



First Presbyterian Church

The Mustard Seed

NEWSLETTER

Vol. 2025 Issue 8

First Presbyterian Church, Helena, MT

August 2025

Welcome, Pastor Emily!

Our new pastor - Emily Cowser - will be arriving at 1:58 p.m., Friday, Aug. 1, at the Helena Airport. Church members and friends are asked to "come if you can" to welcome her at that time as she gets off the plane. Wouldn't it be great if FPC could fill the airport waiting area! We hope to see you there.



Gathering household supplies

There's a big laundry basket near the entrance of the sanctuary. Please bring cleaning items and anything else that might be helpful to someone moving into a new apartment. This is for our new pastor, Emily, who will move into her apartment Aug. 6. Thanks!

See page 3 for more "welcoming" details

Backpack drive ends Aug. 24

We continue to collect backpacks for the homeless through August 24. These will be given to the United Way, which will distribute them.

We also seek 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.

Church picnic Sunday, Aug. 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!

Service for Rose Leavitt at FPC

Tuesday, Aug. 5
11 a.m.

Lunch afterward

Graveside Service
2 p.m. VA Cemetery



Trip to Buffalo Jump State Park

Saturday, July 19, we traveled to Ulm to tour the Buffalo Jump State Park.

A park ranger talked about the prairie tribes who walked and used dogs to haul their belongings. The buffalo were herded and then spooked to run away over the cliffs.

The people would be almost a month or more in one area before they could walk back to their home site. Wonderful summer day!

We also found out through the Park's "Nature Trail" book that our church was built from sandstone quarried at the Buffalo Jump in the early 20th century.

Picture from Park book →



The First Presbyterian Church in Helena was built from sandstone quarried here at the Buffalo Jump.

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

Welcome Timeline

- *Friday, August 1, 1:58pm — Helena Airport. Church members and friends invited to come to the airport to welcome Emily with a big group.
- *August 1-6 — She will stay with BJ Burns.
- *Sunday, August 3 — Emily will attend FPC and be in the congregation.
- *Wednesday August 6 — She will move into her apartment, with help from congregation members.
- *Sunday, August 10 — Emily's first sermon at FPC. You won't want to miss it!
- *Thursday, August 21, 11am — Boating day at Gates of the Mountains. See signup sheet for details.
- *Sunday, August 24 — Our annual Church summer picnic following the Church service -- this time, at Kennedy Park in East Helena. Please bring a chair, if you have one, and a pot-luck item. There will be entertainment, a sing-along, an informal welcome to Emily and -- of course -- delicious potluck food, with our Friendship Committee providing chicken.
- *Saturday, August 30 — a Kayak trip down the Missouri River, ending up at Barb's cabin, #7 Meadow Lane (near Dearborn). We will have a BBQ plus potluck. If you're not floating, just come for the food! More information to follow.
- *Sometime in early September — Emily will take the Tour Train.
- *October 4 or 5 — We take her to the Townsend Fall Fest.
- *October 10 and 11 — Emily will attend the Fall Presbytery Meeting at Glacier Camp.



Quality Control

A group gathered recently to put labels containing the correct QR code over an incorrect code on some Inter-mountain brochures.

MINUTES OF THE SESSION

July 15, 2025

The regular meeting and worship service of the Session of the First Presbyterian Church of Helena were called to order on July 15, 2025, at 6:30 PM by Pastor Janet.

The worship was opened with prayer by Pastor Janet. Elder Jeff Chaffee gave a devotion he titled “Enjoyment of God’s Creation” based on the creation story from Genesis and prose written by Bob Marks, a former businessman, legislator, and State of Montana Administrator. 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, John Warren, and Jeff Chaffee. Clerk of Session John Gneckow, Treasurer Leo Potter, and Deacon Ward Stiles were in attendance. Guest attendee: Joy Edgar.

A motion was made, seconded, and passed to give Joy Edgar voice.

APPROVAL OF DOCKET: Pastor Janet asked for any additions to the docket. Hearing none, a motion was made, seconded, and passed to accept the docket as presented.

APPROVAL OF MINUTES: A motion was made, seconded, and passed to approve the minutes of June 17, 2025, regular Session meeting as presented.

CLERK’S REPORT:

Active Membership as of May 31, 2025	88
Active Membership as of June 30, 2025	94

The Clerk told a story that he titled “God’s Plan”. He told of his attendance at Presbytery last month after Synergos had announced Emily Cowser as the Pastor in Residence in Helena for the next two years. He told of the Presbytery Commissioner from Conrad saying (good naturedly) “you stole Conrad’s new pastor”. During the next month, one of Conrad’s Elders had coffee with their recently retired pastor who commented that she had retired at the wrong time. The Elder asked her if she wanted to end her retirement and return to their pulpit and received an affirmative response. She is scheduled to return to the pulpit in the near future.

At about the same time, a member of the church indicated a desire to pursue the CLP program and will be working with the returning pastor as he pursues his goal.

The Clerk also read a letter from Mike Davis thanking the members of the church for all their help and prayers during the last several years as his

wife, Marsha, and he dealt with her health problems and subsequent death.

INTERIM PASTOR’S REPORT:

Pastor Janet attended Committee meetings: Admin, Worship, and Personnel.

She was honored to be part of the celebration of the life of Marsha Davis on June 18 and thanked all who helped with the service and reception.

She and Joy Edgar completed moderating the class on the study of the book “The Gift of Empathy” in June and recommends the book to church members.

She attended communion at Touchmark July 6 with Deacons Kathy Chambers and BJ Burns.

She visited many of the shut ins in order to say goodbye.

We have come to the end of her Interim service. Her last Sunday in the pulpit was July 13 and last day in office and last Session meeting July 15. Please pray for Emily and the congregation during this time of transition.

God bless you all.

Pastor Janet

Communion	Total	Breakout
June	92	42 in person, 44 online, 6 at home

COMMITTEE REPORTS:

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

Karen Witte attended the meeting and was given voice and vote.

The prior month’s minutes have been accepted by Session.

The financial report was reviewed. It was noted that net operating revenue for June was ~~\$-3048~~, bringing the YTD net revenue to \$11,121. For the year, we have received 53% of our projected (budgeted) income, while expenses are at 43% of budgeted. (50% of the year is gone)

The Vanguard accounts increased by \$10,884.21 for the month. The YTD income is \$5,910.67.

The Memorial Committee: did not meet.

Synergos: updated document (contract) was reviewed. A motion was made, seconded, and passed to send the contract to Session for approval. The committee resolved to discuss the package with Emily shortly after August 1, 2025, to be sure that it meets her needs.

ACTION ITEM: Recommend to Session that the Synergos resident terms of call be approved. Motion passed.

ACTION ITEM: Request Karen Witte be approved to serve on the Administration Committee. Motion passed.

Building committee projects:

Kitchen renovation: Total Renovation costs \$10,182.00

Parking lot maintenance project: Total costs \$21,618.00 Due July 11
Will be paid from accessible funds with plans to replenish.

Main Entry Way patches: Total costs \$2,300.00

Gutter Ice Jam and Bell Tower Drain: Ascension Electric bid
\$10,497.50

Sidewalk repair: \$37,500 estimate

Known plus Estimated total costs: \$82,097.00

Resources:

Kitchen Fund **-\$705**

Vanguard Funds:

Sigrid Underdahl \$42,318

Building Reserve \$51,209

Discussed plans for fundraising event(s) to obtain capital to help address these bills.

Next Meeting: August 13, 2025, at 4:00 PM.

Building and Grounds Committee: Did not meet.

Christian Education Committee: Chair John Bryan reported.

As a newly revised committee, they are working on preparing a budget for the remainder of fiscal year 2025.

They are looking at hiring a full-time nursery attendant.

Meet on the second (2nd) Monday of each month.

Friendship Committee: Did not meet.

Next Meeting: August 6 at 1:00 PM

Mission and Outreach Committee: Did not meet.

Next meeting: August 11 at 1:00 PM

Nominating Committee: Did not meet.

Personnel Committee: Chair Jeff Chaffee reported. A written report was submitted to Session.

The committee agreed to add an employee's anniversary date to each employee's records and to transfer employee files to a locked cabinet in the church office.

Joy Edgar was approved as a new member of the committee.

Next meeting: August 4 at 10:00 AM.

Property Oversight Committee: Did not meet.

Synergos: John Warren supplied copies of the Resident Terms of Call to Session.

Emily's effective salary will be \$57,000 made up of \$39,900 salary and \$17,100 housing allowance. Synergos will pay half of the effective salary or \$28,500. FPC is also paying an additional \$5000 housing allowance based on the average cost of apartment rent in Helena.

The effective salary is also used to calculate the self-employment tax paid by ministers. Synergos will pay 50% and the other 50% will be Emily's responsibility.

Emily will have four(4) weeks which includes 4 Sundays vacation time and two(2) weeks which includes 2 Sundays for continuing education. Synergos and FPC will each pay \$500 for professional expenses, continuing education and mileage.

Additionally, FPC is considered the employer and will pay \$16,120 for the pastoral package which includes medical insurance, temporary disability insurance, death and disability insurance, and her pension program.

Worship Committee: Did not meet.

Next meeting: August 12 at 10:00 AM.

Deacon Report: A written report was submitted to Session.

Moderator Art Bumgardner opened the meeting with prayer. BJ Burns shared a devotional from the Diaconal Ministries Devotions.

During June, 2 meals were provided, no hospital visits, and 6 visitations (Touchmark 4 and In Home 2)

New Flock and Shepherd lists were passed out by Bonnie Anderson.

Moderator Art Bumgardner noted that the Card Ministry job description needs revision.

Moderator Art Bumgardner closed the meeting with prayer.

Next Meeting: August 10 following the Worship service.

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

Old Business: Carol Gneckow handed out a list of Pumpkin Patch Party

activities from last year to committee moderators. She noted that the committees need to get their activities figured out for this year's Pumpkin Patch Party to be held October 18.

New Business: See report by John Warren under Synergos Committee.

There being no further business to conduct, a motion was made, seconded and approved to adjourn the meeting.

Pastor Janet closed the meeting with prayer followed by the Session members praying the Lord's Prayer in unison.

The next Regular Session Meeting: August 19, 2025, at 6:30 P M

John Gneckow
Clerk of Session


Girl Thrive Parking Lot Party on Aug. 7

Girls Thrive will celebrate its 10th anniversary with a Parking Lot Party here on Thursday, Aug. 7, 5-8 p.m. Live music, food trucks, activities and bike raffles are planned.

FPC provides office space to this nonprofit organization, which works to build strength, confidence and community in young girls. Girls Thrive is a Lifetime Sports Program.

Session has approved this additional use of our facility in support of the Girls Thrive mission.

Congratulations, Girls Thrive, on 10 years of service to the community!



Thank You for Your Generosity

Thank you for your faithful giving to the ministry of FPC Helena.

	June 2025	YTD
Income	\$18,597	\$140,575
Expenses	<u>\$21,646</u>	<u>\$129,453</u>
	-\$3,048	\$11,121

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!*

Thank you notes

Dear Pastor Janet and My Incredible Church Family,

I want to thank everyone involved in and behind the scene at Marsha's service. Numerous comments have been sent my way on how wonderful everything was and I want to give a great big THANK YOU to all who helped. I truly couldn't have done this without my church family and wouldn't have wanted to.

The support has been incredible through this chapter of our lives and made it bearable as it can be. Again thank you for all you do.

Sincerely in Christ,
Mitchael & Marsha Davis

Dear all,

First, I want to thank God for our time together! And to say thank you so much for the wonderful send-off on Sunday, July 13. I felt so loved!

The quilt and blessing you gave me will be a reminder of all we have shared since Oct. 2022.

That gorgeous crystal cross truly is the perfect symbol of Christ's light that shines from FPC. The prayers and the circle around the sanctuary all touched my heart.

Thank you for the thoughtful words you said to me, both during the worship service and afterwards. May the peace of Christ be with you.

With love and gratitude,
Pastor Janet



Habitat Trolley Tour

Get a firsthand look at current builds and discover what's next for housing in the Helena area!

Choose a Date:

Saturday, Aug. 9

Saturday, Sept. 13

Time:

9 a.m.-11 a.m.

Meet at the ReStore,
1320 Market Ave.

Reserve Your Seat!

RSVP at:

[HelenaHabitat.org/
Trolley](https://www.helenahabitat.org/trolley)



Trivia Question:

The Son of Man did not come to be served, but to do what?



(Answer on page 11.)

August 2025

Sun	Mon	Tue	Wed	Thu	Fri	Sa
					1 1:30 pm Cards 1:58 pm Greet Pastor Emily @ airport 5:30 pm AA District	2
3 10 am Worship w/Communion 11 am Social Time, welcome Pastor Emily	4 10 am Personnel 5 pm Xpress Singers	5 11 am Rose Leavitt service 7 pm Al Anon 7 pm Scouts	6 1 pm Friendship	7 5 pm Girls Thrive Party in Parking Lot 6:30 Bridge 7 pm AA	8 1:30 pm Hand & Foot Cards	9
10 10 am Worship 11 am Social Time 11:15 am Deacons	11 Noon Christian Ed. 1 pm Mission 5 pm Xpress Singers	12 10 am Worship Comm. 11:30 am Bridge 7 pm Al Anon 7 pm Scouts	13 10 am Building & Grounds 4 pm Admin	14 6:30 pm Chat Bridge 7 pm AA	15 1:30 pm Hand & Foot Cards	16
	Spanglish Summer Camp					
17 10 am Worship 11 am Social Time	18 5 pm Xpress Singers	19 11:30 am Bridge 6:30 pm Session 7 pm Al Anon 7 pm Scouts	20	21 11 am Boating Day: Gates of the Mountains 7 pm AA	22 1:30 pm Hand & Foot Cards	23
24 10 am Worship 11 am Church Picnic at Kennedy Park	25 5 pm Xpress Singers	26 11:30 am Bridge 7 pm Al Anon 7 pm Scouts	27	28 6:30 pm Chat Bridge 7 pm AA	29 1:30 pm Hand & Foot Cards	30 Kayak trip
31 10 am Worship 11 am Social Time	NOTE: Sidewalk repairs are underway! To prevent damage to your vehicle and to allow access for the contractor's equipment, please do not park along the outer edge of the parking lot.					

August Birthdays



4th Jim Meyer
4th Jill Cook
6th Darlene McNay
12th Kay Warren
22nd Levi Clausen
24th Karen Witte

24th Vic Reiman
26th Patti Borsberry
28th Joyce Andrews
31st Butch Plowman
31st Aleigha Drynan



August Anniversaries

3rd Jim & Charlotte Meyer
13th Levi & Kristen Clausen
13th Melissa Stiles & Ryan
Hannahoe
16th Joe & Britta Steffens

18th Bob & Merle Korizek
18th Vic & Joan Reiman
20th Joe & Tonna Strasko
25th Art & Rena Bumgardner
30th Mark & Dianna Goodman

CHOIR SEASON STARTUP



We welcome returning and new choir members to our first rehearsal of the season on

Wednesday, September 3 at 2:00pm.

The upcoming choir season invites people to join the musical family and share their talent and passion for worship through song. Whether a singer is experienced or new to choral singing, there is a place for them in the choir. Joining the choir is about more than singing; it also builds community, creates friendships, and serves God and the church through music.

Our first Sunday to sing for worship will be September 21.

Friendship team meets Aug. 6; no potluck this month

The Friendship Committee will meet the first Wednesday, just for August, then return to the second Wednesday each month.

Also, no 5th Sunday Potluck this month, as we will have the church picnic Aug. 24 instead.

Trivia Answer

To serve.

Cover photo: Deer along the Missouri River

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



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

Label here