



First Presbyterian Church

The Mustard Seed

NEWSLETTER

Vol. 2021, Issue 10 First Presbyterian Church, Helena, Montana October 2021

“Time - and Space ”

Samuel Clements profoundly states “It ain’t what you don’t know that gets you into trouble. It’s what you know for sure that just ain’t so.” And one such surety is time. We think we understand time; we’ve got it down to milliseconds after all. If you are reading this you have most likely been around for decades and seen how time works. Granted, we perceive time as slowing down or speeding upon occasions, but we are able to rationalize those episodes with the overall persistent flow of time.



**Rev.
Scott Wipperman**

And then we come along Samuel Clements and his comments about what we know for sure that “just ain’t so.” Enter Albert Einstein: “The distinction between the past, present and future is only a stubbornly persistent illusion.” Yes, this man who put more than an hour or two thinking about the theory of relativity as well as what happens to time as one approaches the speed of light, acknowledges the thin grasp that he - and particularly we - have on the illusion of time. And those that followed Einstein then describe quarks that appear to jump in and out of existence, as if they are leaving this place and entering an alternate realm and then coming back again. Time and space - may all be illusions!

We step into this paradox, our messy understanding of time and space, this seeming disruption of physics, at least annually in October. NO, this have nothing to do with Halloween, it is World Communion Sunday, which is always the first Sunday of October.

With World Communion Sunday we more formally acknowledge that through the power of the Holy Spirit as we are engaging in the practice of communion, as we are joined together at Christ’s table, it is with the saints (Reformed definition: all believers) of all time and space. Yes, this is not just some tacit agreement with some-

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thing we don't really believe, this happens! We are at the table with all who have taken communion before us. And with all those who have yet to do so. And not just those saints of FPC here in Helena, but saints that have communed with Christ anywhere on this planet (and maybe even some in orbit).

God and time have an interesting relationship, for we consider God both in and out of time. God is present with us wherever and whenever we are - in that sense God is in time. But God is beyond time. If it helps, think of it as the fact that God created time. God existed before time; God will exist after time no longer does. God is present always to every moment of time. In this aspect there is no past, present, or future to God. Because God is outside of time, we can pray today for something that happened yesterday, and God will hear the prayer "before".

And due to this nature of God, the Holy Spirit can also operate within and outside time, as the Spirit does in brining us into the presence of Christ at the table. This doesn't just happen on World Communion Sunday, we are possibly simply more cognizant of this fact on that occasion due to the labeling of "World" and the presence of bread with differing national origins. On this October 3rd let us set aside our skepticism, and truly be open to the presence of saints from all time and space at the table with us.

Peace,
Pastor Scott

NOTES FROM SESSION SEPTEMBER 21, 2021

The regular meeting of the Session of the First Presbyterian Church of Helena was called to order on Tuesday, September 21, 2021, at 6:45 PM in hybrid (in person and zoom) format. Reverend Scott Wipperman opened with prayer and moderated the meeting.

Presbytery Leader Reverend Doctor Beth McCaw was in attendance and presented the devotional drawing on her time as a missionary in Namibia. She also presented an outline of a Mission idea that will be presented at the Fall Presbytery meeting in October. FPC Commissioner to Presbytery John Coefield will gather information on the proposed Mission to present to Session.

There was a quorum with the following Elders present: Linda Bench (zoom), Kathy Chambers, John Coefield, Sheryl Eriksen (zoom), Rose Leavitt, Barb Leland, Carol Stebbins (zoom), Karen Witte (zoom), Mary Stiles and Mary Wright (zoom).

Also, in attendance: Pastor Scott Wipperman, Clerk of Session John Gneckow (zoom), and Deacon Candace Coefield (zoom). Mary Craigle was excused.

APPROVAL OF DOCKET: It was moved, seconded, and passed to approve the docket as presented.

APPROVAL OF MINUTES: A motion was made, seconded, and passed to approve the minutes of the August 17, 2021, regular Session Meeting. A motion was made, seconded, and passed to approve the minutes of the August 18, 2021, Called Session meeting with one correction—changing Cathy Chambers to Kathy Chambers.

PASTOR'S REPORT: Pastor Scott reported that FPC monthly expenses continue higher than income. August expenses included the quarterly insurance payment. Our YTD shortfall is \$30,879 compared to \$18,922 in 2020.

We continue to exercise caution and take precautions with Covid. Two churches in Glacier Presbytery have reported Covid exposures—one having to quarantine the congregation after a member exposed them at a Sunday service. The Pastor of another church contracted Covid along with 4 or 5 members.

CLERK'S REPORT: The clerk read a letter from Presbyterian Office of Mission Engagement and Support thanking FPC for the money from the Pentecost Offering. Pastor Scott noted that our church was commended for our contribution for Kitchen Kits and that Kathy Chambers was interviewed for the Giving Catalog office.

COMMITTEE REPORTS:

Administration Committee: Elder Mary Wright reported, and a written report was submitted.

After review and discussion of the 2022 proposed budget, the Committee approved a revised proposed budget of \$24,800, a reduction of \$3,000.

Building and Grounds: Elder John Coefield reported, and a written report was submitted. The committee has accepted the bid from NICO (now Mountain Alarm) to install security cameras inside and outside of the building. The cost is approximately \$8000 plus \$250/year monitoring fee. Mountain Alarm will also take over our fire alarm service. All Seasons has installed a new furnace for Richardson Hall and upgraded some downstairs thermostats. The Boy Scouts are using Richardson Hall which will allow them to effectively social distance.

Christian Education Committee: Elder Mary Stiles reported and a written report was submitted. Ashley reported that no teens attended the Teen Friday Night Fellowship on September 10, 2021. The lack of teens

appears to be from Friday night sports. She will check school sport schedules for needed adjustments to the Teen Night. Ashely continues to reach out through Social Media and has some success. John Coefield's Bible Study Group will be on Fridays starting October 8, 2021, at noon in the church. The Pumpkin Patch will run October 1 through October 31.

Congregational Fellowship: Elder Linda Bench reported, and a written report was submitted. The committee continues to sponsor activities for church members. These include Walking Centennial Park on Tuesdays at 10:00 AM, and a Lost Soles Hike October 17 at 2:00 PM. BINGO may return in November and the committee is looking at possibly sponsoring a community Thanksgiving dinner, the serving of which would be dependent on Covid numbers.

Mission Committee: Elder Kathy Chambers reported, and a written report was submitted. Family Promise is initiating mentoring of guests in budgeting and other life skills. Marsha Davis has assumed the leadership role for FPC and our involvement in the program. The United Way backpack program has been chosen as the FPC Christmas giving project for this year. The Peace and Global Witness Offering in October will be given to the Friendship Center.

Memorial Committee: The committee voted to postpone the sign project on the northwest corner of the church for the time being.

Nominating Committee: Elder Rose Leavitt reported that the committee membership is being finalized and will begin work soon.

Personnel Committee: Carol Stebbins reported and a written report was submitted. Matthew Richards is contacting the Helena College looking for students who would like to intern in media at FPC. We anticipate providing 45 hours of work for an individual under the direction of Les Cramer.

Worship Committee: A written report was submitted. The Deacons have accepted the task of communion preparation. FPC will continue with the two station communion: one for intinction with cubed bread and one with the basket of "communion kits" for those who prefer them. Les reported that because of the uptick in Covid cases in the county, choir rehearsals and the Sunday performances have been delayed. Ann inquired about refinishing the organ console. Some options are being investigated.

Covid Task Force: The task force has no new recommendations and is continuing to monitor the situation in the Helena area.

Deacon Report: Deacon Candace Coefield provided a report of Board activities during August. She requested information on communion preparation. The Clerk indicated that he would send her an electronic

file with the information.

Old Business: A Called Congregational meeting was held on Sunday, September 12, 2021, after the 10:00 AM service. The initial purpose of the meeting was to review and ratify actions from the electronic Congregational meetings held February 14 and April 11, 2021. A motion was made, seconded, and passed at the end of the meeting to ratify the actions from the two (2) electronic meetings.

A second purpose of the meeting was to consider changes to the FPC bylaws Article II Section 5 and Article IV Section 4 by adding wording authorizing electronic or other participatory meetings as a valid meeting mode. This will eliminate the need for a subsequent gathered meeting to ratify business conducted in the electronic or participatory meeting. A bylaw change to Article IV Section 5 "Special Meetings" was also needed to allow special participatory meetings without a subsequent meeting to ratify actions of the special meeting. A motion was made, seconded, and passed to accept the changes to the bylaws.

Elder Linda Bench noted when she joined the church, we had 159 active members to fund the budget. Now FPC has only 111 active members to fund the budget which has increased over the years. She indicated that we may have to use some of our Vanguard General Fund investment to meet the budget next year. Pastor Scott reviewed reductions in committee proposed budgets to date. The reductions come to \$7100 reducing the "faith" amount to \$49,700. Session is hoping for some more reductions from committees. Deacon Candace Coefield pointed out that for several years, the Board of Deacons didn't have much of a budget and that the Deacons paid much of their expenses out of their own pocket. She feels that the Deacon budget is reasonable given increases in costs such as postage.

New Business: Because of Elder Bench's comments, Session asked what FPC does when we have visitors who might be looking for a home church. Also, what are we doing about the inactive members on our roles? Are we contacting them and encouraging them to start attending again? Should we reestablish the Evangelism Committee?

There being no further business, it was moved and seconded at 8:20 p.m. to adjourn the meeting. The motion carried. John Coefield closed the meeting with prayer.

Next Session Meeting: October 19, 2021, at 6:30 pm.

John Gneckow
Clerk of Session

WHAT - CHRISTMAS IN OCTOBER ??????????????????

The Mission Committee is pushing the Christmas season early this year but for what we believe to be a very good reason!

United Way is partnering with Good Samaritan, God’s Love, and others to minister to the homeless in our communities thru the *Backpacks for the Homeless* project. The Mission Committee has chosen this program as our Christmas giving project for 2021. The reason we are launching it early is to give our congregation plenty of time to purchase items to go into the backpacks. As we know, homelessness is an around the calendar year problem. The items range from \$1.00 for a tube of clapsstick to \$ 1000 for a tent and everything in between. The idea is that no matter your means, there is something you might contribute. Please keep your things at home until December, to place them under the tree but if you want to bring them early, we will take of it for you. Cash is always an option as well. Please give things to Bruce in the office. Please see the list of wanted items.

Homelessness is becoming a larger problem daily and we see that increase on the streets around God’s Love right here in Helena MT. Winter is coming and this is one way for us to help. Merry Christmas! Beginning in October.



With the frigid winter months coming up, the United Way is looking for your help to ensure those without permanent residences are safe and warm. Items are distributed to those needing them in Lewis & Clark, Jefferson and Broadwater counties thanks to the assistance of partners and friends of the United Way, such as Good Samaritan Ministries and God’s Love Inc.

WHAT WE PUT IN THE BACKPACKS

- Band-Aids
 - Blankets
 - Boots
 - Chapstick
 - Coats or Sweatshirts
 - Combs or Small Brushes
 - Food that does not need to be cooked
 - Gift Certificates for Fast Food or Grocery Store
 - Gloves and Hats '
 - Mints, Cough Drops or Gum
 - Nail Clippers
 - Packs of Tissues
 - Pillowcases
 - Sanitary items
 - Shampoo
 - Sleeping Bags
 - Soap
 - Socks
 - Tents
 - Toothbrushes and Toothpaste
 - Water Bottles
 - Wet Wipes
-

We also need backpacks!

History Revisited

In a conversation with Kelly Craige - who knows a lot about history - he pointed out that in modern history there has been a pandemic or epidemic in the "20s" of each century. There have been epidemics in other decades, but the "20s" always seems to have one. In some cases the epidemic started before the "20s" but carried over into it. So, if you are planning on being around in 2120, be careful!

An article from the Evangelical Lutheran Church in Cheyenne, WY, pointed out that in 1527 a case of the Bubonic Plague surfaced in Wittenberg, Germany, the town in which Martin Luther was a professor of Theology. "The university closed, and the students were sent home, but Luther remained in the city against the wishes of many who feared for his life."

Luther was asked for advice on what the Christian responsibility is during such an event, and he penned an open letter: "*Whether One May Flee from a Deadly Plague.*" The Gutenberg Bible was printed in 1455; the advent of the moveable type printing press helped spread the Reformation, and this letter.

Luther argued against some of the rhetoric circulating that faith, or God, would protect believers from contracting the plague. He urged those who were not needed, and could do so, to leave to safer locations, but acknowledged that some must stay including medical personnel, pastors, public officials, and those on whom someone with the disease were dependent.

In staying, Luther assured those concerned about his continued presence in Wittenberg with the following: "I shall fumigate, help purify the air, administer medicine and take it. I shall avoid places and persons where my presence is not needed in order not to become contaminated and thus perchance infect and pollute others, and so cause their death as a result of my negligence."

About others he carried on: "Others sin [because] they are much too rash and reckless, tempting God and disregarding everything which might counteract death and the plague. They disdain the use of medicines; they do not avoid places and persons infected by the plague, but light-heartedly make sport of it and wish to prove how independent they are. This is not trusting God, but tempting him."

"This I know well, that if it were Christ or his mother who were laid low by illness, everybody would be so solicitous and would gladly become a helper ... And yet they don't hear what Christ himself says 'As you did it to the least, you did it to me.' When Christ speaks of the greatest commandment he says, 'and the other commandment is like unto it, you shall love your neighbor as yourself.' There you hear the commandment to love your neighbor is equal to the commandment to love God, and that what you do or fail to do for your neighbor means doing the same to God."

How do we love our neighbor? By taking steps to help ensure their health and safety. Pastor Michael wrote in his article, "One could easily paraphrase Luther's words with 'wearing a mask', 'getting vaccinated', 'social distancing' ... etc. You get the point. Take care of yourself, take care of your neighbor using common sense and utilizing competent trusted sources of information." In our own "20s epidemic" this is how we care for the "least of these", our neighbors, members of our family of faith, and ourselves.



CALLING ALL VETERANS



We are compiling a list of veterans with plans to honor them for Veterans Day. If you are a veteran or know of someone in our church family who is, please contact the church office at 442-4775. Your help is greatly appreciated.



HAND AND FOOT



Good news for you Hand and Foot card players. Games are now on Fridays at 1:30 pm.



Lost Soles Hike - Sunday, October 17

Meet in the parking lot at 2pm. Destination to be determined. Easy hike for approximately 1 1/2 hours.



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!

Willing Workers will meet each Wednesday at 9am.

The group continues to plan for and organize the Craft Fair to be held October 22 & 23. 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.

LOVEQUILTS

The Lovequilt Ministry continued in August and September with the delivery of 11 lap quilts to our First Presbyterian Church family. Deacons Butch and Pearl assisted the Mission Committee with the delivery of the quilts. The Ministry began last November when the first 17 quilts were delivered to those who may have been facing additional challenges, feeling more isolated, or needing an extra touch of love during these difficult times. The Ministry continued with additional deliveries in February, April and May. Our church family has expanded to include several communities outside Helena as well as several Christian denominations through the Ministry. God's love truly has no boundaries!

**Come and enjoy a low-impact exercise that's easy,
free and available to EVERYONE!**

New Walkers Wanted! Our Church "weekly walking group" is looking for additional people -- men, women, children -- get some exercise, visit with friends, and enjoy our beautiful Montana summer. **We meet each Tuesday at 10:00 am in Centennial Park by the flagpole next to the YMCA.** A group from our church family ventures out into the fresh open air to enjoy a time of exercise and fellowship as we walk along the park walking path. Come and join us if you're looking for walking partners...or even if you're not because **EVERYONE** is welcome to join, and it's **FREE!!**

MORE FUN COMING -- Watch for Lost Soles hikes to begin soon.

\$\$\$ BUCKS FOR BIBLES \$\$\$

The Glacier Presbytery's Mission Representative, Ruth Hazelton brings this request before the congregations in Glacier Presbytery.

Guadalupe Presbyterian Church detention ministry in Phoenix received a request from the chaplain who serves at the Eloy Detention Center, for 100 Bibles in Portuguese (or more)!

Each Bible costs \$7.80 -- since they purchased a quantity. (Actually, with postage it would be more like \$10 each). Thus far \$160 has been raised.

If any of you are interested in supporting this ministry, please send your check to Guadalupe Presbyterian Church and in the memo line note: For detention ministry and mail to Rev. Joe Keesecker; 513 W Latona Rd; Phoenix, AZ 85041-8136.



NIGHT COMING SOON



Bingo is just around the corner -- this fall, if Covid cooperates, Bingo will be back!



OUR COFFEE TIME HAS RESUMED!

After the Church service, we will meet and socialize with coffee and treats available -- served by Fellowship Committee members (who have all received the Covid vaccine).



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 is the last day of the month and it falls on a Tuesday, then six business days before the 30th would be Monday the 22nd of the month. For the **November Mustard Seed, submissions need to be in by 10:00 am on Friday, October 22**. Church holidays may require that submissions be made even earlier for both bulletins and newsletters.

MINUTE FOR MISSION

- **Mission Sunday** was held on September 26 and we celebrated our commitment to become a Matthew 25 Church. Thanks to Congregational Fellowship for a delicious brunch afterwards. And thank you to the dedicated members of the Mission Committee for their enthusiasm and good works to promote mission at First Presbyterian.
- **Peace and Global Witness Offering** is one of four special offerings of the Presbyterian Church. It will be collected on World Communion Sunday, October 3rd. This offering will help promote "peace at all times in all ways" worldwide and our church's 25% will be given to the Friendship Center, as they strive to promote peace in domestic situations within the Helena area community.
- **CHRISTMAS IN OCTOBER????????????????**
Please read elsewhere in the Mustard Seed for news about another Matthew 25 / Christmas ministry.

OCTOBER 2021

ANNIVERSARIES

22nd- Andrew & Lexsey Carpenter



BIRTHDAYS

4 - Sandi Smith
9 - Carole Massman
10 - Linda Bench
Michael Davis
16 - Amanda Grimmatt
17 - Jim Moses
22 - Eddy Crowley
John Warren
27 - Jeff Chaffee



DEACONS ON CALL

BJ Burns 439-4026

October Lay Liturgists

October 3	Marsha Davis
October 10	Patti Borsberry
October 17	Kathy Chambers
October 24	Mary Craigle
October 31	Rose Leavitt



DEADLINE

The deadline for
November's
newsletter is
Friday,
October 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:
Sunday, October 10
Sunday, October 24
Tuesday, November 9

**First Presbyterian Church
535 North Ewing Street
Helena, MT 59601**

www.fpchelena.org

OFFICE HOURS

Monday - Thursday

9:00 a.m. - 5:00 a.m.

Friday

9:00 a.m. - 12:00 p.m.

406-442-4775

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