



First Presbyterian Church

The Mustard Seed

NEWSLETTER

Vol. 2021, Issue 11

First Presbyterian Church, Helena, Montana

November 2021

“*The End is Coming ...*”

We are approaching the end of the liturgical year. Christ the King Sunday is November 21, and the First Sunday of Advent (the start of the new liturgical year) is November 28. Just as the calendar year has a holiday at the end (Christmas!), so does the liturgical year (at least in America) - Thanksgiving! As we wrap up this liturgical year we do so ending in thanks.



Rev.
Scott Wipperman

Granted, we do have plenty to be unthankful for. Even with vaccines available Covid-19 had a banner year. And Montana went from being one of the safest states in America in regards to Covid-19 to a leader in Covid infections per thousand people (a small offering of thanks - that we had to settle for the number two spot, Alaska took the number one position). I am confident that each of us can identify other non-thankful experiences that occurred in our life this year. I don't know if it is human nature, or if it is our culture, but most of us find it very easy to focus on what is wrong, or at least “not right,” in our life.

But, for now let's focus on *being* thankful. I solidly believe that is a good practice. Being thankful, looking for the things to give thanks for, is particularly important when at first blush “thankful things” appear to be in short supply.

For starters, being thankful shifts our attention outwards. We can be thankful for something that just involves just us, like finding a \$5 bill on the sidewalk. But, more often than not thankful events involve other people. Thanks for a kind word some gave you, thanks

for sharing a meal with another, thanks for a good conversation (I'm trusting you're not talking with yourself) - so many thankful things and experiences involve others. And technically finding that \$5 bill involved another, someone had to drop it.

Being thankful helps us to think more about other people, and about other people's feelings. Intentionally being thankful just might make us more aware as to whether this other person is going to be thankful for the encounter with us.

Plus, the Bible mentions "give thanks" more than once or twice. "Let them *give thanks* to the Lord for his unfailing love and his wonderful deeds for mankind" shows up four times in Psalm 107 alone (the whole sentence shows up four times)! The action of "giving thanks" involves someone your are giving thanks to, and frequently that someone is God, Christ, or the Holy Spirit. Being in the frame of intentional thankfulness brings us closer to God.

In November, let's practice intentionally being thankful everyday. Let's take time each day to enumerate the events we can be thankful for, not just at the end of the day but periodically throughout it. Practice this up to Thanksgiving Day, during the Thanksgiving holidays, and afterwards. Science tells us being intentionally thankful for 30 days will make it a habit. And once we are in a thankfulness habit, I suspect we will find that the things that don't go right in our life are vastly outnumbered by the things we can be thankful for.

Peace,
Pastor Scott

NOTES FROM SESSION OCTOBER 19, 2021

The regular meeting of the Session of the First Presbyterian Church of Helena was called to order on Tuesday, October 19, 2021, at 6:30 PM in hybrid (in person and zoom) format. Reverend Scott Wipperman opened with prayer and moderated the meeting.

Pastor Scott Wipperman presented the devotional using Matthew Chapter 11, Verse 25.

There was a quorum with the following Elders present: Linda Bench (zoom), Kathy Chambers, John Coefield, Sheryl Eriksen (zoom), Rose Leavitt, Barb Leland (zoom), Carol Stebbins (zoom), Mary Stiles (zoom) and Mary Wright (zoom). Also, in attendance: Pastor Scott Wipperman, Clerk of Session John Gneckow (zoom), and Deacon Candace Coefield (zoom). Karen Witte was absent. Mary Craige has resigned from Session.

APPROVAL OF DOCKET: A report on the Presbytery meeting by Commissioner John Coefield was added to New Business. A motion was made, seconded, and passed to approve the docket as amended.

APPROVAL OF MINUTES: A motion was made, seconded, and passed to approve the minutes of September 21, 2021, with one correction—the spelling of Ashley’s name under the Education Committee report section.

PASTOR’S REPORT: Pastor Scott reported that September was an “in the black” month with income of \$21,411 and expenses of \$20,738. Our YTD shortfall is \$30,206 compared to \$19,878 in 2020. We are three-quarters of the way through the year and have spent 62.12% of our budget.

We continue to exercise caution and take precautions with Covid as Montana rises to #1 nationally in cases per 100,000 population.

Clerk’s Report: The Clerk reported that he had nothing special to report.

COMMITTEE REPORTS:

Administration Committee: Elder Mary Wright reported, and a written report will follow. The October meeting dealt with either purchasing the present copier as the lease expires in November or signing a new lease to replace the current copier with a newer model. A motion was made, seconded, and approved to purchase the present copier.

Building and Grounds: Elder John Coefield reported, and a written report was submitted. The security system is being installed

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this week. After the system is activated, anyone entering the building outside of certain hours will have to enter a code to turn the alarm off. Who will have the code and what hours the system will be turned on for church access is yet to be decided.

Christian Education Committee: Elder Mary Stiles reported and a written report was submitted. The weekly Friday Bible studies have resumed in hybrid format at noon. Pumpkin Patch sales are expected to reach the break even point this week.

Congregational Fellowship: Elder Linda Bench reported, and a written report was submitted. Fellowship Time following worship has been discontinued on recommendation of the COVID task force. Also, because of COVID safety issues, FPC will not host a community Thanksgiving dinner this year. BINGO may return in January.

Mission Committee: Elder Kathy Chambers reported, and a written report was submitted. The United Way backpack program has been chosen as the FPC Christmas giving project for this year. ACTION ITEM: Session approved the backpacks as the Christmas giving project. Presbytery Executive Beth McCaw has developed a Mission project for the Presbytery. ACTION ITEM: Session approved FPC as supporting the mission project proposed by Beth McCaw. The money from the Vanguard investment gains approved at the Congregational meeting was distributed to: First Christian Church, Helena, to support Family Promise, the YWCA, Helena, Habitat for Humanity, and the Friendship Center. The Friendship Center also received money from the Peace and Global Witness offering.

Memorial Committee: No activity to report this month.

Nominating Committee: Elder Rose Leavitt reported and a written report was submitted. The committee members are, Jeff Chaffee, Merle Korizek, Susan Steffens, and Tonna Strasko elected by the Congregation at the annual meeting on February 14, 2021; Elders John Coefield and Rose Leavitt appointed by Session; and Arlyn "Butch" Plowman selected by the Board of Deacons.

Personnel Committee: Carol Stebbins reported. Two staff evaluations remain to be done.

Worship Committee: Pastor Scott reported. FPC is preparing for the Advent season. Because of COVID, we will continue to stream Sunday services.

Covid Task Force: The Task Force has recommended that we suspend Fellowship Time after worship, to cancel the Thanksgiving dinner, and asked the women to postpone or cancel the bazaar. The Task Force is continuing to monitor the situation in the Helena area.

Deacon Report: Deacon Candace Coefield provided a report of Board activities for September. The Board was surprised to be able to serve communion at Touchmark despite the increase in COVID cases in the Helena community. They are not sure if that will change soon.

Old Business: Session committees have been able to reduce proposed expenses by 4.89% from their original 2022 proposed budget. Proposed expenses are \$332,300 with anticipated income of \$290,400. The “Faith budget” to balance would be \$41,975. The proposed budget will be voted on during the November Session meeting.

New Business: Pastor Scott and Commissioner Elder John Coefield reported on the Presbytery meeting held in Seeley Lake October 9 and 10, 2021. Reverend Maggie Lewis was elected and installed as Moderator for 2022. Two candidates for ordination as Ministers of the Word and Sacraments were examined and found ready for ordination. Retired Pastor Janet Potter was accepted as a transfer member into Glacier Presbytery. She and her husband have moved from Idaho to Helena and have been attending FPC Helena. Beth McCaw’s mission group is planning to be in Helena in June 2022.

There being no further business, it was moved and seconded at 7:25 p.m. to adjourn the meeting. The motion carried. Pastor Scott closed the meeting with prayer.

Next Session Meeting: November 16, 2021, at 6:30 pm.

John Gneckow
Clerk of Session



What is Love?

What is love? A question that has been pondered across the centuries by theologians, philosophers, parents, lovers, husbands, and wives.

Defined as an emotion, a feeling, a tingle, a shiver up the spine, a sensation, a touch, or an act.

After much thought and countless hours in philosophical studies, I find that love does exist in each of the above definitions. However, I believe a more profound description and moment in time shows us that love is a gift of ones self.

The moment in history we see this description of love is the cross, from where Christ gives his life for his flock because a good shepherd gives his life for his sheep. We are daughters and sons of God, given the gift of himself that we may have eternity in heaven. And from this event, we know that there is no more significant sign of love, than making ourselves a gift to another to the point of giving everything, unconditional love.

As Christians, love is the very heart of our faith. And each of us is called to experience and share the love of God with others. Ultimately it comes down to this no matter what sect of Christianity you are a part, we are united in the love of God found in the cross.

You are loved, called, and sent out by God to share His good news.

May God bless you today and always.

Ashley Burke
Director of Christian Education
First Presbyterian Church of Helena



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!

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.



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.

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!

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...

\$\$\$ 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!

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

Troop 1228, Scouts BSA

Many things contribute to the success of a Scout troop: trained leaders, quality activities, enthusiastic Scouts, supportive parents, etc. Too often overlooked is the key role charter partners—such as First Presbyterian Church—play in the success of the Scouting program.

On behalf of the Montana Council of the Boy Scouts of America, please accept our heartfelt gratitude for your long-time sponsorship of Troop 1228. Scouting changes lives; as a charter partner, you are making a difference in the lives of the youth in our community and in the lives of their families. Thank you for your continued great support!

Randl Ockey
Unit Commissioner for Troop 1228

NOVEMBER 2021

ANNIVERSARIES

21 -Scott & Merilee Wipperman
24 -Arlyn "Butch"& Pearl Plowman
25 -Joseph & Susan Steffens



BIRTHDAYS

11 -Scott Wipperman
21 -Deanna Albert
Linda Test
Sarah Coefield
24 -Ellen Westenbarger
25 -Susan Steffens
Mary Wright
27 -Louise Cramer
28 -Rena Bumgardner
Lucille Letcher



DEACONS ON CALL

Arlyn "Butch" & Pearle Plowman 449-8705

November Lay Liturgists

Pending

NOVEMBER COMMUNION SETUP

B.J. Burns



DEADLINE

The deadline for
December's
newsletter is
Monday,
November 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, November 9
Monday, November 22
Tuesday, December 7

**First Presbyterian Church
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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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