

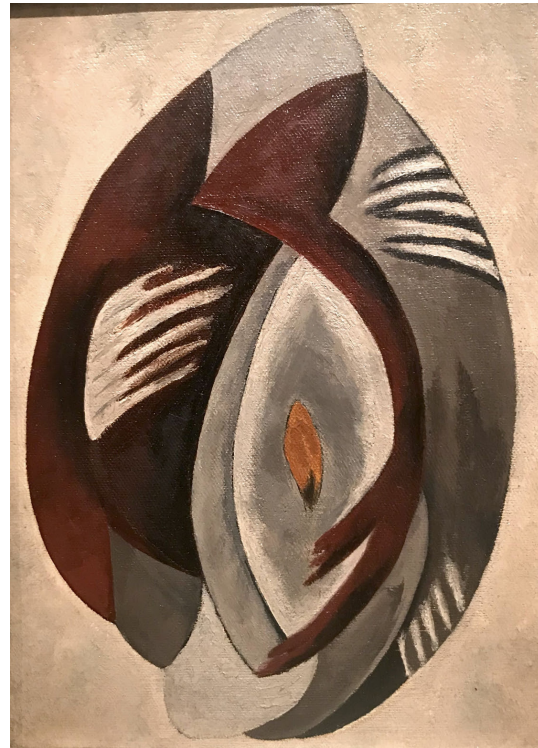
June 2020
eNews

Make for Me a Sanctuary

*Let them make to the glory of My Name a
place of holiness.*

Rashi on Exodus 25:8

*Painting: Helen Torr, 1928
Baker Museum, Naples FL*



Wider Church and Community Resources

Click on these links for resource information

Click on this link for a comprehensive index of Resources mnwcucc.org.



UCC National Ministries

Grants to local churches available



Global Partners

Video messages from around the world



CPC Conf. Minister

Considerations about phasing forward



Horizons Stewardship

Resilient Leadership



People's Campaign

Virtual March on Washington, June 20



National Council of Churches

A Time to Mourn video service of CoVid lament



World Council of Churches

CoVid Q&A for churches from a global view



Convergence

Courageous Faith Summit

Conference Highlights

Local Church Regathering Plans

Many of our churches have been considering when and how to regather for Sunday morning worship. Given our huge territory, you will see that there are a variety of responses among our churches. Please stay attentive to regathering protocols and to changes in the number of CoVid cases in your county.

Resources for phasing into your in-house worship and opening to meetings are available on our Conference Website: www.mnwcucc.org

Churches, listed west to east

University UCC Missoula: virtual throughout summer

Butte UCC: in sanctuary with distancing

Plymouth UCC Helena: virtual with worship team, childcare open

Fairfield UCC: in sanctuary with distancing

Great Falls UCC: virtual until Advent

Pilgrim UCC Bozeman: virtual, limited meetings

Big Timber UCC: in sanctuary

Absarokee UCC: virtual

Columbus UCC: worship team and virtual, will reconsider in mid-June

Red Lodge UCC: virtual and first Sunday of the month outdoors at Kaleva Park

Molt UCC: Laurel's Riverside Park (outdoors) on June 7

Mayflower UCC Billings: virtual; then start with worship team and virtual in July

Billings First: virtual, limited meetings, childcare open

Worden Bethlehem: regathering June 7 with distancing

Ballantine UCC: n/a

Hardin UCC/UMC: virtual, looking to move to outdoor services

Custer UCC: in sanctuary and virtual

Sheridan UCC: worship team with virtual, will reconsider in mid-June

Buffalo UCC: in sanctuary

Colstrip UCC/PCUSA: in sanctuary

Miles City UCC/DOC: in sanctuary with distancing and virtual

Broadus Powder River UCC: in sanctuary with distancing

Glendive UCC: in sanctuary with distancing

Savage UCC: in sanctuary

Baker UCC: in sanctuary

Sidney People's UCC: in sanctuary

Pastors and Church as BIPOC Allies

It is no surprise that clergy among us are offering their ministry skills and reputations as BIPOC (Black, Indigenous, People of Color) allies in these times of national reckoning with racism, inequality, and economic disparity. Of course, clergy engagement is not new among us. However, it is especially focused in these times when our faith values call us to clearly name unrighteous and unjust systems in our society.

Time of Vigil and Mediation: led by Rev. Laura Folkwein and Rev. Danielle Rogers

Time of Testimonial Reading of the Bible: organized by Rev. Dwight Welch

First Church Billings being a people of outreach and providing a place of sanctuary: led by Pastor (soon to be Rev.) Lisa Harmon

Pilgrim UCC Bozeman youth talk about the murder of George Floyd: led by Rev. Danielle Rogers

How to be an Anti-Racist, by Ibram X. Kendi, family bookstudy: led by University UCC Youth Directors, Karin Clark-Cassens and Grace Cassens

Butte UCC and other churches recommend watching [The Cross and the Lynching Tree](#), [A Requiem for Ahmaud Arbery](#) on YouTube

Rev. Roger Lynn reflects on some words of the prophet Micah

Rev. Lynne Spencer-Smith leads prayer service for Great Falls UCC and suggests an online visit to the National Museum of African American Art

Rev. Sheila Naismith posts "[75 Things You Can Do for Racial Justice](#)"

[10 Hours of Silence](#): Rev. Dr. Marc Stewart writes on Montana Association of Christians eNews

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God-seeds



Rev. Dr. Marc Ian Stewart

How is it with holy Spirit?

What the Spirit brings: love, joy, peace, patience, kindness, goodness, trustfulness, gentleness and self-control. There can be no law against things like that. Galatians 5:22-23

I am old enough to remember the summer of '68. How scary it was for this 10-year old boy.! The summer began with the assassination of Sen. Robert F. Kennedy just a few months after the assassination of Rev. Dr. Martin Luther King. The summer continued with riots, and as we moved from Bangor, Maine to southern Maine in August 1968, I became paralyzed with a fear of death. Now, at 62-years of age, contemplating the eventuality of death is nothing more than an unpleasant consideration. What about for today's young people, though? What about for BIPOCs (Black, Indigenous, and People of Color) where there is precious little institutional guarantee of protection? What about for people in cities threatened with military actions against peaceful protesters? I cannot imagine what the trifecta of pandemic, unemployment, and institutional violence is doing to our young people.

At least there is push-back from this younger generation that will not be silenced, and there are warnings from the establishment against the politics and actions of division. It might not be "the end of the American experiment" as one general feared.

I cannot think that there is any comfort offered in the photo-op of the President holding up an unread Bible in front of a St. John's Episcopal Church, near the White House. That particularly was true when federal law enforcement were ordered to brutalize a pre-curfew peaceful vigil in Lafayette Park to clear the way for Mr. Trump's entourage. Bishop for the Washington Episcopal Diocese, The Rev. Mariann Budde, observed that the whole scene was "as if it were a prop or an extension of his military and authoritarian position . . . and was an abuse of the spiritual tools and symbols of our traditions and of our sacred space."

Comfort and assurance, teaching and preaching is what we do. Advocacy and courageously speaking truth to the powers is the ministry we do as churches for the sake of the Gospel. It may seem safer than usual to question our national policies, as Wall Street CEOs, some police chiefs, and bipartisan politicians also question institutional practices, policing tactics, and the white identity politics that perpetuate racism in this country. Yet, I believe we are called to more than supporting safe economies, mediating peace and identifying (for most of us in Montana and Wyoming) our white privilege. As surely as the Church is called to be a good civic participant in society, the Gospel says there is more for which we are responsible. In fact, it is only because we are the Church, gathered and sent out by Spirit, that what is needed for the sake of the Gospel can be accomplished. The transformations, indeed resurrections, needed in this world may only happen because of our faithful response. It is not our buildings, not even Bible waved above our heads, that make for the Church that exists for the sake of the Gospel. The Church is the faithful gathering of those listening and acting in the one Spirit of God to accomplish far more than what human hands and minds can do on their own.

I eventually found some relief from my childhood paralysis, my fear of death. However, it did take a couple more years before the gift of comfort gave way to a gift of understanding. Summer Vacation Church School in 1970 used a curriculum called "Drum Majors for Justice." I learned that people were not powerless in effecting change, that the Church was at work in the world, that there was life in not giving in to the despair of violence. What will we do to preach, teach, accompany and live out this faith life in today's hurting world?

I have been asking during CoVid "How is it with your soul?" As we more fully realize a pandemic of racism that has existed on this continent since 1492, I ask "How is it with holy Spirit?"

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Camping at Mimanagish

Tenting/RV Options

The Conference is offering the opportunity for families to participate in limited rustic camping at Mimanagish during summer 2020. Family groups are limited to 8 people with approval by the Conference office, and with a signed covenant agreement. There will not be more than one family group on site at a time. Camping is limited to two units (tent or rv) and must be located in the lower camp parking lot or in the lodge parking lot. There are no utilities or buildings open, and campers will only have access to the outhouses.

This family camping opportunity is on a first come, first served basis with the intent of providing the opportunity to as many people as are interested. All requests will require the final approval of the Conference Minister. Camping is limited to 7 days including your arrival and departure days. A schedule of availability is located on our website at: www.mnwcucc.org/mim-calendar. Requests to stay must be made at least one week prior to requested arrival date.

Please contact the conference office via email if you would like to reserve a rustic camping time at Mimanagish: ucc@mnwcucc.org. Include the dates you would like to camp and how many people will be joining you. Interested families will be notified via email if their time slot is approved and then be provided a covenant form to be completed and signed by the Conference Minister prior to the stay. All campers will agree to a covenant, which will be printed by the camper and be on hand while at camp.

There is no charge for this camping experience but a free will donation may be made to help alleviate the set costs of camp. Please send to our office at:

MNWC
2016 Alderson Avenue
Billings, MT 59102

Pastoral Transitions

Three ministries celebrated



Rev. Michael Mulberry

Mike leaves First Church Billings with a changed ministry

Six to seven years is a time unit of ministry that may represent a discernable change in the life of a church. The six years of Rev. Mulberry's ministry with First Church Billings turned around the culture and



Rev. Neil Lindorff

Neil retires from Sidney and Savage UCC's

Following 12 years of ministry at People's UCC in Sidney and First UCC Savage, Rev. Neil Lindorff is retiring to Grand Forks, ND, along with his spouse, Rev. Nell Lindorff. Appreciatively known as the "wise man from the east" within the Conference, Neil was on the Board and

mission of First Church Billings, such that its ministry is shared with the downtown community, with Native American elders, and is nationally recognized. Blessings to Mike as he now joins his spouse, Rev. Tracy Heilman, in the Illinois Conference UCC, living at Tower Hill Retreat Center in Sawyer, Michigan.

Church and Ministry Commission for many more terms than most, and he always showed up for meetings. Neil also served as chair of the Conference Minister search committee in 2011/12.



Rev. Glover Wagner

Glover and Mary to retire at end of August

After over 40 years of ministry with Pilgrim UCC Bozeman, Rev. Glover Wagner announced he will be retiring on August 31. Glover's wife, Mary, has also served as the church administrator. Glover and Mary will be moving to Walla Walla, Washington.



Calendar

June 7-14 Conference Minister Marc Stewart on vacation

June 8 Faith Formation Committee, 3 pm Zoom

June 15 Committee for Outdoor Ministries, 7 pm Zoom

June 22-23 MT-NWy UCC Board of Directors, Zoom

July 22-25 National Youth Event Postponed to 2022

September 18-20 Conference Annual Meeting will be held using virtual technology, such as Zoom, instead of in person at Red Lodge

July 2021 General Synod 33 will be held using virtual technology, such as Zoom, instead of in person in Kansas City

Rev. Dr. Ginny Brown Daniel, Missouri MidSouth UCC Conference Minister, has charted out best practices and protocols for each phase of moving through the CoVid 19 pandemic, from various state and CDC protocols. Please monitor your county CoVid situation as infection rates may change over the summer. [CovidNow](#) provides what I consider to be the best state by state information on CoVid risks. Check this link for an assessment of where CoVid is declining or increasing.

Suggested In-Person Worship Phases

<u>Action</u>	<u>Phase 1</u> <i>Stay at Home Order</i>	<u>Phase 2</u> <i>2 weeks declining COVID cases</i>	<u>Phase 3</u> <i>4 weeks declining COVID cases</i>	<u>Phase 4</u> <i>8 weeks declining COVID cases</i>	<u>Phase 5</u> <i>Vaccine distributed to all population</i>
In-Person Worship	No	Yes 10 max	Yes 25 max	Yes 50 max	Yes
Singing	No	No	Choir only	Yes with mask	Yes
Peace of Christ	No	No	No	No	Yes
Time With Children	No	No	No	Limited	Yes
Offering	No	No	No	No	Yes
Communion	No	No	No	No	Yes
Hymnals/Pew Bibles	No	No	No	No	Yes
Nursery	No	No	No	Limited	Yes
Bulletins	Yes 1-time use	Yes 1-time use	Yes 1-time use	Yes 1-time use	Yes
Fellowship Before/After	No	No	No	Limited	Yes
In-Person Sunday School/Confirmation/youth gathering event	No	No	No	Limited	Yes

Suggested In-Person Church Events

<u>Action</u>	<u>Phase 1</u> <i>Stay at Home Order</i>	<u>Phase 2</u> <i>2 weeks declining COVID cases</i>	<u>Phase 3</u> <i>4 weeks declining COVID cases</i>	<u>Phase 4</u> <i>8 weeks declining COVID cases</i>	<u>Phase 5</u> <i>Vaccine distributed to all population</i>
In-Person Worship	No	Yes 10 max	Yes 25 max	Yes 50 max	Yes
Physical Distance	Yes	6 feet	6 feet	3 feet	No
Personal Touch Rituals	No	No	No	Limited	Yes
Food Events	No	No	No	No	Yes
In-Person Meetings	No	No	No	Limited	Yes
Office Opened to Public	No	No	No	Limited	Yes
Mission/Ministry Events	No	No	No	Limited	Yes
Church Rentals ⁶	No	No	Yes 25 max	Yes 50 max	Yes

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Montana - N.Wyoming Conference United Church of Christ

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