

TOWER TIDINGS

The Ninetieth Epistle of John – “Savoring the Right Things”

8-1-26

In the midst of summer days filled with diversified schedules (read, camping trips, home repairs awaiting clear weather, tending the daily requirements of gardens, and most recently trying to beat the heat!), we all perhaps sense the wildness of this season as it passes by all too fast. It is likely we all set our sights on this summer for particular activities and gatherings, specific trips and connections, but find ourselves now past the greater part of summer with much still left to accomplish – and time’s running out. It is not uncommon to experience a sort of depression as we approach the end of one timeframe and sense the oncoming of another; it is sad, we feel, that we don’t have more time to savor our present moment more deeply.

But savoring our present moment more deeply has its value in that which we choose to savor in any particular moment; and the quality of our savoring has everything to do with that choice. For example, I can savor time at the park with my grandchildren, watching them play on the swings or test out a slide – or I can savor my grandchildren in their time at the park, watching the process of their interactions with swing competitors (“MY turn!”) and merry-go-round collaborators (it is very hard to make a merry-go-round work on one’s own) and exploring the power of infectious laughter (I think of it as “the spontaneous giggle train”). The order is intentional. Attending my grandchildren at the park invites two very different perspectives – **watching what they do**, or **observing who they are** (and who they are becoming). The two perspectives are certainly connected, but the latter invites the deeper sense of intimacy that comes from individual focus – another way to speak of our love for each other.

AUGUST 2026



✠ **August 2, 2026**
10th Sunday after Pentecost

Genesis 32:22-31
Psalms 17:1-7 (UMH 749)
Romans 9:1-5
Matthew 14:13-21

✠ **August 9, 2026**
11th Sunday after Pentecost

Genesis 37:1-4, 12-28
Psalms 105:1-6, 16-22, 45b
(UMH 828)
Romans 10:5-15
Matthew 14:22-33

✠ **August 16, 2026**
12th Sunday after Pentecost

Genesis 45:1-15
Psalms 133 (UMH 850)
Romans 11:1-2a, 29-32
Matthew 15:(10-20), 21-28

✠ **August 23, 2026**
13th Sunday after Pentecost

Exodus 1:8-2:10
Psalms 124 (UMH 846)
Romans 12:1-8
Matthew 16:13-20

✠ **August 30, 2026**
14th Sunday after Pentecost

Exodus 3:1-15
Psalms 105:1-6, 23-26, 45b
(UMH 828)
Romans 12:9-21
Matthew 16:21-28

I find this a very helpful way to look at our world these days, as ***something to take notice of in terms of what's going on***, verses ***observing who people are as they do what they do*** for reasons that often baffle me or at least leave me in the dark. There is great madness occurring in our world today, with levels of cruelty and nonsense and outright immorality dominating so many areas of our societal sphere. Looking at what is happening easily leaves one exasperated and despairing over the state of the world. But looking at who is causing these things to happen – looking at them not as heinous villains with devil horns and pitch-forked tails but more as ones who have lost sight of their humanity – can help us to perhaps understand the darker sides of human nature we all possess. Most of us have learned the danger of enlivening those sides and unleashing them into the world, but obviously some have not. Perhaps this is why so many are behaving so hypocritically, so destructively, so uncompassionately – they have been trained to see life (theirs and others) in a very limited way, something akin to a zero-sum gain they must strive to win over others, rather than as a world in which the only success that matters is that which we achieve together.

Those who do not see this will be needing those who do see this to continue to function in the more civilized way; those who do not realize the damage they are causing, or do not care about the damage they are causing, will wind up being damaged themselves; it is a vicious cycle we observe all over the world today, where warfare escalates and injustice normalizes and human-caused suffering escalates, leaving no one unscathed. Stepping back from the carnage – stopping the vicious cycles our species create – will take those who have experienced a better way, a clearer truth, and a deeper life than can be had by human devises; and we, as people of faith, are well poised for this opportunity if we continue to do our best to follow where the love of God leads.

Such are the thoughts of one grandpa watching his grandson and granddaughter figure things out on the playground of life. Such might also be the thoughts of an attentive God watching humanity wrestle with the meaning of it all, stumbling and bumbling along until they realize how much better things are when all of God's children play together well. How much more important it makes those of us who are learning to play together well to maintain our practice of paying the right kind of attention to each other – and engaging in the things that not only lift others, but wind up lifting ourselves as well.

John Wanner



Inspiration Tool Box

“Rejoice as summer should...chase away sorrows
by living.” - Melissa Marr



August 4, Tuesday – Join us for a summertime tea at the Village Residence Center sunroom for a nice visit with our United Women of Faith who live there. They will be happy to see you. Please call Tish if you need a ride or for more information, 406-370-6572.



The United Women in Faith book group will not meet again until September. Meanwhile, the group wants to recommend to the entire congregation *The Book of Hope: a Survival Guide for Trying Times*, by Jane Goodall and Douglas Abrams, which we read and discussed in May. We all need some hope in these trying times! We also suggest *Flowers of Fire: The Inside Story of South Korea's Feminist Movement and What It Means for Women's Rights Worldwide* by Hawon Jung, *Seventy Times Seven: A True Story of Murder and Mercy in Gary, Indiana* by Alex Mar, and *God's Ghostwriters: Enslaved Christians and the Making of the Bible* by Candida Moss. See you in September, when we'll meet to discuss *The Happiest Man on Earth: The Beautiful Life of an Auschwitz Survivor* by Eddie Jaku.

Tzedakah Pocket Offers Hope

As you can see below, our donation total is still greater than our assistance total, but not by much. However, it's summertime and, as always, this is our annual challenge. We'll get through it with your support and we are so grateful for all you do.

A summary of assistance provided by our church's Tzedakah Pocket Ministry for the month of July 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.



Tzedakah Summary

2026 Donations: \$7,555.23

Assistance Paid	July 2026			Year to Date 2026		
	Amount	Fam	Child.	Amount	Fam	Child.
<i>Lodging</i>	\$ 0	0	0	\$ 1,809.92	7	4
<i>Rent/ Sec. Dep.</i>	\$ 318.00	1	2	\$ 1,533.00	7	11
<i>Other</i>	\$ 70.00	4	2	\$ 4,150.83	43	41
<i>TOTAL</i>	\$ 388.00	5	4	\$ 7,493.75	57	56

Hi everyone, I want to thank you again for supporting the Sunday School and Nursery programs last year. It is the time of year for me to start prepping for Sunday School and Nursery for this fall. So far, I am in need of bottled water. The children really appreciate the water. We also need thin ribbon in the following colors: red, orange, yellow, green, blue, purple. I need 2 rolls of each color.



Sunday School begins on September 6 at 9:10 am. We will begin with Music. Our first day to sing in Church will be on September 27.



Church Pledges and Donations

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

[https://
firstumcmissoula.breezechms.com/
give/online](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

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Missoula, MT 59807-7646

CONTACT OUR OFFICE

Weekday Hours

Monday-Thursday 9-12

Phone: 406- 549-6118

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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

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John Daniels, *Pastor*

Catherine Thomsen, *Administrative Assistant*

Cheryl Bauer, *Administrative Assistant Sub*

Jim Bauer, Carol Davis, 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*

TBD, *Nursery Attendant*

Deadline for September 2026

August 20



Living the Questions Class Starting in September

People know that at its core, Christianity has something good to offer the human race. At the same time, many of us can feel that we're alone in being a "thinking" Christian. with more questions than answers. And the meaning of "Christian" and "Christianity" has never been more in question than today. This fall, Faith & Justice is offering a 7-week class exploring our questions. Please email Jana Staton to let us know you'd like to come, so we'll have enough chairs.

This class is a safe environment where there's permission to ask questions you've always wanted to ask but have been afraid to voice, for fear of being thought a heretic. *Living the Questions* provides the opportunity to discuss the beliefs we've learned in childhood, and the questions of life that those Sunday School beliefs didn't mention.

The hour class is built around short videos featuring leading progressive (and provocative) thinkers of the 21st century, with a lively discussion following. It won't provide easy answers – it's a resource for people in the midst of a life-long conversation about the mysteries of faith and life.

9:00- 9:50 Sundays in the Library (in hallway next to the Church office)

Part I, *Invitation to the Journey*, will begin September 13

For more information, call Jana Staton 406-721-5558

Open to everyone – Bring your questions!



IN OUR PRAYERS...

~PRAYERS~

- ✝ A good transition to a less disciplined life for Ernie J's grandson as he leaves the Marines.
- ✝ Hope that the Senate will continue to reject the SAVE Act and that our Constitutional requirement that states control voting within their borders will not be negated.
- ✝ Strength, support, and health for Angela, her daughter Sarah, and new grandson Sawyer.
- ✝ That Rocky's permanent transition to living at Beehive Homes will go smoothly and that her home will sell soon.
- ✝ Hope for peace and justice in our chaotic world.

~HEALING AND COMFORT~

- ✝ Comfort for Bruce A's friend Ryan, whose mom died this last week.
- ✝ Comfort for John T's long-time friend, whose wife recently passed away.
- ✝ Continued comfort and peace for Phyllis W. as she remains stable in hospice care.
- ✝ Continued healing for Kay N, who hopes to get back to her apartment but must remain in rehab for her full course of antibiotic treatment.
- ✝ That things will go well for Angela, who sprained her ankle, and that Angela's daughter Sarah's baby, whose birth is underway now, 5 weeks early, will be OK.
- ✝ Comfort for the friends and family mourning the loss of Senator Lindsey Graham, who passed away yesterday (11th).
- ✝ Comfort for all of Cindy E's family in the sudden and unexpected death of her older brother from a heart attack.

~THANKSGIVING~

- ✝ Joy and gratitude that Kama subbed in the pulpit for John Sunday (19th).
- ✝ Joy for 16 wonderful married years for Nick and Shelley (and for their two lovely daughters).
- ✝ Thanksgiving that the AI center is not going in at Bonner, because the "deciders" listened to the 48,000 people living in the area and beyond, and their concerns, proving expressing your opinion and resisting can work.
- ✝ Gratitude for Bruce & Rhanda's wonderful music this morning.
- ✝ Gratitude for Dan B. washing our windows this morning.
- ✝ Gratitude from Rocky for all the work her daughters have been doing to get her home ready for sale and for the ease of moving into Beehive Homes.



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Open Hearts. Open Minds. Open Doors.

August Events

August 4, Tuesday – Join UWF for tea at the Village Residence Center

August 26, Wednesday - Bell Choir rehearsals begin at 6:00pm



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 for more information. All are welcome to attend!