

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-Sixth Epistle of John "Truth's Non-Compartmentalizability" 3-1-26

There's been a whole lot of wonderful things happening recently; have you noticed?

Or, at least, certain spokespersons would have us think so.

The worst of the worst immigrant criminals are being cast out of our country (except they very often aren't the worst of the worst, oftentimes including children and citizens and those with no criminal record at all); clean coal is being re-introduced as a major energy resource (except there isn't any such thing as "clean" coal); the tariffs are bringing in loads of money (mostly from our consumers paying higher costs, notwithstanding the recent determination that the tariffs themselves are illegal); vaccines are becoming optional (leading to exponential rises in cases of measles, polio, and whooping cough); the Board of Peace is underway (with illegally-commandeered funds and nebulous purpose); there's really nothing to the Epstein files (except for thousands of mentions of powerful figures engaged in sexual exploitation and abuse); and warring parties are meeting (but not agreeing to end the violence).

Which perspective is right? Who's telling the truth? What do we believe? How do we know?

There is a strong temptation to throw one's hands up in the air at such points as this, to say the entire system is so screwed up and the partisan system is so biased and the power figures so lobbied that there is really no way to know what is true and what is false.

Jesus has some helpful counsel here – and it has to do with truthful persistence. Being persistent with the truth, that is – not settling for appearances, not willing to trust the loudest voice in the room, not able to tolerate injustice clothed as righteousness. These are days where the loudest megaphones are being used by the most unethical figures who have demonstrated again and again and again their untrustworthy nature; they are presently shouting louder than ever, which calls to mind the wise saying that "the one who shouts loudest often has the weakest foundation to stand on." (OK, I may have made that up – but my experience bears it out!)

Jesus was, if nothing else, an example of steadiness of truth. He called out the distractive rigidity of the Pharisees and Sadducees; he refused to placate "that old fox" Herod as he played his power games; he regularly broke through the superficial conveniences that people wanted faith to reflect, offering challenging but much more enduring and life-worthy truths that set people free. Jesus insisted upon the truth of God, but understood that such truth was not compartmentalizable (a word I made up, but I think it works here?); the domain of truth was either valid everywhere, or it was valid nowhere.

MARCH 2026

‡ **March 1, 2026**

**2nd Sunday In Lent**

*Genesis 12:1-a*

*Psalms 121*

(P45/845, N704, P234,  
UM844)

*Romans 4:1-5*

*John 3:1-17*

‡ **March 8, 2026**

**3rd Sunday In Lent**

*Exodus 17:1-7*

*Psalms 95 (G386/638,  
N683, P214/215, SH401,  
UM814)*

*Romans 5:1-11*

*John 4:5-42*

‡ **March 15, 2026**

**4th Sunday In Lent**

*1 Samuel 16:1-13*

*Psalms 23*

(G473/801-  
803, N633, P170-  
175, SH295/307,  
UM134/754)

*Ephesians 5:8-14*

*John 9:1-41*

‡ **March 22, 2026**

**5th Sunday In Lent**

*Ezekiel 37:1-14*

*Psalms 130*

(G424/791, N709, P240,  
SH573, UM848)

*Romans 8:6-11*

*John 11:1-45*

‡ **March 29, 2026**

**Palm/Passion Sunday**

*Matthew 21:1-11*

*Psalms 118:1-2, 19-29*  
(G391/681, N700, P232,  
UM839)

*Isaiah 50:4-9a*

*Psalms 31:9-16*

(G214/814, N641, P182,  
UM764)

Jesus was a non-compromiser of truth; so should we be, if we are to persevere in this present madness where truth is treated as the possession of only certain entities or parties or cultures. It is our faith that makes this demand upon us, but not as a forced dictate of God – it is the only way to effectively function upon a reliable foundation common to us all.

Let us always beware those who attempt to repackage truth for their own benefit – and let us always seek to de-compartmentalize truth, letting facts speak for themselves. And let us do so in the realization that a God who is true will only dwell in a reality that is true.

God's Grace Be With You,



### **Ruth Fellowship**

Ruth Fellowship will meet March 12 in the Kay Duffield Library at 10:00 a.m. We will discuss items need for the health kits for the YMCA Women's Shelter. Join us!

**Vespers meets on March 18, 1:30 in the church library.**

### **What's happening with Sunday School?**

Currently, we are in need of modeling clay, which can be found at Hobby Lobby or Walmart. Thank you so much for your continued support of our Sunday School.

### **YWCA Women's Shelter Health Kits**

Ruth Fellowship will assemble health kits for the YWCA. Please consider donating the following items and bringing them to the church. A box will be in the Narthex before church services or you can bring items to the church office.

Here's what items are needed:

- ◆ Hotel sized Soap, Shampoo, Conditioner, and Lotions
- ◆ Combs and/or Brushes
- ◆ Disposable Razors
- ◆ Deodorant
- ◆ Toothpaste/toothbrushes/Toothbrush Covers/Dental Floss
- ◆ Note Pads and Pens (not personalized)



**UNITED WOMEN IN FAITH****Inspiration Tool Box**

“The world is round and the place which may seem like the end, may also be only the beginning.” Ivory Baker

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United Women in Faith invites anyone who is interested to join our book group. We meet the fourth Tuesday of each month at 11 am in the Kay Duffield Library at church. For our March meeting (3/24), our book will be ***Don't Look Back: A Memoir of War, Survival and my Journey from Sudan to America***, by Achut Deng and Keely Hutton. It's about Achut's life in refugee camps for 10 years after her family was killed, a refugee relocation program that gave her the opportunity to move to the United States, and her story of overcoming one obstacle after another and facing each day with hope and faith in her future. For more information, contact Kathie Snodgrass (406-531-1569).

**MARCH 15**– Sunday following church, St. Patrick’s potluck, sponsored by United Women in Faith. A lovely meal and fellowship awaits the entire congregation at a potluck after church. For more information contact Kathie Snodgrass, 406-531-1543.

Everyone's Irish once a year...

**LOOKING AHEAD**

**APRIL 17** - Mark your calendars for out-to-lunch, McKenzie River Pizza on BROOKS, 11:30 a.m. Bring a friend! Contact Peg Plimpton, 406-542-1543.

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

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 projects, 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.

## Common Good Missoula – Training Opportunity

Common Good Missoula offers a two-day leadership training two or three times a year. The next one is March 12th & 13th. It's a two-day commitment, but I (Joe) can tell you it goes fast and is well worth it – I've attended three times over the last six years – the last time a year ago. And it keeps getting better each time! It not only teaches skills – for building meaningful connections across divides, and practical ways to contribute to community organizing work at whatever level and capacity you are able and willing to do – but it also is a great opportunity to get to know other people across our community and learn what they care about and why. Here's some description from [commongoodmissoula.org](http://commongoodmissoula.org).

One recent participant said: *"I thought I'd be bored and this would be a lecture style. I was engaged and I have a lot of ideas and excitement now."*

Another added, *"I have never been in a space where I felt like I could really be myself and my ideas mattered. Thank you for taking me seriously."*

People leave inspired, with a renewed sense of purpose and belonging, ready to create positive change.

By joining, you're not only gaining valuable skills, but also connecting with others committed to building a vibrant, inclusive community. This is collective action in its truest form—and we want you to be part of it!

**Interested?** Contact Joe Loos:

[joeloos7245@gmail.com](mailto:joeloos7245@gmail.com) or (406) 721 5013



**Go to the Roxy and See Our Ad!**

Yes, our congregation is reaching out to the Missoula community with the good news –we’re in the Heart of Missoula as a congregation offering hope and justice for all people. Go early enough to see the local ads that scroll before the previews, and look for ours:

Looking for **HOPE?**

**1st United Methodist**  
**Sunday Gathering: 10:00am**  
 Nursery & Children's Program  
 Coffee and Conversation at 11:00

A Congregation for all people, in the Heart of Missoula.

300 E. Main – across from the Missoula Library  
 406-549-6118 | [www.firstumcmissoula.org](http://www.firstumcmissoula.org)

**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](mailto:FUMCmissoula@gmail.com)

**Website:** [www.firstumcmissoula.org](http://www.firstumcmissoula.org)

**Facebook:**

[www.facebook.com/1stumcmissoula](http://www.facebook.com/1stumcmissoula)

**Instagram:**

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

**PASTOR JOHN**

**Office:** Available Monday-Friday

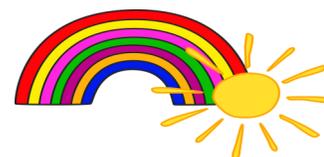
**By phone:** 406-549-6118 or  
 406-396-8966 (cell)

**E-Mail:** [john@FUMCmissoula.com](mailto: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*
- Sarah Sandoval, *Administrative Assistant*
- Cheryl Bauer, *Administrative Assistant Sub*
- Jim Bauer, *Cara Lightfield Office Volunteer*
- 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 April 2026  
 March 23*

**Tzedakah Pocket Offers Hope**

The assistance requests we received this month were quite different from those we received toward the end of 2025. Instead of the primarily family-oriented needs we satisfied at the end of 2025, so far our help this year has been primarily focused on helping individuals with safety needs of one sort or another. Both are important and both are the focus of this wonderful ministry. You just never know who will contact us and for what and, unlike some other churches, we will help individuals and those without children. No matter what comes our way, you have always been there supporting this ministry and may God bless you for that. We know those who request our assistance are grateful for our help. A summary of assistance provided by our church’s Tzedakah Pocket ministry for the month of February 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: \$1,626.87**

Assistance Paid	February 2026			Year to Date 2026		
	Amount	Fam	Child.	Amount	Fam	Child
<i>Lodging</i>	\$ 0	0	0	\$ 0	0	0
<i>Rent/ Sec. Dep.</i>	\$ 0	0	0	\$ 0	0	0
<i>Other</i>	\$ 744.32	5	4	\$ 1,226.90	13	11
<b>TOTAL</b>	<b>\$ 744.32</b>	<b>5</b>	<b>4</b>	<b>\$ 1,226.90</b>	<b>13</b>	<b>11</b>

## **January Food Bank Drive - 2026**

**Food orders/cash donations: \$1,892.70**

**Donated items: 337 lbs. of food**

**Birthday kits: 24 Birthday Kits.**

**A very special “thank you” to everyone who donated to help our community and to our Sunday School children and their teachers for putting the very popular birthday kits together.**

**THANK YOU**  
 \* \* \* \* \*  
**SO MUCH!**

## IN OUR PRAYERS...



### ~PRAYERS~

- ✚ Guidance and strength for Fred in difficult situations.
- ✚ Safety for those providing passive resistance against powers trying to do away with morality and justice, who are following Jesus on the side of light.
- ✚ Strength and healing for Elaine W's sister Marilyn, who is in the hospital, and strength and comfort for Elaine as she stays in Portland to care for her sister.
- ✚ Comfort, peace, and strength for Missoula's emergency services personnel, who are traumatized and grieving the deaths Marin P., Jeff M., and Gabe S., as well as three first responders in the last seven months.
- ✚ Strength and success for Greg B's friend who recently checked himself into a detox center.
- ✚ Traveling mercies for Peter and Jenna and their family, who will be visiting family in New Zealand, and a safe return in April
- ✚ Comfort for the family and friends of Kathie S's good friend from college, Sue A. who recently passed away.

### ~THANKSGIVING~

- ✚ Joy for the birthdays of Greg B. and Nancy H.
- ✚ Grateful Thanksgiving for the people of Minnesota's behavior of brothers and sisters to those who are threatened.
- ✚ Thankfulness for the play "Can't Drink Salt Water" and the light it shines on Missing and Murdered Indigenous People.
- ✚ Joy that James C. has been able to visit his dying mother and strength for his sister, who is caring for his mom.
- ✚ Joy for Don McC's upcoming retirement from railway and highway construction engineering on Thursday the 26th.

## *~HEALING AND COMFORT~*

- ✚ Comfort and strength for Tish and all of family and friends of her sister Sharon, who passed away Monday, Feb 16th.
- ✚ Continued Healing for Teresa H.
- ✚ Continued recovery for Winton K.
- ✚ Relief from grief; strength and endurance through God's radiance divine.
- ✚ Comfort and strength for those whose loved ones are missing or have been murdered.
- ✚ Strength and healing for Elaine W's sister Marilyn, who is in the hospital, and strength and comfort for Elaine as she stays in Portland to care for her sister.
- ✚ Comfort and strength for Lou and Phillis W. as they continue in hospice care.
- ✚ Comfort and mercy for a parishioner's brother Jay, dying of kidney disease.
- ✚ Strength and comfort for Jenna's friend Julie, who is learning to navigate life without her husband of 21 years.
- ✚ Comfort, strength, and healing for Ernie J's close family member with stage 4 prostate cancer.



## **Meet the committees – SPRC and M&O**



This newsletter, our daily emails from the church office, and announcements in the bulletin and at worship remind us that First Church is busy and engaged within the church, in the community, and around the world. We hear of various activities undertaken by the church, but we may not always be sure who is doing the heavy lifting.

The Administrative Council of the church, which meets about once a month, comprises a representative of each committee. Our meetings help all committees learn about what the others are doing. Thanks to our amazing secretary, Cheryl Bauer, notes from these meetings are available outside the church office and in the narthex to help you stay informed about FUMC activities.

Over the next few months, I'll be giving you more information about our hard-working committees and what each does for the church. What follows was written by the chairs of the Staff Pastor/Parish Relations Committee, Carole Addis, and the Mission and Outreach Committee, Joe Loos, but edited for length.

The Staff Pastor/Parish Relations Committee (SPRC) is our HR department. It supports the staff by advocating for salaries, working conditions, and healthy life/work balance. In consultation with the Treasurer and Finance committee, SPRC monitors staff compensation and support and creates a budget to meet staffing needs. Committee members connect regularly with assigned staff members to ensure good communication.

SPRC maintains and updates job descriptions and interview questions as needed, interviews qualified candidates for open positions, and recommends candidates to the Administrative Council for hiring. The committee ensures staff receive proper training, including Safe Gathering certification, and completes annual evaluations to review with staff.

Like all committees, SPRC prepares required documents for our annual charge conference, including a pastor assessment, compiled in consultation with the congregation, and a budget for staff compensation.

Concerns or questions about staff should be directed to SPRC, which is tasked with communicating with the congregation on these issues:

(Continued)

**Living out these words includes:**

- ✚ Supporting those who are unhoused or struggling to stay housed, Being the church's liaison with, and advocating for donations to, Family Promise, Missoula Interfaith Collaborative's Housing Advocate Network, Tzedakah Pocket ministry, Poverello Sack Lunch Making, and the Weather Emergency Shelter Overflow Team.
- ✚ Welcoming refugees and immigrants through Afghan Refuge of Hope & Drop by Drop fundraising, and work with Soft Landing Missoula.
- ✚ Supporting those who identify as LGBTQA+ through the Reconciling Ministries Network, annual Pride Parade Organization, Queergiving Thanksgiving gathering, and possible partnership with Mask Block Missoula, which provides Covid masks for this vulnerable population.
- ✚ Initiating Green Team activities including the church's recycling program, Green Notes for announcements and this newsletter, and Green Minutes for worship.
- ✚ Organizing January Food & Funds drive and Bread for the World offerings of letters to Congress in support of National and International nutrition programs.
- ✚ Partnering with Common Good Missoula and other churches and organizations to work toward a more equitable Missoula community and to advocate for Housing Equity and a reduced dependence on cars.
- ✚ Participating in Action Network gatherings sponsored by Missoula Interfaith Collaborative and working with that group and other faith communities to enhance efforts.
- ✚ Supporting National and International Missions such as Angola Pastor Support and Quessua Agricultural Mission, UMCOR's Global Ministries and Disaster Relief and Jubilee USA – which advocates for debt relief and economic justice

Questions? Want to help? Contact **Joe Loos at [joeloos7245@gmail.com](mailto:joeloos7245@gmail.com)**, or the other co-chair of Mission & Outreach, **Jana Staton at [jstaton@montana.com](mailto:jstaton@montana.com)**.

If you are particularly interested in the work of a committee, feel free to let the office know so they can put you in touch with the committee chair.

Theresa Cox

Administrative Council Chair



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Facebook: [www.facebook.com/1stumcmissoula](http://www.facebook.com/1stumcmissoula)

Instagram:

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

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*Open Hearts. Open Minds. Open Doors.*

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### **February Events**

- 3/1 - Name Tag Sunday** 10 a.m. Service
- 3/7&21- Methodist Men**, 8:30 a.m. KDM Library
- 3/12- Ruth Fellowship**, 10 a.m. KDM Library
- 3/15– St. Patrick** Pot Luck 11 a.m. Fellowship Hall
- 3/18- Vespers**, 1:30 KDM Library
- 3/24- Book Group**, 11:00 a.m. KDM Library



### **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 Padget at [barryumc@yahoo.com](mailto:barryumc@yahoo.com) for more information. All are welcome to attend!