



First Presbyterian Church

The Mustard Seed

NEWSLETTER

Vol. 2023, Issue 2 First Presbyterian Church, Helena, Montana February 2023

Ash Wednesday lunch, service February 22

Join us on Ash Wednesday—the beginning of Lent—for lunch at noon, followed by the worship service with the imposition of ashes at 12:30.



For God so loved the world . . .

Annual Meeting Sunday, Feb. 12

The annual meeting of the congregation will be held Sunday, Feb. 12, immediately after the worship service.

At the meeting we will vote on proposed bylaw changes. Copies of the bylaws with proposed changes were sent to active members last month. Copies of the changes are also included in the 2022 Annual Report, available Feb. 5 at the church.

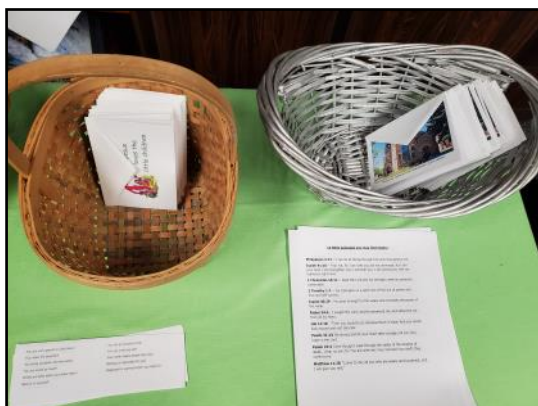
There are two areas of change:

- The first area is under Article VII--Committees, Section 4, Nominating Committee on page 8 of the bylaws.
- The second area is under Article VIII--Board of Deacons, Section 1, page 9.

We will also elect new Elders and Deacons, receive reports and conduct any other business of the church. This year, the Feb. 12 worship service will be a celebration of the ways the church has served the Lord in 2022. Your congregation has been actively serving as the heart, hands and feet of Jesus.

Please plan to attend worship and the Annual Meeting on Feb. 12, either in person or via YouTube!

The newly formed Outreach Team has chosen its first official activity, "Cards and Candy." The congregation has been invited to take blank cards and write words of encouragement to those currently residing at the YWCA and The Friendship Center.



Cards are available for both adults and children. Once completed, the envelopes will be filled with candy hearts for adults, and candy hearts, stickers, and a note pad for the children. The cards will be delivered to the organizations on February 13. Please check the bulletin and 'This Week at FPCH' for the time to meet prior to delivery. Please return all cards by February 5. Thank you for your participation.

Cards are available in the fellowship area.

If you wish to participate and want a card or cards delivered to you, please email Karen at piglet37@msn.com.

The congregation is invited to participate in all Outreach activities and encouraged to offer suggestions for new outreach opportunities.

Coupon collection continues

We need your help sharing coupons with those in need here in our community. Please drop them off in the basket in the lobby as you come in the front door, or contact Tonna Strasko for more information.

Congregational Fellowship Opportunity

Hand & Foot Card Playing

Fridays, 1:30 p.m., Fellowship Room

Never played? No problem! The game is easy to learn and willing teachers abound.

From the Pastor's Desk

"The 6 Great Ends of the Church" have been the focus of the sermons over the last several weeks. This series continues until Feb. 12 (the Annual Meeting of the Congregation).



Rev. Janet Potter

So what are they?

1. The proclamation of the gospel for the salvation of humankind;
2. The shelter, nurture, and spiritual fellowship of the children of God;
3. The maintenance of divine worship;
4. The preservation of the truth;
5. The promotion of social righteousness;
6. The exhibition of the Kingdom of Heaven to the world.

The Ends are the core purposes of the church. If someone wanted to know how a congregation serves Christ, here is the answer. A Presbyterian church is to proclaim, protect and love the children of God, worship the Lord, preserve the truth, promote social righteousness and show the Kingdom of Heaven to our neighbors. A church's calendar, budget and annual report will reflect these purposes. Is that true for FPC Helena?

This is a great time in the life of this congregation to reflect on where the congregation does these well and where more attention is needed. The 6 Great Ends of the Church are single line statements which rest on a firm foundation of prayer. As we move toward Ash Wednesday and the season of Lent, please pray every day for this congregation. Pray for her future. Pray for the Spirit of the Lord to fill and energize us to be the heart, hands and feet of Christ.

In Christ,

Pastor Janet



Mark Goodman checks on the overflowing Warm Hearts donation box.

Warm Hearts Project draws abundant gifts

The “Warm Hearts” drive concluded Jan. 29, with donations overflowing the collection box.

Thank you to all who donated blankets, bath towels, hand towels, and washcloths. Your donations will be distributed to the disadvantaged through organizations such as The Willis Cruse House, Family Promise, God’s Love, Florence Crittenden Home, Good Samaritan Ministries, Rocky Mountain Development Center, The Friendship Center, and YWCA.

Deacons’ Benevolence Fund

Is it the end of your pay period and you need assistance with unexpected expenses? We can help!

The Deacon’s Benevolence Fund is for folks who attend our church. There are no strings attached! If you need help, call the pastor’s office. She will contact the Benevolence Committee and explain your need. We will get a check cut to the doctor, the dentist, Home Depot, your grocery store, etc. This is held in the strictest confidence and not even the committee knows who it is helping.

This is possible because of the generous contributions of the people of First Presbyterian.

God bless our donors!



FPC hosts Family Promise Feb. 26-27

FPC will host Family Promise Sunday, Feb. 26, and Monday, Feb. 27.

We will be looking for people to prepare meals and also to serve as overnight hosts for the families, who will be staying at First Christian Church.

Watch for signup sheets to offer your help. For more information, contact Joy Edgar at 406-202-2200.

Boy Scout Sunday Feb. 5

Boy Scout Troop 1228 will join us in worship on Sunday, Feb. 5.

Scout Sunday is an opportunity to recognize the contributions of young people and adults to Scouting.

FPC has sponsored Troop 1228 since 1972.

←
At left, a Boy Scout helps set up FPC's Pumpkin Patch last fall.



The "Widows to Warriors" Bible study group meets Tuesdays at 1 p.m.

Matthew 25 Recommitment



We live in a time of uncertainty: hunger, poverty, violence, isolation. The list goes on and on. But here is a certainty: Jesus gave us commandments about those things in M25: Feed the hungry, give to the thirsty, invite the stranger in, clothe the naked, help those who are sick, visit those in prison. Last year FPCH took each one of those and shared various activities to accomplish the mission for that commandment. So why talk about them again? Aren't we done?

We should never be done with these; the mission is ongoing to help those less fortunate. Hopefully each of us took to heart the message of living a Matthew 25 life for each and every day. Not just once or occasionally but as a model for a way of living and being in the world and in your world.

In February, your Mission Committee invites you to recommit to making the message of Matthew 25 your way of life. To encourage you and assist you with your recommitment, your Mission Committee has prepared bags with strips of colorful paper and a list of suggestions for activities to bring your commitment to life. Just write your activities for any Matthew 25 thing you do and return them to the church. The completed strips will be linked with those of other congregants to form a chain; because when we join/link together, our impact is greater than we can accomplish as individuals.

The bags of strips are available in the Fellowship area so you can pick up a bag weekdays between 9 a.m. and 1 p.m. If you wish to participate and want a bag delivered to you, please email Karen at piglet37@msn.com. If you use all your strips, additional strips will be available.

We are a designated Matthew 25 church by our denomination. We are a blessed and chosen congregation. We are living Matthew 25 lives and it is our hope that this project will encourage you, help you grow in love, and be a blessing to you. Thank you for your participation.



**MINUTES OF THE SESSION
FIRST PRESBYTERIAN CHURCH (PCUSA)
HELENA, MONTANA**

January 17, 2023

The regular meeting of the Session of the First Presbyterian Church of Helena was called to order Tuesday, January 17, 2023, at 6:40 PM by Reverend Janet Potter. Pastor Janet opened the meeting with prayer and moderated the meeting.

Pastor Janet led the meeting attendees in reading Psalm 146 and asked each attendee for one word that stood out to them.

She then read Ephesians 4:17-32 and asked, “Where have you seen God at work recently?” Various examples were given ranging from something personal, something observed or heard, to something involving a church committee they serve on.

There was a quorum with the following Elders present in the church facility: Jim Meyer, Arlyn “Butch” Plowman, John Coefield, Barb Leland, Sheryl Eriksen, Karen Witte, Mary Stiles, Rose Leavitt, and Carol Stebbins. Elder Jeff Chaffee was present on zoom. Also in attendance: Treasurer Leo Potter, Clerk of Session John Gneckow and Deacon Joy Edgar.

APPROVAL OF DOCKET: The docket was amended to include discussion of the air cleaners in the Sanctuary, the Annual meeting, frequency of CLP candidate Dianna Goodman’s preaching, and a suggestion that FPC offer a new member class. A motion was made, seconded, and passed to accept the docket with the additions.

APPROVAL OF MINUTES: A motion was made, seconded, and passed to approve the minutes of December 20, 2022, Session meeting as presented.

CLERK’S REPORT:

Membership as of November 30, 2022		100
Review and Adjustment		2
Membership as of December 31, 2022		98

The Clerk reported that FPC received thank you notes for donations from Good Samaritan Ministries, God’s Love, Intermountain, the YWCA, Glacier Camp, and the Salvation Army. FPC also received Christmas cards from the Theological Education Fund and from the Basin Presbyterian Church with a check enclosed as a thank you for our support during 2022.

The Clerk of Session and John Warren, the FPC dB administrator, recently compared the electronic list of active members to the Church Registry hand-written list. The lists agree on the number and names of active members.

INTERIM PASTOR’S REPORT: Pastor Janet reported her activities during December. They include:

Session Minutes (continued from page 7)

Christmas Eve Service

Attending committee meetings

Visiting shut-ins and those that are hospitalized.

Elder/Deacon luncheon January 8, 2023.

The next Presbytery meeting will be February 24 and 25 at the Sunrise Presbyterian church in Great Falls.

Helena will be hosting the summer Presbytery meeting June 2 and 3.

She will be out of the office January 24, 25, and 26. As always, if something **important** comes up, she can be reached on her phone by texting or calling.

c. Communion	71	43 in person, 23 online, 5 at home	
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COMMITTEE REPORTS:

Administration Committee: Elder Jim Meyer reported, and a written report was submitted to Session.

Leo reported that the end of year income was \$7608. Also, FPC spent approximately \$26,000 from restricted funds. During the past year, the Vanguard accounts lost more than \$100,000 combined value.

ACTION ITEM: Vanguard Account #1 incurred an approximate loss in value of \$22,000 from end of year 2021 to end of year 2022. Because of the loss, and the Committee's interpretation of the motion establishing the Mission Tithe, the committee voted to recommend no Mission Tithe donation in 2023. The Session approved the Action Item.

The Committee discussed a proposal to primarily provide the monthly Mustard Seed newsletter to interested parties via email to reduce the church's monthly mailing expense. A printed will be available to those who prefer it or do not have an email account and still want a printed copy.

ACTION ITEM: Recommend that Session ask the Deacons to contact each member of their flock to update current information (mailing address, email, and phone number) and preference (printed or email) for their copy of the Mustard Seed. Session will contact the remaining people on the Mustard Seed list to update the information and interest in receiving the Mustard Seed. The motion was tabled.

FPC received an anonymous donation of \$5,000 from an estate. The money was placed in Memorial Funds per the estate directions.

FPC received 36 responses to the stewardship letter.

Building and Grounds: Elder John Coefield reported, and a written report was submitted to Session.

The HVAC filters have been changed from MIRV 16 to MIRV 11 in the sanctu-

ary furnaces.

A spring all church clean-up is being considered.

Elder Jim Meyer has completed repair of the vandalism damage to the Memorial Bookstand.

The building alarm system has been activated. Pastor Janet and Julie have been trained in its operation.

Christian Education Committee: Elder Mary Stiles reported, and a written report was submitted to Session.

Les Cramer is reviewing curriculum materials for a youth program. He hopes to have a decision by next month.

The committee is advertising the Seeley and Linton Scholarships. They noted that last year there were three applicants. Depending on the number of applicants this year and the amount of money available, they are considering supplementing the total amount using some of the Pumpkin Patch money.

Congregational Fellowship: Elder Sheryl Eriksen reported, and a written report was submitted to Session.

A fifth (5th) Sunday potluck will be held on January 29, 2023.

Lent will begin on Ash Wednesday February 22, 2023. FPC will hold a luncheon at noon to be followed with services at 12:30 PM.

Future activities include possibly showing the series movie “Chosen” and a soup and pie lunch/sale following the February 19th church service.

Memorial Committee: The Committee provided battery-powered hand-held candles for the Christmas eve service.

Mission Committee: Elder Karen Witte reported and a written report was submitted to Session.

At Pastor Janet’s suggestion, the committee approved the purchase of gift cards for local charitable agencies to give out to people needing assistance.

There are currently 6 or 7 families being hosted through Family Promise. FPC’s next hosting will be February 26 and 27.

The **Mission Outreach Team** is doing well. It approved the YWCA and Friendship Center as recipients of a “Cards & Candy” outreach.

January recipients of financial donations were Glacier Camp (\$600) and Good Samaritan (\$500) for use in rent deposit.

Personnel Committee: Elder Rose Leavitt submitted a written report to Session.

The committee discussed changes to the Personnel Policy Manual to clarify staff time off when a church authorized holiday falls on a Saturday or Sunday.

Session Minutes (continued from page 9)

Pastor Janet reminded the Committee that Office Coordinator Julie Young should have had a performance evaluation at the end of her 4-month probationary period and also noted that Les is due a review soon.

ACTION ITEM: Approve Vic Reiman as a member of the Personnel Committee. Motion passed.

Worship Committee: Pastor Janet reported. A written report was provided to Session.

The Christmas Eve candlelight service was well attended.

The Committee is working on plans for Lent. Pastor Janet will choose the Lent devotionals.

Les is preparing the choir for the music.

Les Cramer is our Lay Liturgist Coordinator. Vic Reiman has joined the Lay Liturgists group.

Merle Korizek will continue to fill in for Ann as pianist the last Sunday of each month.

Deacon Report: Deacon Joy Edgar provided a written report of Board activities to the Session.

Communion was served at Touchmark, the Masonic Home, and The Legacy. Three people were visited at the hospital. Two meals were provided to members during the month.

Deacons made 984 contacts with their Flock members during 2022. This was an increase of 132 contacts compared to 2021.

Covid Task Force: The Task Force is no longer meeting but continues to monitor the situation in the Helena area.

Old Business: The annual Congregational meeting will be held on February 12, 2023

following the morning worship service. Instead of each Committee Chair reading their annual report to the attendees, we will point out the reports are in the meeting packet, allow a moment for questions, and vote to accept the reports. The Committee Chairs will briefly describe “How God is working in or through their Committee” during the worship service preceding the meeting.

New Business: John Coefield suggested that it is time to hold a new members class. During discussion it was suggested that we consider advertising the class in the newspaper and invite anyone in the community who might be interested in joining FPC to attend the class.

John Coefield reported that since the air filter noise is distressing to some wor-

(Continued on page 11)

ship attendees, we will move one or two machines to the side and turn off the rest during worship.

Pastor Janet led a discussion regarding Dianna Goodman’s role in worship, especially as to doing sermons. She is required to do some preaching as part of the program to be ordained as a Commissioned Lay Pastor (CLP). Session members indicated their support of her pursuit of the studies for CLP and have been pleased with her sermons.

There being no further business, a motion was made, seconded, and passed to adjourn.

Pastor Janet closed the meeting with prayer at 8:10 PM.

Next Regular Session Meeting: February 21, at 6:30 pm.

John Gneckow

Clerk of Session



Elders and Deacons met with Pastor Janet for a lunch meeting in February.

Bible study opportunities

The “Widows to Warriors” women’s Bible study continues this month, wrapping up on Feb. 21. The group, led by Pastor Janet Potter, meets Tuesdays at 1 p.m.



The Friday Bible Study meets at noon on Fridays in the fellowship room, and discusses books of the Bible. Contact John Coefield for details.

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.

Deadline is March 17, 2023.

Scholarships Available

Applications are now open for the Seeley Family Memorial Scholarship and Larry Linton Scholarship. The scholarships provide 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 provided here and also are available in the fellowship room and on the fpchelena.org website. Due date for both scholarships is March 17. The amount available will be posted March 3.

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 17, 2023**. The recipient(s) of the scholarship(s) will be chosen, among eligible applicants, by a scholarship committee established at the Helena First Presbyterian Church.

FEBRUARY 2023

Sun	Mon	Tue	Wed	Thu	Fri	Sat
			1 6:30 pm Choir	2 10 am Rebekah Circle 6:30 pm District AA 7 pm AA	3 Noon Bible Study 1:30 pm Hand & Foot Cards	4
5 10 am Worship w/Communion 11 am Social Time 11:15 Deacons	6 3 pm Education	7 10 am Sarah Circle 11:30 am Bridge 1 pm Women's Bible Study 3 pm Personnel 7 pm Al Anon 7 pm Boy Scouts	8 10 am Buildings & Grounds 2 pm Fellowship 4 pm Administration 6:30 pm Choir	9 7 pm AA	10 Noon Bible Study 1:30 pm Hand & Foot Cards	1 1
12 10 am Worship 11 am Annual Meeting	13 10 am Worship	14 11:30 am Bridge 1 pm Women's Bible Study 6:30 pm Mission 7 pm Al Anon 7 pm Boy Scouts	15 6:30 pm Choir	16 7 pm AA	17 Noon Bible Study 1:30 pm Hand & Foot Cards	1 8
19 10 am Worship 11 am Social Time	20	21 11:30 am Bridge 1 pm Women's Bible Study 6:30 pm Session 7 pm Al Anon 7 pm Boy Scouts	22 <i>Ash</i> <i>Wednesday</i> Noon Lenten Lunch 12:30 Worship Service 6:30 pm Choir	23 7 pm AA	24 Noon Bible Study 1:30 pm Hand & Foot Cards	2 5
26 10 am Worship 11 am Social Time	27	28 11:30 am Bridge 7 pm Al Anon 7 pm Boy Scouts				
Hosting Family Promise						

FEBRUARY BIRTHDAYS

1st Charlotte Meyer
11th Elaine Gingery
12th Linda Granzow
13th Sheryl Eriksen

16th Stephen Bayless
21st Mary Craigle
22nd Jane Ogle
29th Ron Witte

FEBRUARY ANNIVERSARIES

1st Les & Louise Cramer
14th Derwin & Betty Brown



22nd John & Carol Gneckow

Invite a friend!

FPC brochures
are available in the
fellowship room

*Take some to share with your
friends and neighbors!*

FOOD SHARE

The Mission Committee is collecting
food for Helena Food Share.
Our Boy Scout troop will
collect and deliver donations as
an ongoing service project.

Thanks for your help.

**Articles for the March
Mustard Seed are due
Wednesday, Feb. 22.**



SARAH CIRCLE

Tuesday, Feb. 7, 10 a.m.
(Contact: Sheryl Eriksen)

REBEKAH CIRCLE

Thursday, Feb. 2, 10 a.m.
(Contact: Merle Korizek)

DEACON ON CALL

Art Bumgardner—468-8342

FINANCIAL DEADLINES

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

Monday, February 13

Monday, February 27

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 - Friday
9:00 a.m. - 1:00 p.m.

406-442-4775

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Celebrating 150 Years
1872-2022