



First Presbyterian Church

NEWSLETTER

Vol. 2022, Issue 04 First Presbyterian Church, Helena, Montana April 2022

“An Easter Thought”

When I was in High School (sometime last century) the term “queer” was a derogatory statement. It was spoken of someone as an insult, a put-down. When said, it was an act of oppression. Technically the term related to someone’s sexual orientation - as being a homosexual - as being “different.”

But the term became routinely used as an insult to anyone who was “different” in any manner. If you weren’t “cool,” if you didn’t dress in the latest fashions, or if you were “too smart” you were a likely target for the “queer” label. This was a great put-down from the oppressor’s view point. For it not only pointed out the target’s characteristic of not fitting in, it also raised the additional specter that they just might be homosexual.

The homosexual community didn’t like being called “queer,” so they did something about it. They reclaimed the term. They began, proudly, self-identifying as queer. By assuming the term and claiming ownership to the term they destroyed the term’s effectiveness as an insult. In effect it made those trying to oppress others with the term “queer” look out of fashion and behind the times.

In the Roman culture (more than a few centuries before my high school years) the cross was both a symbol and an instrument of oppression. The clear warning was that if you misbehaved in the



**Rev.
Scott Wipperman**

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eyes of the Roman Empire you would spend the last few hours of your life hoisted up high so all could see your “disgrace.” Politely, it was a way of keeping the occupied territories as well as the citizens of Rome in-line. In truth it was part of the plan of oppressing those under their rule.

Jesus Christ was killed on a cross. As Richard Rohr wrote: “People like Jesus and Paul were not executed for saying, ‘Love one another.’ They were killed because their understanding of love meant more than being compassionate toward individuals, although it did include that. It also meant standing against the domination systems that ruled their world, and collaborating with the Spirit in the creation of a new way of life that stood in contrast to the normalcy of the wisdom of the world.”

Jesus reclaimed that symbol and instrument of oppression. With his resurrection Christ transformed the cross from a symbol of oppression to a symbol of freedom. Freedom from sin, freedom from death, freedom to truly live - without fear. This is one of the glorious moves and messages of Easter!

Peace,
Pastor Scott

Congregational Fellowship Committee

Your Congregational Fellowship Committee is back in full swing with a list of spring-time activities!

Sunday, April 3rd: After-service Social Time will resume with coffee and birthday cake.

Sunday, April 10th and continuing on subsequent Sundays: Social Time with treats contributed by Church members each week. Please see signup sheet on coffee table to volunteer your goodies.

Sunday, May 1st: Church potluck

Friday, May 20th: Bingo -- with food, fun and fellowship! 6pm

Look for details about Hand and Foot card games resuming soon.

Lost Soles (easy) hikes coming soon.

MINUTES OF THE SESSION

March 15, 2022

The regular meeting of the Session of the First Presbyterian Church of Helena was called to order as a hybrid meeting on Tuesday, March 15, 2022, at 6:30 PM by Reverend Scott Wipperman. Reverend Scott Wipperman opened with prayer and moderated the meeting.

For a meditation, Pastor Scott Wipperman read some excerpts from A Year with CS Lewis and asked for responses.

There was a quorum with the following Elders present in the church facility: Elders Sheryl Eriksen, Kathy Chambers, Rose Leavitt, Linda Bench, Karen Witte, Carol Stebbins, Vic Reiman, and John Coefield. Attending on Zoom were Barb Leland, Jeff Chaffee, Deacon Candace Coefield, and Clerk of Session John Gneckow. Also in attendance: Pastor Scott Wipperman. Elders Mary Wright and Mary Stiles were excused.

APPROVAL OF DOCKET: Pastor Scott added “placement of the Eagle Scout food box” to Old Business. A motion was made, seconded, and approved to accept the docket with additions.

APPROVAL OF MINUTES: A motion was made, seconded, and passed to approve the minutes of February 15, 2021, as presented.

PASTOR’S REPORT: Pastor Scott reported that we have had a homeless person spending time in the church and camping outside the Sanctuary and Main church entrance. Because of the trash left by the individual and the concern expressed by Spanglish and individuals wanting to enter the church, the Helena Police (HPD) were called. Pastor Scott learned that this individual had been previously barred from other properties. Pastor Scott was told by HPD to call if the homeless person returns. Pastor Scott also added a page for Mission activities to the website.

CLERK’S REPORT: The Clerk reported that FPC received thank you notes for recent donations from God’s Love, Glacier Camp, Mission Engagement and Support, and PDA. We also received a note card from the Staff of Omaha Presbyterian Seminary Foundation stating that they had recently prayed for our church and presbytery. The Clerk also reported receipt of an email from Ok-Kee Kim listing the days that he will be in Basin in March, April, and May prior to his retirement and move to California.

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COMMITTEE REPORTS:

Administration Committee: Elder Linda Bench reported, and a written report was submitted.

Pastor Scott opened the meeting with prayer. The Chair noted that we have a request for Anderson Trust funds for Missionary Andrew Christopherson's visit to FPC and talk about his mission in India. Funding was approved. A revised Treasurer job description was reviewed and approved.

Building and Grounds: Elder John Coefield reported, and a written report was submitted. John opened the meeting with prayer. FPC has received a bid for insurance for the building, vehicle, and workers compensation from Brotherhood Mutual to replace our Farmers Insurance coverage. Brotherhood also offered to add earthquake coverage for an additional premium amount. The premium for the base coverages plus the earthquake coverage would total less than the amount FPC is currently paying Farmers for building, vehicle, and workers compensation coverage. A motion was made, seconded, and passed to add the earthquake coverage to our policy with Brotherhood Mutual.

John discovered that we have had a cave-in along the foundation on the north side under the sound room window. The AC unit has partially fallen into hole and the falling debris took out the PVC vents to the Lovell Library furnace. A crew is working on repairs to the damage. John estimated that the cost will be at least \$5000.00. Money for the repairs is available in one of the restricted funds or the Vanguard Underdahl account.

Christian Education Committee: Pastor Scott reported for Elder Mary Stiles, and a written report was submitted. Pastor Scott opened the meeting with prayer. Pastor Scott will lead a study on the Sermon on the Mount. There is a signup sheet at FPC for those interested in the class. This information is needed to order books and to determine a convenient meeting day and time. The committee is also looking at offering programs with topics on Estate Planning, Trusts, Wills, Home Care, Hospice Care, Palliative Care, and Funeral Planning. These presentations will be open to the public in addition to FPC members.

Congregational Fellowship: Elder Linda Bench reported, and a written report was submitted. Pastor Scott opened the meeting with prayer. Starting April 3, after church fellowship will restart depending on COVID numbers remaining low. Hand and Foot will also resume in April. A church potluck is scheduled for May 1st following worship and Bingo Night is scheduled for May 20.

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Mission Committee: Elder Kathy Chambers reported, and a written report was submitted.

The meeting was opened with prayer. The feminine hygiene products drive was an immense success. Products were shared with the Placer Pantry at Good Samaritan, the Friendship Center, and the YWCA. The Matthew 25 project is for the month April where the focus is “When I was a Stranger”. Church members are asked to smile at a stranger at least once a day.

The FPC Vanguard Tithe was increased to \$1800 and sent to Presbyterian Disaster Assistance to help with the Ukrainian Humanitarian efforts.

ACTION ITEMS: The committee requests Session approval of Janet Potter as a member of the Mission Committee. Motion carried.

The committee requests approval to conduct a catalog giving program for Refugee Food Baskets to begin later this spring after the One Great Hour of Sharing and Pentecost donation time is completed. Motion carried.

Memorial Committee: No activity to report this month.

Nominating Committee: No activity to report this month.

Personnel Committee: Elder Carol Stebbins reported and a written report was submitted. The meeting was opened with prayer. The committee approved the updating of the Personnel Policy Manual. The committee then opened discussion of the “Housing Allowance” issue from the Congregational meeting of February 13, 2022. Beth McCaw, Presbytery Executive, and Pastor Scott provided information on the issue. Pastor Scott also provided information that he used to calculate his Housing Allowance for the 2022 Terms of Call. After a period of discussion and questions, the Committee voted to stay with the original Housing Allowance listed in the Terms of Call and approved at the Congregational meeting

Worship Committee: No Committee representative at Session although a written report was submitted. Dianna opened the meeting with prayer. Pastor Scott reported that he will be on vacation the week of April 24. Andrew Christofferson will talk about his mission in India on Sunday April 24.

The choir is back and able to sing without masks. Masks will be optional for the congregation.

FPC will have a Maundy Thursday service 7:00 pm April 14 with communion being served and a Good Friday service at 12:00 noon April 15. The choir will sing at both services.

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Deacon Report: Deacon Candace Coefield provided a report of Board activities for February. Communion was served at Touchmark and Edgewood. Meals were prepared and delivered to Mike and Marsha Davis to help them during Marsha’s convalescence from her fall.

New Hire Task Force: Elder Carol Stebbins reported and a written report was submitted. The Task Force met twice during February and once in March to plan for the replacement of Bruce Luke who recently resigned his position as Administration Assistant. A revised job description was developed and subsequently shown to a staff member at Job Service. The individual who reviewed the job description suggested re-naming the position to Office Coordinator and indicated that the pay should be set at \$14 to \$16 per hour. In addition to Job Service, whose services are free, two private employment agencies were contacted for candidates for the position.

Covid Task Force: Pastor Scott reported that the Task Force is continuing to monitor the situation in the Helena area and noted that there are three new Covid variants, but little is known about them at the present. Many of the Spanglish children came down with Covid. Stacie was exposed but tested negative. The church will relax the mask guidelines effective March 20 and after service fellowship with snacks and coffee will resume April 3.

Old Business: People from the Basin Church, Glacier Presbytery, and our church met to discuss the Basin church future as a “chapel” of FPC. Since no property is owned by the Basin church, liability issues appear nonexistent. Details still need to be worked out. A motion was made and seconded to pursue adoption of the Basin church as a chapel without expectation on the part of Basin for any financial involvement on the part of FPC Helena. Motion carried.

The Boy Scouts have decided that the best spot for the Eagle Project food box is the corner of Rodney and 10th Avenue. They will check on it regularly as part of their troop meetings. A motion was made and seconded to authorize the placement. Motion carried.

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New Business: June 15, 2022, will be the 150th year of FPC Helena's existence. Do we and to what extent do we want to celebrate? Since the date is on a Wednesday, do we want to hold any celebration on the Sunday before or after that date? John Coefield noted that the answers to these questions are important to him and Candace as June 14 is their 50th wedding anniversary and they are planning a celebration that will include the church members.

The Personnel Committee is preparing a letter to send to the members of the congregation about the resolution of the "Housing Allowance" issue. A motion was made and seconded to proceed with the letter. Motion carried.

There being no further business, it was moved and seconded at 8:15 PM to adjourn the meeting. The motion carried. John Coefield closed the meeting with prayer.

Next Regular Session Meeting: April 19, 2022, at 6:30 pm.

John Gneckow
Clerk of Session

As We Approach Holy Week ...

As we journey closer to Jerusalem with Christ you are encouraged to keep up the spiritual discipline of daily devotionals with "Lent in Plain Sight." Even if you have lapsed in daily readings, don't worry about necessarily catching up, just begin again with today's study. Our remaining *elements* in the study are (1) Shoes, (2) Oil, (3) Coats, Towels, and Thorns, and (4) Stones.

Holy Week opens with worship on Palm Sunday, April 10. It continues with a Maundy Thursday service at 7:00 pm on April 14, and a Good Friday service at noon on April 15. The week wraps up with the celebration of Easter on April 17!

Remember, April 17th is just the *beginning* of the Season of Easter!

First Presbyterian Church
535 N. Ewing
Helena, MT 59601
442-4775

Larry Linton Scholarship

Larry Linton provided a scholarship gift of \$10,000 to the church several years ago. This gift was invested and is earning interest. As sufficient interest becomes available, funds are to be awarded to students for attending or planning to attend post-secondary school.

Criteria:

Student must be a member or related to a member of First Presbyterian Church

Minimum grade point average of 2.0

Demonstrated financial need

Demonstrated good character

Application Process:

Submit a letter of interest to FPC with your name, address, email, and phone number. Indicate the current school you attend and the school that you plan to attend (must be accredited).

Attach a current transcript and estimated expenses for your year of college (tuition, room and board, books and supplies).

Attach a letter of recommendation from an individual who can address knowledge of your academic ability and character.

Address the following essay questions.

1. What are your current academic goals?
2. What are your career goals once you have completed your degree?
3. What is your involvement with the First Presbyterian Church?
4. This scholarship is for students with financial need. Please describe your financial situation and how the scholarship can help you meet your academic goals.

Mail the application to the attention of the Education Committee at First Presbyterian Church, 535 N. Ewing St., Helena, MT 59601.

Scholarships are to be utilized for tuition and when awarded will be addressed to the school that the student will attend.

Availability of funds will be advertised through the church's website and newsletter. A committee representing education, mission and administration will review and recommend successful applicants.

Seeley Family Memorial Scholarship

Eve and Nelson Seeley, members of the Helena First Presbyterian Church, created an endowment at the Montana Community Foundation in 2015 called the Seeley Family Memorial Scholarship. This endowment will provide annual scholarship awards in perpetuity to benefit members of the church who are attending or planning to attend post-secondary school.

Scholarship Criteria:

- Student must be a member or relative of a member of the Helena First Presbyterian Church
- Graduate from a Helena high school
- Minimum grade point average of 2.0
- Demonstrated financial need.
- Demonstrated good character

Students may apply online for the scholarship through the Montana Community Foundation website at www.mtcf.org. Students create an account to start the process. For further information or assistance with the application process, please call or email Jenny Lou Stark, Scholarship Manager, at the Montana Community Foundation (jstark@mtcf.org or 441-4946).

The application deadline this year is March 15, 2022. The recipient(s) of the scholarship(s) will be chosen, among eligible applicants, by a scholarship committee established at the Helena First Presbyterian Church.

The Brick!!

A young and successful executive was traveling down a neighborhood street, going a bit too fast in his new Jaguar. He was watching for kids darting out from between parked cars and slowed down when he thought he saw something. As his car passed, no children appeared. Instead, a brick smashed into the Jag's side door! He slammed on the brakes and backed the Jag back to the spot where the brick had been thrown.

The angry driver then jumped out of the car, grabbed the nearest kid and pushed him up against a parked car shouting, 'What was that all about and

what the heck a new car and going to cost a you do it?' The ogetic. 'Please, sorry but I didn't do,' He pleaded.



who are you? Just are you doing? That's that brick you threw is lot of money. Why did young boy was apol-mister...please, I'm know what else to 'I threw the brick be-

cause no one else would stop.'

With tears dripping down his face and off his chin, the youth pointed to a spot just around a parked car. 'It's my brother,' he said, 'He rolled off the curb and fell out of his wheelchair and I can't lift him up.' Now sobbing, the boy asked the stunned executive, 'Would you please help me get him back into his wheelchair? He's hurt and he's too heavy for me.'

Moved beyond words, the driver tried to swallow the rapidly swelling lump in his throat. He hurriedly lifted the handicapped boy back into the wheelchair, then took out a linen handkerchief and dabbed at the fresh scrapes and cuts. A quick look told him everything was going to be okay. 'Thank you and may God bless you,' the grateful child told the stranger. Too shook up for words, the man simply watched the boy push his wheelchair-bound brother down the sidewalk toward their home.

It was a long, slow walk back to the Jaguar. The damage was very noticeable, but the driver never bothered to repair the dented side door. He kept the dent there to remind him of this message: 'Don't go through life so fast that someone has to throw a brick at you to get your attention!' God whispers in our souls and speaks to our hearts. Sometimes when we don't have time to listen, He has to throw a brick at us. It's our choice to listen or not.

APRIL 24TH – Save the Date

SAVE THE DATE! On April 24th, FPCH will have a special guest in the pulpit: Andrew Christofferson.

I had the unexpected pleasure of meeting Andrew in August when I visited my family in Chinook and attended church services with them on Sunday morning. During the service, Andrew gave a very interesting and enlightening account of his missionary experience in Asia. I introduced myself afterwards and asked him if he would speak at FPCH. He agreed to do so.

Andrew, his wife and children have lived and worked in India since 2015. Their primary work has been focused on “Unreached People Groups”. Unreached people groups are classified as a people group that is less than 2% Christian and has no way of hearing the gospel unless someone goes to them.

The Kristofferson's have worked through BAM- Business As Mission. BAM participants help start small businesses such as cafes, gyms, and sports clubs, getting into peoples' lives in ordinary ways. Often they say they want to “build bridges of relationship that can hold the weight of the gospel.” Many times a Hindu or Muslim would never go to a church service, but will come for a workout, a coffee, or be a part of a sports club. This bridges the gap into the lives of people whom otherwise they would have no reason to be in contact with.

I think you will find Andrew very engaging and you will readily see why he is so successful in his missionary work. Please plan to attend the service on April 24th to meet Andrew.

The **Deacons' Benevolence Fund** has been used several times during the pandemic. Thanks to the congregation's generous gifts, we have been able to fulfill every request. We want to remind everyone that this fund is for you. If you need help to pay household or medical bills, buy groceries, medicine or gas, we are here, ready to help. Just contact Pastor Scott at the church office, and he will get the ball rolling. This is completely confidential; not even the deacons know who our recipients are. We are so happy to help! God bless!



Submission Deadlines for the Bulletin and Newsletter



To allow for the production and review of **worship bulletins** and the **monthly newsletters** we want to reiterate some submission deadlines for items to be included in those. It is always appreciated if material can be received earlier than these deadlines, but these deadlines need to be met for inclusion in a particular issue.

The deadline for worship bulletins is the most straight forward deadline: items for inclusion need to be into Bruce by Tuesday at 10:00 am for inclusion in Sunday's bulletin, preferably in an electronic form. Given that the last day of the month moves, submissions for a newsletter needs to be made by 10:00 am on the sixth business day before the end of the month.

For instance, if the 30th or 31st is the last day of the month and it falls on a Tuesday, then six business days before the 30th/31st would be Monday the 22nd of the month.

For the **April Mustard Seed**, submissions need to be in by **10:00 am on Friday, April 22nd**. Church holidays may require that submissions be made even earlier for both bulletins and newsletters.

Willing Workers will meet each Wednesday at 9am.

The group continues to plan for and organize future Craft Fairs and events. We invite everyone interested to attend the weekly gatherings. We need not only your ideas, but your crafts and your help to ensure the success of this event. We hope to put together many gift baskets containing hand crafted items, so we'd like your assistance with this new addition to the Craft Fair. Come one and all; we welcome your participation.

FOOD SHARE: The Mission Committee is pleased to announce that we will resume collecting food for Helena Food Share. Our Boy Scout troop will collect and deliver donations as an ongoing service project. Thanks for your help.



DEADLINE
The deadline for
April's
newsletter is
Friday
April 22nd.

UPCOMING FINANCIAL **DEADLINES**

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

Tuesday, April 12, 2022
Wednesday, April 27, 2022
Friday, ??, 2022

APRIL ANNIVERSARIES

5th - Stephen & Judy Bayless

26th Matthew & Diane Richards

APRIL BIRTHDAYS

14th- Marsha Davis

16th- Dianna Goodman

16th- Jaclyn Haven

17th- Diane Richards

17th- Sally Klein

20th- Nicole Carpenter

24th- Carolyn Anderson

28th- Madisyn Gard

DEACONS ON CALL

BJ Burns 492-5833

APRIL COMMUNION SETUP

Sunday April 3rd - Merle Korizek

Thursday April 14th - BJ Burns

April - Lay Liturgists

April 3 John Coefield

April 10 Deb Whitcomb

April 17 Art Bumgardner

April 24 Dianna Goodman

MATTHEW 25 Activity for April

I was a stranger and you invited me in. v 35

Inviting strangers in during Covid may not be a prudent thing to do and therefore, the Mission Committee would like to give you an alternative way to minister to "strangers". We challenge you to make it your daily goal to smile at one person (or more!): a stranger at the store, someone walking the neighborhood, someone delivering a package, you get the idea. We will provide you with a calendar to help you be accountable. Put a smiley face on each day you gave away a smile. And if you aren't out and about, smile at many people when you are and count them for the days you stay home. Please see this as a joy, not a burden, a way to share Christ's love with others.

"Every time you smile at someone, it is an action of love, a gift to that person, a beautiful thing". Mother Teresa

MANY MISSION MINUTES!

MATTHEW 25: PERIOD POVERTY was a success in many ways. Receiving agencies were most grateful for product donations. In addition, there have been many positive and appreciative comments within the Helena community, that this topic was valued and addressed.

MATTHEW 25: IN PRISON has been embraced as well and is progressing. We are collecting activity books and donations for recreational balls for the Pine Hills School.

MATTHEW 25: STRANGER challenges us to reach outside and share a smile and/or a kind word with a stranger. (see related article elsewhere in the Mustard Seed)

ONE GREAT HOUR OF SHARING: This is the first of the Four Special Offerings of the Presbyterian denomination. Our gifts will go toward providing relief from disasters, food and support for oppressed peoples.

VANGUARD TITHE: Many places were considered before allocating these funds. After much thought and prayer, it was determined by the Mission Committee to round up the money given to \$1800 and send the entire amount to the Presbyterian Disaster Assistance fund, to be used for relief in Ukraine.

FOOD SHARE: We continue to collect food for hunger assistance.

211: a hotline to call if you encounter someone who is in need of housing.

SOCIAL JUSTICE: our denomination suggests that we, as a church and as individuals, examine our financial investments and consider their impact or lack of, regarding social justice. Are we using our resources to further Christ's commandments in our world? Something to think about.

As you can see, mission at First Presbyterian, Helena, is ongoing and involving in many different areas. We welcome input from the congregation, to share projects you may be passionate about and wish us to pursue. **One snowflake doesn't have much impact but many snowflakes all together can have a huge impact.** True for us as well.

Welcome Our New Members!

Jim and Mary Brainard have been attending our church for approximately five years. Mary joined the choir to share her musical talent. They both decided it was time to join First Presbyterian Church. The Brainards moved to Montana in 1966 and then spent time in North Dakota and Arizona, but needed to get back to Montana because of missing their children. They have six adult children, 20 grandchildren and 25 great grandchildren! WoW! Jim taught school in Montana and North Dakota for a number of years. Science was his specialty. For a hobby he does wood carving. Mary reads a lot, loves jigsaw puzzles and baking. Of course she manages to stay busy with children both young and old.

Vic Reiman grew up in Great Falls. He received a bachelor's degree in anthropology from the University of Montana and lived 25 years in Missoula before coming to Helena with his wife Joan in 1996. Vic worked for the Montana Historical Society, retiring in 2019, although he still volunteers. He is currently putting together a firearms exhibit for the new MHS building. His hobbies include music, history, and hiking in the mountains with his wife Joan and good dog Mojo. Vic has been regularly attending First Presbyterian Church for a little more than three years and decided to join. Vic has been a choir member for two years.

Leo and Janet Potter moved to Helena in the summer of 2021 after Janet retired from serving as Pastor of Community Pres. Church in St Maries, ID. Prior to living in St Maries, they lived in Rockford IL where they raised their three children. Leo has 40 years' experience in accounting. He serves as the Glacier Presbytery Treasurer, Treasurer of First Presbyterian Church and Treasurer of FPC's corporation. Leo's favorite hobby is fly-fishing. Janet is a "second career" pastor. Janet loves to read, watch movies and hopes to become an angler like Leo. Together they enjoy hiking, traveling and spending time with family. Leo joined First Presbyterian Church. Janet looks forward to being part of the congregation even though she will not be a member. Pastors in the PC(USA) are members of the Presbytery where their work is situated.

First Presbyterian Church
535 North Ewing Street
Helena, MT 59601

www.fpchelena.org

Weekly Sermon on HCTV Cable Channel 189
Wednesdays at 6 pm & Saturdays at 9 AM

OFFICE HOURS

Monday - Thursday

9:00 a.m. - 2:00 p.m.

Fridays - 9:00 am - 12 Noon

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