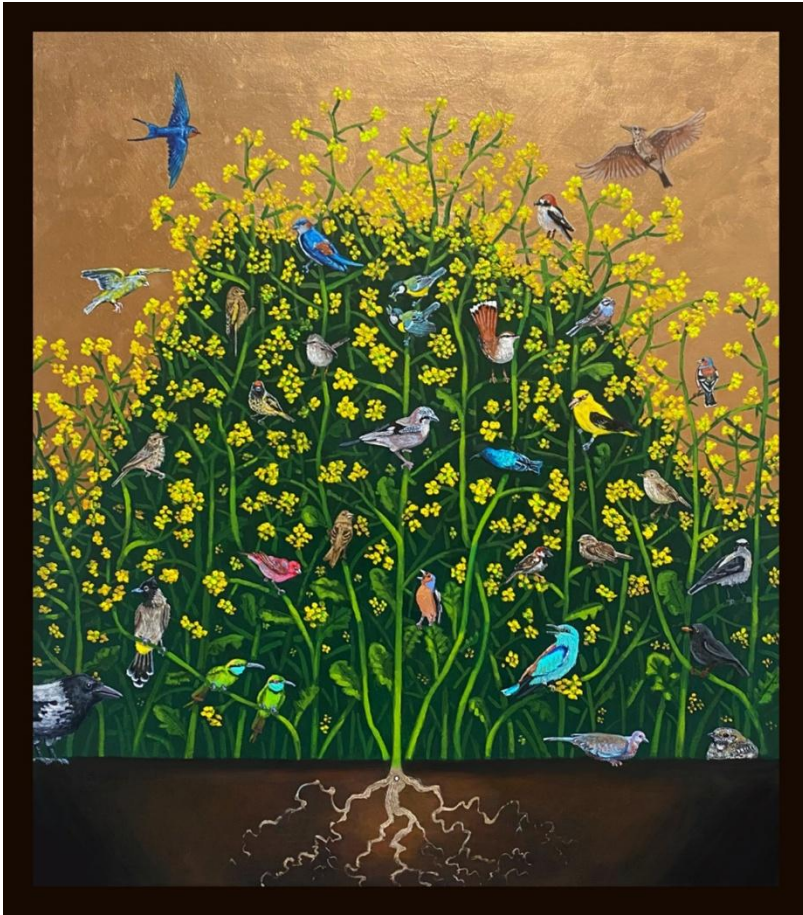


*Growing in Faith, Supporting One Another,
and Sharing Christ's Love*



The Parable of the Mustard Seed by Kelly Latimore

FIRST PRESBYTERIAN CHURCH PC(USA)

535 North Ewing Street

Helena, MT 59601

Sunday, September 27, 2026 ~ 10 a.m.

ORDER OF WORSHIP

Pastor: Rev. Emily Cowser

Liturgist: Kathy Chambers

Pianist: Merle Korizek

“Leadership begins the moment you are more concerned about others’ flourishing than you are about your own.”

-Andy Crouch, *Strong and Weak: Embracing a Life of Love, Risk and True Flourishing*

**Please stand if you are able*

PRELUDE

“Holy, Holy, Holy”

John B. Dykes

WELCOME AND ANNOUNCEMENTS

*CALL TO WORSHIP

Adapted from Joanna Harader

One: Gentle and patient

ALL: Jesus calls us to follow him.

One: Intentional and persistent

ALL: Jesus calls us to follow him.

One: In times of grief and in times of praise

ALL: Jesus calls us to follow him.

One: Through the struggles and through the victories

ALL: Jesus calls us to follow him.

One: Unexpected and planned

ALL: Jesus calls us to follow him.

One: In a still small voice and in power

ALL: Jesus calls us to follow him.

One: Spontaneous and prepared

ALL: Jesus calls us to follow him.

One: In our willingness and in our reluctance

ALL: Jesus calls us to follow him.

One: Jesus is eager to show us the way. May we enter worship open to his leading.

*HYMN

“In an Age of Twisted Values”

GtG #345

In an age of twisted values
we have lost the truth we need.
In sophisticated language
we have justified our greed.

By our struggle for possessions
we have robbed the poor
and weak.
Hear our cry and heal our nation;
your forgiveness, Lord, we seek.

We have built discrimination
on our prejudice and fear.
Hatred swiftly turns to cruelty
if we hold resentments dear.

For communities divided
by the walls of class and race,
hear our cry and heal our nation;
show us, Lord, your love and grace.

When our families are broken,
when our homes are full of strife,
when our children are bewildered,
when they lose their way in life,

When we fail to give the aged
all the care we know they need,

hear our cry and heal our nation;
help us show more love, we plead.

We who hear your word so often
choose so rarely to obey.
Turn us from our willful wandering;
give us truth to light our way.

In the power of your Spirit
come to cleanse us, make us new;
hear our cry and heal our nation
till our nation honors you.

*CALL TO CONFESSION

*PRAYER OF CONFESSION

ALL: Lord Jesus Christ, you know our sin. We want you to do whatever we ask of you, but we are unwilling to do what you ask of us. We want to sit beside you in your glory, but we fail to stand beside you in your suffering. We want to be first in your great kingdom, but we are among the last to serve the least. Forgive us. Pour out your mercy upon us and wash us clean in your saving grace. All this we ask in your holy name. Amen.

(a moment of silent confession)

*DECLARATION OF FORGIVENESS

One: People of God, the Lord is loving, and we are reconciled to God.
Therefore, let us humble and surrender ourselves to the will of God for the glory of the Lord. Our sins are forgiven.

ALL: Thanks be to God!

*THE PEACE

*“Gloria Patri”

GtG #581

Glory be to the Father,

and to the Son,
and to the Holy Ghost;
as it was in the beginning,
is now, and ever shall be,
world without end. Amen, amen.

OLD TESTAMENT READING Exodus 17:1-7

Page 114

One: The Word of the Lord.

ALL: Thanks be to God.

PSALM READING Psalm 78 (*The Message*)

Read Responsively

One: Listen, dear friends, to God's truth,
bend your ears to what I tell you.

I'm chewing on the morsel of a proverb;
I'll let you in on the sweet old truths,

**ALL: Stories we heard from our fathers,
counsel we learned at our mother's knee.**

One: We're not keeping this to ourselves,
we're passing it along to the next generation—

**ALL: God's fame and fortune,
the marvelous things he has done.**

One: He planted a witness in Jacob,
set his Word firmly in Israel,

**ALL: Then commanded our parents
to teach it to their children**

One: So the next generation would know,
and all the generations to come—

**ALL: Know the truth and tell the stories
so their children can trust in God,**

One: Never forget the works of God
but keep his commands to the letter.

Heaven forbid they should be like their parents,

bullheaded and bad,
A fickle and faithless bunch
who never stayed true to God.
The Ephraimites, armed to the teeth,
ran off when the battle began.
They were cowards to God's Covenant,
refused to walk by his Word.

**ALL: They forgot what he had done—
marvels he'd done right before their eyes.**

One: He performed miracles in plain sight of their parents
in Egypt, out on the fields of Zoan.

**ALL: He split the Sea and they walked right through it;
he piled the waters to the right and the left.**

One: He led them by day with a cloud,
led them all the night long with a fiery torch.

**ALL: He split rocks in the wilderness,
gave them all they could drink from underground springs;**

One: He made creeks flow out from sheer rock,
and water pour out like a river.

**ALL: All they did was sin even more,
rebel in the desert against the High God.**

One: They tried to get their own way with God,
clamored for favors, for special attention.

**ALL: They whined like spoiled children,
"Why can't God give us a decent meal in this desert?"**

**Sure, he struck the rock and the water flowed,
creeks cascaded from the rock.**

**But how about some fresh-baked bread?
How about a nice cut of meat?"**

One: When God heard that, he was furious—
his anger flared against Jacob,
he lost his temper with Israel.

**ALL: It was clear they didn't believe God,
had no intention of trusting in his help.**

One: But God helped them anyway, commanded the clouds
and gave orders that opened the gates of heaven.

**ALL: He rained down showers of manna to eat,
he gave them the Bread of Heaven.**

One: They ate the bread of the mighty angels;
he sent them all the food they could eat.

**ALL: He let East Wind break loose from the skies,
gave a strong push to South Wind.**

One: This time it was birds that rained down—
succulent birds, an abundance of birds.

**ALL: He aimed them right for the center of their camp;
all round their tents there were birds.**

One: They ate and had their fill;
he handed them everything they craved on a platter.

**ALL: But their greed knew no bounds;
they stuffed their mouths with more and more.**

One: Finally, God was fed up, his anger erupted—
he cut down their brightest and best,
he laid low Israel's finest young men.

**ALL: And—can you believe it?—they kept right on sinning;
all those wonders and they still wouldn't believe!**

One: So their lives wasted away to nothing—
nothing to show for their lives but a ghost town.

**ALL: When he cut them down, they came running for help;
they turned and pled for mercy.**

One: They gave witness that God was their rock,
that High God was their redeemer,

**ALL: But they didn't mean a word of it;
they lied through their teeth the whole time.**

One: They could not have cared less about him,
wanted nothing to do with his Covenant.

ALL: And God? Compassionate!

Forgave the sin! Didn't destroy!

One: Over and over he reined in his anger,
restrained his considerable wrath.

**ALL: He knew what they were made of;
he knew there wasn't much to them,**

One: How often in the desert they had spurned him,
tried his patience in those wilderness years.

**ALL: Time and again they pushed him to the limit,
provoked Israel's Holy God.**

One: How quickly they forgot what he'd done,
forgot their day of rescue from the enemy,

**ALL: When he did miracles in Egypt,
wonders on the plain of Zoan.**

One: He turned the River and its streams to blood—
not a drop of water fit to drink.

**ALL: He sent flies, which ate them alive,
and frogs, which drove them crazy.**

One: He turned their harvest over to caterpillars,
everything they had worked for to the locusts.

**ALL: He flattened their grapevines with hail;
a killing frost ruined their orchards.**

One: He pounded their cattle with hail,
let thunderbolts loose on their herds.

**ALL: His anger flared,
a wild firestorm of havoc,**

One: An advance guard of disease-carrying angels
to clear the ground, preparing the way before him.

**ALL: He didn't spare those people,
he let the plague rage through their lives.**

One: He killed all the Egyptian firstborns,
lusty infants, offspring of Ham's virility.

**ALL: Then he led his people out like sheep,
took his flock safely through the wilderness.**

One: He took good care of them; they had nothing to fear.
The Sea took care of their enemies for good.

**ALL: He brought them into his holy land,
this mountain he claimed for his own.**

One: He scattered everyone who got in their way;
he staked out an inheritance for them—
the tribes of Israel all had their own places.

**ALL: But they kept on giving him a hard time,
rebelled against God, the High God,
refused to do anything he told them.**

One: They were worse, if that's possible, than their parents:
traitors—crooked as a corkscrew.

Their pagan orgies provoked God's anger,
their obscene idolatries broke his heart.

**ALL: When God heard their carryings-on, he was furious;
he posted a huge No over Israel.**

One: He walked off and left Shiloh empty,
abandoned the shrine where he had met with Israel.

**ALL: He let his pride and joy go to the dogs,
turned his back on the pride of his life.**

One: He turned them loose on fields of battle;
angry, he let them fend for themselves.

**ALL: Their young men went to war and never came back;
their young women waited in vain.**

One: Their priests were massacred,
and their widows never shed a tear.

**ALL: Suddenly the Lord was up on his feet
like someone roused from deep sleep,**

shouting like a drunken warrior.

One: He hit his enemies hard, sent them running,
yelping, not daring to look back.

**ALL: He disqualified Joseph as leader,
told Ephraim he didn't have what it takes,**

One: And chose the Tribe of Judah instead,
Mount Zion, which he loves so much.

**ALL: He built his sanctuary there, resplendent,
solid and lasting as the earth itself.**

One: Then he chose David, his servant,
handpicked him from his work in the sheep pens.

One day he was caring for the ewes and their lambs,
the next day God had him shepherding Jacob,
his people Israel, his prize possession.

**ALL: His good heart made him a good shepherd;
he guided the people wisely and well.**

One: The Word of the Lord.

ALL: Thanks be to God.

NEW TESTAMENT READING Philippians 2:1-18

Page 1827

One: The Word of the Lord.

ALL: Thanks be to God.

SPECIAL MUSIC

“The God-Given Task”
by Moving Works

Video

PRAYER FOR ILLUMINATION

GOSPEL READING

Mark 10:35-45

Page 1571

One: The Gospel of the Lord.

ALL: Praise to you, O Christ!

SERMON—The Request of James and John

A TIME OF QUIET REFLECTION

O God of every nation,
of every race and land,
redeem the whole creation
with your almighty hand.

Where hate and fear divide us
and bitter threats are hurled,
in love and mercy guide us
and heal our strife-torn world.

From search for wealth and power
and scorn of truth and right,
from trust in bombs that shower
destruction through the night,

From pride of race and station
and blindness to your way,
deliver every nation,
eternal God, we pray.

Lord, strengthen those who labor
that all may find release
from fear of rattling saber,
from dread of war's increase;

When hope and courage falter,
your still small voice be heard;
with faith that none can alter,
your servants under-gird.

Keep bright in us the vision

of days when war shall cease,
when hatred and division
give way to love and peace,

Till dawns the morning glorious
when truth and justice reign
and Christ shall rule victorious
o'er all the world's domain.

***AFFIRMATION OF FAITH**

ALL: Christ Jesus, though he was in the form of God, did not regard equality with God as something to be exploited, but emptied himself, taking the form of a slave, being born in human likeness. And being found in human form he humbled himself and became obedient to the point of death – even death on a cross. Therefore God also highly exalted him and gave him the name that is above every name, so that at the name of Jesus every knee should bend, in heaven and on earth and under the earth, and every tongue should confess to the glory of God: Jesus Christ is Lord! Amen.

A TIME OF TESTIMONY: Update from Andrew Christofferson

PRAYERS OF THE PEOPLE & THE LORD’S PRAYER

THE OFFERING

INVITATION TO THE OFFERING

OFFERTORY

“Give Us This Day”

Bobby Day

Offering plates are located in the back of the sanctuary. You may also give online at fpchelena.org/giving or by mailing a check to First Presbyterian Church, 535 N. Ewing St., Helena, MT 59601.

***DOXOLOGY “Praise God, from Whom All Blessings Flow”**

GtG #606

Praise God, from whom all
blessings flow;
praise him, all creatures here

below;

Praise him above,
ye heavenly host;
praise Father, Son,
and Holy Ghost. Amen.

*OFFERING PRAYER

*HYMN

“For the Healing of the Nations”

GtG #346

For the healing of the nations,
Lord, we pray with one accord;
for a just and equal sharing
of the things that earth affords;
to a life of love in action
help us rise and pledge our word.

To a life of love in action
help us rise
and pledge our word.

Lead us forward into freedom;
from despair your world release,
that, redeemed from war
and hatred,
all may come and go in peace.

Show us how through care
and goodness
fear will die and hope increase.

All that kills abundant living,

let it from the earth be banned:
pride of status, race, or schooling,
dogmas that obscure your plan.

In our common quest
for justice
may we hallow life's brief span.

You, Creator God, have written
your great name on humankind;
for our growing in your likeness,
bring the life of Christ to mind,

That by our response
and service
earth its destiny may find.

*CHARGE

*BENEDICTION

POSTLUDE

“Rejoice, The Lord is King”
John Darwell

Announcements

Welcome!

A special welcome to visitors joining us for worship today! If you have children with you, feel free to hand them one of the cloth bags hanging in the back of the sanctuary — they are filled with books and toys! Hymns are found in the “Glory to God” (GtG) hymnal in the pews, as well as on the screen. Please sign the red fellowship pad in your pew and pass it to your neighbor. It is our tradition to remain seated during the Postlude at the conclusion of the service. After the service, please join us for refreshments and conversation.

Milk Campaign Wraps Up Today!

Thank you to all who participated in the Milk Campaign! Today is the final day to contribute to this multi-church campaign to buy milk for the Helena Food Share Kid Packs. Visit with Carol Gneckow for details.

Women’s Bible Study Time Changes

The Women’s Bible Study will meet Thursday, Oct. 1, at 1 p.m. Please note that this is a different gathering time from the past. For details, visit with Merle Korizek.

World Communion Offering Sunday, Oct. 4

The World Communion Offering (PC(USA)), received during A Season of Preparation leading up to World Communion Sunday, Oct. 4, is a new way for Presbyterians to “love kindness” expressed in action, often involving mercy, faithfulness and steadfast commitment. When we give to the World Communion Offering, we become the hands and feet of Christ’s work of dismantling racism, practicing peacemaking and assisting communities in finding their voice. And when we all do a little, it adds up to a lot. Thank you! Mission and Outreach, Carol Gneckow.

Trunk or Treat Coming Saturday, Oct. 10!

FPC is sponsoring a Trunk or Treat event on Saturday, Oct. 10, 11 a.m.-1 p.m., in our parking lot! If you’d like to participate by decorating your car trunk and handing out treats to our neighborhood children, contact Dianna Goodman or Carol Gneckow for details. Free hot dogs will also be offered that day!

Special Congregational Meeting Oct. 11

Session has called a special congregational meeting on Oct. 11, 2026, in the sanctuary following the 10 am worship service. The purpose of the meeting is to elect a Pastor Nominating Committee. If you would like to join the meeting via Zoom, please use this link: <https://us02web.zoom.us/j/85185156598?pwd=3b3IBlyYgWd0XSbWapNGnLSdQPZ6xA.1>. Please join us after worship Oct. 11 for this important meeting.

Doors Locked During Service

Session decided to lock the main entrance doors during the worship service. The doors are locked from 10:15 to 11 a.m., and unlocked again between 11 a.m. and noon.

You're Invited!

Wednesday, Sept. 30 Choir Rehearsal 2 p.m.

Thursday, Oct. 1 Women's Bible Study 1 p.m.

Friday, Oct. 2 Friday Bible Study 12/noon

Sunday, Oct. 4 Worship Service with Communion 10 a.m.
Social Time 11 a.m.

*Shaped by the grace of our sovereign God, we follow Jesus Christ
by growing in faith, supporting one another, and sharing
Christ's love in our community and the wider world.*

Staff

Ministers—Every Member

Pastor—Rev. Emily Cowser

Director of Music & Media—Les Cramer

Organist—Ann Swisher

Treasurer—Leo Potter

Office Coordinator—Julie Young

FPC Elders

John Bryan

(Congregational Life Co-Chair)

Dianna Goodman

(Nominating Chair)

Jim Meyer

(Administration Co-Chair)

Butch Plowman

(Buildings & Grounds Chair)

Carol Gneckow

(Mission & Outreach Chair)

Patti Borsberry

(Congregational Life Co-Chair)

Matthew Richards

(Administration Co-Chair)

Max Oliver, Clerk of Session

FPC Deacons

Bonnie Anderson

Ward Stiles, Vice-Moderator

Vicky Bryan

Art Bumgardner, Moderator

Rena Bumgardner

Ria Caussyn

Carole Massman

Wanda Jewell

Alysia Ryan



FIRST PRESBYTERIAN CHURCH PC(USA)

535 North Ewing Street ~ Helena, MT 59601

Office Hours: Monday through Friday, 9 a.m. to 1 p.m.

Phone: 406-442-4775 **Email:** admin@fpchelena.org **Website:** www.fpchelena.org

Pastor Emily Cowser

Phone: 406-442-4775

Email: pastor@fpchelena.org

Weekly Sermon on HCTV Cable Channel 189, Wednesdays 6 p.m. & Saturdays 9 a.m.