

First Presbyterian Church

# The Mustard Seed



NEWSLETTER

Vol. 2025 Issue 4

First Presbyterian Church, Helena, MT

April 2025

*Come,  
worship  
with us!*



## **Palm Sunday**

Sunday, April 13  
10 a.m.

## **Maundy Thursday**

Thursday, April 17  
7 p.m.

## **Good Friday**

Friday, April 18  
Noon

## **Easter Sunday**

Sunday, April 20  
10 a.m.  
Social Time  
11 a.m.

## **In person at:**

535 N. Ewing St.  
Helena

## **or online:**

[www.fpchelena.org](http://www.fpchelena.org)



## **Comfort Food Challenge**

Larry Mirch, Kathy Chambers, Melissa Stiles and Ward Stiles serve brownies and pulled pork at the Comfort Food Challenge, a fundraiser for Family Promise. (Janet Potter photo)

## **Rev. Munoz to give update on Synergos Program April 6**

Rev Jessica Crane Munoz, Director of the Synergos Pastoral Residence Program and pastor of Sunrise Presbyterian Church (Great Falls, MT) will join us for worship on Sunday, April 6.



After the service, there will be a Town Hall meeting when Jessica will give an update on the Pastoral Residency program and answer questions.

## Financial Giving Opportunities

March 5 – April 20 – One Great Hour of Sharing Offering Period

April 21 – June 8 - Pentecost Offering Period

## Mission & Outreach had a busy March

**God's Love Offering:** Additional donations have been received for the repairs at God's Love. The new total is over \$3,500! Your generosity is greatly appreciated.

**Vanguard Tithe:** During the annual meeting in February, FPCH members voted to give 10% of the annual profits from our Vanguard investment portfolio to the Mission and Outreach Committee for distribution. The Committee has chosen to give \$1,000 each to The Center Pole, located in Garryowen, MT, and The World Food Program.



**Cuddle Buddy stuffing party:** Pictured, from left, Pastor Janet, Louise Cramer, Kathy Chambers, Jill Cook and Karen Witte. (Les Cramer photo)

These programs were chosen in part because they each offer programs to their respective communities that “teach them to fish” rather than simply giving them a handout. You may access further information about each of them at these websites : <https://www.thecenterpole.org/> and <https://www.wfpusa.org/countries/madagascar/>.

**Cuddle Buddies:** The Cuddle Buddies were stuffed on March 13. Thanks to all who helped with the cutting and the stuffing! Good job! We will distribute them to local groups in April: I’m sure they will comfort many children in our community!

**Family Promise Comfort Food Challenge:** Again this year FPCH participated in the Comfort Food Challenge at the Fairgrounds. Pulled pork was our offering. Additionally, small brownie bites were offered and larger brownies sold to benefit Family Promise.

**I**n the Gospel of John, Jesus asks a very simple but profound question: "Who are you looking for?" Jesus asked this twice, in two very different settings, with two different responses.



The first time Jesus posed this was on the night of his arrest. A contingent of soldiers, pharisees and chief priests marched in to the Garden of Gethsemane, led by Judas Iscariot. Jesus stepped forward and asked, "Who are you looking for?" "Jesus the Nazarene," they replied. "**I am** he," Jesus said. As Jesus said "I am he," they all drew back and fell to the ground!" They had been touched by the great I Am. Though their hearts responded briefly, nothing else changed. That night, they did not become followers of Jesus. Instead, they took him before Pilate for the trial and to crucify him. Yet Jesus still forgave them all on the cross.

The second time took place three days after Jesus' crucifixion. Mary Magdalene stood by the open tomb, crying because Jesus' body was gone. Then Jesus appeared to her and asked her, "Who are you looking for?" Thinking he was the gardener, "Sir," Mary said, "if you have taken him away, tell me where you have put him, and I will go and get him." "Mary!" Jesus said. She recognized Jesus and turned to him! After that, Jesus sent her on a mission to "Go tell my brothers I am going back to my Father and your father, to my God and your God."

Both the crowd and Mary met Jesus, face to face and heard his voice. Both times, Jesus asked, "Who are you looking for?" But they had very different responses.

Sadly, to the crowd in the garden, Jesus was a man they barely, briefly recognized as divine. But Mary recognized the voice of Jesus, her savior. She responded by turning to Jesus in amazement. Then she faithfully went to where the other disciples were gathered and announced to them, "I have seen the Lord!"

During these last few weeks of Lent, Jesus asks each of us this simple yet profound, life-changing question: "Who are you looking for?" What will your response be? Will it be to turn away, like the crowd in the garden of Gethsemane or will it be to turn to Jesus, like Mary? No matter where we've been or what we've done, or any doubts or questions, we each need to respond to Jesus. As we draw near to Easter, may God open our eyes, our hearts and our minds to turn to Jesus Christ. And like Mary, may we too proclaim, "I have seen the Lord!"

To God be the glory!

Pastor Janet

## Mission update from Andrew

Andrew, a missionary FPCH supports, has provided an update on his activities:

**Basketball-** I am one of the coaches for our sons' basketball club with nearly 80 kids. I have an amazing platform to speak into the lives of these kids and families.

**Global Conference-** We were part of a regional conference with many workers from all over South Asia.

**Faithfulness-** Bible studies with seekers are happening, worship teams are forming, pictures are being taken, and people are being mentored.

Often, I think I simply repeat myself in these updates, but I want you to know that God is working and moving in many of the same ways that I have previously shared.

Jesus is good.

— Andrew

## New Bible study starts April 24

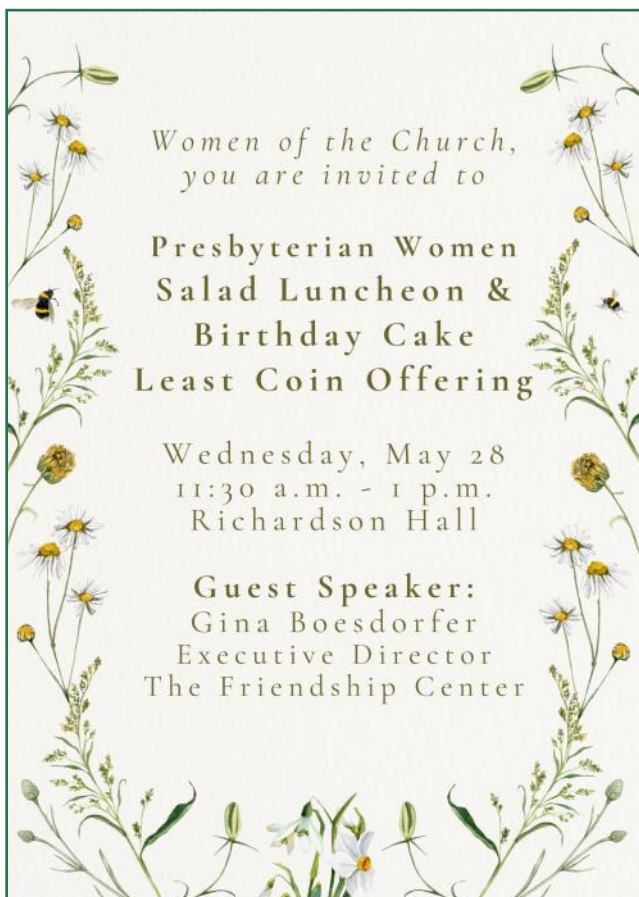
"Learning to Love the Psalms" is a new Bible study starting April 24 to be held on Thursdays from 11 am to noon.

This is a 12-week course consisting of a video and discussion. If interested, please sign up at the table where you pick up your bulletin. For more information please contact John or Vicky Bryan at [Rockcrawler2023@sbcglobal.net](mailto:Rockcrawler2023@sbcglobal.net).

## Trivia Question:

What does the word "Maundy" mean?

(Answer on page 11.)



# MINUTES OF THE SESSION

## First Presbyterian Church (PCUSA)

March 18, 2025

The regular meeting and worship service of the Session of the First Presbyterian Church of Helena were called to order on Tuesday, March 18, 2025, at 6:30 PM by Pastor Janet Potter, Interim Pastor

Pastor Janet opened the meeting with prayer followed by worship. Following 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, Sheryl Eriksen, John Bryan, Karen Witte, Jim Meyer, and John Warren. Clerk of Session John Gneckow, Treasurer Leo Potter, and Deacon Ward Stiles were also in attendance. Elders Patti Borsberry and Jeff Chaffee were excused.

**APPROVAL OF DOCKET:** Pastor Janet added discussing the new lease for the classrooms. A motion was made, seconded, and passed to accept the docket with the additional topic.

**APPROVAL OF MINUTES:** A motion was made, seconded, and passed to approve the minutes of February 18, 2025, regular Session meeting and the February 16, 2025, Congregational Annual Meeting.

### CLERK’S REPORT:

Active Membership as of January 31, 2025	90	
Active Membership as of February 28, 2025	90	

The Clerk referenced a letter from the PC(USA) Office of Ministry Engagement and Support thanking FPC Helena for our support of the various denomination donations programs throughout the year.

### INTERIM PASTOR’S REPORT:

Pastor Janet will be out of office March 24 after worship through March 29.

Moving forward with Lent and Easter, Dianna Goodman will lead the Maundy Thursday and Good Friday services.

Pastor is leading a Lenten class on “Connecting with God through Prayer” Thursdays March 6, 13, 20 and April 3, 10, and 17.

Discussed the Scholarship Committee with Melissa Stiles in light of the illness of Marsha Davis. Need to find a replacement for Marsha and one more person.

Liturgist Training will be March 23 immediately after worship.

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

Elder Boundary Training will be held on Wednesday April 2 at 11:30 with lunch included.

Pastor attended Committee Meetings: Deacon, Building and Grounds, Admin., Worship, and Mission and Outreach.

Communion	Total	Breakout
February	85	40 in person, 41 online, 4 at home

**COMMITTEE REPORTS:**

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

Treasurer Leo Potter provided financial reports. Giving in January was higher than usual, while giving in February seemed to be more usual (\$14,597). There were some increased expenses for February contributing to the month’s net loss of \$3,235.

Vanguard accounts decreased in value approximately \$6200.

Our current insurer came in with a premium amount less than expected. The premium payment is due in the middle of April.

The next Administration meeting: April 9 at 4:00 PM.

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

FPC applied for the city sidewalk replacement program online. The city will subsidize thirty projects. We are not sure at this time if we are one of the thirty.

Butch will contact Darron Ramos, a Helena Transportation Department Sidewalk Technician, to schedule an inventory of necessary repairs to the sidewalk to bring the sidewalks up to code in preparation for soliciting bids to do the work.

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 fire suppression system in the kitchen. So long as we have a working system, the fire department will approve non-commercial stoves hooked to the system in the kitchen.

**ACTION ITEM: Session permission to sell or otherwise dispose of the commercial kitchen stoves. Approved.**

Since we had problems with a frozen drain in the bell tower, Ascension Electric was contacted to discuss installing heat cables in the gutters and downspouts near the main entrance. Because the electrical panel controlling that area is maxed out on usable space, we will have to find a solution for a power supply to operate the cables.

Our property insurance is due for renewal April 15. The offer from our present carrier was not as bad as expected. Another company has approached us to provide coverage but has so far failed to provide a premium projection for our consideration. The committee sees little or no reason to switch and will continue to investigate options such as removing redundant coverage, including but not limited to selling or gifting the almost never used van. Several possibilities were

proposed for disposing of the van.

**ACTION ITEM: Session permission to sell or gift the van. Approved.**

Next B&G meeting: April 9 at 10:00 AM.

**Friendship Committee:** Chair Sheryl Eriksen reported. No written report was submitted to Session.

The committee scheduled a luncheon for the meeting. Because of a lack of a quorum, no business was conducted.

**Memorial Committee:** The committee met on February 19 at 1:00pm. Chair Kathy Chambers provided a written report to Session.

Curtain for the stage: Mark Goodman reminded the members that the curtain will have to be fire safety compliant. Pastor Janet offered suggestions from a website regarding material, colors, and hemming. We need to ascertain the mechanics of attaching the curtain with what we currently have and what we may need.

Concrete apron on the south side of the building: Mark reported that B&G is looking at this. Tabled discussion for now pending more information.

Memorial sign for the west side: While this project is not a priority at this time, we will look at doing a cleanup and refreshment of the sign this spring.

Wall hanging above the doors to the sanctuary: Mark will work on this.

Columbarium: The committee revisited the idea of creating a columbarium at the church. Ward Stiles noted that a number of churches throughout our Presbytery have them.

Church kitchen upgrade: Pastor Janet noted that there is an ongoing discussion concerning upgrading the kitchen and asked if the Memorial committee would be interested in participating. Will address this as more information becomes available.

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

The committee has received the Mission Tithe funds that were approved at the Congregational meeting of February 16. After reviewing various donation options, the committee decided to split the funds between The Center Pole and World Food Program. By adding just over \$150 to the tithe from Undesignated Funds, FPC was able to provide \$1000 to each organization.

The Point-In-Time Dinner received reimbursement of \$200 which was placed in the undesignated fund.

108 new Cuddle Buddies are ready to be stuffed.

Larry Mirch has tickets for the Family Promise Comfort Food Challenge.

Moderator Karen Witte and Sheryl Eriksen helped set up the Good Samaritan's St. Francis dinner. Good Samaritan is also planning a "Mocktail" party for Cinco de Mayo (May 5<sup>th</sup>) at Our Place (former Restore outlet on National Avenue).

Habitat for Humanity is hosting a workday March 22, to celebrate International

*(Continued on page 8)*

Waffle Day.

Jacob Kuntz, Executive Director of Habitat for Humanity will join FPC for the Fifth Sunday service and luncheon March 30.

YWCA is holding a Diaper Drive for Mother's Day. FPC will participate with diapers, baby wipes, and other personal items for mothers and babies.

Pastor Janet closed the meeting with prayer.

The next meeting: April 14, at 1:00PM.

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

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

**Property Oversight Committee:** We have received a letter of intent and a lease for the spare office, 4 classrooms, the kitchen, and playground. Our attorney has okayed the lease by a daycare business.

The State office responsible for licensing daycare operations requires FPC to have a separate location designation (for example Suite A and Suite B) within the facility for each of the lessees (the Spanglish program and the daycare operation). FPC is applying to the city to accomplish this.

**ACTION ITEM: Session acceptance of the lease and lessee. Approved.**

**Worship Committee:** Barb Leland reported. A written report was submitted to Session.

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.

Worship is planning a Commissioned Pastor Recognition Celebration for Dianna.

Last year, members received cards to give to friends encouraging them to attend Holy Week events and Easter morning. There will be no ad in the newspaper, but we will have posters to place around town. Pastor Janet will ask Julie to produce these.

Pastor Janet was asked to again put together, as she did last year, some gifts for kids and adults to receive on Easter morning.

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

The next Worship committee meeting: April 8 at 10:00 AM.

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

Moderator BJ Burns opened the meeting with prayer. Deacon Merle Korizek shared a devotional from Max Lucado's Grace for the Moment.

Roses and cards were handed out at the February 9 worship in honor of Valentine's day. The cards were created by Julie Young, the FPC Office Coordinator.



Pastor Janet thanked all for “picking up” during January during her absence. During February, communion was served to four people at Touchmark, none at Son Heaven, and none at home. One person was visited in the hospital. Six meals were supplied to homebound individuals.

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

**Old Business:** See report under Property Oversight Committee.

**New Business:** Julie will be out of the office during Holy Week.

A motion was made to move the next Session meeting to April 22 since the normal schedule would have the meeting during Holy Week. The motion was seconded and passed.

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 8:00 PM.

The next Regular Session Meeting: April 22 at 6:30 PM.

John Gneckow  
Clerk of Session

## April 15 deadline for scholarship applications

Applications are now open for the Larry Linton Scholarship.

The scholarship provides assistance to students who are members of FPC or related to a member of FPC, and can be used toward post-secondary education. Information sheets are available from the church office and on the [fpchelena.org](http://fpchelena.org) website. Due date is April 15.

### FPC Elders

**Sheryl Eriksen**  
(Fellowship chair)

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

**John Bryan**

**Jim Meyer**  
(Administration chair)

**Jeff Chaffee**  
(Personnel chair)

**John Warren**

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

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

**Karen Witte**  
(Mission chair)

**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.)

# April 2025

Sun	Mon	Tue	Wed	Thu	Fri	Sat
		<b>1</b> <b>11:30 am</b> Bridge <b>7 pm</b> Al Anon <b>7 pm</b> Scouts	<b>2</b> <b>11:30 am</b> Elder Boundary Training <b>2 pm</b> Choir	<b>3</b> <b>10 am</b> Re- bekah Circle <b>11 am</b> Lent study <b>6:30 pm</b> Chat Bridge <b>7 pm</b> AA	<b>4</b> <b>1:30 pm</b> Hand & Foot Cards  <b>5:30 pm</b> District AA	<b>5</b>
<b>6</b> <b>10 am</b> Worship w/Communion <b>11 am</b> Synergos Town Hall with Rev. Munoz	<b>7</b> <b>2 pm</b> Sarah Circle <b>5 pm</b> Xpress Singers	<b>8</b> <b>10 am</b> Worship <b>11:30 am</b> Bridge <b>7 pm</b> Al Anon <b>7 pm</b> Scouts	<b>9</b> <b>10 am</b> Building & Grounds <b>1 pm</b> Friendship <b>2 pm</b> Choir <b>4 pm</b> Admin	<b>10</b> <b>11 am</b> Lent study <b>6:30 pm</b> Chat Bridge <b>7 pm</b> AA	<b>11</b> <b>1:30 pm</b> Hand & Foot Cards	<b>12</b>
<b>13 Palm</b> <i>Sunday</i> <b>10 am</b> Worship <b>11 am</b> Social Time <b>11:15</b> Deacons	<b>14</b> <b>1 pm</b> Mission  <b>5 pm</b> Xpress Singers	<b>15</b> <b>11:30 am</b> Bridge <b>7 pm</b> Al Anon <b>7 pm</b> Scouts	<b>16</b> <b>2 pm</b> Choir	<b>17</b> <i>Maundy</i> <i>Thursday</i> <i>Service</i> <i>7 p.m.</i> <b>11 am</b> Lent study <b>7 pm</b> AA	<b>18</b> <i>Good</i> <i>Friday</i> <i>Service</i> <i>12 / Noon</i> <b>1:30 pm</b> Hand & Foot Cards	<b>19</b>
<b>20 Easter</b> <i>Day</i> <b>10 am</b> Worship <b>11 am</b> Social Time	<b>21</b> <i>Church</i> <i>office</i> <i>closed</i>  <b>5 pm</b> Xpress Singers	<b>22</b> <b>11:30 am</b> Bridge <b>6:30 pm</b> Session <b>7 pm</b> Al Anon <b>7 pm</b> Scouts	<b>23</b> <b>2 pm</b> Choir	<b>24</b> <b>11 am</b> 'Learning to Love the Psalms' study <b>6:30 pm</b> Bridge <b>7 pm</b> AA	<b>25</b> <b>1:30 pm</b> Hand & Foot Cards	<b>26</b> <b>All Day</b> AA Corrections Workshop
<b>27</b> <b>10 am</b> Worship <b>11 am</b> Social Time	<b>28</b> <b>5 pm</b> Xpress Singers	<b>29</b> <b>11:30 am</b> Bridge <b>7 pm</b> Al Anon <b>7 pm</b> Scouts	<b>30</b> <b>2 pm</b> Choir			



## April Birthdays



2nd Sylvia Huntsman  
 16th Dianna Goodman  
 17th Diane Richards  
 17th Sally Klein

22nd Judy Birch  
 24th Carolyn Anderson  
 28th Madisyn Gard



## April Anniversaries

5th Stephen & Judy Bayless  
 6th Deb Drynan & David Rosencrans

26th Matthew & Diane Richards



*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 Feb. net giving is below:

	Feb. 2025	YTD
<b>Income</b>	<b>\$21,731</b>	<b>\$45,541</b>
<b>Expenses</b>	<b><u>\$24,967</u></b>	<b><u>\$43,985</u></b>
	<b>-\$3,235</b>	<b>\$1,556</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!*

The church office  
 will be closed  
 Monday, April 21,  
 for the Easter  
 holiday.

### Session note:

Session will meet on  
 the **4th Tuesday** in  
 April instead of the  
 3rd Tuesday.

### Trivia Answer

"Maundy" comes from  
 the Latin word  
 "mandatum," mean-  
 ing "command," refer-  
 encing Jesus' words at  
 the Last Supper: "A  
 new command I give  
 you: Love one another."  
 (John 13:34)

**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

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

**406-442-4775**

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

Stamp  
here



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

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