

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

SEPTEMBER 2026

The Ninety-First Epistle of John – “Getting the Most Out of Time”

9-1-26

I find that the ebbing of summer always puts me in a sort of melancholy mood; perhaps you feel the same. The opportunities for vacation time leisure are drawing to a close; gardens are beginning to show signs of finishing off their annual tenure; mornings are becoming chilly enough to warrant sweatshirts for early walks; students and teachers are gearing up for a motivated start-up; and, perhaps most melancholy of all – more and more stores have aisles full of Halloween goods already on display! All of these elements of our days are natural evidences of time’s passing and thus are not qualitatively good or bad; they are just the normal affects of temporal rhythms that affect our species (OK, perhaps the premature Halloween sales are not so natural!).

The overall but vague sense of time’s passage can have this somewhat depressive effect upon most people for it is a reminder that we cannot control many things in our lives or the world; many things progress in spite of our efforts to change them, which can be a good or bad thing. And thank goodness many such matters are not dependent upon our attentive responses to their advent; there is something profoundly comforting in the knowledge that, even as we somewhat mourn the passing of time, we can count on its consistency to continue bringing us tomorrows we did not create ourselves.

Faith helps us appreciate this aspect of reality as we understand just Who holds time in their hand (as the platitude puts it) – and Who holds us as we deal with time’s unfolding. A sense of the eternal carries us into hopes unknown to those whose spiritual myopia keeps them from the expansive thoughts faith invites. This is a major source of despair in this world, where immediacy has become an idol, self-satisfaction the mantra, and excess the norm, all of which are impossibilities in a finite and flawed world.



✝ **September 6, 2026**
15th Sunday after Pentecost

Exodus 12:1-14
Psalm 149 or 148
(UMH 861)
Romans 13:8-14
Matthew 18:15-20

✝ **September 13, 2026**
16th Sunday after Pentecost

Exodus 14:19-31
Exodus 15:1b-11, 20-21
(UMH 135)
Romans 14:1-12
Matthew 18:21-35

✝ **September 20, 2026**
17th Sunday after Pentecost

Exodus 16:2-15
Psalm 105:1-6, 37-45 or
Psalm 78 (UMH 799)
Philippians 1:21-30
Matthew 20:1-16

✝ **September 27, 2026**
18th Sunday after Pentecost

Exodus 17:1-7
Psalm 78:1-4, 12-16
(UMH 799)
Philippians 2:1-13
Matthew 21:23-32

No wonder those who do not try to see very far beyond themselves experience the greatest frustrations of their desires – as CS Lewis put it in his sermon “The Weight of Glory,” “We are half-hearted creatures, fooling about with drink and sex and ambition when infinite joy is offered us, like an ignorant child who wants to go on making mud pies in a slum because he cannot imagine what is meant by the offer of a holiday at the sea. We are far too easily pleased.”

Perhaps our Creator built into this creation aspects that would always naturally keep us hungering for more, or at least never fully satisfied with life as it is. Perhaps this is what keeps real hope alive in our minds and hearts and helps us pay the greater attention to what faith reveals – a God who is with us now and beyond time; a God who shares with us how to live worthy lives in this space and time and make the kind of progress that leads to ever better things. Hope, after all, depends upon the attention given to it to move it forward – and perhaps, it is as we experience the low times in life’s seasons that we are made most aware of the high times revealed through grace – and possibly even see hints of those highs in the lows.

It is thus that I do find myself mourning and rejoicing at the same time, much like being sorry to see the summer end, but looking forward to what fall brings anew. There are gardens to harvest, brilliant changed-color leaves to enjoy, study groups to re-start, grandchildren to pick up from first grade and kindergarten (Terri and my particular joy this fall!), apple pies to make and pumpkins to carve.....and much greater than that, the joy of relationships that continue to deepen, strangers that become friends, grace-inspired service that makes a difference in the lives of those in need, and all the many ways our human experiences can be furthered and grown as we practice our faith together. Experiencing God’s continuum of time’s unfolding is, after all, best done in the company of those who know God ultimately holds all things -- including the future and including ourselves -- in His hands.

God’s Grace Be With You,

John Daniel



Inspiration Tool Box

"Color is one of the great things in the word that makes life worth living." -
Georgia O'Keefe



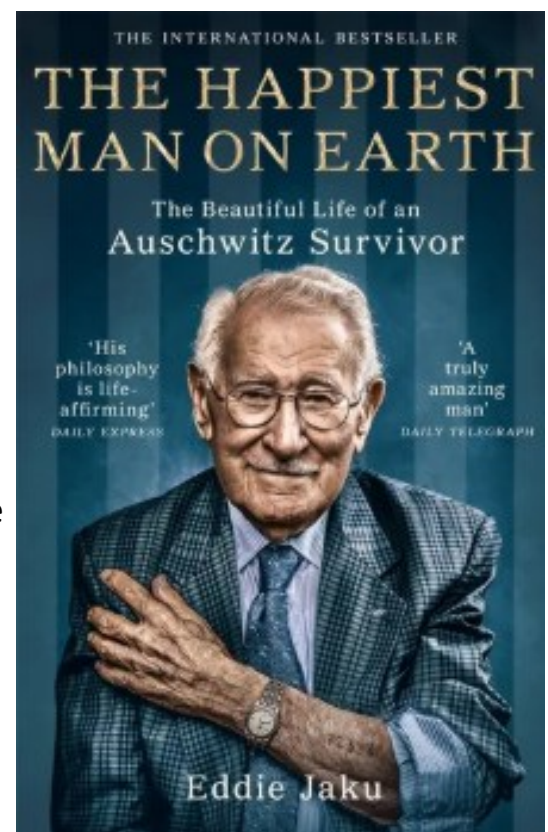
GEMS - Thursday Sept 17, 6 p.m. Kay Duffield Memorial Library, especially welcoming women and students who cannot meet during the day, to enjoy fellowship and support, and consider future activities. Please come and bring a friend. Call Tish for further info, 406-370-6572.

DISTRICT GATHERING - Saturday Sept 26, Epworth UMC, Kalispell. Breakfast at 8, meeting from 9 to 3. "Dream It, Believe It, Do It!" Join in a day of singing, praying and loving UWF! Come and hear Denalie, Elaine, Tish and others share their Assembly adventures. Bring toiletries for the women's shelter, good books to exchange, and cheer on your district officers who keep UWF alive and well. Registration deadline is Sept 18. \$25 in person, \$10 to Zoom. Contact Tish to register, 406-370-6572.

LOOKING AHEAD

UWF Annual Gathering - October 2 & 3, Saint Paul's UMC, Helena. Mark your calendar for your chance to see the UWF BIG PICTURE! Oct 2 spiritual retreat 9 to 4:30, dinner 5 to 8. Oct 3 meeting and workshops 8:30 to 4. Racial Justice and MMIW issues highlighted. \$80 for both dates, plus \$25 for Friday dinner and entertainment. \$30 to Zoom only. Again, let Tish know if you need more info.

The **UWF Bookie Ladies** took the summer off, but will be meeting again on September 22 in the church's Kay Duffield library at 11 a.m. Our September book is *The Happiest Man on Earth: The Beautiful Life of an Auschwitz Survivor* by Eddie Jaku. Eddie was a teenager when Nazis sent him to Buchenwald concentration camp and then Auschwitz. Somehow, he had the will to survive and promised himself he'd smile every day he lived in gratitude and to honor the six million Jews murdered by Hitler. Our book is his story, in his words. 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!





NEW Adult Discussion “Living the Questions” starts Sept. 13

People know that at its core, Christianity has something good to offer the human race. At the same time, many of us 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 and Justice is offering a 7-week discussion group exploring our questions.

Living the Questions is an opportunity to discuss beliefs we learned in childhood, and questions of life that Sunday school didn’t mention. The hour is built around short videos featuring leading progressive (and provocative) spiritual leaders 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 begins September 13

Open to everyone

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

NEED GRIZ FOOTBALL GAME DAY PARKING?

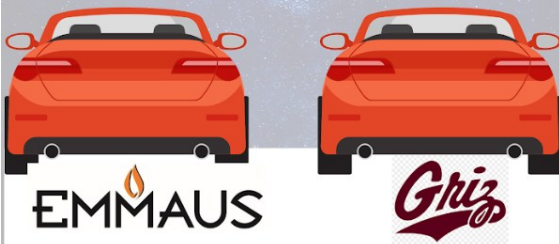
**Park at Emmaus Campus Ministry
and support Emmaus students!!**

Located just across the street from the University, off of Arthur Ave

**\$175 PER PARKING SPOT FOR ALL 7
2026 HOME GAMES!**

**PARKING DONATIONS WILL GO DIRECTLY TO
EMMAUS FOR PROPERTY MAINTNANCE AND
UPGRADES TO STUDENT HOUSING!**

For Questions or To Sign Up, Email office@emmausmontana.org



**We're a  circle
participant.
Vote for us.**



Support Family Promise through Target Circle! Vote for Missoula Interfaith Collaborative from July 1–September 30 to help direct Target's community giving funds specifically to Family Promise, a program of MIC that supports families experiencing or at risk of experiencing homelessness through prevention, shelter, food, and stabilization services.

TO VOTE: Scan QR Code or Visit:
<https://www.target.com/circle/community-voting/>



Fall is quickly approaching and we know that calendars are going to start to fill up! Please mark your calendars for our Fall Bingo Fundraiser which will be at the ZACC this year on Sunday, October 11th. Bingo & Raffles Prizes galore! Stay tuned for details! If you have an interest in becoming a sponsor, donating bingo prizes, or donating raffle prizes, please email office@emmausmontana.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

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

CHURCH STAFF

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*

Lilly Scott, *Nursery Attendant*

*Deadline for October 2026
September 20*

Tzedakah Pocket Offers Hope

Once again you came through for us with donations which allowed us to provide needed assistance to those who contacted us for help and to be able to help more in the coming weeks. We are so grateful for your support. Thank you for your generosity.

A summary of assistance provided by our church’s Tzedakah Pocket Ministry for the month of August 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: \$8,963.27

Assistance Paid	August 2026			Year to Date 2026		
	Amount	Fam	Child.	Amount	Fam	Child.
Lodging	\$ 204.20	1	0	\$ 2,014.12	8	4
Rent/ Sec. Dep.	\$ 0	0	0	\$ 1,533.00	8	13
Other	\$ 606.95	4	1	\$ 4,757.78	47	42
TOTAL	\$ 704.20	5	1	\$ 8,304.90	63	59



If you have a Saturday morning free in September or October, please join the team and make some sack lunches for the Poverello Center. It's a lot of fun and helps some of our hungry neighbors make it through the day. Please contact Lorraine Carlson at madamecarlson@gmail.com.

IN OUR PRAYERS...

~HEALING AND COMFORT~

- ✚ Comfort and a good financial outcome for Nancy's brother Bob, whose wife Sharon is now in memory care, and who has been the victim of financial exploitation.
- ✚ Comfort and peace for Fred's cousin, who is going through a divorce, and his cousin's daughter, who is changing schools in the midst of the turmoil. Thanksgiving that the cousin and daughter will be living near grandma.
- ✚ Comfort for a parishioner's friend Kim in Colorado, whose mother died at Kim's birthday celebration.
- ✚ Comfort for the family and friends of Ellie's kind, loving friend Vickie, who passed away last week and whose service is today in Helena.
- ✚ Successful care for Brad, the new, prematurely born son of Nick's friends Kristen and Josh, who has been flown to Seattle for specialized care.

~PRAYERS~

- ✚ Hope that Rocky's house will sell soon, so she can afford to stay at Beehive (since she can no longer live by herself), and traveling mercies for her daughter as she heads home.
- ✚ Safety for non-combatants during the current wars, especially children, and that we will learn to solve differences without violence.
- ✚ Safety for Pastor John as he commutes back and forth to Colorado to help his parents, and strength as he helps them deal with their new situation.
- ✚ Safety for those in the vicinity of the wildfires this summer, especially for Megan's in-laws, who are having to play evacuation tag as the fires in the Reno/Sparks area threaten first one family's home, and then another's.
- ✚ Strength and comfort for Pastor John's father, Dan, who is now in hospice care. Comfort and a smooth adjustment for his mother, Betty, as she transitions to memory care.
- ✚ That the deterioration of Megan's back due to her Crone's disease can be halted or reversed.

~THANKSGIVING~

- ✚ Gratitude that Denalie's niece is dealing well with her breast cancer diagnosis and treatment and healing for her.
- ✚ Joy for the new Sunday School bulletin board in the back hallway.
- ✚ Gratitude for the great local food available at Missoula's farmer's markets and farm stands.
- ✚ Joy that her sons-of-the-heart's college finals are complete, hope for best results and good jobs for both of them.
- ✚ Gratitude for Denalie's retiree friends still working hard for their Union and fighting for a better world.
- ✚ Joy that Phyllis W could be with us on Sunday morning the 23rd of August.



Our congregation took its turn and made a budgeted donation to MIC to support the Family Promise Welcome Basket program. This program provides needed household items to families when they move from the shelter into more permanent housing.

We got the following response:

"Thank you for your support of Missoula Interfaith Collaborative (MIC) and Family Promise of Missoula! We appreciate your generous donation of \$250.00 for Welcome Baskets which you gave on July 20, 2026. With your assistance and partnership this year, we continue to empower congregations and community organizations to work together, leveraging strengths to meet the needs of the community and address challenges such as hunger and homelessness. Your donation to Family Promise will directly support families in need in Missoula. Thank you for your important help in making our community a brighter place."

All you can eat chili & cornbread — \$5 per person or \$15 per family.

Every bite you share helps families in our community take the next step toward housing stability. We hope to see you there!

Chili Cookoff & Pie Extravaganza
A fundraiser for Family Promise of Missoula

Save the Date

Friday, October 2, 2026 at 6 pm
Revive Church, 2811 Latimer St

All you can Eat Chili & Cornbread
\$5 per person or \$15 per family

Family Promise Updates!
Silent & Live Auction!
Kid's Activities!

Family Promise of Missoula
 a program of the Missoula Interfaith Collaborative

Green Notes: Welcome to Green September!

We're celebrating the new school year by recommitting ourselves to sustainable living and advocacy on behalf of our fragile planet. Please join First Church's Green Team in our effort.



One of the easiest steps you can take is to participate in our church's recycling and composting program. The cost is just \$3 a month – if that's too much for your budget, just pay what you can. The important thing is to join us in composting food scraps and recycling glass.

Everyone is welcome to participate – friends, families, neighbors and members of First Church!

The glass recycling bins and a smaller compost bin are located behind the Sunshine House, in the alley next door to the church's Education Annex. They're accessible 24 hours a day, seven days a week.

Remember: NO GARBAGE is allowed in the bins. Our contractors won't pick up any glass or compost mixed with garbage. Also, the glass should be clean; all colors of glass are accepted.

Just send a check to First UMC, marked "glass recycling" and start bringing your glass and compost materials to our bins. Questions? Email Sherry Devlin at sherrydevlin@gmail.com.

Want to do more? How about joining our Green Team? We meet once a month by Zoom for no more than an hour to brainstorm new projects and tackle our always-growing to-do list. Members set their own level of involvement – no pressure! Email Sherry Devlin at sherrydevlin@gmail.com if you'd like to attend our next meeting.

Finally, stay up-to-date on Green Team initiatives by reading short summaries in our weekly announcements, with more information online at our First Church website and in the main hallway on our Green Team bulletin board. We are monitoring dozens of local, state and national environmental issues, and will help provide you with accurate, timely information on as many of them as possible.

Let's get green this school year, First Church! Join the Green Team!

Why am I committed to Mission & Outreach?

A friend struggling to rebuild his work life after a series of health challenges and other hardships, asked me why it seems like everything conspires against you to keep you down, especially when you are already down. I told him I didn't believe it was a conspiracy, but human greed that we've built into our systems.

I was born into good fortune – loving parents, good public schools, college back when it was affordable, mentors with compassion and wisdom, faith communities led by people who reflected a loving God.

My friend was born into more challenging circumstance – early traumas in a family that had little patience or understanding for his neurodiversity; poverty that extended to local public school budgets and lack of access to good physical and mental health care; peers and mentors impacted by addiction; and faith communities reflecting a punishing, judgmental God.

So my friend is one of the reasons why I do the work of making our Mission and Outreach ministries and our partnerships with the Missoula Interfaith Collaborative and Common Good Missoula, as vibrant, visible, and inviting as possible.

It's because I know that if I'm not working, as Micah says, to "do justice, and to love kindness and to walk humbly with your God," then I am failing my friend, as well as the many other people I have walked alongside as a Housing Advocate volunteer or back in the days of my social work career. Once aware, I can't turn my back without denying them and my own humanity.

So. That is why.

Joe Loos – joeloos7245@gmail.com



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Instagram:

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

Open Hearts. Open Minds. Open Doors.

September Events

Sept 13: Living the Questions begins, Library, 9:00-9:50am

Sept 16: Vespers Circle, Library 1:30-2:30pm

Sept 17: GEMS, Library, 6:00pm

Sept 20: Bell Choir plays Sunday Service.

Sept 22: UWF Book Group, Library 11:00am

Sept 26: UWF District Gathering, Kalispell, MT



Looking Ahead

Oct 2: Chili Cookoff and Pie Extravaganza, Revive Church, 6:00pm

Oct 2 & 3: UWF Annual Gathering, Helena, MT

Oct 11: Bingo Fundraiser for Family Promise, Emmaus Campus Ministry

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!