

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

NOVEMBER 2026

The Ninety-Third Epistle of John -- 11-1-26 – “Star Trek Theology”

Sometimes the answers to the most challenging questions of our time are right in front of us. And one of the most challenging questions before us now is the issue of Artificial Intelligence, with perhaps the most significant question being: is it dangerous?

Like all questions posed regarding human ingenuity, the answer runs from “of course it is” to “it can be if used wrongly” which, as history continues to show us, makes the second answer pretty much the same as the first. Humans are so very adept at using what was once a promising discovery or a hopeful invention in the most destructive, discouraging, or despicable way if given enough time to figure out its exploitation potential; we live in times where “what is it?” is almost instantly followed by “how can we sell it?” Such thinking is always dangerous.

Perhaps my cynical side is showing a bit, but I believe there is important truth here. And I speak from the authority of one who is addicted to Science Fiction, both literature and movies, where the dangers of AI have been exposed for many years and in a variety of ways.

I remember being stunned by the movie “Colossus: The Forbin Project,” which related the story of a supercomputer created to run a country’s defense without human interference – but then, once given overall power, quickly decides that the best way to remove such interference is to threaten the human variable with elimination. No spoilers here, but the end of the movie defines the term “alarming.”

I’ve watched “The Twilight Zone” (original series) where a few of the episodes had to do with the negative outcomes of computers running things; I’ve seen the Terminator movies where intelligent technology starts numerous wars decimating humanity (at least, unless the future is changed by returning to the past through a time machine multiple times!); and don’t get me started on my favorite series “Star Trek” (the original series) where technology is regularly messing things up.....many of the plotlines have to do with increasing technological intelligence working towards the damage or even doom of the human species.



✠ **November 1, 2026**  
**23<sup>rd</sup> Sunday after Pentecost**

*Joshua 3:7-17*  
*Psalms 107:1-7,33-37*  
*(UMH 830)*  
*1 Thessalonians: 2:9-13*  
*Matthew 23:1-12*

✠ **November 8, 2026**  
**24<sup>th</sup> Sunday after Pentecost**

*Joshua 24:1-3a, 14-25*  
*Psalms 78:1-7 (UMH 799)*  
*1 Thessalonians 4:12-18*  
*Matthew 25:1-13*

✠ **November 15<sup>th</sup>, 2026**  
**25<sup>th</sup> Sunday after Pentecost**

*Judges 4:1-7*  
*Psalms 123 or 7 (UMH 797)*  
*1 Thessalonians 5:1-11*  
*Matthew 25:14-30*

✠ **November 22<sup>nd</sup>, 2026**  
**Christ the King Sunday**

*Ezekiel 34:11-16, 20-24*  
*Psalms 100 (UMH 821)*  
*Ephesians 1:15-23*  
*Matthew 25:31-46*

✠ **November 29<sup>th</sup>, 2026**  
**1<sup>st</sup> Sunday of Advent**

*Isaiah 64:1-9*  
*Psalms 80:1-7,17-19*  
*(UMH 801)*  
*1 Corinthians 1:3-9*  
*Mark 13:24-37*

Yes, I know, drama makes for heightening interest; drama sells, and this is very true for science fiction. But the drama seems somehow more grounded in reality with AI, if for no other reasons than the very creators of the technology have recently become the loudest spokespersons for its growing maleficence. They have made predictions of AI possibly wiping out human civilization within 10 years if left unchecked; many experiments with AI have already exposed great errors and a propensity to “breach the rules of engagement protocol” in exceeding its original design parameters.....in other words, Frankenstein is likely to get out of control.

My point here is not to miss the forest for the trees, for the challenge that seems so new can be thought of as the very old problem of idolatry packaged in today’s technology. Humans have always wanted to create the gods they worship, to design systems and structures that invite obeisance, to take the world of mundanity and inject something that speaks of the greater power, wisdom, truth, and opportunities embodied by some sort of human defined entity. From pyramids to obelisks and temples, to attempted deification of rulers, to attributions of metaphysical properties to celestial bodies, to subjugations of one supposedly-superior population over another, humans create gods to worship; today it is no different if we consider the new idols such as obscene wealth, over-the-top fame, self-aggrandizement, musical talent, athletic physicality, political posturing, and so many other human constructs demanding attention.

And to all of these things, God continues to shake his head. As should we.

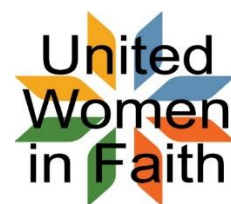
The shaking of God’s head and ours need not occur out of a mournfulness over where things have gotten to; I believe Jesus was sent to us to show us how to consistently and successfully refute the idols of any age. It comes down to the simplicity of principles to live by which faith embodies and helps us in life’s hopeful maintenance. Generosity, forgiveness, justice, mercy, patience, understanding, humility, community, and a host of other such dispositions are regularly promoted as flagstones on the pathway of life for those who follow Jesus; a risky sort of love, unconditional and continual, forms the basis of those dispositions, adding a dimension the world cannot fathom on its own. Knowing all of these are both defined by God (we call this “Truth”) and provided by God (we call this “Grace”) helps us to know God (we call this “revelation”) and follow God (we call this “Jesus!”) rather than any temporary manifestation meant to replace God such as idolatry always seeks to do. A constant call to people everywhere is the call to worship only what is truly divine – and to always recognize the great danger in substitutions.

It is my prayer, and the prayer of so very many others, that AI can be used as a tool to help our world become more of what it ought to be. It will be essential, however, that we keep the “ought” of God’s perspective in view, which will always have the benefit of all creation in mind.

God’s Grace Be With You,

A handwritten signature in dark ink, reading "John W. Daniel". The script is fluid and cursive, with a large, stylized initial 'J' and 'D'.

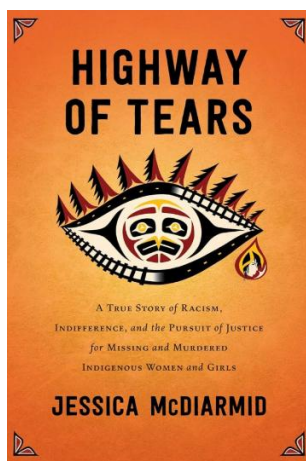
## Inspiration Toolbox



“If you must look back, do so forgivingly. If you must look forward, do so prayerfully. However, the wisest thing you can do is to be present in the present – gratefully.” – Maya Angelou

## Gratitude Harvest Fest Potluck

Join us on November 15th and take a tiny turkey home with you when the meal is over. Bring your favorite dish to share and join us in the Fellowship Hall in the church basement right after the service. You know how good the food and conversations always are at Methodist potlucks – don’t miss this one to kick off the holiday season! The potluck will be organized by the United Women of Faith, and the Stewardship Committee will let us all know how successful the Stewardship Campaign was. Hopefully, it will be news to celebrate! For more information, call Kathie at (406) 531-1569.



**The UWF Bookie Ladies** will be meeting again on November 24 in the church’s Kay Duffield library at 11 a.m. Our October book is ***Highway of Tears: A True Story of Racism, Indifference, and the pursuit of Justice for Missing and Murdered Indigenous Women and Girls***, by Jessica McDiarmid. It’s focused on northwest British Columbia, but the story is very similar to those in all areas with indigenous populations. If you’d like to join our discussion about the book, you can borrow it from the UWF shelf or the city library or get it on your Nook or Kindle. If it sounds interesting, but you don’t have time to read the book, feel free to join us anyway!

- **RUTH will meet Thursday, November 12th at 10:00 am in the Kay Duffield Library.** Nanci Reed will give the devotions and Judy Whiddon will serve as hostess. Members will receive an updated directory with corrections from the last meeting. We will also review the donation contents of the shoeboxes we will give to the Blackfeet children for Christmas. All women are welcome to join us.
- **Thursday, November 19th at 6pm, GEMS circle** meets in the library. This is our only evening circle for fellowship and inspiration. Any women are welcome, UMC member or not. Need a ride? Call Tish at (406) 370-6572.
- **Thursday, December 8th at 1:30 is the All-Unit Christmas Party** in the Kay Duffield Library. Mark your calendar and please bring a white elephant gift to exchange. Pastor John will present a program. Holiday refreshments will be provided by the steering committee. A great time to bring a friend! Questions? Contact Tish at (406) 370-6572.

## Tzedakah Pocket Offers Hope

With the change of season, we have received a flood of requests for assistance. Some requests we were able to satisfy and some we weren't, either because we didn't have the money or because the request was for something we couldn't handle. Turning someone away is not something we do without considerable soul-searching and prayer, but it's necessary at times. We do our best and help as many as we can.



## Tzedakah Summary

2026 Donations: \$10,858.57

| Assistance Paid        | October 2026       |          |           | Year to Date 2026   |           |           |
|------------------------|--------------------|----------|-----------|---------------------|-----------|-----------|
|                        | Amount             | Fam      | Child.    | Amount              | Fam       | Child.    |
| <i>Lodging</i>         | \$ 0               | 0        | 0         | \$ 2,153.96         | 9         | 4         |
| <i>Rent/ Sec. Dep.</i> | \$ 159.00          | 1        | 2         | \$ 2,603.00         | 13        | 26        |
| <i>Other</i>           | \$ 1,175.34        | 6        | 6         | \$ 6,208.12         | 56        | 52        |
| <b>TOTAL</b>           | <b>\$ 1,334.34</b> | <b>7</b> | <b>10</b> | <b>\$ 10,965.08</b> | <b>78</b> | <b>82</b> |

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

-----

**THE CHRISTIANS**  
BY LUCAS HNATH

NOVEMBER 11 & 12  
UNIVERSITY CONGREGATIONAL CHURCH, 425 UNIVERSITY AVE

NOVEMBER 13 & 14  
IMMANUEL LUTHERAN, 830 SOUTH AVE W

NOVEMBER 15  
OUR SAVIOR'S LUTHERAN, 895 MT HIGHWAY 200, BONNER

NOVEMBER 18 & 19  
FIRST UNITED METHODIST, 320 E MAIN ST

NOVEMBER 20 & 21  
ST PAUL'S LUTHERAN CHURCH, 232 BROOKS ST

NOVEMBER 22  
FIRST CHRISTIAN, 2701 N. RUSSELL ST

MONTANA REPERTORY THEATRE

All performances at 7:30 PM. Doors open at 7 PM.  
Presented onsite and in partnership with local congregations. Pick what you pay. \$25 suggested.

**On November 18<sup>th</sup> and 19<sup>th</sup> at 7:30 p.m. the Montana Repertory Theatre will be performing in the Sanctuary at FUMC. Tickets can be purchased at the door or ahead of time. Scan QR code for more information. This is a pay-what-you can performance.**

## MIC New Volunteer Orientation

Looking for a meaningful way to get involved in your community?

Join us for our Volunteer Orientation on **Wednesday, November 18th from 5:30–7:30 PM** to learn about the many ways you can make a difference through Missoula Interfaith Collaborative. Whether you're interested in supporting neighbors through the Housing Advocate Network, Family Promise/Just Neighbors, Missoula Works, the Community of Belonging, or other MIC programs, we'd love to share how you can get involved. **Dinner is provided, and all are welcome!**

LOCATION: MIC Offices @ 2205 34th St

QUESTIONS: Contact [rebecca@micmt.org](mailto:rebecca@micmt.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 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*

Catherine Thomsen, *Administrative Assistant*

Cheryl Bauer, *Administrative Assistant Sub*

Carol Davis and Cara Lightfield. *Office Volunteers*

Leslie Uhlenbruck, *Financial Secretary*

Larry Chase, *Treasurer*

Craig Gohl, *Custodian*

Greg Boris, *Chancel Choir Director*

Jason Triche, *Hand Bell Choir Director*

Luke Larson, *Organist and Pianist*

Cindy Ekstrand, *Sunday School Director*

Lily Scott, *Nursery Attendant*

*Deadline for December 2026  
November 20*

## In Our Prayers...

### ~PRAYERS~

- † Quick healing for Jack's broken arm.
- † Sorrow for the four people killed and 39 injured, and safety, healing, and comfort for all those affected by the huge, incredibly fast-moving windstorm-propelled fire that occurred during live ammunition training at Fort Wainright in Alberta Saturday (17<sup>th</sup>).
- † Successful surgery and a quick recovery from a hysterectomy this week for the American aunt of our Afghan Refugee of Hope family.
- † Strength for Bob's parents, Robert and Marie, still living independently, although it's getting harder for them to do so.
- † This week please pray for McCurdy Ministries in Espanola, New Mexico, and for Deaconess Evana Lewis of the New York Annual Conference, whose birthday is November 7.
- † That Fred will successfully overcome his transportation and income challenges, and that his medical appointments in November will go well.

### *~HEALING AND COMFORT~*

- † Comfort for Ira's sister Maxine K, who has congestive heart failure and is in hospice, and strength and comfort for her daughters and grandchildren.
- † Comfort for Pastor John's father, Dan, who is declining.
- † Comfort for the family and friends of Phyllis W., who passed away.
- † Comfort for the family, friends, and churches mourning the recent passing of Rev. Howard Hunter.
- † Comfort for Cheryl B, her daughter Liz, and their family as they and friends mourn the death October 24<sup>th</sup> of Jim B. and as they prepare for his memorial service October 31<sup>st</sup> at 11 a.m.
- † Strength and comfort for Greg B's friend Tasha, whose father is coming to the end of his life.
- † Comfort and healing for Shelly's family friend and mentor who has multiple cancers and is experiencing mental decline.

### ~THANKSGIVING~

- † Thanksgiving that Nick continues to recover, is doing very well, and may be home soon after his surgery.
- † Joy for visitors in church and hope that they will return.
- † Joy for the long, productive career of Susan H. P. as she retires as director of United Way of Missoula County.
- † Joy that Tish was back in church the 18<sup>th</sup> and her finger is healing nicely.
- † Gratitude that Pastor John's mom, Betty, is enjoying her new life in memory care and her new friends there.





**November 14** will mark the fourth year that we have been making sack lunches for the Poverello Center. Every Saturday morning, nine volunteers from 1st UMC, the UCC, various Lutheran churches, the Episcopal Church, some friends from the Jewish community, the Latter Day Saints, and two scout troops, among others, have been coming to work for 1 1/2 hours to make 200 sack lunches. Two coordinators a week pick up ingredients from the Pov on Friday and occasionally buy other ingredients if there is a shortfall. They come again early on Saturday to get things set up. Other volunteers sometimes bring fruit or other items. Everyone enjoys each other and the process immensely.

On Monday mornings, the HOT team from the Pov comes to pick up the 200 sack lunches and deliver them to hungry neighbors wherever they find them throughout Missoula County.

If you would like to be placed on the signup list to become part of the team, please email Lorraine Carlson at [madamecarlson@gmail.com](mailto:madamecarlson@gmail.com). If you would like to help out but find it's physically difficult to participate, please consider a monetary donation. You may enter "POV sack lunches" into your church Breeze account or write "POV sack lunches" on the memo line of your check.

There are many slots available in November and December!

Grace and Peace to you.

### **First Church to Rent Upstairs Classrooms as Office Space!**

We need your help in spreading the word! Our First Church trustees are advertising two upstairs classrooms in the Education Annex – Rooms 208 and 209 – as office/conference room space. If you know a local nonprofit group that's looking for clean, bright office space, can you let them know about this opportunity?

Minimum rental rate will be \$2,000 a month. The rooms are across the hall from one another at the east end of the Education Annex. They are unfurnished, carpeted, have access to public WiFi. Utilities are included. The tenant may add approved window coverings and/or AC, subject to approval by the trustees. Public restrooms are available on the same floor.

Anyone with questions about the property or who would like a tour of the rooms should contact trustee's chair, Stephen Egli by text or email: 406-989-1510 or [segli@gmail.com](mailto:segli@gmail.com). Or call the First Church office at 406-549-6118 to leave a message for Steve.

This rental has been approved by all affected church groups, as well as First Church's Administrative Council. The rooms have not been used for many years, and the rental income will help First Church meet our financial obligations and maintenance needs.



### **Christmas Bazaar**

**Saturday, November 14**

**9 am – 2 pm**

**Grace United Methodist  
Church**

**1756 S. 10<sup>th</sup> W**

**Holiday Grief  
Support Group**

  
**BIG SKY**  
HOME HEALTH • PALLIATIVE • HOSPICE

FREE to anyone in our community  
who has lost a loved one

**9 Sessions**  
**Wednesdays, October 21 - January 6**  
**1:00PM-2:30PM**  
(excluding Thanksgiving and Christmas weeks)

3760 Mullan Rd Suite 101  
Register at (406) 543-4408



### **Green Notes: Vote Now! Here's Why and How**

As we head to the polls for an election of unprecedented importance, let's listen for a moment to the late Dr. Jane Goodall:

*"Here we are, the most clever species ever to have lived. So how is it we can destroy the only planet we have?"*

*"Together, we can bring change to the world, gradually replacing fear and hatred with compassion and love. Love for all living beings."*

*"If we do not do something to help those creatures, we make a mockery of the whole concept of justice."*

*"The greatest danger to our future is apathy."*

It is time to vote, Missoula. Our local and statewide ballot is of great consequence. Every single vote cast will be critical. Every single person who lets the opportunity pass without voting will be complicit in the evils heaped upon our nation and world in recent years.

Those of us who registered to vote by mail now have ballots in hand. Many sources recommend that those ballots be returned to the Missoula County Elections Office on Russell Street. The ballot drop box there is accessible 24 hours a day.

Is transportation a problem for you, but you still want to vote in person on Election Day? In Missoula, you can take the bus to vote! The Mountain Line is providing a free Bus to Ballot service to various polling places around Missoula.

Check out the schedules online at [mountainline.com](http://mountainline.com). As always, all rides on Mountain Line are ADA accessible and free of charge.

Not sure where you can vote? All voter information is available at [Missoulavotes.gov](http://Missoulavotes.gov) – Missoula County's excellent election website. Phone numbers are also available on the site, and actual humans at the Elections Center answer those numbers.

We know that you are tired of and frustrated – or angry – about this election. But we all need to make those feelings known by actually casting our ballot. Vote for yourself. Vote for your grandkids. Vote for the most vulnerable person you know. Vote for Planet Earth.

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



PH: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](https://www.facebook.com/1stumcmissoula)

Instagram:

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

*Open Hearts. Open Minds. Open Doors.*

### November Events

**November 12:** Ruth, 10:00 am, Library

**November 15:** Gratitude Harvest Fest, Fellowship Hall, after worship

**November 18:** Vespers, 1:30pm, Romeo's Italian Restaurant. Everyone is welcome

**November 19th:** GEMS, 10:00am, Library

**November 18<sup>th</sup> & 19<sup>th</sup>:** The Christians (Montana Rep Theatre), 7:30, Sanctuary

### Looking Ahead

**December 6:** Jubellation Holiday Performance, 3:00, Sanctuary

**December 8:** Christmas Party, 1:30, Library

**December 13:** Children's Christmas Play



### 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 Tuesday 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!