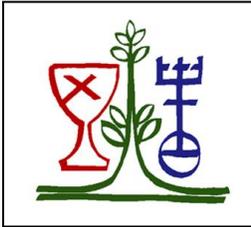


## United Christian Church - Late November 2022

A merged congregation of  
Highland Park United Church of Christ  
and First Christian Church, Disciples of Christ,  
Miles City, Montana



# The Welcome!

**No matter who you are, or where you are  
on life's journey, you are welcome here!**

### ADVENT SEASON ARRIVES

After a glorious, lengthy autumn that ended much too abruptly with sub-zero temperatures, December is practically upon us! Whatever the weather next brings, we have moved into Advent and UCC is planning some special services and events for this season.

Sunday, December 4 - Special Choir Program at 10:00 am followed by a potluck

Saturday, December 24 - Christmas Eve Services at 6:30 pm and 11:00 pm

Sunday, December 25- CHRISTMAS DAY, no services will be held

Sunday, January 1 - No services; instead, a Brunch Potluck at 10:00 am.

Come & share some favorite Christmas memories!



### CHRISTMAS FAIR TRADE & ALTERNATIVE GIFTING EVENT

On Saturday, December 3rd, UCC is hosting a fair trade sale that includes opportunities for "alternative giving." (See the green box below.) In addition, there will be a variety of items for sale, including tree ornaments, Christmas decor, coffees, soup mixes, ceramics, **CHOCOLATE**,

and much more! The sale runs from 9:00 am - 1:00 pm in the UCC fellowship hall. (Use side doors.) Proceeds from the event benefit World Central Kitchen, UNICEF, World Vision (similar to the Heifer Project) and Bread for the World. *Share the Love Bookstore* will be open!

A sample of items available at the sale:

**Alternative Gift Opportunities-**  
especially good for those on your  
list who don't need any more "stuff!"

**YOU** can gift::

A portion of a **goat** or **chickens**;  
these animals provide milk, protein &  
income to families in poor countries

**High energy biscuits & therapeutic  
milk** for malnourished children

**Meals** for hungry families in **Ukraine**  
and other war-torn & natural disaster  
impacted areas

**YOU** choose the gift & amount and  
**WE** provide you with a certificate,  
describing the donation, that you  
give to your recipient.



Soapstone engraved hearts



Bread warmers,  
some with  
homemade bread!

Lanterns



**And MUCH, MUCH more!**

**From Rev. Amber ~**

It seems like the commercialized parts of Christmas start earlier and earlier every year. There were Christmas commercials on TV while we still had trick-or-treaters ringing the doorbell. Christmas sales began on November 1.

Correct me if I am wrong, but didn't Christmas used to begin *after* Thanksgiving? It seems like we are going right from Labor Day to Halloween to Christmas and forgetting everything else in between. We are bombarded with the message that we need to purchase everything right now. Some commercials state this is the last time the item will ever be available, so you need to buy it IMMEDIATELY. We are made to feel anxious about what we have or haven't yet purchased.

In 2000, the movie "How the Grinch Stole Christmas" came out. It is the live action version of the Dr. Seuss book and TV special. Jim Carrey plays the Grinch and Taylor Momson plays Cindy Lou Who. Little Cindy Lou begins to realize that all the buying and baking and gifting and decorating may not be what Christmas is really all about. She sings a song called "Where are you, Christmas?" Cindy Lou Who is surrounded by Christmas but she just can't feel the spirit of the season.

The older I get, the more I identify with that song. Where is Christmas? Not the commercialized Christmas that is on display at Wal-Mart, in our email inboxes, and on our Facebook pages. Where is the REAL Christmas and when does that start?

After the Grinch steals all the food, all the packages, all the decorations and returns to his lair, he hears the Whos in Whoville singing. He suddenly realizes, like Cindy Lou Who, that Christmas doesn't come from a store. Christmas is the people who surround us and the love that warms our hearts.

We work hard to find the right *THING* to give to our loved ones, but most of us don't need more *THINGS*. We need THANKS. We need to give thanks to our loved ones for being in our lives. Yes, the things we give them can be an expression of our love and appreciation, but how often do we give them thanks instead of giving them things? When was the last time you really looked someone in the eye and said you appreciated them?

Often on Thanksgiving, we give thanks for who and what we appreciate. This is important! Maybe, this Christmas season, we can add a new tradition of giving thanks to our loved ones with words, not just things. There will be an entire month after Thanksgiving before Christmas to buy the stuff. For at least one day, give the words that mean the most. Maybe, then, our hearts can find Christmas.



### **SPECIAL CHRISTMAS PROJECT**

This holiday season, UCC members & friends are providing gifts to families and individuals served by CNADA (Custer Network Against Domestic Abuse & Sexual Assault). We have a list of families, with ages and sex of children, who can be "adopted" for gift giving. If you haven't yet signed up and want to do so, please contact Marilyn Thaden at 853-1651. If you want to provide some funds and have someone shop for you, please let Marilyn know. The deadline for turning in gifts is fast approaching: **Sunday, December 4th**. Gifts **don't** need to be wrapped.

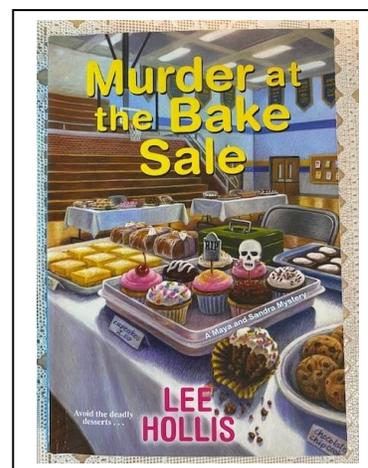
## FALL SALE BENEFITS FOOD BANK

United Christian Church sponsored its annual Fair Trade & Bake sale on October 1st. Due to a rainy forecast, the sale was held mainly inside the church, though some baked goods were available outside under the sheltered front eave.

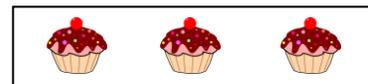


Linda Parks was even in town for the sale!

Thanks to many generous bakers, we had an amazing array of pies, breads, cookies and other goodies. We also displayed a fun book that came into the bookstore, but fortunately, our sale didn't have this ↓ type of excitement. ↓



The following Saturday, we set up a table at the MC Farmers' Market, where we sold most of our remaining fair trade baskets.



As a result of the two days of sales, our proceeds totaled more than \$2,000 and we were delighted to present the Custer County Food Bank with a check for \$2,000, an amount that is being matched by the Town Pump Charitable Foundation. (In addition, our donation jar for CNADA brought in \$100.) A huge "THANK YOU" goes to the bakers, the workers and all our customers who helped make this event such a success!!!

## BOOKSTORE NEWS

In an effort to serve underrepresented youth in our community, *Share the Love Bookstore* is in the process of starting an LGBTQ+ section. It has been brought to our attention that the young LGBTQ+ population in Miles City have inadequate resources, especially in our school libraries. We believe that everyone should be able to find characters in books with whom they can identify. The details are still being finalized, but the books in this collection will probably be loaned out instead of being available for purchase. If you have questions or would like to help us build this collection, please contact Amber or Wendy.

**MORE BOOK NEWS:** Current read by the UCC Book Group is "Everyone Needs a Larry: Love with a Twist of Cancer" by Jennifer Greenhut Tollin and Larry Tollin. December's gathering and discussion has been rescheduled to **January**. Details to follow!

**WE LOVE READING!**

## PEOPLE WE KNOW

Last month, our church family and many friends gathered to celebrate the 25th anniversary of **Dixie Rieger** and **Toni Gaglia's** original commitment ceremony. The celebration, which included a renewal of their vows, featured a Hawaiian theme as had their original ceremony. The event was planned without Toni's knowledge, and, amazingly, Dixie and everyone else

managed to keep it a secret! As the photos indicate, it was a great celebration!



**CELEBRATE**

**October was a month of celebrations!** Many of us gathered with Joan Wilson and her family at Joan's home to honor and celebrate her 90th birthday. Joan, in her usual modest way, didn't think anyone would attend, and marveled as her porch and house filled with friends. (None of us was surprised!)



Joan deciding if she wants to don her birthday hat!



This fall has also been a time for health issues and medical procedures within our church family. We continue keeping **Cindy Radue** and **Clancee Collins** in our thoughts as they progress through complicated health issues and lengthy recoveries.

We're glad that **Lee Richardson** is doing well after his carpal tunnel surgery and ulnar nerve transposition. We are also happy to report that **Judy Bovee** is recovering well from her back surgery. And it's great to see **Toni Gaglia** with a big smile on her face as she recovers from her successful rotator cuff surgery and the repair of a torn bicep. (Plus, Toni's now far enough along in recovery that she can drive herself, which really makes her smile!)

## MORE PEOPLE WE KNOW

**Rhonda McKay** recently had knee replacement surgery and we're sending our best wishes for a recovery that is as-speedy-as-possible! **Robert Dickson** will be having prostate surgery and our prayers will be with him.

And then there's **Marilyn Thaden**, who a week ago took a bit of a tumble while ice skating, resulting in **two** broken wrists. After the original splinting was replaced with bright, seasonal casts, Marilyn wasted no time in returning to her piano and she played today, Nov. 27, during church, a mere week after her accident! Obviously, this injury won't slow her down for long and we all wish Marilyn a full and fast recovery!



We had two church friends move from Miles City recently. **Rhonda Shumway** relocated to Billings and we wish her the very best in this new chapter of her life. We enjoyed the all-too-brief time Rhonda attended UCC and we thank her for her time as Financial Secretary. (Thanks also to Toni Gagli for taking over this position until our next election of officers.) **Samar Devies** moved recently to Tucson where she is providing care for her mother. Samar's enthusiasm and smile are missed!

We extend our sympathy to **Jerry Collins** and family in the death of Jerry's wife, Bev. Jerry is the semi-retired pastor at Miles City's United Methodist Church.

We have been congratulating **Dixie Rieger** repeatedly on her recent retirement from her position as director of the Waterworks Art Museum! Retirement is definitely agreeing with her and now she helps out at WAM when she wants to! (which does **not** include shoveling snow!) **Vida Landa** retired again recently for the 5th (?) time and **DeNice Curry** possibly retired earlier this year from Wagner Chiropractic but then again, she doesn't really seem to be gone from there!

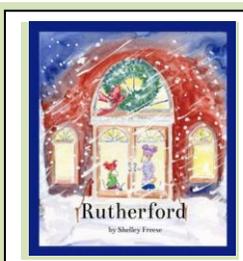


Our UCC family has been enriched by the presence of **Damian "Pipo" Sanz**, who arrived from Argentina in July for an internship at Tongue River Winery. Pipo has a degree in Enology (winemaking) and he and Bob T. have enjoyed sharing their knowledge with one another. Pipo originally arrived for a six month internship but that has now been extended, although he is leaving in early December to fulfill his visa requirements and enjoy time with his family. His plan is to return in February with a work visa and become a long-term partner at the winery.

Pipo has been a regular at UCC since his arrival in Miles City, and his contributions to the music and church community have been greatly enjoyed!

### ~ Birthdays ~

12/10 - Tim Irion      12/20 - Cord Berg  
12/16 - Kurt Reinhart    12/22 - Trista York



Shelley Freese will do a reading and signing of her new book 'Rutherford' at 3:00, Saturday, Dec. 3 at Vintage & Rustics. Artwork and story of this delightful book are entirely done by Shelley.

## Calendar of Upcoming Events

- 11/29 - **GIVING TUESDAY** - Global Giving Day - Many charities match donations!  
12/2 - **Barn Players Production: 'A Christmas Story'** - Montana Theatre, 7:30 pm  
12/3 - **Fair Trade/Alternative Giving Event at UCC, 9:00-1:00**  
12/3 - *Share the Love Bookstore, 9:00 - 4:00*  
12/3 - **RSVP Craft Bazaar, Presbyterian Church, 9:00 - 3:00**  
12/3 - **Shelley Freese reading & book signing, Vintage & Rustics, 3:00 pm**  
12/4 - **UCC Special Choral Service followed by potluck**  
12/4 - **Deadline for bringing CNADA Christmas gifts**  
12/9 - **Barn Players Production: 'A Christmas Story'** - Montana Theatre, 7:00 pm  
12/10 - **Barn Players Production: 'A Christmas Story'** at 2:00 pm & 7:00 pm  
12/18 - **Convent Keepers Christmas Tea, 2:00 - 4:00 pm**  
12/24 - **UCC Christmas Eve Services 6:30 pm and 11:00 pm**  
12/25 - **MERRY CHRISTMAS** (no UCC services)  
1/1 - **HAPPY NEW YEAR!** No UCC services; Brunch potluck at 10:00 am  
***Share the Love Bookstore is also open Tuesdays from 2:00-6:00 pm***

### United Christian Church

1006 S. Strevell Avenue  
Miles City, MT 59301  
(406) 234-3467

### Ministry Team:

Rev. Amber Richardson, Deacon  
Rev. Bob Thaden, Retired

Mailing Label

### Sunday Service at 10:00 am



Follow us on Facebook at **UCC Miles City**  
and at **Share the Love Bookstore**

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Newsletter Editor: Barb Cole



LOVE

