

TOWER TIDINGS

The Seventy-Ninth Epistle of John – “The Job of World Repair”

There isn't a day that goes by where I don't hear someone comment on how bad things look in this upcoming year. The news media is the worst source of such dire projections, but plenty of my face-to-face conversations embody the same sentiments. For people of conscience, for those who retain an appreciation for morality, for those who follow Jesus and heed his counsel for this world, there is no denying that this upcoming year has an ominosity (yes, I made that word up!) that staggers the mind and plunges the heart. We are undoubtedly in for some very troubling times.

But people of faith were made for troubling times like these, weren't we?

Perhaps my question mark gave away the tenuousness of that perspective, for it is a popular, cavalier thought meant to drum up the courage needed to confront impending doom. We often repeat such mantras, such as “when the going gets tough, the tough get going” (quote by Joseph P. Kennedy) or “What **lies** behind **you** and what **lies** in front of **you** pales in comparison to what **lies inside you**” (quote from Ralph Waldo Emerson) or “The greater the obstacle, the more glory in overcoming it.” (quote by Moliere) or – one of my favorites – “when your ice cream falls out of the cone, remember the cone tastes good, too” (quote by John Daniels). Well and good – we need these and many thoughts to bolster our spirits and encourage our efforts when things look bad. Sometimes they help; sometimes they seem wildly patronizing; sometimes they simply confirm that what lies ahead will be arduous.

It can be more helpful, however, to remember that when something is profoundly wrong with the world the unease we feel is actually a good thing. To be uncomfortable with wrongdoing affirms a conscience at work; to be outraged by injustice confirms that we are attentive to the needs and rights of humanity and creation; to squirm in the presence of falsehood doing its best to appear true upholds our insistence on honesty; to agonize over the suffering caused by warfare, greed, exploitation, abuse, and

JANUARY 2025



EPIPHANY

LECTIONARY

- **January 5, 2025**
Epiphany Sunday
Isaiah 60:1-6
Psalm 72:1-7, 10-14
Ephesians 3:1-12
Matthew 2:1-12

- **January 12, 2025**
Baptism of the Lord
Isaiah 43:1-7
Psalm 29
Acts 3:14-17
Luke 3:15-17, 21-22

- **January 19, 2025**
2nd Sunday after the Epiphany
Isaiah 62:1-5
Psalm 36:5-10
1 Corinthians 12:1-11
John 2:1-11

- **January 26, 2025**
3rd Sunday after the Epiphany
Nehemiah 8:1-3, 8-10
Psalm 19
1 Corinthians 12:12-31a
Luke 4:14-21

creation abuse is the natural response of those who identify with better ways of being. It may sound funny to our ears, but it is right and good to be uncomfortable in these ways, not that we seek the discomfort for its own sake, but that it comes about because of acknowledged brokenness.

I've lost the author of an important quote that carries within it a summation of how change occurs which I think is very accurate (my apologies to the author as well because I cannot remember his or her precise wording!). The quote goes like this: "Things don't change unless one of three things moves the change: 1) people suffer enough to desperately seek change; 2) people are forced to change from an outside force; or 3) people choose to change because they have discovered a better way."

People of faith find themselves invited constantly into that third perspective where the discovery of how things ought to be, while outlining how far off things are from that ideal, remains the greatest hope for the world. The acknowledgment of the wrongness of things may start in depressive outlooks, but these are not taken as defeatist apathies – rather, they are understood as catalysts for faith's implementation. Jesus was sent to a broken world to implement repair (we call this redemption); Jesus invited us into that same work when he said, "follow me." Jesus started with the world as it was, filled with misunderstandings, prejudices, oppressions, abuse, inequity, diseases, and injury, but he never left the world as it was, working acts of grace that met very practical human needs.

We may do the same; and we must do the same, joining Jesus in the work of world repair. Time to roll up the sleeves! God's Grace Be With You,



Afghan Drop By Drop Fund is Ready

The Afghan family we are helping, a widow and 4 young adult daughters, are now in Pakistan, thanks to our church support that helped the family leave Afghanistan safely. The oldest daughter already has UN Refugee status; with our help, she is now with the U.S. State Department and will be coming to Missoula through the International Rescue Committee (IRC). The mother and other 3 daughters are waiting in Pakistan to be vetted for legal refugee status in January. The girls are still vulnerable to forced marriages with male relatives if they cannot leave soon. Our Drop by Drop Fund will support them while they wait and during their first 90 days in Missoula through our Welcome Corps sponsorship. Afghan Support Team members will be glad to talk with you about this effort.

Your donations in any amount will go directly to support this family. To donate, you can bring or send a check to church with Afghan Drop by Drop on the memo line. OR go to BREEZE at FUMC online and select the Afghan Drop by Drop Fund.

- "Drop by drop a river is made." - Afghan proverb

Spread the Word! First Church’s Office Complex for Lease

First Church’s office complex at 320 E. Main St. is for lease. We need you to help spread the news to organizations and businesses that might be looking for a new home.

The building offers many amenities: two stories with five-plus offices (could easily be eight), two bathrooms, work rooms and waiting areas, and a basement with safe storage space. The 2,700 square feet-plus provides ample room to meet an organization’s staff and customer/client needs.

Parking is available in front of the building, with four dedicated spaces in the alley. Tenants also will appreciate the property’s high-visibility street frontage across from the former Missoula Public Library building. A bus stop is out front. There’s bicycle parking, and easy walking to downtown businesses and the university. A main-floor entrance ramp provides access for all.

Spread the word! Interested parties can contact First United Methodist Church for more information or a tour of the building: 406-549-6118 or fumcmissoula@gmail.com.



Church Pledges and Donations

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

<https://firstumcmissoula.breezechms.com/give/online>

If you give online there is a dropdown menu under the line with the amount that allows you to designate where the money goes. You can also text to give at (406) 998-1982 with a donation amount and keyword like pledge or building. You are also welcome to mail in your donation. Leslie Uhlenbruck, Financial Secretary

**Tower Tidings
January Deadline:**
January 17
Special thanks to Nancy Eik and April Padgett for helping edit *Tower Tidings*.

HOW TO CONTACT

THE 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

- John Daniels, *Pastor*
- Administrative Assistant
- Cheryl Bauer, *Administrative Assistant Sub*
- Jim Bauer, Donna McCammon, and
Cara Lightfield *Office Volunteers*
- Leslie Lindley, *Treasurer*
- Leslie Uhlenbruck, *Financial Secretary*
- Craig Gohl, *Custodian*
- Greg Boris, *Chancel Choir Director*
- Jason Triche, *Hand Bell Choir Director*
- Luke Larson, *Organist and Pianist*
- Cindy Ekstrand, *Sunday School Director*
- Lizzie Mills - Low, *Nursery Attendant*

For more information or to reach First UMC staff, please call the church office, 406-549-6118, or E-Mail us at FUMCmissoula@gmail.com

Inspiration Toolbox

“With the new day comes new strength and new thoughts.”

Eleanor Roosevelt

UNITED WOMEN IN FAITH



The UWF has no general meeting in January. The executive team and circle leaders are meeting to plan the programs for the 2025 year. The next meeting will be:

GENERAL MEETING: Thurs Feb 6, at 1:30 pm, in the Kay Duffield Memorial Library for installation of officers and a memorial service. Hosts will be Ruth Circle. All women of the church and friends are welcomed. For further information contact Elaine Williams, 406-529-1325.

RUTH: Thurs, Jan 9 at 10 am in the KDM Library. Group met and learned how to “spiritually declutter” life each year and made plans for 2025. Please contact Marsha Lowe 406-531-9730.

VESPERS: Wed, Jan 15 at 1 pm in KDM Library. For more contact Patsy at 406-493-0961.

GEMS: Meets at various times to meet needs of members. If you enjoy fun, hands on spirit-filled mission-oriented work, check out this group. Call Tish at 370-6572 for more information.

BOOK: Tues, Jan 28 at 11 am in KDM Library to discuss the January book, *“A Little Piece of Light: A Memoir of Hope, Prison, and Life Unbound”* by Donna Hylton - “A women’s journey back to life as she faced the truth about the crime that locked her away for 27 years, as well as the family she found inside prison that ultimately saved her.” We’ll briefly discuss the December bonus book, *Saving Us* by Katharine Hayhoe - “A climate scientist’s case for hope and healing in a divided world”, and will distribute hard copies of our 2025 book list. The 2025 books will be available in our library bookcase in early February. Please contact Kathie for more info at 406-531-1569.

CRAFTERS: Several projects are underway: revamping pew swags used during Advent, sewing swag bags for women attending the spring District Mtg that FUMC is hosting, learning to make Danish Braided Heart Baskets to be filled with goodies for Valentine’s Day and creating ice luminaria for next Christmas Eve. Contact Kathie Snodgrass at 406-531-1569 or email Kathie so you can help us schedule at: kippie_snodgrass@hotmail.com

Sunday School - Needs Your Help!

Greetings. We are really in need of Sunday School Teachers, Sunday School Assistants and Nursery Attendants. Please consider joining our Sunday School staff. If you are interested, please call Cindy Ekstrand at 775-560-3381 or call the church office at 406-549-6118.

One of the crafts the children are working on in Sunday School requires egg cartons. If you can bring in egg cartons that store a dozen eggs that would be wonderful. Please drop them off at the Sunday School room or drop them off at the church office.

Thank you! Cindy Ekstrand, Sunday School Director

Tzedakah Pocket Offers Hope

December was an exceptionally busy month with many individuals and families in need. For some, our support helped them move into more permanent housing or was a bridge until more permanent housing was ready for them to move in. For others, our support helped keep them in their motel room until their next paycheck came. Some we couldn't help at all because their needs were too great and/or we are not equipped to handle their situations. That always hurts, but all we can do is say prayers for them and we do. As you can see, we have spent considerably more this year than in previous years, but we have helped more individuals and families than ever before and our donations exceeded what we gave out. This would not be possible if it weren't for the generosity and caring of our congregation, our church faith groups, and our Foundation. May God bless you all.

A recap of assistance provided by our church's Tzedakah Pocket ministry for the month and year to date is shown below. We help whenever we can with as much as we can. Please continue to donate whenever you are able. Together we make a difference for those who come to us for assistance.



Tzedakah Summary

2024 Donations: \$16,031.03

Assistance Paid	December 2024			Year - To - Date 2024		
	Amount	Fam	Child	Amount	Fam.	Child.
<i>Lodging</i>	\$ 616.00	6	12	\$ 4,286.23	24	24
<i>Rent/ Sec. Dep.</i>	\$ 562.00	2	5	\$ 3,962.00	18	26
<i>Other</i>	\$ 341.00	4	4	\$ 7,553.89	61	54
<i>TOTAL</i>	\$ 1,519.00	12	21	\$ 15,578.12	103	104

First UMC January 2025 Food Drive

January is our month to support the Missoula Food Bank. The continuing Covid presence, inflation, and the fallout from them continue to increase the need for donations to the Food Bank. They also make it a challenge for us to do our January Food Drive but we have always come through and supported our community. We are offering you as many donation options as we possibly can under the circumstances. If you are able, please help us do our part to ensure food security for households in our community. Whatever option you choose, please make your donations of food and/or funds sometime during January.

Option 1: Use the 2025 Food-by-the-Case Order Form to order a case of food through the Orange Street Market. Most needed items will be identified by the Food Bank and shown on the form with the current price per case. The completed form and your check can be mailed to Missoula First UMC, P.O. Box 7646, Missoula MT 59807 or dropped off at the office during office hours (9-12; Monday-Thursday). Please make your check out to First UMC and put “Food Bank” in the memo line. The office will have extra forms if you need them.

Option 2: Make a monetary donation and let the Food Bank buy what they need at wholesale prices. Donations can be mailed to Missoula First UMC, P.O. Box 7646, Missoula MT 59807 or dropped off at the office during office hours (9-12; Monday -Thursday). You can also give online. If you mail a check, please make your check to First UMC and put “Food Bank” in the memo line. For online donations, please select the “Missoula Food Bank” option from the designated giving options.

Option 3: Place your food donations in the container located outside the church office. If you are not able to enter the church, you may either buzz the office during office hours when you are at the back door or call the office (406-549-6118) during office hours for entry to make your donation. Office hours are Monday through Thursday from 9 to 12.

Birthday Kits: Our Sunday School will once again assemble the birthday Kits for us this year. They will need cake mixes, frosting, candles, cake decorations, party plates/napkins, plastic forks, gift bags, and tin foil pans. Place your donation items in the “birthday-wrapped” container outside the office. As you can imagine, the Birthday kits are very popular at the Food Bank.

Questions: Please contact Jane Kisselbach janekisselbach@gmail.com or 406-531-6768.



2025 Food-by-the-Case Order Form

Food Item	Case Price	# of cases	Total
Tuna	\$46.00 - 48 5 oz. cans per case.		
Peanut Butter	\$21.59 - 12 16 oz jars per case.		
Chicken Noodle Soup or Tomato Soup	\$24.59 - 24 10.5 oz. cans per case/		
Green Beans or Corn	\$22.69 – 24 15 oz cans per case		
Total			
Name:			

IN OUR PRAYERS...

~Healing and Comfort ~

- ✚ Prayers for peace for the accelerating hostilities around the world.
- ✚ Prayers for strength, comfort, and healing for Keith B., who is in the hospital following a bad fall.
- ✚ Prayers of strength, healing, and a full recovery for Nancy H., who had emergency/major surgery the first week of January and is recovering at St. Patrick Hospital.
- ✚ Prayers of healing and strength for Rocky's granddaughter Eugenia (Yuie), who was injured while performing her job as an EMT in the Boston area.



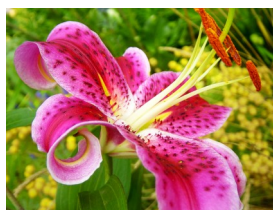
✚ Prayers for comfort for Laura B's cousin Lynn, who is in the last stages of her battle with lung cancer.

✚ Prayers of healing for Rod P who has a cracked tibia, which

remained undiagnosed for more than a year.

- ✚ Prayers of healing and clarity for Marie N's son-in-law, Kevin, as he awaits test results for cancer.
- ✚ Prayers that Fred's upcoming MRI will provide a path to healing.
- ✚ Prayers of continued healing for Terri D's dad, Walter S, who is recuperating from pneumonia at home.
- ✚ Prayers of discernment for the members of City Council as they make decisions about housing.
- ✚ Prayers for safety and acceptance into the USA refugee system for the Afghani family our church has embraced.
- ✚ Prayers of comfort and healing for Faye G's friend Jeanie, who has cancer.
- ✚ Prayers of a safety and healthy pregnancy for April P's granddaughter.
- ✚ Prayers of a successful heart procedure and healing for April P's daughter-in-law's mother.
- ✚ Prayers for a friend's granddaughter, Hailey, who was in a terrible auto accident in December.
- ✚ Prayers for a friend's daughter, Paris, struggling with mental health issues.
- ✚ Prayers for peace and courage for a close friend of John T's nephew, who is dying of lung cancer.
- ✚ Prayers for a quick recovery for John T. who has "bronchial crud".
- ✚ Prayers of healing for Meghan, who continues to struggle with Crohn's Disease.
- ✚ Prayers of a quick recovery from bronchitis for Terri D.

- ✚ Prayers of peace, strength, and encouragement for Maizy's grandmother, Judy G., who is struggling with challenges in her daily life.
- ✚ Prayers of healing for Peg P's step-great granddaughter Gabriella, who was struck by a vehicle while walking and suffers from severe injuries to her knee and ankle.
- ✚ Prayers of comfort for Holly C's mother, Aggie, who is in hospice, and strength for the family.
- ✚ Prayers for more snow in the mountains!
- ✚ Prayers of gratitude to all those who contributed so much to our Christmas worship experience.
- ✚ Prayers for successful shoulder surgery and a quick healing for Brady S.



~Sympathy~

✚ Prayers of comfort for the family and friends of Jan L., who recently passed away.

~Praises and Joys~

- ✚ Prayers of joy for Cathy and Winton K's 54th wedding anniversary, Sunday, December 8th.
- ✚ Prayers of thanksgiving for all the "helping" hands in our congregation.
- ✚ Prayers of thanksgiving for all the wonderful baked goods available for sale in our church.
- ✚ Prayers of joy that John's sister is finally recovering from COVID.
- ✚ Prayers of peace, joy, and abundance for this congregation from Paul, who is struggling but finds respite and renewal in our church.
- ✚ Prayers of joy for Roger S's 94th birthday on January 5th.
- ✚ Prayers of joy for George S's 87th birthday, which was December 29th.



Recyclers: Our Account Needs Your Payments Please!

First Church owes payments to our glass and compost collection contractors this month and there aren't sufficient funds in the recycling account. If you bring either glass or compost to our collection bins in the alley behind the church, please help by sending a check for \$4 per month to the church office. Make checks to Missoula First United Methodist Church and please mark RECYCLING PAYMENT in the message line.

Thanks very much for helping us keep this important program going. We're making a difference by keeping glass and food waste out of Missoula's landfill. Everything that goes into our collection bins is reused and recycled!



Let's Do Lunch! All-Church Potluck Is January 19

Have you noticed the price of food has gone up lately? Did you know grocery costs have increased more than 18% since 2020? Ouch!

That's why the Green Team has launched a new initiative where we can all share and search for new strategies that help cut food costs while keeping our meals nutritious and delicious. AND along the way, we'll help reduce the amount of food waste that winds up in Missoula's landfill.

Carole Addis kicked off the months-long project Jan. 5 with a Green Moment at the start of church – and an invitation! On Sunday, January 19, you are all invited to an after-church potluck in First Church's Fellowship Hall. Green Team members will provide the entrees. You can bring a side dish or a dessert, if you'd like – but that's not necessary. What's important is to bring yourself and your friends or family!

At the potluck, we'll show off delicious, low-cost meatless entrees that we know you'll enjoy. Why? Because one way to cut food costs is to plan a meatless meal once each week. Have you noticed the significant increase in beef prices in recent years? Yikes!

"We look forward to engaging all of us in discussing how we are NOT wasting food," Carole told the congregation during her January Green Moment. "We know what to do. Let's share ideas!"

So mark your calendar for January 19. Let's enjoy the fellowship and fun of a potluck lunch after church. Bring your ideas for saving money at the grocery store. We look forward to seeing you!

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



PH:406-549-6118

E-Mail: FUMCmissoula@gmail.com

Website: www.firstumcmissoula.org

Facebook: www.facebook.com/1stumcmissoula

Instagram:

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

Open Hearts. Open Minds. Open Doors.

January Events

1/15 - Vespers, 1:00 p.m. KDM Library

1/28 - UWF Book Group, 11:00 a.m. KDM Library

1/19 - Potluck Lunch after Worship Service. Please Join Us!

2/6 - UWF General Mtg, 1:30 p.m. KDM Library

4/26 - UWF Spring District Mtg being held at FUMC



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!