

The Mustard Seed



NEWSLETTER

Vol. 2025 Issue 7 First Presbyterian Church, Helena, MT

July 2025

Pastor Janet retiring

Attend July 13 to say farewell

Be sure to join us for worship Sunday, July 13—Janet Potter's final Sunday with us as pastor before her (second!) retirement.

Janet has served as our interim pastor since October 2022. Her final day in the office will be Tuesday, July 15.

Our new pastor, Emily Cowser, will begin Aug. 1, with Aug. 10 her first Sunday in the pulpit.



Welcome, new members!

We welcomed several new members on Sunday, June 1: From left, Sylvia Huntsman, Mitch & Alysia Ryan, Wanda Jewell & Max Oliver, and Sharon King.

(Kathy Chambers photo)

Trip to Buffalo Jump, Dinner Saturday, July 19

Join in the fellowship and fun with the Friendship Committee's trip to the Buffalo Jump at Ulm, Montana, on Saturday, July 19.

We will meet at the church parking lot at 12:30 to carpool to the Visitor Center at Ulm. Then we will go up to where the buffalo were driven off the cliff, where we'll have a talk by a Ranger.

On the way home, we will stop at the Tap House in Craig for dinner. Admission to Ulm is free. If you're interested in going, please put your name on the sign-up sheet on the coffee table.



Summer donation opportunity

Backpacks for the homeless will be collected at FPC July 13-August 24. These will be given to the United Way, which will distribute them.



We are also seeking donations of summer/winter items such as socks, gloves, mittens, hats, and personal cleanliness items such as toothpaste, toothbrushes, shampoo, etc.

For details, visit with Mission & Outreach Chair Carol Gneckow.



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 May net giving is here:

	May 2025	YTD
Income	\$22,965	\$121,977
Expenses	<u>\$19,022</u>	<u>\$107,807</u>
	\$3,943	\$14,170

The online giving program can be found on the 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!*

Elders & Deacons with Committee Chairs

FPC Elders

Patti Borsberry
(Worship Chair)

Jeff Chaffee
(Personnel Chair)

Barb Leland
(Friendship Chair)

John Bryan
(Christian Ed Chair)

John Warren
(Nominating Chair)

Jim Meyer
(Administration Chair)

Butch Plowman
(Building & Grounds Chair)

Carol Gneckow
(Mission Chair)

John Gneckow
(Clerk of Session)

FPC Deacons

BJ Burns

Kathy Chambers

Jill Cook

Bonnie Anderson

Ward Stiles
Vice-moderator

Vicky Bryan

Art Bumgardner
Moderator

Rena Bumgardner

Ria Caussyn
Carole Massman

Dear All,

One of my go-to scriptures is from *Jeremiah 29:11*. "*For I know the plans I have for you,*" declares the Lord, "*plans to prosper you and not to harm you, plans to give you hope and a future.*" It was God's word to a people who were in an unfamiliar place. People who were told to settle down, plant gardens, marry, have many children and pray for their city as they worked for the peace and prosperity of it. And to do so in the confidence that God was with them.



God's word to them remains God's eternal word for us. Since Oct. 2022, together we have done those things that God commanded the Hebrew people. Prayed, served the city in many places and many ways, worshiped God and discerned the future. As Interim, our time was always in God's hands and now it has come to an end.

I want to share (again) this email from June 9, 2025.

"Exciting times are ahead as the church looks forward to new pastoral leadership and support through the Synergos program of the Omaha Presbyterian Seminary Foundation. With Emily Cowser arriving early August, it is time for me to retire.

I am writing to formally resign my position as Interim Pastor at First Presbyterian Church-Helena. Sunday, July 13, 2025 will be my last day leading worship. Tuesday, July 15, 2025 will be my last day in the office.

As is appropriate, I will not be attending worship, committee meetings nor providing pastoral care after July 15. Pastor Emily, the FPC Synergos Leadership team, the Synergos Program staff and Session will help make the decision on when I might return to participating in the life of the congregation.

Thank you so much for the opportunity to serve and lead this amazing congregation."

Many things remain unfinished and many opportunities are present. I challenge you to look for different ways to use the new stoves to love and feed the community; to boldly pray for God to bring the right group to use the east wing of the "new building"; to seek the creativity of the Holy Spirit on fundraising events to pay for the building projects.

I love you all and will miss you. Thank you for your grace, forgiveness and love. Today, even as we say good-bye, we believe "This is the day the Lord has made, let us rejoice and be glad in it!" Amen? Amen!

Blessings,
Rev. Janet Potter

MINUTES OF THE SESSION

June 17, 2025

The regular meeting and worship service of the Session of the First Presbyterian Church of Helena were called to order on Tuesday, June 17, 2025, at 6:32 PM by Pastor Janet Potter, Interim Pastor.

Pastor Janet opened worship with prayer. Elder Patti Borsberry gave a devotion based on the word “Enough” and concludes that no matter how one is performing, He loves us! “In God’s eyes, I am enough!” Following the devotion, the group participated in communion.

There was a quorum with the following Elders present: Arlyn “Butch” Plowman, Barb Leland, Carol Gneckow, John Bryan, Jim Meyer, Patti Borsberry, and Jeff Chaffee. John Warren attended via Zoom. Clerk of Session John Gneckow, and Deacon Ward Stiles were in attendance. Treasurer Leo Potter was excused. Guest attendee: Joy Edgar.

APPROVAL OF DOCKET: Pastor Janet asked for any additions to the docket. A report from the Presbyterian Women and election of a substitute Commissioner to the Presbytery meeting June 20-21 in Havre were requested. A motion was made, seconded, and passed to accept the docket as with the two additions.

APPROVAL OF MINUTES: A motion was made, seconded, and passed to approve the minutes of May 20, 2025, regular Session meeting as presented.

CLERK’S REPORT:

	Active Membership as of April 30, 2025	88	
	Active Membership as of May 31, 2025	88	

Presbytery meeting June 20-21 in Havre. Tims Talks July 13-15 at Glacier Camp.

INTERIM PASTOR’S REPORT:

Pastor Janet attended Committee meetings: Deacon, Mission and Outreach, and Worship.

We are coming to the end of my Interim service. My last Sunday in the pulpit will be July 13. As we prepare for the resident pastor Emily Cowser, it would be appropriate for Session to meet July 15 which coincides with Pastor Janet’s last day in the office. Please pray for Emily and the congregation during this transition.

On a personal note, thank you all for prayers after my sister died at the end of May. I appreciate Dianna leading worship on June 8 so that I could remain with family in Wisconsin.

Grateful for the opportunity to serve!

Pastor Janet

Motion made, seconded, and passed to accept Janet’s resignation effective July 15 with regrets and thank you for her time and contributions to FPC Helena.

Communion	Total	Breakout
May	68	42 in person, 19 online, 7 at home

COMMITTEE REPORTS:

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

The agenda was amended to add approval of the new application form for Anderson Trust Funds.

The May 2025 minutes have been accepted by Session.

The financial report was reviewed. It was noted that net operating revenue for May was \$3943, bringing the YTD revenue to \$14,170. For the year, we have received 46% of our projected (budgeted) income, while expenses are at 36% of budgeted. (approximately 42% of the year is gone)

The Vanguard accounts increased by \$13,247 for the month. For the year they have a **-\$4,974** return.

The Memorial Committee did not meet.

Old Business:

Budget: Changes were discussed briefly.

Accounting reports review: It is felt that the additional information helps to clearly show the financial processes.

New Business:

Synergos: update and financial adjustments were discussed. With the hiring of the new pastor, the budget will need to be adjusted. We will wait for the final contract.

Building committee projects and fundraising ideas:

Kitchen renovation: we anticipate fund-raising dinners of some sort. It is hoped that we will get some financial assistance from the women’s group. Based on a recent visit from the fire marshal, more expense may be involved.

Parking lot maintenance project: There has been a change of contractor, so we anticipate slight cost changes. It has been suggested that the parking lot be divided into units to which church friends and members donate specifically.

The van has been donated to the Lutheran camp and removed from our insurance. The title has been transferred.

Adjustments to the Anderson Trust fund application form were reviewed and a change suggested that the completed application be given to the Clerk of Session.

Next Meeting: July 9, 2025, at 4:00 PM.

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

Barb Leland presented the committee with a request/suggestion and fundraising

idea. The project is to replace the carpeting in Richardson Hall with flooring that is easy to keep looking nice and does not show the stains/traffic etc. She suggested a series of dinner shows (meal and entertainment).

The new kitchen stoves have been installed. Installation of a fire alarm system, per the City Fire Marshall, is needed that sounds throughout the East Wing. Hope is that this can be accomplished by the fifth Sunday potluck June 29.

Parking Lot: Crack filling, sealing, and striping will begin June 25. Driving in the lot is to be avoided until June 29. Everyone is to park on the streets around the building from June 25 until June 29.

We are awaiting a bid from DC Enterprises for sidewalk repair required by the city.

Also waiting for a cost estimate from Clark's plumbing for plumbing work required by the City if FPC leases space to the proposed daycare lessee.

FPC is still waiting for the estimate to install heat tapes for the roof.

B&G has spent \$33,175 of its 2025 budget (41.6%).

Amount available:

Kitchen fund **-\$705**

Vanguard funds for B&G expenses:

Sigrid Underdahl \$42,318

Building Reserve \$51,209

Projects underway and/or under consideration will likely deplete most of the funds available.

Next meeting: July 9 10:00 AM

Christian Education Committee: Did not meet.

Friendship Committee: Chair Barb Leland. A written report was submitted to Session.

FUTURE ACTIVITIES:

June 29th—Fifth Sunday potluck. Synergos chair Rev Jessica Crane-Munoz will attend Sunday service to answer questions.

July 13th—Pastor Janet's final Sunday in the pulpit.

July 19th—Trip to Ulm Buffalo Jump at Ulm. Dinner in the Tap Room in Craig.

August 24th—Church picnic at Kennedy Park in East Helena.

August 31st—no potluck due to weekend holiday.

IDEAS FOR THE FUTURE:

Progressive Dinner, Fellowship Banners, Lost Soles Walks

Septemberout to eat in Butte?

Next Meeting: August 6 at 1:00 PM

Mission and Outreach Committee: Chair Carol Gneckow reported. A written report was submitted to Session.

Around the table: members were asked to give a definition of 1) What is mis-

sion? 2) What is outreach? The comments will be presented at the next meeting.

Old Business:

Twenty-five (25) Cuddle Buddies were mailed to The Center Pole, Crow Indian Reservation.

Three (3) Love Quilts have been made and given away.

One Great Hour of Sharing Offering received \$1,690 donations which was sent to Presbyterian Disaster Relief, Presbyterian Hunger and self-development of people.

New Business:

Pentecost Offering (FPC retains 40%). The FPC share will be given to Girls Thrive. This nonprofit provides guidance for teenage girls through a program that teaches health, exercise, nutrition, self-esteem, and offers a safe place to discuss issues affecting them.

FPC has been invited by Helena Area Habitat for Humanity to help with cleaning and light housework Saturday, June 28 starting at 9:00 AM and continuing until 4:00 PM. There will be coffee, donuts, and water available. Pre-registration is required. A sign-up sheet is available in the Narthex.

Summer donation opportunity: Backpacks for the homeless will be collected at FPC July 13-August 24. These will be dispersed through United Way. The homeless can also use summer/winter items such as socks, gloves, mittens, hats and personal cleanliness items such as toothpaste, toothbrushes, shampoo, etc.

ACTION ITEM: Request Session approve collecting backpacks for the homeless July 13-August 24, along with personal items such as socks, mittens, hats, and cleanliness items such as toothpaste, toothbrushes, shampoo, etc. to be distributed through United Way of Helena. Motion passed.

ACTION ITEM: Request Session to hold the Pumpkin Patch Party, Saturday, Oct. 18 and encourage all committees to participate. Motion passed.

Next meeting: August 11, 1:00 PM

Nominating Committee: Did not meet.

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

Property Oversight Committee:

Pastor Janet and John Warren reported the status of the daycare lessee is uncertain. As a result, FPC extended the contract with Green and Green with the request to try to rent the rooms separately to individual(s) who don't want or need a larger space.

Synergos Committee: John Warren reported that the individual that the committee interviewed was very impressive and she accepted the offer to come to FPC Helena as pastor beginning August 1. Her name is Emily Cowser.

Session has some things to work on:

How much to increase the housing allowance

Vacation opportunity to visit her parents in Pennsylvania.

Synergos requested 3–5-year Strategic Plan

Paster Jessica Crane-Munoz, Director of Synergos will attend the June 29 worship service and be available for questions about the program.

Worship Committee: Chair Patti Borsberry reported. A written report was submitted to Session. (Two months reports)

May 13, 2025, meeting:

The celebration of Dianna's CLP was very nice. Dianna sent a thank you note noting that she appreciated the message form former Helena Pastor Scott Wiperman, the robe, stole, and time spent by the committee to make it a special event for her.

Pentecost Sunday was the last choir Sunday before their summer break. Also, volunteers will be thanked for their past years' service.

Sheryl Eriksen is looking at the latest brochure looking for new banners to purchase for the church.

Three new liturgists attended training and have already served. Two more people will attend training in the near future.

June 10, 2025, meeting:

Pastor Janet's last Sunday in the pulpit will be July 13. Dianna offered to cover the remaining July Sunday services and "Butch" will conduct the August 3 worship before new pastor Emily Cowser's first Sunday service August 10.

The committee decided to wait until the new Pastor Emily has arrived before making plans for an outdoor service.

Plans are underway to present our new pastor with a gift basket of Made in Montana items.

Pastor Jessica Crane-Munoz will attend the June 29 service to answer questions about Synergos.

Patti distributed a copy of the Worship Job Description. She asked for review and comments since the last update was in 2015.

She also asked about creating a document detailing the various duties listed in the JD. The result would be valuable information for the new pastor and future committee members and pastors.

Next meeting: August 12 at 10:00 AM.

Deacon Report: A written report was submitted to Session.

Election of Officers for 2025-6

The following officers were elected:

Moderator—Art Bumgardner

Vice Moderator—Ward Stiles

Secretary—Vicky Bryan

Nominating Committee Representative: BJ Burns

Congregational Card Ministry:

Birthdays—Jill Cook

All Others—Carole Massman

Communion Coordinator—Kathy Chambers

Grief Ministry Coordinator—Kathy Chambers
Meal Ministry Coordinator—BJ Burns
Shepherding Ministry Coordinator—Bonnie Anderson
Hospital Ministry—Carole Massman
Benevolence Fund—Art Bumgardner, Bonnie Anderson, Pastor
Communion Set Up Coordinator—BJ Burns

Pastor Janet thanked all the Deacons for the work they do and thanked Merle Korizek for her 4 years of service as a Deacon.

During May, 2 meals were provided, four hospital visits provided, and 7 visitations (Touchmark 2 and In Home 5)

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

Old Business: none

New Business: The Pumpkin Patch Party will be on October 18, 2025. The Mission Committee will coordinate the event.

After Pastor Janet's retirement on July 15, John Coefield, Corporation President, and/or John Gneckow, Clerk of Session, will be responsible for addressing any business involving the church until Pastor Emily Cowser arrives in August and assumes her duties and responsibilities.

Carol Gneckow reported that the Presbyterian Women's Executive Board voted to dissolve the FPC Presbyterian Women's group. The remaining treasury balance in the PW bank account will be closed and the funds given to the Building & Grounds/Kitchen Fund. She also reported the Monthly Circles, Sarah and Rebekah, will continue to meet for Bible study and a time of fellowship.

Pastor Janet read an email from John Coefield, FPC Commissioner to Presbytery, stating that he would be unable to attend the Presbytery Meeting in Havre June 20-21. He recommended that John Gneckow be authorize as the substitute commissioner. Motion made, seconded, and passed to accept John Coefield's recommendation.

There being no further 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: July 15, 2025, at 6:30 P M

John Gneckow

Clerk of Session

Trivia Question:

What occupation did Paul use to make a living?

(Answer on page 11.)



Hand & Foot Cards

Fridays, 1:30 p.m.

Never played? No problem!

The game is easy to learn
and willing teachers abound.

July 2025

Sun	Mon	Tue	Wed	Thu	Fri	Sat
		1 11:30 am Bridge 7 pm Al Anon 7 pm Scouts	2	3 11 am Psalms Study 6:30 pm Chat Bridge 7 pm AA	4  Fourth of July <i>Church Office Closed</i>	5
6 10 am Worship w/Communion 11 am Social Time	7 5 pm Xpress Singers	8 11:30 am Bridge 7 pm Al Anon 7 pm Scouts	9 10 am Building & Grounds 4 pm Admin	10 11 am Psalms Study 6:30 pm Chat Bridge 7 pm AA	11 1:30 pm Hand & Foot Cards	12
13 10 am Worship 11 am Social Time	14 Noon Christian Ed. 5 pm Xpress Singers	15 11:30 am Bridge 6:30 pm Session 7 pm Al Anon 7 pm Scouts	16	17 7 pm AA	18 1:30 pm Hand & Foot Cards	19 12:30 pm Trip to Buffalo Jump & Dinner
20 10 am Worship 11 am Social Time	21 5 pm Xpress Singers	22 11:30 am Bridge 7 pm Al Anon 7 pm Scouts	23	24 6:30 pm Bridge 7 pm AA	25 1:30 pm Hand & Foot Cards	26
		Spanglish Summer Camp				
27 10 am Worship 11 am Social Time	28 5 pm Xpress Singers	29 11:30 am Bridge 7 pm Al Anon 7 pm Scouts	30	31 7 pm AA		

July Birthdays



13th Andrew Kaiser
24th Bill Peterson
24th Les Cramer
26th Deb Drynan



July Anniversaries

18th Tim & Patti Borsberry
28th Ward & Mary Stiles

Congrats!

Justice Gard is a 2025 graduate of East Helena High School!

She is the great-granddaughter of Joy Edgar.

Congratulations, Justice, and best wishes as you begin the next chapter!



'Cloud of Witnesses' theme of July 13-15 TIM Talk at camp



July's TIM Talk at Glacier Camp parallels the Summer Camp theme: *"So Great a Cloud of Witnesses—Running the Race of Faith."*

Join us as we explore the challenges and blessings, the joys and difficulties all inherent to the challenge of embracing faith and living our lives of faith in a world that is filled with challenges and obstacles.

For details, email Rev. Tim Lanham, camp director, at timothy@glaciercamp.org

Church picnic August 24!

Mark your calendar now for our Church Picnic Sunday, Aug. 24, in Kennedy Park, East Helena -- following the service.

Your Friendship Committee will provide chicken, and you're asked to bring a side dish and a chair (if you have one). Food, fun, and entertainment offered!

Pride Shabbat July 11 at Temple Emanu-El

Join the Montana Jewish Project for its third annual Pride Shabbat Friday, July 11, at 5p.m.

We welcome all our Helena community—Jewish or otherwise—to celebrate our vibrant LGBTQ+ community. Come grab food and drinks starting at 5 p.m. on the lawn of Temple Emanu-El. At 5:30, we'll welcome Shabbat with inclusive blessings.

We'll be serving piroshkis and rainbow challah from Dear Potato plus drinks (mocktails and sodas). Bring a blanket or lawn chairs for comfy seating!

Trivia Answer

He made tents.

First Presbyterian Church
535 North Ewing Street
Helena, MT 59601

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

Stamp
here

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