

First Presbyterian Church

# The Mustard Seed

## NEWSLETTER



Vol. 2025 Issue 3 First Presbyterian Church, Helena, MT

March 2025



### ***Point in Time Dinner***

FPC volunteers prepared and served dinner at God's Love Thursday during the Annual Point in Time Survey.

## **Update on Building Use**

Hello Everyone!

I wanted to fill you in on the status of our on-going commitment to be good stewards of the "new building" God has provided.

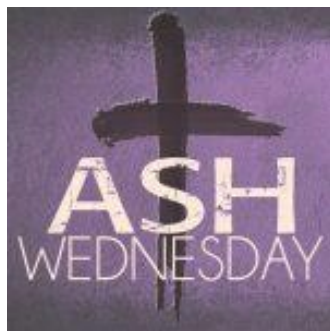
In December, we were in discussion with a daycare provider but that lease did not happen (through no fault of ours, just life).

Feb. 17, the Building Oversight Committee (aka Ad-Hoc) told Mark Runde, realtor with Green and Green, to publicize the available space.

Click on [this link](#), then scroll down to the photo of the east entrance. When you click on the photo, it will open up the rest of the photos.

At this time, the goal is to lease the entire

*(Continued on page 2)*



### **Ash Wednesday service March 5**

You are invited to the Ash Wednesday service March 5 at noon.

Coffee, cinnamon rolls, and cookies will be served after the service.

### **Ash Wednesday reflections**

*by Dianna Goodman*

Greetings brothers and sisters in Christ,

Ash Wednesday is March 5. Nothing can surpass the love of Jesus that will culminate on the cross. Ash Wednesday marks the onset of Lent which is

*(Continued on page 2)*

space (4 classrooms and the office) to one entity. That may change in the future.

Please pray for the right group to come to be in this space. We are trusting God to provide for us and are grateful for your prayers.

If you have questions, the committee members are: Linda Bench, moderator, John Coefield, Leo Potter, John Warren and Deb Whitcomb (and I'm ex-officio).

Blessings,  
Janet

## **Reflections**

*(continued from page 1)*

the 40-day period of fasting, abstinence, and repentance. Ashes are a sign of sorrow and repentance going back to ancient Hebrew customs. Listed below are a few examples in Scripture describing the spreading of ashes:

- Genesis 3:19
- Job 42:3-6
- Jeremiah 6:26
- Daniel 9:3
- Matthew 11:21

In addition to our Scripture readings, there will be a Lenten devotional available to all to help us on our journey through Lent.

We invite you all to an Ash Wednesday Service March 5, 12:00 noon. This will be a more contemplative service preparing us for Lent. As we come forward, we will receive the imposition of ashes upon the forehead in the sign of the cross. The ashes are from last year's palm branches that have been burned, as is our custom. The words spoken to each person comes to us from the book of Genesis: "You have come from dust, and to dust you shall return."

We encourage all to attend and be sure to invite a friend.

In Him,  
Dianna Goodman

Dear All,

The season of Lent begins with Ash Wednesday on March 5, 2025. Please plan to attend the service at noon as a way to begin preparing for dying with Jesus on the cross and then to Celebrate the Resurrection on April 20, 2025.



There are 6 weeks between March 5 and April 20. How will you continue in preparation for both participating in Christ's death and in Christ's resurrection?

Traditional Lent practices of prayer, spiritual practices, study and fast/giving are ways which help guide us through this season.

Here are some options to assist you!

1. Attend "Lent: Connecting to God" to explore different methods for prayer. We will meet Thursdays starting March 6, at 11 a.m.
2. Pick up the Lent devotional "There in God's Garden" which follows along with the scriptures in Luke. (or find another online option)
3. Attend worship! Commit to coming to worship for six weeks straight.
4. Choose to fast by giving as God instructs in Is. 58:6-7:

"No, this is the kind of fasting I want: Free those who are wrongly imprisoned; lighten the burden of those who work for you. Let the oppressed go free, and remove the chains that bind people. Share your food with the hungry, and give shelter to the homeless. Give clothes to those who need them, and do not hide from relatives who need your help."

As we spend the month of March in Lent, please join me in prayer for God to provide three significant needs of this congregation. Let us continue to pray for the Synergos program and our future pastoral resident, pray for the right group to lease the unused space in the "new building," and pray for God to build up this congregation.

"In life and death, we belong to God!"

Blessings,  
Pastor Janet, Interim Pastor



## Birthday party!

Several of us from choir gathered to celebrate Jane's birthday Feb. 22 at the Frozen Moose. Joy brought the cake, plates and napkins.

While we were there, two young dads and their kids were enjoying yogurt and they wanted to sing to Jane too! So we all sang to her. Lovely moment of fellowship and fun.

(Photo by Alysia Ryan)

## Fifth Sunday Potluck returns March 30

The Friendship Committee is starting the Fifth Sunday Potlucks again.

The next one will be Sunday, March 30, after the church service. Bring a favorite dish to share.

Looking forward to seeing you!



## Friendship Committee lunch March 12

This month, the Friendship Committee will be going out to lunch for its meeting. Plan to gather at 11:30 a.m.

Visit with Sheryl Eriksen for details.

## Lay Liturgist training will be Sunday, March 23

A training session for those who want to serve as lay liturgists will be held Sunday, March 23, after the service.

Those currently serving as lay liturgists are also welcome to attend.

For details, visit with Joy Edgar by phone: 406-202-2200, email: [joyedgar66@gmail.com](mailto:joyedgar66@gmail.com), or in person.

# Mission & Outreach News

## Financial giving opportunities

March 5 – April 20 — One Great Hour of Sharing Offering period

## Nonfinancial giving opportunities

March 2 — Cuddle Buddy cut-outs should be returned

March 13 at 1pm — Cuddle Buddy stuffing party. Come join us.

March (date tba) — Crafts, Cookies, & Conversation at Intermoun-

**God's Love Offering** — On February 16 we held a special offering for God's Love to assist with a multitude of repairs required in their old building. We collected over \$2300! Offerings may still be given. Thank you for your generosity.



**Hope & Healing**



**Crafts, Cookies, & Conversation** — Intermountain has invited our congregation to join them in upcoming craft projects for their residents. In March they will put together weaving kits for children to make while they meet with a therapist. Please watch for an email with the date and time. (If you are not on the email list, please call the office to sign up.)

**Cuddle Buddies** — Cuddle Buddies packets of fabric, a pattern, and some instructions were handed out February 23 and should be returned Sunday March 2. We will meet to stuff them on March 13 at 1pm.





**Merle, Karen and BJ prepare food for the Point-in-Time Dinner Jan. 30.**

## *Thank you*

Dear Education Committee,

I, Carver Van Aken, was a recipient of The First Presbyterian Church Linton Scholarship for 2024-2025. I am currently a junior pursuing a degree in engineering. Fall of 2024 Semester, I was recognized for earning the distinction of "Dean's List" for a 3.91 GPA.

I wanted to thank you for your support in assisting me with my education. I am truly grateful for the scholarship support. This has allowed me to be able to attend the university and focus on my studies.

Sincerely,  
Carver Van Aken

Dear Education Committee,

I, Kendall Van Aken, was a recipient of The First Presbyterian Church Linton Scholarship for 2024-2025. Thank you so much for the generous support from The First Presbyterian Church Linton Scholarship. Your assistance was invaluable to my education, allowing me to pursue my pre-med degree and business minor with focus and dedication. Achieving a 3.87 GPA and being recognized on the Dean's List is a testament to the impact your scholarship has made on my academic journey. I am truly grateful for your belief in my potential.

Sincerely,  
Kendall Van Aken



# MINUTES OF THE SESSION

## First Presbyterian Church (PCUSA)

### February 18, 2025

The worship service and regular meeting of the Session of the First Presbyterian Church of Helena were called to order on Tuesday, February 18, 2025, at 6:33 PM by Pastor Janet Potter, Interim Pastor

Pastor Janet opened the meeting with prayer followed by worship. Pastor Janet asked, “Where have you seen God in your life in the last 24 hours?” After several people responded, two people read Scripture from Luke 6:20-28. After a reading of the Scripture followed by a time of reflection, Pastor Janet asked: 1) What caught your imagination? 2) How might the Spirit be encouraging us? After discussion by Session members, conclusion of worship, and communion, Pastor Janet opened and moderated the business meeting.

There was a quorum with the following Elders present: Arlyn “Butch” Plowman, Barb Leland, Patti Borsberry, and John Bryan. Elders present on Zoom: Karen Witte, Jim Meyer, and Jeff Chaffee. Clerk of Session John Gneckow and Deacon Ward Stiles were also in attendance. Elder Sheryl Eriksen was excused. Guest: John Warren.

A motion was made, seconded, and passed to give John Warren voice .

**APPROVAL OF DOCKET:** Pastor Janet added discussing immediate ordination and installation of John Warren as he is filling the remainder of Linda Bench’s term on Session. A second addition to the docket was the status with leasing of church property. A motion was made, seconded, and passed to accept the docket as amended.

**APPROVAL OF MINUTES:** A motion was made, seconded, and passed to approve the minutes of January 21, 2025, regular Session meeting.

#### CLERK’S REPORT:

	Active Membership as of December 31, 2024	90	
	Active Membership as of January 31, 2025	90	

The Clerk read thank you letters from Kendall Van Aken and Carver Van Aken, both of whom were given Linton Scholarships to assist them in pursuit of their college degrees.

The Clerk reported having filed the required annual report with the Montana Secretary of State’s office.

**INTERIM PASTOR’S REPORT:** Pastor Janet expressed her thanks to the Session for the much-needed break. She and husband Leo spent time

vacationing and visiting family in Colorado and Oregon.

Moving forward with Lent and Easter, Dianna Goodman will lead the March 5 Ash Wednesday service. Pastor is also planning a Lenten class on prayer—time to be determined.

She is also preparing the materials for training the newly elected Elders and Deacons.

Communion	Total	Breakout
January	93	45 in person, 40 online, 8 at home

**COMMITTEE REPORTS:**

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

Treasurer Leo Potter provided financial reports. Net operating revenue for January 2025 was \$4,792. Giving for the month was \$17,072. Expenses were decreased for January secondary to the interim pastor’s leave of absence.

Vanguard accounts increased in value approximately \$6,200.

PILP funds remain after paying off of the loan. Church needs were discussed as was the original intent of the PILP loan.

**ACTION ITEM: Recommend renaming the PILP Loan funds as the Building Reserve Fund. Motion passed.**

John Warren reviewed the Synergos program. There is a concern about the amount allowed for the housing expense. The concern is that the formula does not provide an adequate housing expense for the Helena area. This is being researched further and will be discussed at the next meeting.

A letter was received from an insurance company in Billings that specializes in church insurance. Butch will investigate this further.

Noting that the committee is made up of four men, an appeal is being made for some women to join the committee.

The next Administration meeting: March 12 at 4:00 PM.

**Building and Grounds:** Co-Chair Butch Plowman reported. A written report was submitted to Session.

The city has notified FPC that there has been a complaint filed about the sidewalks on Ewing Street and Tenth Avenue. FPC applied for and was accepted for the city sidewalk replacement program in the amount of \$10,000 for 10 years with no interest. The repayments would be included in the yearly property taxes/fees. The city has since revised the estimated costs upwards to around \$50,000. The city has been notified that FPC is



working on fixing the sidewalks.

B&G is having a contractor look at and bid on the sidewalk work before proceeding with determining the payment methodology.

The parking lot needs its periodic patch and seal work. Yellowstone Pavement Solutions will be visiting FPC this spring to offer ideas and costs.

Mark and Vic will consult with the Fire Marshall regarding standards governing the exhaust hood and fire suppression system in the kitchen.

Girls Thrive asked permission to use the parking lot for a ten-year anniversary celebration in August. Permission granted.

Next meeting: March 12 at 10:00 AM.

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

FPC will have a fifth Sunday potluck March 30 after the church service.

Worship committee will host the coffee and cookies after the Ash Wednesday service March 5<sup>th</sup>.

March meeting: Lunch out meeting at 11:30

**Memorial Committee:** Did not meet.

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

The committee has received several suggestions for use of Mission Tithe funds that were approved at the Congregational meeting of February 16.

The Point-In-Time Dinner only served half as many meals this year compared to last year. Overall, the numbers of meals served were down everywhere.

The committee agreed to make 100 new cuddle buddies beginning in February.

The next meeting: March 10, at 1:00PM.

**Nominating Committee:** No updates this month.

**Personnel Committee:** Chair Jeff Chaffee reported that the committee did not meet.

**Property Oversight Committee:** Chad Adams has reviewed the lease. In the future if a for-profit entity leases space, they will pay their own taxes. If a nonprofit leases space, they will need to pursue their own tax exemption.

**Worship Committee:** Patti Borsberry reported. A written report was submitted to Session.

The Lenten season will begin on March 5<sup>th</sup> Ash Wednesday. Dianna will once again arrange for palm fronds and ashes that will be used at the Ash Wednesday service. She will also be handling the service. The Deacons will set up the Communion.

Dianna will also handle the Maundy Thursday service which will be held at 7:00 pm and will include Communion.

Dianna will be in the pulpit for Good Friday services. The service is at noon.

Les is purchasing new Easter music.

Liturgist training/refresher course is planned for March 23rd. Contact Joy Edgar if you would like to participate.

Worship will take over the Kids' Packets. "Little Kids' Bibles" will be added to the packets and the kids will be able to take them home.

The next Worship committee meeting: March 11 at 10:00 AM.

**Deacon Report:** A written report was submitted to Session.

Moderator BJ Burns opened the meeting with prayer. Deacon Carole Massman shared a devotional from Jesus Calling.

During January, communion was served to six people at Touchmark, two at Son Heaven, and none at home. No one was visited in the hospital. Two meals were supplied to homebound individuals.

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

### **Old Business:**

John Warren was elected as an Elder to replace Linda Bench at the February 16 Congregation Meeting. John has indicated his willingness to start serving now. March 2 has been selected as the ordination and installation date. A motion was made, seconded, and passed.

### **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 at 7:38 PM.

The next Regular Session Meeting: March 18 at 6:30 PM.

John Gneckow

Clerk of Session

## FINANCIAL DEADLINES

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

**March 10**

**March 24**

## *Lent Devotional*



Pick up a copy of "There in God's Garden," available at the church, or download a digital copy at:

<https://www.luthersem.edu/godpause/lenten-devotional/>



*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:

	<b>Jan. 2025</b>	<b>YTD</b>
<b>Income</b>	<b>\$23,810</b>	<b>\$23,810</b>
<b>Expenses</b>	<b><u>\$19,019</u></b>	<b><u>\$19,019</u></b>
	<b>\$4,792</b>	<b>\$4,792</b>

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

## Glacier Camp offering online Lenten study

Glacier Camp is offering an online Lenten Bible Study, beginning

Sunday, March 9, at 5 p.m.

The book of Galatians will be the theme of the four-week study.

Email camp director Rev. Tim Lanham: [timothy@glaciercamp.org](mailto:timothy@glaciercamp.org) to sign up or for more information.



## Trivia Question

Which Gospel writer was a doctor ?

*(Answer on page 11)*

# March 2025

Sun	Mon	Tue	Wed	Thu	Fri	Sa
						1
2 10 am Worship w/Communion 11 am Social Time	3 2 pm Sarah Circle 5 pm Xpress Singers	4 11:30 am Bridge 7 pm Al Anon 7 pm Scouts	5 Ash Wednesday 2 pm Choir	6 10 am Rebekah Circle 11 am Lent study 6:30 pm Chat Bridge 7 pm AA	7 1:30 pm Hand & Foot Cards 5:30 pm District AA	8
9 10 am Worship 11 am Social Time 11:15 Deacons	10 1 pm Mission 5 pm Xpress Singers	11 10 am Worship 11:30 am Bridge 7 pm Al Anon 7 pm Scouts	12 10 am Building & Grounds 11:30 am Friendship 2 pm Choir 4 pm Admin	13 11 am Lent study 6:30 pm Chat Bridge 7 pm AA	14 1:30 pm Hand & Foot Cards 4 pm Pockets of Enthusiasm through Saturday	15
16 10 am Worship 11 am Social Time	17 5 pm Xpress Singers	18 11:30 am Bridge 6:30 pm Session 7 pm Al Anon 7 pm Scouts	19 2 pm Choir	20 11 am Lent study 7 pm AA	21 1:30 pm Hand & Foot Cards	22
23 10 am Worship 11 am Social Time 11 am Lay Liturgist train- ing	24 5 pm Xpress Singers	25 11:30 am Bridge 6:30 pm Session 7 pm Al Anon 7 pm Scouts	26 10:30 am PW Coordinating Team 2 pm Choir	27 No Lent Study today 7 pm AA	28 1:30 pm Hand & Foot Cards	29
30 10 am Worship 11 am <i>Fifth Sunday Potluck</i>	31 5 pm Xpress Singers					

## March Birthdays

11th Merle Korizek  
12th Mary Brainard  
13th Tonna Strasko  
21st Candace Coefield

21st Austin Clausen  
21st Stephen Steffens  
21st Kelly Craigle  
22nd Ward Stiles



## March Anniversaries

1st Marvin & Carol Carpenter

17th Karen & Ron Witte

### Friday Bible Study

is on break for a few weeks.  
Watch for its return in April!

### Invite a friend!

FPC brochures  
are in the fellowship room  
*Take some to share with  
your friends and neighbors!*

### Hand & Foot Cards

**Fridays, 1:30 p.m.**  
Never played? No problem!  
The game is easy to learn  
and willing teachers abound.

Articles for the April  
“Mustard Seed” are due  
Friday, March 21.

**Trivia Answer:** Luke

### FPC Elders

**Sheryl Eriksen**  
(Fellowship chair)

**Jim Meyer**  
(Administration chair)

**Butch Plowman**  
(Building & Grounds chair)

**Karen Witte**  
(Mission chair)

**Patti Borsberry**  
(Worship co-chair)

**Jeff Chaffee**  
(Personnel chair)

**Barb Leland**  
(Worship co-chair)

**John Bryan**

**John Gneckow**, Clerk of Session

### FPC Deacons

Vicky Bryan  
Merle Korizek  
Carole Massman  
Darlene McNay

BJ Burns (Moderator)  
Kathy Chambers  
Jill Cook

Bonnie Anderson  
Ward Stiles (Vice-mod.)

**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**



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

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

**406-442-4775**

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

Stamp  
here

Label here