

MISSOULA FIRST UNITED METHODIST CHURCH
WELCOMES ALL PEOPLE OF ANY AGE, GENDER, COLOR, ETHNICITY, SEXUAL ORIENTATION, ECONOMIC STATUS,
OR PHYSICAL ABILITY INTO THE FULL LIFE AND MEMBERSHIP OF THIS CONGREGATION.

TOWER TIDINGS

The Eighty-Eighth Epistle of John

"The Eagerness to be Noticed" 5-1-26

MAY 2026



† **May 3, 2026**
5th Sunday of Easter

Proverbs 4:10-18
Psalm 119:9-32
1 Peter 2:2-10
John 14:1-14

† **May 10, 2026**
6th Sunday of Easter

Ezekiel 34:1-7
Psalm 115:
1 Peter 3:13-22
John 14:15-21

† **May 17, 2026**
Ascension Sunday

Isa 45:1-7
Ps 21:1-7
1 Peter 4:12-14; 5:6-11
John 17:1-11

† **May 24, 2026**
Pentecost

Num 11:24-30
Ps 104:24-34, 35b
1 Cor 12:3b-13
John 7:37-39

† **May 31, 2026**
Trinity Sunday

Gen 1:1-2:4a
P 8
2Cor 13:11-13



What was that?

Something.....good.....just happened?

I almost missed it! For I was looking elsewhere; honestly, I was looking down due to the burdensome nature of reality these days, a depressing gravity that weighs on heart and mind daily and winds up bending thoughts pessimistically downward as the default. It took effort to look up.

But when I did, I noticed things that broke through that heaviness, things as powerful in their effect even as they were nothing extraordinary in outward appearance. A grocery store cashier who is almost always terse and blunt coming to life with my wife and I as he noticed we are avid tea drinkers ("have you tried the new Blueberry Zinger? It's one of my new favorites!"); our normally "I do my own thing" dog paying me the honor of jumping down from my chair without me having to coax him at all (he thinks it's his chair, of course!); a kindly interaction at our favorite fast food franchise (let's hear it for Taco Del Sol!); a sun-beam well placed on a cloudy day; one remaining bloom of a purple crocus the deer didn't eat (we thought they didn't like them? In our neighborhood, the deer do not obey any such taste prohibitions); a granddaughter complimenting her grandpa Hop (that's me!); a finished project, a completed pastor's pen (in just a bit!), a new staff introduction, a growing number of new people to our church, a wondrous moment with the children on Sunday.....how many are the blessings in our lives that we miss due to our heads – or hearts -- hanging down?

None of the things I mentioned as blessings would register on the scale of earth-shaking events, but neither are they negligible as to their power to transform the day – in fact, they probably carry much more weight to encourage a good day than anything promoted by the news of our world or the darker thoughts of our inner lives.

The key is in shaping our perception towards noticing those everyday matters and people and events which affirm life and uplift goodness; and the key to such noticing is expectation that there is always something before us worth seeing.

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The heavy days of our present worldly and national distress show no signs of abating any time soon, but neither do the lighter days of friendship and spring gardens and children playing and effective advocacy and creative expression that coexist with the heaviness; yet we always have a choice over what we pay the greater attention to in our lives. It is in that choice that we largely determine what our outlook for the future will be -- filled with despair over the way things are, filled with hope over the way things can become, or filled with something in between which strives to see the burdensome things in the light of how they are meant to be changed.

Faith seeks this balance, as Jesus did; and it begins with noticing how God is at work in the world in spite of any evidence to the contrary. Looking at things in a different way has always been God's counsel for those eager to see this world transformed; Jesus showed us how such vision works, by understanding how God works, who God loves, and what God wants, showing us how God moves in us and through us to work grace-filled transformation.

Perhaps this is what makes the greatest difference in life – noticing what really matters. Perhaps this is our greatest power as people of faith – noticing what others miss. And perhaps this is our greatest contribution to the world – to invite others to notice what they otherwise would miss. After all, the love Jesus came to promote is the most noticeable – and needed -- gift to those on the receiving end. And noticing is often the prelude to replication.

God's Grace Be With You,

John Hamel



UNITED WOMEN IN FAITH**Inspiration Tool Box**

"Is it Spring, is it morning?

Are there trees near you,

And does your own soul need comforting?

Quick, then - open the door and fly on your heavy feet; the song

May already be drifting away."

- From Such Singing in the Wild Branches, poem by Mary Oliver

MAY 1-3: Fairmont Hot Springs Spiritual Retreat. Registration now open. Please ask Tish for more information, 406-370-6572. NOTE: A scholarship is available for first time attendees. Again, call Tish.

May 14 - Ruth Fellowship will meet in the Kay Duffield Library at 10:00. We will prepare pansies for distribution to special church members. Join us!

May 15-17: UWFaith National Assembly in Indianapolis

May 20 - VESPERs will be meeting for lunch at Applebees on Wednesday at 1:00 pm. Contact Patsy Hodges or Joanie Painter for more information.

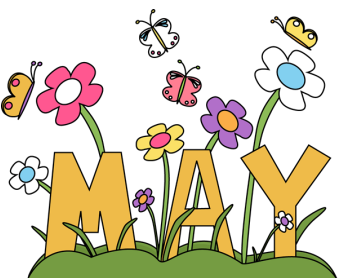
May 23 - GEMS will be finishing out the year by meeting for lunch at McKenzie River Pizza on BROOKS, this Saturday at 11:30. Anyone wanting good fellowship, FUN and conversation is welcome. Call Tish if you need a ride, 406-370-6572.

May 26- The UWF book group meets the fourth Tuesday of the month at 11 am in the Kay Duffield Library at church for discussion. We choose our books from the UWF recommended reading list. Our book for May is *The Book of Hope: A Survival Guide for Trying Times*, by Jane Goodall. For those who can't join us in person, we always have a ZOOM option.

June 21: Bake Sale! Mark you calendar.

Our UWFaith unit is now facilitated by a Steering Committee rather than by elected leaders.

Circles and groups will still meet at their designated times and carry out their mission pro-



jects, but there will be no regularly scheduled unit meetings unless specially announced. So, watch for calendar announcement throughout the year. If you have questions, please call or text Elaine at 406-529-1325 or Tish at 406-370-6572.

MANIFEST LOVE. CELEBRATE WITH PRIDE!

Many of us are looking forward to being a part of the Pride Parade again this year on June 20th. This year we'd also like to "show up" even more as allies for our LGBTQ+ family, friends and neighbors (and get our church name out there in solidarity) by becoming a Missoula Pride Celebration Sponsor. Sponsorships for the Pride Celebration are not inexpensive, starting at \$1,000. But we think it's worth it. And if we raise more than the \$1,000, we'll share the rest with *Reconciling Ministries Network* – the national organization that engages us and the rest of the Methodist church in realizing our vision of a more diverse and inclusive church.

To donate by check, put "Pride Celebration" in the memo line, or use the same designation through Breeze, or text: "406-998-1982, Pride".

The funds are important to...

1. Create Free & Accessible Events – They prioritize keeping as many events free and family-friendly as possible.
2. Cover Essential Event Costs – Your support covers critical expenses such as:
 - Sound & Lighting for performances and events
 - Permits & Insurance to ensure a safe and legal celebration
 - Event Safety & Security Measures to protect all attendees
 - Infrastructure like waste management, recycling, and porta-potties
 - Event Staff & Volunteers who make the festival happen
3. Provide Direct Local Support – Proceeds beyond their costs benefit the *Western Montana LGBTQ+ Community Center*. To date, they have raised more than \$65,000 for this vital resource through the last four prior years of Missoula Pride Celebrations.
4. Elevating Inclusion and Building Local Capacity – Funding top-tier performances, broad educational offerings, and safe and inclusive community gathering spaces.

Over 3+ vibrant days (June 19 - 21) they host 50+ events including:

- Downtown Street Party & Parade
- Educational Sessions & Community Spaces
- Dance Parties & Drag and Variety Performances

Help us help Missoula Pride celebrate five years of lifting up LGBTQ+ voices and community *with pride!*

Thank you!

Mission & Outreach, Reconciling Ministries Team.



Green Notes: Recycle Glass, Compost at First Church for Free Through June

There's never been a better time to join First Church's glass recycling and composting programs.

Through the end of June, all current and new recyclers/composters can participate in the program for free! At the end of June, we will announce a new, less expensive monthly fee based on the number of congregation members and friends who have joined us.

First Church contracts with Recycling Works to collect our glass each week. The collection bins are behind the Sunshine House, next door to our church building. There's easy, 24-hour access to the red-topped bins from the alley. We accept all colors of glass, but it should be clean. Remember not to put any trash in the recycling bins, as Recycling Works will not collect from contaminated bins.

All of the glass we collect is reused for new products — road bed, decking, etc. — or is recycled into new glass jars, bottles and containers. Glass is infinitely recyclable, so recycling couldn't be more crucial.

Soil Cycle is our composting contractor. That bin is also near the alley in the backyard of Sunshine House. These are the items you CAN COMPOST in our bins: vegetables, fruits, coffee grounds and filters, loose leaf tea, egg shells, cereal, bread and grains, mushrooms, plant and flower trimmings, shredded paper (not glossy), used paper towels and napkins.

Let's get busy recycling glass and composting our food waste. Missoula's landfill, and the planet, need our help.

Church Pledges and Donations

The donation page via the Breeze website can be found at:

<https://firstumcmissoula.breezechms.com/give/online>

Designate where your donation goes when donating an online by using the dropdown menu below the donation amount.

You can also donate via text message: (406) 998-1982 include donation amount and a keyword like "Pledge" or "Building".

Mail in donations are also welcome.

Contact:

Leslie Uhlenbruck,
Financial Secretary

First United Methodist Church
P.O. Box 7646
Missoula, MT 59807-7646

CONTACT OUR OFFICE

Weekday Hours

Monday-Thursday 9-12

Phone: 406- 549-6118

E-Mail: FUMCmissoula@gmail.com

Website: www.firstumcmissoula.org

Facebook:

www.facebook.com/1stumcmissoula

Instagram:

<https://www.instagram.com/missoula1stumc/>

PASTOR JOHN

Office: Available Monday-Friday

By phone: 406-549-6118 or
406-396-8966 (cell)

E-Mail: john@FUMCmissoula.com

Hospital visits: Please call John or the office if you know of someone in the hospital. Home visits: upon request.

CHURCH STAFF

John Daniels, *Pastor*

Catherine Thomsen, *Administrative Assistant*

Cheryl Bauer, *Administrative Assistant Sub*

Jim Bauer, Carol Davis, Cara Lightfield.

Office Volunteers

Leslie Lindley, *Treasurer*

Leslie Uhlenbruck, *Financial Secretary*

Craig Gohl, *Custodian*

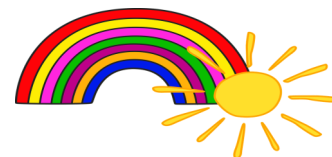
Greg Boris, *Chancel Choir Director*

Jason Triche, *Hand Bell Choir Director*

Luke Larson, *Organist and Pianist*

Cindy Ekstrand, *Sunday School Director*

Lizzie Mills -Low, *Nursery Attendant*



Deadline for June 2026

May 20

Play Earth Action Bingo; Win a Prize!

Join First Church’s Green Team this month in playing a Climate Action Bingo game focused on the power of small, individual, earth-friendly actions. Have you changed to a green bank? Check the box! Have you joined a peaceful protest calling for climate action? X marks the spot! Did you take the bus one day this week instead of driving? Or did you bicycle? What if you ate plant-based meals for a whole week? Or donated to a climate charity? There are many ways to increase your climate activism and our Climate Action Bingo Card is chock-full of ideas. We distributed a big stack of cards on Sunday, April 19, but still have plenty to share. So ask a Green Team member for a game card, and get to work! Then turn in your winning card no later than Sunday, May 17, and we’ll draw one name from the basket of cards during worship service. The winner will receive a gift basket assembled by the Green Team – surprises! Of course, we will all be winners for taking steps during the month to increase our climate activism. Here we go!



Earth Month 2026

CLIMATE ACTION *Bingo!*

Donate to a climate charity	Eat plant-based for 1 week	Be a climate advocate in your job	Join a climate organization
Change to a green bank	Peacefully protest	Create media attention about climate	Reduce and compost food waste
Divest from fossil fuels	Look into electrifying your home	Bicycle instead of drive	Take one less flight
Call your local leader	Take public transport instead of drive	Share climate solutions	Build your climate community

HOW MANY CAN YOU COMPLETE?

Tzedakah Pocket Offers Hope

April has been a challenge from a lodging standpoint with complicated requests for assistance which required more thought and effort than normal to accommodate. As usual though, your support was there to help us resolve the issues to the extent we could and to get those in need on their way with our prayers and well wishes. We couldn't do this without you and we are grateful every day for your help.

A summary of assistance provided by our church's Tzedakah Pocket ministry for the month of April 2026 and Year to Date 2026 are shown below. We help whenever we can with as much as we can. Please continue to donate whenever you are able. We can make a difference for those who come to us for assistance.



Tzedakah **Summary**

2026 Donations: \$4,154.79

Assistance Paid	April 2026			Year to Date 2026		
	Amount	Fam	Child.	Amount	Fam	Child
<i>Lodging</i>	\$ 235.88	1	0	\$ 728.28	5	0
<i>Rent/ Sec. Dep.</i>	\$ 105.00	1	2	\$ 105.00	1	2
<i>Other</i>	\$ 155.63	1	2	\$ 2,479.01	27	29
TOTAL	\$ 496.51	3	4	\$ 3,312.29	33	31

First United Methodist Church—Financial Summary

For The 2026 Fiscal Year As Of March 31, 2026:

- General Fund Income As of March 31, 2026: \$143,897
- General Fund Expenses As Of March 31, 2026: \$118,694
- General Fund Net Income As Of March 31, 2026: \$25,203
- Building Loan Balance: \$1,016,935

IN OUR PRAYERS...

HEALING, COMFORT, & STRENGTH

- ✚ Prayers of hope that our country and constitution will survive the current divisiveness.
- ✚ Prayers of healing and comfort for the Iranian people.
- ✚ Prayers that Lorraine C has good biopsy results.
- ✚ Prayers of hope that the twin girls in “our” Afghan family be accepted to the Afghan boarding school in Rwanda.
- ✚ Continued healing and recovery for Rocky A, who is still at Riverside for rehab, and patience for her daughters as they attend to her needs.
- ✚ Continued comfort and strength for family, friends, and especially Phyllis W. in the loss of Lou on the 10th, and as she remains in hospice care.
- ✚ Prayers that Mandy E’s mom has a complete recovery from her stroke.
- ✚ Prayers for US Forest Service and other federal agencies as they face uncertain futures.
- ✚ Healing for Donna McC.’s sister Nancy following a mini stroke.
- ✚ That those still employed by the US Forest Service and other Federal agencies, will have the strength to work through the fear and chaos created by our current administration.
- ✚ Healing and recovery from a stroke or blood clot in her brain (Doctors are still uncertain) for Donna McC’s sister Nancy.
- ✚ God’s help for the USA that we will escape the current difficulties with our democracy intact.
- ✚ That the upcoming surgical procedure for Tom E, who lives at Missoula Manor, will go well.



JOY AND THANKSGIVING

- ✚ Joy for our new office staff and accountant, and thanksgiving for the SPRC and current staff for their discernment and training!
- ✚ Joy that Rocky’s daughters have been able to visit her, and travel safely to their homes again.
- ✚ Joy that a missing airman in Iran was rescued.
- ✚ Joy that Mary M. was able to join us in worship!
- ✚ Prayers of joy for Peg P’s worship ministry in our church.
- ✚ Gratitude for Peg P. conducting the service for us on May 12th.
- ✚ Gratitude for Jan B. coordinating Brad’s worship and obtaining his new cat, Rikki.
- ✚ Thanksgiving from Sherry from Alabama, who was in Missoula for a conference, for our welcoming and inclusive congregation.
- ✚ Health and strength for Melvin F., who is the brother of Agnes from Missoula Manor.



SYMPATHY

- ✚ Comfort for James C and his family in the loss of his mother.



First United Methodist Church
300 E. Main Street
P.O. Box 7646
Missoula MT 59807



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E-Mail: FUMCmissoula@gmail.com
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Facebook: www.facebook.com/1stumcmissoula
Instagram:
<https://www.instagram.com/missoula1stumc/>

Open Hearts. Open Minds. Open Doors.

May Events

5/1-3: Fairmont Hot Springs UWF Spiritual Retreat.

5/14: Ruth Fellowship, 10 a.m. KDM Library

5/20: Vespers, 1:30 KDM Library

5/26: UWF Book Group 11 a.m. KDM Library

June Events

6/20: Pride Parade



Weekly Events via Zoom and in person

Sunday Worship: Worship 10:00 a.m. and via Zoom.
(recordings on Facebook or the church website).

Sunday School: During the worship service in the Nursery for kids age 4 and up.

Tuesday: Pastor John's class 10:00 a.m. via Zoom. All are welcome!
Please contact the office for the Zoom link.

Wednesday: Lectionary Bible Class 10:00 a.m. in the Library. Contact Rev. Barry Padgett at barryumc@yahoo.com for more information. All are welcome to attend!