



First Presbyterian Church

The Mustard Seed

NEWSLETTER

Vol. 2024, Issue 3 First Presbyterian Church, Helena, MT March 2024

*Come,
worship
with us!*



Palm Sunday

Sunday, March 24
10 a.m.

Maundy Thursday

Thursday, March 28
7 p.m.

Good Friday

Friday, March 29
Noon

Easter Day

Sunday, March 31
10 a.m.
Brunch Potluck
11 a.m.

In person at:

535 N. Ewing
Helena

or online:

www.fpchelena.org



Neighbors

A series of workshops based on Mr. Roger's Neighborhood wrapped up in March. Above, the participants discuss "Peace in the Neighborhood." (Janet Potter photo)

Lenten Study in March

Join Pastor Janet for a Lenten Study, "Walking Towards Glory," by John Birch.

This study focuses on the Sunday Gospel text. We will meet from 12/Noon until 1:00pm on March 6, March 13 and March 20. Bring a sack lunch or a snack; coffee and water will be provided.

If you are new to Bible study, come, give it a try!



Easter Day Potluck Brunch Sunday, March 31, 11 a.m.

Bring a brunch item such as a breakfast casserole or dish, fruit tray, donuts or bagels with cream cheese or jam. The Fellowship Committee will provide beverages.

One Great HOUR OF SHARING

One Great Hour of Sharing (OGHS)

Now through March 31

Each gift to OGHS helps to improve the lives of people in challenging situations. The Offering provides us a way to share God's love with our neighbors in need. In fact, OGHS is the single, largest way that Presbyterians come together every year to work for a better world.

The three programs supported by One Great Hour of Sharing - Presbyterian Disaster Assistance, the Presbyterian Hunger Program, and Self-Development of People - all work in different ways to serve individuals and communities in need.

Thank you for opening your hearts to share in ministries of justice, compassion, and joy through your support of One Great Hour of Sharing.

IF WE ALL DO A LITTLE, IT ADDS UP TO A LOT!

Energy Share of Montana

Thank you all for your generosity toward your neighbors by participating in the Energy Share special offering. \$1,260 was collected and will help those in need in this community.

FPC is hiring!

We are looking to hire a person to serve as our Nursery Care Worker.

This part-time position requires experience in childcare, must be at least 16 years old, dependable and able to pass a background check. Hours are from 9:00-11:30am Sunday mornings and pay is \$37.50 for the morning.

A complete job description is available in the church office and can be emailed to anyone interested in the position; just ask Julie in the office.

Movie Night

Friday, March 15, 3:30 p.m.

FPC Youth Room

Following a successful Movie Night in January, your Fellowship Committee has decided to plan another one! Popcorn provided. Bring your own non-alcoholic drink. Our movie selection promises to be very entertaining!

As we did in January, those of us who want to will go to dinner afterwards – place to be determined.

Hope to see you on the 15th!

March 2024 brings a time change (spring ahead!), a continuation of Lent, Spring arrives, Palm Sunday, Holy Week and Easter Sunday (with a brunch-themed potluck!) Wow! March 2024 also brings the reminder of 3 years ago when everything shut down as that mysterious, novel and potent (often deadly) virus made its way across the country.



Shutting down, wearing masks, social distancing, hand sanitizing, zoom worship were new things to figure out. And, we did. One way or another, these changes were incorporated into our personal lives and the lives of the congregation. Worship happened without choir anthems or congregational singing; communion elements were little packages of juice and wafer; the peace was passed through the sign of peace or love and coffee hour was cancelled. Uff! But, like the Israelites in the wilderness, we got through it (though the covid virus is still around.)

Not an easy time to remember....but in retrospect, there were lessons learned. We discovered relationships between family, friends, co-workers and neighbors really are important. Worship can glorify God even without music! Online worship allowed people to attend worship that were previously unable to do so. In many situations, God pried our fingers off of traditions and the "way we've always done things." God was doing a new thing and shaking up our ways during the pandemic. God is always about doing new things, shaping and molding God's children to become more like Jesus.

As this season of Lent continues, we have an opportunity to dig deep and ask questions. How is my relationship with Jesus? Where is there a need to repent or to ask forgiveness? Is God trying to do a new thing in my life? How is God working in my heart or my life to be less self-centered and more neighbor-centered?

What is my cross to bear with Jesus? What are my fingers clutching to that God is trying to pry off? Take one or two questions and explore them through prayer and by talking to others. What lessons is God trying to teach me? For me, I thank God for the lessons of that pandemic and how we might continue to apply them, in our lives and in this congregation. In good times and in hard, God loves us all the way to the cross.

To God be the glory,

Pastor Janet

Presbyterian Women March 2024



A gentle reminder that the PW Coordinating Team will meet Wednesday, April 24, at 11 a.m.

We encourage you to put Wednesday, May 29, 11:30-1:00 on your calendars when we will hold our Salad Luncheon. The Birthday and Thank Offerings will be part of the agenda along with recognition of our Honorary Membership Recipients. There will be delicious salads, light entertainment and, of course, fellowship with one another. Show your support of Presbyterian Women – your sisters in Christ and our shared PW ministry that provides a faithful and caring community for us to live and love and thrive. (*Some thoughts above from PW Moderator Ruth Hazelton.*)

We are deeply concerned for the soul of our nation, but also for our churches and the integrity of our faith. The best response to our political, material, cultural, racial, or national idola-

tries is the First Commandment: “You shall have no other gods before me” (Exodus 20:3). Jesus summarizes the Greatest Commandment: “You shall love the Lord your God with all your heart, your soul, and your mind. This is the first commandment. And the second is like unto it. You shall love your neighbor as yourself. On these commandments hang all the law and the prophets” (Matthew 22:38). As to loving our neighbors, we would add “no exceptions.” (*From Reclaiming Jesus.org*)

(*A prayer attributed to St. Francis*)
‘Grant that we may not so much seek to be consoled as to console; to be understood as to understand; to be loved as to love. For it is in giving that we receive; it is in pardoning that we are pardoned; and it is in dying that we are born to eternal life. Amen.’

Christ’s Peace to All,

Carol Gneckow, PW Moderator
(406) 422-9914

FPC Elders

Barb Leland Butch Plowman

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

FPC Helena

February 20, 2024

The worship service and regular meeting of the Session of the First Presbyterian Church of Helena were called to order on Tuesday, February 20, 2024, at 6:30 PM by Reverend Janet Potter.

Pastor Janet opened the meeting with prayer followed by a worship service with communion. As part of the worship service, Pastor Janet posed the question, "What does baptism mean to you?" Following communion, she moderated the business meeting.

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

APPROVAL OF DOCKET: A motion was made, seconded, and passed to accept the docket as presented.

APPROVAL OF MINUTES: A motion was made, seconded, and passed to approve the minutes of January 16, 2024, Session meeting with a word change.

CLERK'S REPORT:

	Active Membership as of December 31, 2023	92	
	Active Membership as of January 31, 2024	92	

The Clerk stated that he had no correspondence to report.

INTERIM PASTOR'S REPORT: Pastor Janet reported her activities:

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

Continues leading weekly worship at Cooney Home.

Plans and leads Sunday worship.

Attended Lent Planning team meeting.

Attended Mission & Outreach, Building & Grounds, Fellowship, Deacons, Nominating and Admin committee meetings.

Planned and conducted the Ash Wednesday worship service February 14.

Conducted a Town Hall meeting January 21 following worship.

Conducted graveside services for Eve Seeley February 20, 2024.

Communion	118	43 in person, 58 online, 17 at home
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COMMITTEE REPORTS:

Administration Committee: Chair Jim Meyer reported.

(Continued on page 6)

Session Minutes (continued from page 5)

Treasurer Leo Potter noted FPC had a net operating revenue of negative \$572 for January. Donations for the month were \$15,590. Expenses for the year were 8% of budgeted for the year and income was 9% of budget for the year.

Vanguard accounts showed an increase of \$4,970.49 for the month.

One nonprofit has toured a portion of the church for possible leasing as office space.

ACTION ITEM: Requests Session appoint an ad hoc subcommittee for the shared use of the campus. We request that Linda Bench, John Warren, and John Coefield be appointed as members of the committee and the Treasurer (Leo Potter) be included as an ex officio member. Motion passed unanimously.

Building and Grounds: Chair John Coefield reported.

Active Shooter training is set for February 27 at 2:00 PM in the fellowship area.

DPHHS has requested building use. Okayed 50% off.

Contractor has been notified that snow removal on Sundays is a priority.

The next meeting is March 13, 2024.

Christian Education Committee: Chair John Coefield reported.

Vicky Bryan connected FPC to the Legal Services Developer Program DPHHS which is interested in hosting three (3) events at FPC.

In March, Estate Planning 101 open to the public free of charge.

In April, a one-day training for professionals in the aging services field.

In April, a free clinic to assist registered clients with estate planning documents—to be drafted and notarized free of charge.

Chair John Coefield proposed the Pumpkin Patch be moved to Mission and Outreach committee.

ACTION ITEM: The committee requests Session approval of the Nursery Care Job Description. Motion carried. NOTE: an adult volunteer church member will also be in attendance.

Congregational Fellowship: Chair Sheryl Eriksen reported.

The next Movie time will be 3:30 PM March 15 in the Youth Room.

A 5th Sunday Potluck will take place on March 31 following the worship service. The theme will be “Brunch” consisting of breakfast casseroles or dishes, fruit trays, donuts, bagels w/crème cheese, jam, or peanut butter.

ACTION ITEM: Committee requests approval of Ria Caussyn as a member of the committee. Motion carried.

Hand and Foot card games continue every Friday at 1:30 pm.

The next meeting will be on March 13 at 2:00 PM.

Memorial Committee: Did not meet.

Mission Committee: Chair Karen Witte reported.

Mark Nay, Street Minister for Good Samaritan, was our guest. He described his work with the unsheltered and the challenges they face in their efforts to find shelter in Helena. He stated that in the long run it is more costly to NOT help them than it is to help them.

Joy Edgar reported that Panda Express is holding a fund raiser on February 24. A portion of the day's receipts will be donated to Family Promise.

The Mission Committee approved a donation of \$200 to be used for a newly established First Nation Scholarship fund. The scholarships will be used to send First Nations youth to the 4H Congress at Bozeman for leadership training.

FPC collected funds for Energy Share on February 18th.

Our next hosting of Family Promise will be February 25 and 26.

100 cuddle buddies will be presented to Alayna Hutchings for her Mission of visiting children in various hospitals.

Disbursement of the Tithe Funds from the Vanguard funds was discussed. The committee is looking at sending the funds to a hospital in the Gaza strip area if we are confident the funds will reach and be used for those in need.

The next meeting is March 11, 2024, at 1:00 PM.

Nominating Committee: No meeting was held.

Personnel Committee: Chair Jeff Chaffee reported no meeting was held.

Worship Committee: No report submitted to Session.

Lent Planning Team: A report was submitted to Session.

The committee discussed the meaning of Lent and felt that giving and serving others and repairing/restoring relationships would be more in keeping with Lent. They discussed including prayers specifically for those different needs.

Lent devotionals are available in hard copy and as an eBook.

The congregation will be asked to "give up" applause during and after worship. We will also forego sanctuary decorations during this time.

An hour-long study class will be offered on three Wednesdays in March at noon. Participants are encouraged to bring their own sack lunch.

Important worship dates:

Palm Sunday—March 24.

Maundy Thursday—March 28. Includes Communion

Good Friday—March 29.

Easter Sunday—March 31. 5th Sunday potluck brunch after worship.

Next meeting (if needed) March 4 at 1:15 PM

Deacon Report: The minutes of the January 14, 2024, meeting were submitted to Session as well as January activity reports. There were 1,092 contacts with

Session Minutes (continued from page 7)

congregants in 2023.

During January, communion was served to six people at Touchmark, three people at Son Heaven, three people at Edgewood and five at home. No hospital visits. Three meals were supplied.

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

Old Business: none

New Business: none

There being no more business to conduct, a motion was made, seconded, and approved to adjourn the meeting.

The meeting was closed with prayer by Pastor Janet at 7:55 pm.

The next Regular Session Meeting: March 19, 2024, at 6:30 pm.

John Gneckow
Clerk of Session

Synod of the Rocky Mountains offering online Christian Leadership classes

The Synod, in conjunction with the University of Dubuque Theological Seminary (UDTS), is offering affordable Christian Leadership classes in 8-week units, by zoom.

Classes are taught by a UDTS Professor along with an instructor from this region. An undergraduate degree is not required, nor is it necessary to be an Elder. Each class is pass/fail. Take one or take as many as you would like!

Each class costs \$100/participant and \$100 from the church, along with purchasing class books. Consider requesting Anderson Trust funds to help pay for the class or books.

2024 Synod classes:

Congregational Care — great class for Deacons! (March 19, 2024 - May 13, 2024)

Introduction to New Testament (August 12, 2024 - October 3, 2024)

Introduction to Old Testament (October 10, 2024 - December 11, 2024)

For more information, contact Janet or contact Becky Schellabarger at 563.589.3261 or DERegistration@dbq.edu.



Mark your calendars!

Free estate planning seminar offered March 11

The DPHHS Legal Services Developer Program will be offering a free estate planning seminar at FPC on Monday, March 11, at 1 p.m.

The “Estate Planning 101 Seminar” will cover a variety of topics relevant to estate planning, such as the importance of advance planning, the several types of available estate planning documents, and scenario training about what happens if you do not draft estate planning documents.

Presenters will be Susan Gecho Gobbs, Esq., Katy Lovell, and Annalisa Bell. Watch for registration details coming later.



***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 Jan. net giving is below.

	Jan. 2024	YTD
Income	\$22,100	\$22,100
Expenses	<u>\$22,671</u>	<u>\$22,671</u>
	\$(572)	\$(572)

The online giving program can be found on the 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!*

**Ongoing
collections**

Helena Food Share

The Mission Committee continues to collect food for Helena Food Share. The donation bin is located just inside the main office doors.

Toiletries/Coupons

Donations of toiletries (small, travel size) and coupons can be dropped off in the collection basket inside the main office doors.

Tonna Strasko delivers the donations to individuals in need of help with expenses, and also to God’s Love, Friendship Center, and YWCA.



Sun	Mon	Tue	Wed	Thu	Fri	Sat
<div>March 2024</div>					1 Noon Bible Study 1:30 pm Hand & Foot Cards	2
3 10 am Worship w/Communion 11 am Social Time	4 3 pm Education	5 11:30 Bridge 2 p.m. Sarah Circle 7 pm Al Anon 7 pm Scouts	6 Noon Lenten Bible Study 2 pm Choir	7 10 am Rebekah Circle 11 am Prayer Time 5:30 AA 6:30 pm Bridge 7 pm AA	8 Noon Bible Study 1:30 pm Hand & Foot Cards Afternoon Bridge	9
10 10 am Worship 11 am Social Time 11:15 am Deacons	11 1 pm Mission 1 pm Estate Planning Seminar	12 11:30 am Bridge 7 pm Al Anon 7 pm Scouts	13 10 am B & Grounds Noon Lenten Bible Study 2 pm Choir 2 pm Fellowship 4 pm Admin.	14 11 am Prayer Time 7 pm AA	15 Noon Bible Study 1:30 pm Hand & Foot Cards 3:30 Movie 4 pm AA Event	16 9 am—All Day AA Pockets of Enthusiasm
17 10 am Worship 11 am Social Time	18	19 11:30 am Bridge 6:30 Session 7 pm Al Anon 7 pm Scouts	20 Noon Lenten Bible Study 2 pm Choir	21 11 am Prayer Time 6:30 pm Bridge 7 pm AA	22 Noon Bible Study 1:30 pm Hand & Foot Cards	23
24 <i>Palm Sunday</i> 10 am Worship 11 am Social Time	25	26 11:30 am Bridge 7 pm Al Anon 7 pm Scouts	27 2 pm Choir	28 11 am Prayer Time 7 pm AA 7 pm Maundy Thursday service	29 Noon Good Friday service 1:30 pm Hand & Foot Cards	30
31 <i>Easter</i> 10 am Worship 11 am Potluck						



March Birthdays



6th Elroy Letcher
11th Merle Korizek
12th Mary Brainard
13th Tonna Strasko

21st Candace Coefield
21st Kelly Craigle
22nd Ward Stiles



March Anniversaries

1st Carol & Marvin Carpenter
15th Elroy & Lucille Letcher

17th Karen & Ron Witte

Join us for worship!

Sundays, 10 a.m.

or online @

fpc.helena.org

Hand & Foot Cards

Fridays, 1:30 p.m.

Never played? No problem!

The game is easy to learn
and willing teachers abound.

Please let us know

If you or a loved one is
hospitalized, please let us know
by calling the church office.

Also, if you need assistance
please call the church office

406-442-4775

‘Upper Room’ devotionals here

Copies of “The Upper Room” daily
devotional guide are available in the
wall rack next to the church office.

Regular and large-print booklets are
available, provided by the FPC
Education Committee.

FINANCIAL DEADLINES

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

Monday, March 11

Monday, March 25

First Presbyterian Church
535 North Ewing Street
Helena, MT 59601

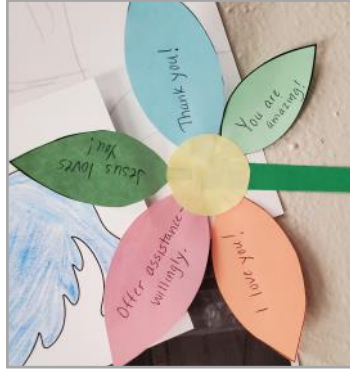
www.fpchelena.org

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



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

Label here