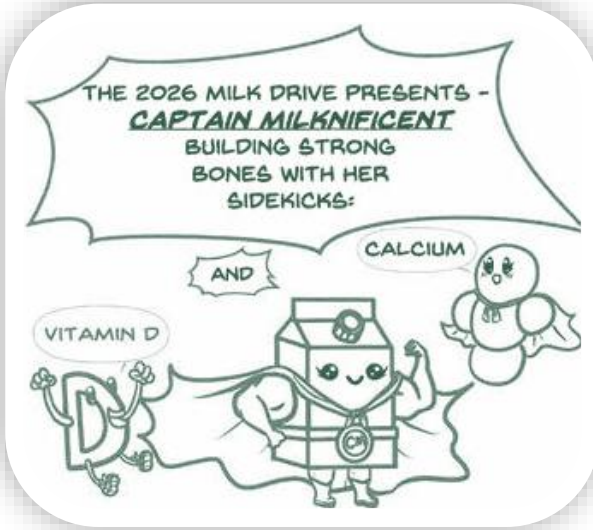




The Mustard Seed

First Presbyterian Church of Helena, MT

September 2026



POET Society Dinner Sept. 2

We will resume our POET (*Presbyterians Out Eating Together*) Society dinners on Wednesday, Sept. 2!

Meet at the Delta Hotel Restaurant, 2301 Colonial Drive, at 5:30 p.m.

For more information, visit with Barb Leland.

FPC Joins With Local Churches to Provide Milk for Kid Packs

This month, FPC is joining other local churches in raising money to buy milk for the Helena Food Share Kid Packs. The packs are distributed throughout the school year to students in need, providing food for the weekends.

Last year, 41,090 packs were distributed. FPC will be gathering donations throughout September, and Mission & Outreach invites you to “get in touch with the kid in you” on Sunday, Sept. 13, when you can buy tickets to play carnival games here, with proceeds going to the campaign. See details here: 

For more about the campaign, see page 2 or visit with Carol Gneckow.

Come & Play!

Milk Campaign Carnival Sept. 13

Join us Sunday, Sept. 13, for a Milk Campaign Carnival!

Get in touch with the kids in you! Throw a ring, bowl a few pins, or guess how much money is in the jar!

Tickets are \$1, so bring cash (checks welcome, too, made out to FPC.)

Congregational Life Invites You!

Trivia Night

Tuesday, Sept. 15
6-8 p.m.

Brewhouse - Downstairs

\$5 per person

*Proceeds support
Family Promise*

Pow Wow

Friday, Sept. 25
6 p.m.

At the Fairgrounds

Free Admission

*Food, crafts, Native American
music, dancing*

More About the Campaign

What About Milk?

In 2025, with 23 schools participating, 41,090 kid packs were distributed through Helena Food Share. The unit price was \$0.55 for the milk, making the total just under \$22,600. Awesome statistics.

This year, First Presbyterian will join Our Redeemer's Lutheran, St. John's Lutheran, New Life Lutheran, Plymouth Congregational and St. Peter's Episcopal churches in their milk campaign. The Hunger Team is hoping to order enough milk for at least 41,000 kid packs for the 26/27 school year. We will collect donations through September, beginning on Sunday, Sept. 6. Questions? Contact Carol Gneckow.

Goal: \$25,000.

.55 cents = 1 carton of milk

\$5.50 = 10 cartons of milk

\$55.00 = 100 cartons of milk

\$110.00 = 200 cartons of milk

\$550.00 = 1000 cartons of milk

\$1100 = 2000 cartons of milk

Together with the other five churches, we can help build strong bones and strong brains in our kids!

What's a Helena Food Share Kid Pack?

*Kid Packs provide nutritious, kid-friendly foods
so kids can stay healthy, nourished and ready to learn every week.
See the Kid Pack on display Sept. 6 near the bulletins.*

*D*ear friends in Christ,

In August, our session adopted updated mission and vision statements prepared by our Strategic Planning Team. Our mission statement seeks to address why we exist, what ministry is essential, and whom we serve. Our vision statement seeks to address who God is calling us to become and what impact we intend to have on our community over time. With much prayerful reflection and conversation, our Strategic Planning Team crafted these statements:

Mission: 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.

Vision: Open to the movement of God's Spirit, we seek to persist in faith and ministry, embrace people looking for a spiritual home, and focus outward to better serve our neighbors with the resources that we have.

Over the next nine months, I want to unpack what these mission and vision statements mean and how we might live them out as a church community. For this month, let's focus on what it means to be "shaped by the grace of our sovereign God." Our Strategic Planning Team spent time exploring what makes us theologically distinct from other churches. We are Presbyterian. Presbyterianism is part of the Reformed tradition. But what does it mean to be "Presbyterian" and to be "Reformed?" Would visitors reading our mission statement understand what these words mean – and can we even explain them ourselves?

"Presbyterian" comes from a Greek word that means "elder." The term refers to the form of government that we follow, which is characterized by the leadership of elders chosen by the congregation who guide, strengthen, and nurture the church. "Reformed" refers to a branch of Protestant Christianity that arose in the 16th century, guided by leaders like John Calvin and Ulrich Zwingli. "Reformed" is not the same thing as the "Reformation." The Protestant Reformation was a movement that led to the birth of Protestantism, a branch of Christianity that sought to reform – and eventually diverged from – the Roman Catholic Church. Martin Luther was a key leader in the Reformation. The Reformed tradi-



Continued on page 4)

tion came later, with different leaders and distinct theological emphases. Rather than include the words “Presbyterian” or “Reformed” in our mission statement, we decided to dig deeper and reflect on how our theological tradition shapes us. While the Reformed tradition is a broader church family with much diversity, the central affirmation of the Reformed tradition is that God is sovereign. The *Book of Order* defines God’s sovereignty as “the affirmation of the majesty, holiness, and providence of God who in Christ and by the power of the Spirit creates, sustains, rules, and redeems the world.” We believe that God is powerful, that God has authority over all creation, and that God is active in our world. These beliefs inform our worship of God and guide us as we seek to participate in God’s work in our community and the wider world.

By stating that we are “shaped by the grace of our sovereign God,” we are stating that God is the primary actor in the work of the church and that by God’s grace, God invites us to participate in loving relationship with God and with others. As we seek to live into our mission statement, I invite you to reflect on these questions in this season: How do you see God at work in Helena? How might God be inviting us to participate in God’s work? As we bear witness to the good news of God in Helena, may we follow the leading of our sovereign God.

Grace and peace,



The Rev. Emily Cowser

Lanham Memorial Service Sept. 23 at Glacier Camp

The memorial service for the Rev. Tim Lanham, former Glacier Camp director, will be held at Glacier Camp on Wednesday, Sept. 23, at 3 p.m., followed by a community dinner. Those who stay overnight will be served a breakfast of sausage, biscuits, and gravy in honor of Tim. This was his favorite breakfast.

If you plan to spend the night, the camp is charging a \$100 per person fee for room and board.



CHANCEL CHOIR

**Choir rehearsals will begin on Wednesday,
September 16, 2:00 pm in the choir room upstairs.**

**All choir members are welcome, and are
encouraged to come and join in.**

**Choir is a learning and performance opportunity,
where worship expands with a whole added dimension!**

**And, it's fun! We are always seeking new choir
participants. Perhaps you have sat in the
congregation and someone has said**

"You should join the choir, you sing well...."

If this is so, you probably do!

Why not give it a try?

**Our first Sunday to sing for worship will be
September 20.**

~ Thank You ~

Blair Haseman, Executive Director of Helena's Girls Thrive, has written a Thank You letter to First Presbyterian Church for our recent giving campaign.

Blair writes:

"Thank you to the generous congregation members of First Presbyterian Church of Helena for fundraising for Girls Thrive to ensure our programs continue to positively impact girls in the Helena area. The members of FPC raised \$12,660 in total to support Girls Thrive's upcoming programs! We want to give a special thank you to the anonymous donor who went above and beyond their initial \$2,500 match by donating \$7,535!

Your charitable donations will directly impact both our Community Programs for girls in grades 6-12 and our School Programs for girls in grades 4-5. Each 8-week session of our Community Program costs approximately \$10,000 to operate, while each 10-week session of our School Program costs \$18,000 at three schools.

Thanks to FPC's generosity, we will be able to serve a third school this fall - Smith Elementary School.

These costs support high-quality educational lessons, scholarships, fun and active games and physical activities, collaborations with local businesses and professionals, team t-shirts and water bottles, nutritious snacks for each student and more. Thanks to the generous support of FPC, we are able to help even more girls THRIVE!"

God's Blessings,
Carol Gneckow, Mission & Outreach



Trivia Question:

When Jesus sent out his disciples, what group did he tell them to go to?



(Answer on page 9)

World Communion Offering One Way to 'Love Kindness'

The World Communion Offering (PC(USA)), received during A Season of Preparation leading up to World Communion Sunday (October 4), is a new way for Presbyterians to "love kindness" expressed in action, often involving mercy, faithfulness and steadfast commitment.



Racial justice, gender justice, global witness, and ecumenical and interfaith engagement are the important causes supported by this Offering.

The prophet Micah is clear: Our love of God moves us to faithful action through justice, kindness and humble living. Participating in the Churchwide Special Offerings is one way Presbyterians show their love for God and help all God's children live into the fullness of Micah's prophecy.

Thank you for your generous gifts. 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

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

MINUTES OF THE SESSION

FIRST PRESBYTERIAN CHURCH PC(USA)

August 18, 2026

Our meeting began with Pastor Cowser leading us in reflection and discussion, Dwelling in the Word. Bible text was from Matthew 14.

The meeting was called to order by Pastor Cowser at 1345. Elder Jim Meyer opened the meeting with prayer

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

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

Approval of the Consent Agenda:

- a. Approve the minutes of the June 16th session meeting.
- b. Accept the reports of the committees and the deacons.
- c. Authorize the celebration of communion on September 12th at the fall spiritual formation retreat.
- d. Approve periodic (once every five years) earnings withdrawal from Lona's Legacy/Long Range Building Fund to reimburse general fund for cost of dungeon furnaces and the upgraded internet/wi-fi system.
- e. Approve our congregation's participation in the Trivia Night at The Brewhouse on September 15th from 6:00pm-8:00pm.
- f. Approve our congregation's participation in the Pow Wow at the Fairgrounds on September 25th at 6:00pm.

Motion to approve the Consent Agenda was seconded, and motion carried.

Clerk's Report: Clerk read a couple of letters thanking FPC for its support. One from PCUSA and one from The Friendship Center.

Active Membership as of July 31, 2026: 76

Action Items: None before the Pastor's Report. There are several after and are noted where they occurred in the meeting.

Pastor Report: Pastor Cowser answered a question about an agenda for the September Retreat. She indicated that details would be forthcoming.

The future of the Church was discussed. The session was asked to pick an experiment to try. Pastor Cowser gave 3 examples of what other churches

have tried. A motion to reach out to Helena Pointe was made, seconded, and carried.

The Pumpkin Patch and Pumpkin Patch Party were discussed. A motion to cancel the pumpkin patch was made, seconded, and carried. A motion to have a “Pumpkin Patch Event” was made, seconded, and carried. The exact make up of the Event will be determined by a new team.

Committee Reports

Admin Committee asked to refer Policies and Procedures Relating to Sexual Misconduct and the Child/Youth/Vulnerable Adult Protection Policy and Procedures to our attorney for review. Motion passed.

Mission and Outreach put forth a motion for permission to participate in Girls Thrive Events. Motion passed.

The Strategic Planning Team asked to adopt updated mission and vision statements and strategic goals. Motion was made, seconded, and carried.

The Viability and Sustainability Committee of Glacier Presbytery has asked for input on five questions so that they may help plan the future of the Presbytery. These questions were also put forth to the Deacons. The Clerk will compile and submit the responses.

Motion was made to adjourn the meeting, seconded and carried. Leo closed the meeting with prayer.



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 July net giving is here:

	July 2026	YTD
Income	\$28,955	\$203,151
Expenses	<u>\$17,787</u>	<u>\$142,316</u>
	\$11,168	\$60,834

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!*

Trivia Answer

The lost sheep of Israel.

(Matthew 10:5-6)

SEPTEMBER 2026

Sun	Mon	Tue	Wed	Thu	Fri	Sa
		1 Noon Bridge 5:30 pm Scouts 7 pm Al Anon	2 2 pm POET Society Dinner	3 Noon Bridge 7 pm AA	4	5
6 10 a.m. Worship w/Communion 11 a.m. Social Time	7 <i>Labor Day</i> <i>Church Office Closed</i>	8 Noon Bridge 1 pm Admin 5:30 pm Scouts 7 pm Al Anon	9 10 am Buildings & Grounds 1 pm Congregational Life	10 10 am Women's Bible Study Noon Bridge 7 pm AA <i>Fall Retreat Begins at Glacier Camp</i>	11	12
13 10 a.m. Worship 11 a.m. Milk Campaign Carnival 11:15 am Deacons	14 1 pm Mission 5 pm Xpress Singers 6 pm Bridge	15 Noon Bridge 1:30 Session 5:30 pm Scouts 6-8 pm Trivia Night at Brewhouse 7 pm Al Anon	16 2 pm Choir	17 Noon Bridge 7 pm AA	18	19
20 10 a.m. Worship 11 a.m. Social Time	21 5 pm Xpress Singers	22 Noon Bridge 5:30 pm Scouts 7 pm Al Anon	23 2 pm Choir	24 Noon Bridge 7 pm AA	25 Noon Friday Study 6 pm Pow Wow at Fairgrounds	26
27 10 a.m. Worship 11 a.m. Social Time	28 5 pm Xpress Singers 6 pm Bridge	29 Noon Bridge 5:30 pm Scouts 7 pm Al Anon	30 2 pm Choir			

September Birthdays



2nd Bob Korizek
6th Lonna Weidemann
14th Marie Fuhrmann
21st Bruce Luke
21st Bonni Belden
22nd Kya Clausen

22nd Marti Cook
25th Terry Healow
26th Zachary Kaiser
26th Tyler Kaiser
30th Mark Goodman
30th Mike Swisher



September Anniversaries

2nd Barrie & Bill Heinecke
4th John & Kay Warren

20th John & Vicky Bryan

Bible Studies

Women's Bible Study Resumes Sept. 10



The Women's Bible Study will meet the second Thursday of each month, beginning Sept. 10.

The group will meet at the church at 10 a.m. All women are invited to participate. Visit with Merle Korizek for details.

Friday Bible Study Returns Sept. 25

The Friday Bible Study will resume meeting Sept. 25, at noon, at the church.



The group will study the book of Romans. Everyone is welcome, and you can join in any time. Contact John Coefield for details.

Save the Date! Trunk & Treat Coming October 10!

Pumpkin Patch Trunk & Treat will be held in the church parking lot on Saturday, Oct. 10, from noon to 2 p.m. We'll have trunks open for the children to pass by and fill their bags with sweet treats! Costumes are encouraged! We'll have free hot dogs to give away! Tell your neighbors and friends! More information will be coming soon. Dianna or Carol can answer your questions.



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



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

Label here