**

**1) Warm Hearts** – Dec 31<sup>st</sup> through Jan 28<sup>th</sup>.

Donate twin-sized blankets, towels and wash-cloths.

**2) Cuddle Buddies** – Jan 7<sup>th</sup> and Jan 18<sup>th</sup>. Help cut, sew or stuff Cuddle Buddies.

**3) Point in Time Census** – Jan 25<sup>th</sup>. Help set up and serve dinner to unsheltered people in our community.

**4) Energy Share of MT** – Undetermined date in Feb. Give financial help to neighbors struggling with heat bills.

# JANUARY 2024

Sun	Mon	Tue	Wed	Thu	Fri	Sat
	<b>1</b> <i>New Year's Day</i>	<b>2</b> <b>10 a.m.</b> Sarah Circle <b>11:30</b> Bridge <b>3 pm</b> Personnel <b>7 pm</b> Al Anon <b>7 pm</b> Scouts	<b>3</b> <b>6:30 pm</b> Choir	<b>4</b> <b>10 am</b> Re-bekah Circle <b>11 am</b> Prayer Time <b>5:30</b> District AA <b>6:30</b> Bridge <b>7 pm</b> AA	<b>5</b> <b>Noon</b> Bible Study <b>1:30 pm</b> Hand & Foot Cards	<b>6</b>
<b>7</b> <b>10 am</b> Worship w/Communion <b>11 am</b> Social Time	<b>8</b> <b>3 pm</b> Education <b>1 pm</b> Mission	<b>9</b> <b>11:30 am</b> Bridge <b>7 pm</b> Al Anon <b>7 pm</b> Scouts	<b>10</b> <b>10 am</b> B & Grounds <b>2 pm</b> Fellowship <b>4 pm</b> Admin. <b>6:30 pm</b> Choir	<b>11</b> <b>11 am</b> Prayer Time <b>6:30</b> Chat Bridge <b>7 pm</b> AA	<b>12</b> <b>Noon</b> Bible Study <b>1:30 pm</b> Hand & Foot Cards	<b>13</b>
<b>14</b> <b>10 am</b> Worship <b>11 am</b> Social Time <b>11 am</b> Deacons	<b>15</b>	<b>16</b> <b>11:30 am</b> Bridge <b>6:30</b> Session <b>7 pm</b> Al Anon <b>7 pm</b> Scouts	<b>17</b> <b>6:30 pm</b> Choir	<b>18</b> <b>11 am</b> Prayer Time <b>6:30</b> Chat Bridge <b>7 pm</b> AA	<b>19</b> <b>Noon</b> Bible Study <b>1:30 pm</b> Hand & Foot Cards <b>3:30 pm</b> Movie & Dinner Night	<b>20</b>
<b>21</b> <b>10 am</b> Worship <b>11 am</b> Town Hall	<b>22</b>	<b>23</b> <b>11:30 am</b> Bridge <b>7 pm</b> Al Anon <b>7 pm</b> Scouts	<b>24</b> <b>6:30 pm</b> Choir	<b>25</b> <b>11 am</b> Prayer Time <b>6:30</b> Bridge <b>7 pm</b> AA	<b>26</b> <b>Noon</b> Bible Study <b>1:30 pm</b> Hand & Foot Cards	<b>27</b>
<b>28</b> <b>10 am</b> Worship <b>11 am</b> Social Time	<b>29</b>	<b>30</b> <b>11:30 am</b> Bridge <b>7 pm</b> Al Anon <b>7 pm</b> Scouts	<b>31</b> <b>6:30 pm</b> Choir			



# January Birthdays



2nd Carol Carpenter  
5th Ann Swisher  
6th Kristen Clausen  
8th John Gneckow  
11th Carol Gneckow

14th Glenn Phillips  
18th BJ Burns  
23rd Deb Whitcomb  
29th Judy Patton  
30th Robin LeNeve

**Town Hall, Sunday, Jan. 21, 11 a.m.**

*Meet after the worship service; watch for details in bulletins!*

**Join us for worship!**

**Sundays, 10 a.m.**

**or online @**

**fpc.helena.org**

**Invite a friend!**

Updated FPC brochures  
in the fellowship room

*Take some to share with  
your friends and neighbors!*

## **FINANCIAL DEADLINES**

Completed Credit Card Request forms, Check Request forms, Personnel Forms & Time Sheets are due in the Financial Office mailbox:

**Monday, Jan. 8**

**Tuesday, Jan. 29**

## **Please let us know**

If you or a loved one is hospitalized, please let us know by calling the church office at 442-4775. St. Pete's is no longer able to tell us whether any FPC people are patients there.

**Also, we no longer have a deacon on call each month. If you need assistance please call the church office: 406-442-4775.**

**Articles for the  
February "Mustard Seed"  
are due Jan. 22**

## **Hand & Foot Cards**

**Fridays, 1:30 p.m.**

**Fellowship Room**

Never played? No problem!

The game is easy to learn and willing teachers abound.

First Presbyterian Church  
535 North Ewing Street  
Helena, MT 59601

[www.fpchelena.org](http://www.fpchelena.org)

Sunday Service 10 a.m.  
Weekly Sermon on HCTV Cable Channel 189  
Wednesdays at 6 pm & Saturdays at 9 AM

OFFICE HOURS  
Monday - Friday  
9:00 a.m. - 1:00 p.m.

406-442-4775

[admin@fpchelena.org](mailto:admin@fpchelena.org)



*Spreading the Good News  
of Christ through Our Love,  
Words, and Actions*

Label here