February 2021 eNews

Voices of Faith

Part 2

girl holding basin with birds, sculpture

Intermountain Children's Home, Helena
Wider Church Resources

Click on these logo links for resource information

UCC Vital Signs
What to do when there are White Nationalists down the road.

UCC CoVid Statistics
Worship, technology, pastoral care, and clergy concerns during CoVid

State of the Church
Envisioning the Church Differently

State of the Poor
Revs. William Barber and Traci Blackmon address poverty, Feb 19, 1:30 pm

Conference resources

Click on these logo links for resource information. Many additional resources can be found on our WEBSITE [www.mnwcucc.org](http://www.mnwcucc.org)

The MT-NWY Conference Faith Formation Committee invites you and your faith community, near and far, to join us for Lenten Tuesday Evening Prayer online via Zoom, Tuesdays during Lent, 7:00-7:30 p.m. This will be a quiet time of reflection, scripture, and prayer together, coordinated by conference clergy and lay leaders. Bring a candle and your prayerful heart (or your worried, weary, anxious heart). All are welcome. Please register in advance to receive link.

Tues Lenten Series
Faith Formation Committee offers Meditation Series during Lent, Tuesdays 7-7:30 pm

God Loves Us When...
Virtual Sunday School shared by Missouri Mid-South UCC, available for free use on YouTube

eNews Archive
from 2015 to current

Sound and Video
Spec sheets and suggested equipment

Local Church News

Click on these logo links for more information. To include your church news, email items to ucc@mnwcucc.org before the 29th of each month.
Black History Month
Great resources offered to children, youth, and families compiled by Pilgrim UCC CE director, Rev. Danielle Rogers.

Ordination Sunday
Pastor Lisa Harmon will be ordained on March 21 at First UCC Billings. Details will be forthcoming.

Just Eating
Mayflower and First UCC, Billings, share Lenten program on "Practicing our Faith at the Table."

Lenten Learning Kits
Great Falls UCC puts together weekly kits with devotional activities.

Hardin UCC and UMC
These two congregations commit to sharing an administrative board.

Heart Attack Awareness
Reminders for Feb Heart Attack Awareness Month

New Colstrip pastor
Rev. David Murchie, and spouse Joyce, are moving from Japan where they had served as UCC Global Missionaries.

News of the World
Columbus UCC seeks readers and film viewers of "News of the World" to have a discussion group.

Church Book Studies
Billings 1st: Arctic Dreams, Barry Lopez
Helena: Into the Beautiful North Luis by Alberto Urre
Missoula: Towards the Other America by Chris Crass
Red Lodge: Caste: The Origin of Our Discontents by Isabel Wilkerson
Worden: He Choose the Nails by Max Lucado

Ministry Positions Sought
Pilgrim UCC, Bozeman, Interim Minister, full-time
Columbus Community UCC, Part-time settled minister
Peoples Sidney and Savage UCC’s, Full-time designated pastor

Other churches in interim ministries:
Broadus Powder River UCC, Baker UCC, Buffalo WY UCC,

God-seeds
Christians, what do we know about creation?
Is it good or bad?

Christians, what do we know about humanity?
Are we the image of God, or are we just what we make of ourselves?

Christians, what do we know of relationships?
Are we called to be our kin’s keeper, or king of our own world?

Christians, what do we know of righteousness?
Is what is right for the world, the same as what Jesus teaches is right?

Christians, what do we know of justice?
Is justice the remainder of what we care about after our own needs and desires are satisfied, or the beginning of how we engage transactions?

Christians, what do we know about Jesus calling us to go into the world?
Is it to preach the rewards in heaven, or to do unto others…the least of brothers and sisters?

These questions bubbled up as I read Democracy in Chains by Nancy MacLean. She chronicles a movement started in the United States over 50 years ago to end our national “social contract.” Based on the economic theories of unfettered capitalism articulated by James McGill Buchanan, this movement has nothing but hostile regard for the common good and religious morality. I give my bi-optic questions above because this movement answers these questions in ways that are so opposite to Christian faith and ethics.
This movement labels anything that our government does on behalf of the common good as “socialism,” including public education, social security, and medicare. With its social-economic roots in the antebellum South, proponents believe that true freedom is when a person is able to lord over others without restraint. They are aware that the general public is not likely to vote against its common good, and so they strategize on how to disenfranchise voters and how to hide their true intentions. This movement has achieved major influence through political wins and through judiciary appointments (2/3 of current federal judges have received training).

A current major political-social-economic movement, 50 years in the making, is all about dismantling democracy, the common good, and the morality of “doing unto the least of these.” Christians, we have some questions to ask. And many of the answers we already know. During this biennial legislative session in Helena, ask the right questions. Offer moral answers to the issues our faith would have us lift up. Speak righteousness to legislation that impacts the “least of these” among the children and families of Montana.

Extra Covid Relief grant supplement from UCC will be used to assist local church insurance costs

Last fall, our Conference received a $10,000 grant to support our mission during the pandemic. This grant was used to fund our virtual Conference Annual Meeting leadership, provide consultation to the Board of Directors, and offer grants to help rural churches purchase equipment to do virtual worship. Our national setting of the UCC had extra grant funds remaining at the end of 2020 and so gave the MT-NWy Conference an additional $5000. The Board of Directors is offering to supplement local church property and liability insurance on an "as-needed" basis. If your church has an urgent budget need for assistance with insurance costs, you may send a letter or email of request to the Conference office. Include your 2021 budget, a copy of your church insurance policy, the cost of your insurance, and the amount requested. Requests are due by March 31. Distributions will be made by April 30.

Team Ministries

Healing the Earth

Our Conference Green Team meets the 3rd Tuesday of each month on zoom at 2 p.m. Our three goals are:

The Conference Green Team met again on the third Tuesday of January, the 19th, at 2 p.m. Thanks to Rev. Bob Miller and Barbara Gulick, we took an inward journey, sharing the spiritual practices that sustain
1. Share information with Conference churches about becoming a Creation Justice Church.

2. Engage in political advocacy around clean energy solutions to heal the earth.

3. Identify someone at each Conference church to be a Green Team liaison/member.

The Green Team will meet again Tuesday, February 16, 2 pm. Register in advance for this meeting: https://us02web.zoom.us/meeting...

After registering, you will receive a confirmation email containing information about joining the meeting. After registering, you will receive a confirmation email containing information about joining the meeting.

We shared upcoming Creation Justice events. At our February meeting, we will plan to bring resources of what churches can do to celebrate Earth Day, April 22.

At our next meeting, we will divide up the list so that we can begin calling Conference church pastors and moderators and invite them to join our team.

Look for a hymn, our mission statement, and events on our Green Team page on the Conference web site.

Stay healthy; stay green!

Culture of Wellness/
Surviving the Pandemic

Zoom gatherings for clergy serving local congregations, to share strategies, support, and find "worship buddies" for shared worship planning.

Leadership Coaching available through trained coaches within the Conference:
Amy Carter
Laura Folkwein
Pamela Peterson
Cheryl Stewart
Marc Stewart
Susan Watterson
Dwight Welch
Kim Woeste
Jennifer Yocum

• Coaching looks forward with hope and optimism to people and groups’ abilities to solve their own problems.
• It is both a guided and an open, creative process with a priority on setting plans and taking steps toward a goal.
• Coaching can help with personal matters, professional development, church vitality and challenges.
• Those being coached, the "coaches," set the priorities and the tone for coaching.

In these times of Covid, physical location does not matter much, as we can all use zoom. Consider how these, your Conference coaches, might be helpful to your church family.
Connecting Our Justice Work

“Just Connections” grew out of this past year’s Conference Annual Meeting as we entered into conversation and realized that there’s a whole lot of justice work going on in our churches. There was a passion to share what’s happening and celebrate it. There was also a desire to connect with one another more deeply to share resources and bring our voices together. That connectional work has begun and we are inviting others to join in.

Next gathering by zoom on Tuesday February 16, 7 pm
Register in advance for this meeting: https://us02web.zoom.us/meeting...

After registering, you will receive a confirmation email containing information about joining the meeting.

If you or your church are involved in justice work, you are invited to be part of Just Connections so we can celebrate and affirm your work.

If you or your church would like more information about what justice work is, you are invited to be part of Just Connections to draw from the resources and wisdom in our midst.

If you or folks in your church would like to learn more about what justice work you could be engaging, you are invited to be part of Just Connections to be inspired.

If you just like connecting with people who are passionate about justice, you are invited to join in.

If you know of someone that would be interested but is not getting the email, please forward the information along.

Questions? Contact Lynne Spencer-Smith 406-770-9157 or pastor@greatfallsucc.org

Calendar

All meetings are happening virtually and require registration
February 16 Green Team 2 pm
February 16 Just Team 7 pm
February 17 Ash Wednesday, check for church evening services
February 18 Executive Committee 10 am - noon
February 18 Church and Ministry Commission 3 - 5:30 pm
February 18 resilENT Worship resources Zoom seminar on Climate Change 4 pm
February 23 Lenten Meditation Time led by Faith Formation Comm, 7 pm
February 25 Clergy Cluster 10 am - noon
February 28 Seminary Sunday
March 2 Lenten Meditation Time led by Faith Formation Comm, 7 pm
March 3 Deadline for filing church annual updates with national UCC
March 5 World Day of Prayer
March 7 -13 UCC Women’s Week
March 8 Faith Formation Committee 4 pm
March 9 March 23 Lenten Meditation Time led by Faith Formation Comm, 7 pm
March 10 Committee for Outdoor Ministries  7 pm
March 14 One Great Hour of Sharing Sunday, also Daylight Savings Time starts
March 16 Green Team 2 pm
March 16 Just Team 7 pm
March 16 March 23 Lenten Meditation Time led by Faith Formation Comm, 7 pm
March 18 Conference Board of Directors 10 am - noon
March 20 Wholiness Team zoom gathering
March 21 Ordination of Pastor Lisa Harmon
March 23 Lenten Meditation Time led by Faith Formation Comm, 7 pm
March 28 Palm Sunday and beginning of Holy Week
April 4 Easter Sunday
April 8 Virtual Happy Hour for clergy serving congregations, 6 - 7:30 pm
July 11-18, 2021 General Synod 33, Rooted in Love, will be held using virtual technology, such as Zoom
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