

The Mustard Seed



NEWSLETTER

Vol. 2026 Issue 7

First Presbyterian Church, Helena, MT

July 2026

Summer Trip to Our Lady of the Rockies

The Congregational Life Committee invites you to come along with us to Butte on Saturday, July 25, at 2 pm.

Should you decide to join this adventure, please buy your tour tickets online as soon as possible. They are nonrefundable, \$32 for seniors, and a limited number of tickets remain for this date.

Questions? Visit with John Bryan or Carol Gneckow.



Girls Thrive Fundraiser

A Girls Thrive Fundraiser is under way!

Visit the donation board and choose tags indicating the amount you'd like to give.

Then put the tags, along with your donation, in the shoe box.

An anonymous donor has already given \$2,500, and will be matching donations!

Please make checks payable to Girls Thrive. The fundraiser ends July 31.

Thank you. Questions? Visit with Dianna or Carol.



Fall Spiritual Formation Retreat Sept. 10-12

Registration is open for our fall spiritual formation retreat at Glacier Camp. Together, we will explore the purpose and nature of prayer, our struggles with prayer, and a variety of ways to pray.

The retreat begins with dinner on Thursday, September 10th, and will conclude by noon on Saturday, September 12th. The cost of the retreat is \$330 per room and \$110 per person for meals.

To register, email Pastor Emily at pastor@fpchelena.org and make a check payable to the church. Come enjoy an opportunity to connect with God and one another!



Projector Project

Scaffolding and some wonderful volunteers recently helped replace the lightbulb in the projector, which is nestled within the chandelier.

Summertime is Picnic Time



August 30th is the date for this year's summer picnic which will be held at Kennedy Park in East Helena.

Please plan to bring a dish or dessert to share, along with a chair. The Congregational Life Committee will provide the fried chicken.

We hope you'll save the date and join in the festivities!

Ladies Lunch July 2 at Centennial Park

Pack your favorite sack lunch and join the ladies lunch in Centennial Park, Thursday, July 2, at 11:30 am.

We'll meet under the canopy beside the softball fields (west). Fellowship and enjoy a summertime meal together!

Questions? Need a ride? Call Carol Gneckow.

Heritage Center Tour

The second tour of the new Montana Heritage Center with Vic Reiman will be Friday, July 10, at 1pm.



The group will meet at the north entrance of the center. Be prepared to walk the equivalent of about four blocks.

The group size is limited to 12 people. Check the signup sheet to see if there's room, or to sign up as an alternate in case someone cancels.

Trivia Question:

Philippians 4:6 tells us not to worry about anything.

What should we do instead?



(Answer on page 5)

Dear friends in Christ,

At our deacons training in June, we focused on the theme of listening. We engaged in various activities that helped us to listen well to one another, and we were amazed at what we can learn from and about one another when we listen attentively. Pastor and theologian David Augsburger once wrote: “Being heard is so close to being loved that for the average person, they are almost indistinguishable.” Loving our neighbor requires listening attentively – hearing their story, their hopes, their concerns.



In this season of discernment, listening is one of the most important practices. We must listen to ourselves. What hopes and fears are on your heart? How is this season unfolding for you? What feels energizing and life-giving right now, and what feels draining?

We must listen to God. We listen to God by practicing stillness and silence. As we quiet our easily distracted minds, we are more able to hear God's voice. We also listen to God by dwelling in Scripture. Scripture shows us who God is and how to follow God. God continues to speak to God's people through Scripture.

We must also listen to one another. We listen to one another by asking thoughtful questions, sitting with each other in the midst of both celebration and struggle, and being fully present. Let us listen to one another in our congregation. Let us listen to those in our community outside our church.

In the slower pace of summer, as we pause from some of our regular rhythms, I invite you to create space to practice listening. Sit on your porch for a few minutes in the mornings and listen to the sounds around you. Journal as a way of listening to what is on your heart. Practice becoming still before God and listening for what God might be saying to you. Lean into opportunities to fellowship with others and listen deeply to people's stories, hopes, and concerns.

Listening is a way to love. May we love God and love our neighbor by being attentive listeners this summer.

Grace and peace,

A handwritten signature in cursive script that reads "Emily Cowser". The signature is written in black ink on a white background.

The Rev. Emily Cowser

MINUTES OF THE SESSION FIRST PRESBYTERIAN CHURCH PC(USA)

June 16, 2026

The regular meeting of the Session of the First Presbyterian Church of Helena was called to order on June 16, 2026, at 1300 by Pastor in Residence Reverend Emily Cowser. Dwelling in the word. Pastor Cowser passed out a passage from Matthew 14 for the Session to examine and ponder.

Elder John Byran opened meeting with prayer

There was a quorum with the Following Elders present: Carol Gneckow, Patti Borsberry, Jim Meyer, Matt Richards, Dianna Goodman, John Bryan, Butch Plowman and Deacon Ward Stiles. Clerk of Session Max Oliver was also in attendance.

Approval of Session Meeting Agenda: A motion was made, seconded and passed approving the Meeting Agenda.

Approval of the Consent Agenda:

Approve the minutes of May 19 regular Session meeting.

Accept the reports of committees and Deacons

Carol Gneckow asked to look more at Admin Report. Pastor Emily said it was in Consent Agenda. A motion was made, seconded and passed to accept the Agenda.

Clerk's Report: Clerk read a letter from Dana Holzer, Intermountain, thanking FPC for its support.

Member BJ Burns passed away on 5 June.

Active Membership as of May 31, 2026

76

Action Items: Motion to take July off was made and seconded. There was some discussion. The discussion included Pumpkin Patch, outreach, party workers training and how to accomplish these types of items if we were not meeting. Motion passed.

Motion was made to move meeting time to 1330. Motion was seconded and passed.

Pastor Report: Emily explained a little about Strategic Planning Team. When to have an initial town hall.

A motion to have a Town Hall in July was made, seconded and approved. Emily reminded the group that Session packets are “privileged” as are discussions.

Pastor Emily revisited Elder training to fill in Ward and Jim. Was some



Many thanks to Sheryl for nurturing the roses!

SESSION MINUTES (Continued from page 4)

discussion on what was done, outcomes, benefits. How to hold each other accountable was added. We prayed a prayer of commitment. Discussion went into our “Experiment.” Session agreed to revisit at August meeting.

Committee Reports

Elder Carol asked a question about personnel and Policy. Elder Matt answered. Policies will be presented at August Session meeting. Policies will be made available online.

After Congregational Life we held a minute silence and prayer to recognize and grieve for BJ.

A motion was made to make Patti cochair of Congregational Life.

Action Items

Wednesdays in Advent. Session approved.

Girls Thrive Fundraiser. Session approved.

Dianna Goodman closed with prayer.

Trivia Answer

Pray about everything.

Philippians 4:6

ELDERS & DEACONS

FPC Elders

John Bryan

Congregational Life
Co-Chair

Dianna Goodman

Nominating Chair

Jim Meyer

Admin Co-Chair

Butch Plowman

Buildings & Grounds
Chair

Carol Gneckow

Mission & Outreach
Chair

Patti Borsberry

Congregational Life
Co-Chair

Matthew Richards

Admin 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

JULY 2026

Sun	Mo	Tue	Wed	Thu	Fri	Sat
			1 6:30 pm Bridge	2 Noon Bridge 11:30 Ladies Lunch 7 pm AA	3	4
5 10 am Worship w/Communion 11 am Social Time	6	7 Noon Bridge 2 pm Strategic Planning 7 pm Al Anon 5:30 pm Scouts	8 10 am Building & Grounds 1 pm Congregational Life 6:30 Bridge	9 Noon Bridge 7 pm AA	10 1 pm Tour of Heritage Center	11
Child's Play Summer Camp 9 a.m.-noon						
12 10 am Worship 11 am Social Time 11:15 am Deacons	13 1 pm Mission 5 pm Xpress Singers	14 Noon Bridge 1 pm Admin 7 pm Al Anon 5:30 pm Scouts	15	16 Noon Bridge 7 pm AA	17	18
Child's Play Summer Camp 9 a.m.-noon						
19 10 am Worship 11 am Social Time	20 5 pm Xpress Singers	21 Noon Bridge 7 pm Al Anon 5:30 pm Scouts	22 6:30 Bridge	23 Noon Bridge 7 pm AA	24	25 2 pm Our Lady of the Rock- ies Tour
Spanglish Kids Summer Camp						
Child's Play Summer Camp 9 a.m.-noon						
26 10 am Worship 11 am Social Time	27 5 pm Xpress Singers	28 Noon Bridge 7 pm Al Anon 5:30 pm Scouts	29	30 Noon Bridge 7 pm AA	31	
Child's Play Summer Camp 9 a.m.-noon						

July Birthdays



13th Andrew Kaiser
24th Bill Peterson

24th Les Cramer



July Anniversaries

18th Tim & Patti Borsberry

28th Ward & Mary Stiles

OPSF Worship Series

This summer, we are utilizing some worship materials published by the Omaha Presbyterian Seminary Foundation. This series includes weekly journal activities that you can pick up on the table by the sanctuary.



*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 2026	YTD
Income	\$27,941	\$157,804
Expenses	<u>\$21,191</u>	<u>\$101,970</u>
	\$6,750	\$55,834

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!*

Ongoing collections

Helena Food Share

The Mission Committee continues to collect food for Helena Food Share. The donation bin is located just inside the main office doors.



Toiletries/Coupons

Donations of toiletries (small, travel size) and coupons can be dropped off in the collection basket inside the main office doors.

Tonna Strasko delivers the donations to individuals in need of help with expenses, and also to God's Love, Friendship Center, and YWCA.

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