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2017



PASTOR'S PEN

"Scripture Surprises"

My New Year's Resolution for 2017 is to read through the entirety of the Bible, from Genesis to Revelation. Even though I have studied much of the Bible and know much about its content and context, I have never read the Bible from cover to cover. The task is daunting as the Bible is comprised of 66 books, 1189 chapters, and just over 805,000 words. As one that never was much of a reader, my elementary teachers would be proud that I was setting such a lofty goal.

I began my resolution on January 1 and I just surpassed the half way point, which is Psalm 117. I must admit that there have been a few times, especially in Leviticus and 2 Chronicles, that I questioned the sanity of this resolution. As marathon runners will talk about "hitting the wall" during a race, I felt that I was banging my head against a wall on several points in this journey. The book of Leviticus, filled with rules and regulations, reads more like a manual of operations. Chronicles has name after name of those who were a part of the Jewish exile to Babylon in the 6th century BC. I wanted to skip to the good parts, the likes of Matthew, Mark, Luke, John—much more familiar territory. But like the Israelites in the wilderness, I persevered and pressed forward even when the way became difficult.

In this journey of reading through the Bible I have wandered upon a few unexpected surprises. I will name my top three.

1. The Dysfunction of God's Family: Right out of the gates, beginning with the first family of the Bible, Adam and Eve ushered in a long line of dysfunctional families in the Bible. I think of Cain and Able, Jacob and Esau, Joseph and his brothers, Lot and his wife, Ahab and Jezebel. The stories of dysfunctional families in the Bible are like God's promises: never-ending. Yet amid the dysfunction that persists in every book, God is faithful in the Lord's care and concern for his people. God seems to always provide way for people to come back to the Lord, drawing them in by his grace and mercy.

2. The Surprise of Hezekiah: Hezekiah, one of the many kings in Israel's history, stands as a model for ministry. Throughout his entire life, he never waived in his devotion to the Lord. Where other kings would allow things to dissuade them in their faith, Hezekiah remained steadfast in his walk with God and provides a great blueprint for us living today.

3. The Steadfast Love of God is the reoccurring baseline in the Bible. In spite of dysfunctional families, ill-willed decisions, sin and shortcomings, God is faithful still. That faithfulness culminates in Jesus Christ who stands in our place as forgiveness is offered for the sins of the world. I have a great appreciation for God and the new life that is offered freely through the grace of God given by Jesus Christ.

I look forward to growing more in my faith and learning more about God's ways in 2017, and I invite you to share in the journey.

In Christ,

Pastor Dave



MEMORY JOGGERS FOR FEBRUARY 2017

<u>The 5th</u>	<u>The 12th</u>	<u>The 19th</u>	<u>The 26th</u>	<u>March 1</u>	<u>March 5</u>
Preaching Dave Thompson Key Elder Chris Eriksen Greeters Edna Carlson Thelma Riggs Jo Albin Ushers Bob & Cathy Culbertson Earl & Sharon Henderson Liturgist Kay Doss Van Driver Charles Leggate Sound Booth David Bauer Communion Ken & Barb Eichenberger Phyllis Brown Pat Clark Kathy Baskett	Preaching Dave Thompson Key Elder Carla Bracken Greeters Ed & Edna Stauber Judy Nusbaum Ushers Janet Brown Bebe Spring Carla Bracken Teena Bracken Liturgist Judy Cuff Van Driver Don Harr Sound Booth Jeff Gruizenga Flower Delivery Sharon Lincoln	Preaching Dave Thompson Key Elder Jeff Gruizenga Greeters Dottie Hilger Carl & Vickie Johnson Ushers Janet Kline Cindy Leggate Jack & Karla Mahan Liturgist Megan Lorentz Van Driver Don Harr Sound Booth Chuck Leggate Flower Delivery Nina LaSeur	Preaching To Be Determined Key Elder Jenice Fugere Greeters Tom & Ruth Drummond Alta Dakolios Ushers Chris Eriksen John Thompson Pat Clark Marjorie Stewart Liturgist Meghan Ascheman Sound Booth Bob Culbertson Van Driver Heather McLean Flower Delivery Dave & Vicki Thompson	Ash Wednesday Preaching Dave Thompson Greeters Youth Group Ushers Youth Group Communion JoAnn Jones Chris Eriksen Kathleen Butler Heidi Duncan Sharon Lincoln	Preaching Dave Thompson Key Elder Chris Eriksen Greeters Gary & Jean Schneider Shirley Harr Ushers Marlene Spencer Sharon Brady Marian Shehein Betty Ann Nesmith Liturgist Janet Kline Sound Booth David Bauer Communion Sharon Mathews Kay Doss Shari Dayton Bob & Cathy Culbertson

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COMING ATTRACTIONS:

Presbytery meeting hosted by our church on February 10-11
Youth Ski Retreat coming February 24-26— See Heather or Pastor Dave if interested

Church Info

Office Hours:
Mon—Thurs 8:30 am— 4 PM
406-252-3434
mainoffice@fpcbillings.org
www.fpcbillings.org
Sunday School @ 9:15 AM
Worship Celebration @ 10:30

STAFF

Pastor: Dave Thompson
Office Manager: Jeanne Thompson-Raney
Accompanist: Sandi Rabas
Choir Director: Janie Sutton
Custodian: Kent Fellingham

SESSION MEMBERS

Clerk of Session:
Marlene Spencer

Class of 2018

Kathy Baskett
Marv Brown
Jeff Gruizenga
Sandi Schoenberger

Class of 2019

Chris Eriksen
Jenice Fugere
Chuck Leggate
Heather McLean

Class of 2020

David Bauer
Carla Bracken
Ken Eichenberger
Sharon Lincoln

FOOD BANK SUNDAY

Our church was one of the first churches in Billings to designate a monthly Food Bank Sunday. We invite you to bring some non-perishable food items with you on the first Sunday of each month as we help local people in need. Our next Food Bank Sunday will be held on Sunday, February 5 in celebration of the Souper Bowl of Carving Day. Thanks to all who brought food last month!

Session Notes:

During the January 10th meeting of the session, the main topic of discussion was the review of the proposed budget for 2017. It will now be printed for the congregation to review. The session will vote for final approval at the February 14th meeting.

The session would like to thank Sharon Mathews for her years of service on the session. She has been replaced by Carla Bracken. David Bauer, Sharon Lincoln, and Ken Eichenberger have returned to the session for a second term.

The next meeting of the session will be on Tuesday, February 14 at 7:00 PM in the Fireside Room.

2017 Financial snapshot

	Income	Expense	Net
January	\$ 45,878	\$ 29,004	\$ 16,874

Special thanks to all who have given to our church during this past year. We have accomplished much through your generosity. A full financial report from 2016 is available through the church office. Per-capita for 2017 is \$48. If you would like to pay your per-capita payment, you can submit a check to the offering plate or church office. Thanks!!

JANUARY	2017
1ST	106
8TH	151
15TH	181
22ND	170
29TH	224
2017 JAN AVERAGE	167

Sermons are now back on-line

We were having some technical difficulties in getting sermons to our church's website. The issue has been remedied and we once again have sermons available on our website at www.fpcbillings.org. You can click the "Listen to Sermons" tab on the upper right front of our church's homepage. This allows you to stay connected even when you are away.

Church Mice:

Do you know that there are super heroes in our church? There are many, but the church mice want to focus on Janet and Marvin Brown. Their super powers are love, kindness, compassion, graciousness and living their faith. Janet and Marvin continually and constantly care for others not only in our church but throughout the community. Perhaps in addition to being superheroes, they are also angels in disguise. Thank you Janet and Marvin for all you do.



FLOWER SPONSORSHIP OPPORTUNITIES

Our new 2017 flower sign-up sheet is located on the back table in the narthex. We invite you to sign up for a particular Sunday to sponsor the flowers either in honor or memory of someone or a special event such as an anniversary, birthday, etc. Suggested donation is \$30. Special thanks to Pat Clark (in honor of Marv & Janet Brown), June Pierce (in memory of her family), and Linda Luse (in memory of Billie Tatum) who donated flowers during the month of January. Following worship each Sunday, the flowers are distributed to church members and friends in the hospital, nursing homes, or among those who are unable to attend church.

What's next around the church?

Some in our congregation are asking about what is next for updates around the church facilities. We recently finished our updated our bathroom and office remodeling project. We are looking at making improvements to the flat roof system of the church, kitchen, and church secretary's office. We continue to do projects every year to keep up with the ongoing maintenance needs of the church facilities. By doing some projects every year, we avoid having to do major construction at one time. We appreciate all who continue to give to make the church a viable place where people can come to hear about the Good News of Jesus Christ.

Our Church's Leadership Team

Moderator of Session: Pastor Dave Thompson

Clerk of Session: Marlene Spencer

Class of 2018

Kathy Baskett (2)
Marv Brown (2)
Jeff Gruizenga (2)
Sandi Schoenberger

Class of 2019

Chris Eriksen (2)
Jenice Fugere (2)
Chuck Leggate
Heather McLean

Class of 2020

David Bauer (2)
Carla Bracken
Ken Eichenberger (2)
Sharon Lincoln (2)

Deacons:

Class of 2018

Janet Brown (2)
Pam Gore (2)
Ruth Kaufman
Charlie Pinnick

Class of 2019

Peggy Cluff
Dodie Cox (2)
Bob Fedric
Janice Ward

Class of 2020

Kathy Ramage (2)
Lorrie Rimpe
Paige Spalding (2)
Marjorie Stewart (2)

(2) denotes a second consecutive terms that is currently being served.

Grief Support and Caregiver Support Groups

Two support groups at our church meet monthly. Our Grief Support Group meets the first Wednesday of each month at 10:00 AM and provides help, hope, and healing to those dealing with grief and loss.

Our Caregivers Support Group meets the second Wednesday of each month at 10:00 AM and provides help to those who care for others.

Both groups are open to anyone in the church and community and both are facilitated by Dr. Don Harr, a retired psychiatrist with a lot of years of experience.



Stephen Ministry Update

We have an active group of Stephen Ministers who are working to help others in our church and community. Each of our church's Stephen Ministers are assigned a care receiver with whom they provide one-on-one skills of listening, encouragement, and spiritual help. Stephen Ministry supervision is scheduled for the fourth Tuesday of each month at 6:00 PM and includes time for continuing education and support. More information about Stephen Ministry is available through one of our church Stephen Ministry leaders who are JoAnn Jones, Doris Backus, Shirley Shirley, or Pastor Dave.

A study on Revelation is coming in March

Pastor Dave will be leading a special Sunday school class on the book of Revelation beginning on Sunday, March 5. This six week class will be held in the Fireside Room at 9:15 AM. Revelation is one of the most fascinating and thought-provoking books in the Bible. This series will take a cursory look at Revelation, its themes, message, and hope for the future. According to Pastor Dave, "The book of Revelation is one of the most misunderstood books in the Bible and often causes more fear than faith. However, there is an underlying tone of God's invitation to come to Jesus Christ and the hope for those who follow Jesus as Lord and Savior." Join us as we seek to learn more about this book and the message of Christ that is revealed.

On a Personal Note

Vince Larsen continues to undergo treatments for pancreatic and liver cancer.
Gary Lohnbakken and Bill Lorentz are both recovering from recent shoulder surgery.
June Holmes was hospitalized briefly at St. V's. She is now receiving rehabilitation at St. John's Transitional Care Unit.
Mary Carey has returned home after having heart valve surgery recently at the Clinic.
Charlene (Rich) Switzer continues to undergo treatment for ALS Disease.
A note from Scott Harr: "I would like to thank Pastor Dave, all my friends and family from First Presbyterian who prayed for me, sent cards, visited, and fixed food during my recent hospital stay. Believe me when I say that each and everyone of you is partly responsible for my ongoing recovery. Hope to see you all real soon.
Congratulations to Grayson Powell, infant son of Parker and Ashley Powell, who was baptized during worship on Sunday, January 29.
Linda Haden has returned home after being hospitalized for a few days with stomach issues.



Senior Singles to meet on Saturday, February 18

Senior Singles will be meeting on Saturday, February 18 at 10:00 AM at the Western Emporium Restaurant, located on King Ave West and 32nd Street West. All senior adults who are single are invited to join this group which meets monthly. Questions about this group can be directed toward Tom Erskine or Phyllis Brown.

SUN	MON	TUE	WED	THU	FRI	SAT
			1 9-1 Preschool 10 Grief Support 12 PW Luncheon 12 BLT 6:00 Youth Group 7:00 Choir Rehearsal	2 9-11 Bible Study Fellowship (BSF) 12 PEO Bistro 1 Mission Comm. 7 CE Committee 7 College Group	3 9-1 Preschool 5:30 Braun/Bills wedding rehearsal	4 10 Gluten Intolerance Group (GIG) 4:30 Braun/Bills wedding
5 Food Bank Sunday Souper Bowl of Caring Sunday 9:15 Sun School 10:30 Worship 11 West Park	6 9-1 Preschool 10 Worship Comm 6 Billings Child Care Meeting	7 9:30 Women's Bible Study 12 Property Comm Meeting	8 9-1 Preschool 9 BSF Leaders 9:30 PW Board 10 Caregivers Support Group 12 BLT 7 Choir Rehearsal	9 9-11 BSF 7 College Group	10 9-1 Preschool 12noon Presbytery begins at our church	11 12noon Presbytery concludes at our church
12 9:15 Sun School 10:30 Worship 11 West Park	13 9-1 Preschool 12 Men's Bible Study in Fireside Room	14 Valentine's Day 9:30 Women's Bible Study 7 Session Mtg.	15 9-1 Preschool 9 BSF Leaders PW Circles 10 Real Life Group 12 BLT 6 Youth Group 7 Choir Rehearsal	16 9-11 BSF 12 Congregational Care Team 7 College Group	17 9-1 Preschool Church Office Closed	18 10 Senior Singles at Western Emporium
19 9:15 Sun School 9:15 "Donuts with Dave" 10:30 Worship 11 West Park	20 9-1 Preschool 11:30 Stephen Ministry Leaders' Meeting	21 9:30 Women's Bible Study	22 9 BSF Leaders 9-1 Preschool 12 BLT 6 Youth Group 7 Choir Rehearsal	23 9-11 BSF 11 Fellowship Committee 7 College Group	24 9-1 Preschool Church Office Closed Ski Retreat for Youth Leaves church	25 Youth ski retreat in Bozeman
26 9:15 Sun School 10:30 Worship 11 West Park Ski Retreat Youth returns to church	27 9-1 Preschool 12 Men's Bible 4 Deacons Meeting in Fireside Room	28 9:30 Women's Bible Study 6 Stephen's Supervision				

Presbyterian Women



The Presbyterian Women's group will have a special luncheon on Wednesday, February 1 at 12noon in the Fellowship Hall.
The PW organization in our church has five different groups which meet monthly for study, fellowship, and often food. We offer groups that meet in the mornings, afternoons, and evenings. Consider joining one of our groups to grow in your faith in God and one another. For more information about the PW organization in our church, please talk with Sandi Schoenberger or Marlene Spencer.
The PW board will meet on Wednesday, February 8 at 9:30 AM in the Fireside Room and the monthly PW groups will meet on Wednesday, February 15.

Sunday school classes

Sunday school for all ages continue for children, youth, and adults. Lots of great classes are provided for all ages! Hope you all with join us!



Classes for Children and Youth

Kindergarten through 5th grade: This class meets at 9:15 AM
Middle School and High School: Youth meet in the downstairs youth coffee room with Russ and Heidi
Sunday school during our worship service is held every week after the children's sermon. A variety of teachers lead this class for children ages kindergarten through the 5th grade.
With the growing number of children attending Sunday school during worship we will be offering two classes this fall during worship. Additional teachers are needed for this growing program. If interested in helping teach, please talk with Robyn Bauer.

Special Class for Adults:

Join Pastor Dave on Sunday, February 19 at 9:15 AM in the Fireside Room for a special "Donuts with Dave." About three times a year, Pastor Dave offers this special class as a way to share about faith and answer any questions you might have of spiritual life and faith. Of course, donuts and a healthy option will be provided. Join us for an informal time of sharing and growing in our faith together.

Church and Society Class for January

Church and Society class meets on Sunday mornings at 9:15 AM in the Church and Society Room. The group hosts a different guest every week in relation to issues pertaining to church and society.

FEBRUARY 5: Regina Griemsman, Executive Director, Big Brothers/Big Sisters of Yellowstone County. One to one mentoring makes profound differences in a child's life. Making healthy decisions, staying in school, avoiding risky behaviors, and encouraging goals and dreams are some of the benefits. Regina will discuss the mentoring process and the mentoring gap that is occurring here and throughout the country.

FEBRUARY 12: Jack Bell, Pastor of First Presbyterian Church in Stanford and Denton Community United Methodist Church, will talk about "Deepest, Darkest Africa is Not that Deep and Dark, but I Did See Jesus There." Jack visited our sister church, Makokoba Presbyterian, in Zimbabwe. Learn how that congregation is working to improve the lives of those around them. With their simple request of pray for us, Jack will explore different ways our church can continue to partner with them.

FEBRUARY 19: Intizor Aliyorov, Business Intelligence Analyst at First Interstate Bank. She will talk about "Where in the World is Kazakhstan?" As a high school exchange student in Plentywood and a double degree graduate from the University of Montana, Zor will give us an overview of his home country. Included will be the history, culture, politics, interactions with Russia, and how their religions play a part in the country today.

FEBRUARY 26: Val Young, Outreach Coordinator for Child Bridge Montana. A Christian ministry that finds and supports foster and adoptive families for Montana children in need, Val will give insight into this organization. With 3,300 children in Montana in foster care, there is still a need for more families. Learn how Child Bridge helps to alleviate these problems by facilitating churches, communities, and governments working together.

Youth News:

The annual winter ski retreat is coming February 24-26 to the First Presbyterian Church in Bozeman. All middle school and high school kids are invited to join us. The cost of the registration is only \$15. Skiing will be an additional cost of \$50 for a lift ticket and \$35 for ski rental. We will be leaving from the church at 4 PM on Friday, February 24 and will return on Sunday afternoon. If you are interested in going with us, please talk with either Pastor Dave or Heather McLean.



Youth group continues on Wednesday evenings from 6-8 PM. All 6-12 grade youth are invited and encouraged to join us each week. Friends are always invited. A new meal sign up sheet is located on the bulletin board across from the Fireside Room door. Please help provide a meal on a Wednesday evening.

Special thanks to those who provided meals for our youth group during the month of January. They include Jeff & Tonya Appelt, Jay & Cassie Kouba, Biff Hogue, and Dave & Vicki Thompson.

The high school group is led each week by Heather McLean and Tamara Lucht and the middle school group is led by Pastor Dave, Erica & Alicia Nelson. Kitchen help each week is provided by Chris Eriksen and Jody Ferestad.

We continue to look for a full time youth director and are seeking applications. We hope to have someone hired in this position soon to help with our children’s and youth ministry programs.

Annual Meeting News

Our church’s annual congregational meeting was held after worship on Sunday, January 29. During the meeting various reports were presented from a number of committees in the church. A new class of elders and deacons were elected. David Bauer, Carla Bracken, Ken Eichenberger, and Sharon Lincoln were elected to serve as elders for a three year term. Kathy Ramage, Lorrie Rimpe, Paige Spalding, and Marge Stewart were elected to serve as deacons for a three year term.

The financial report for 2016 was presented and the congregation was thanked for its support of our increased mission giving during the past year and the completed bathroom/office remodeling project that was finished in October. The remodeling project was completed paid through fundraising and reserve funds and there is no debt remaining for which we are grateful.

The 2017 church budget was presented with an annual budget of \$391,953 projected. Thanks to all who provide support and ministry to our church in a variety of ways and means.

Men’s group

Our men’s group is meeting the 2nd and 4th Mondays of each month at 12noon in the Fireside Room. Join other men for a time of encouragement, fellowship, prayer, and study. This group is currently studying the New Testament book of Hebrews which encourages Christians to remain faithful to God in all circumstances. For more information about this group, please talk with Pastor Dave. The next meeting will be held on Monday, February 13 at 12noon.

Upcoming Committee Meetings

(All meetings are in the Fireside Room)

Mission Committee	Thursday, February 2 at 1:00 PM
Christian Education	Thursday, February 2 at 7:00 PM
Property Committee	Tuesday, February 7 at 12noon
PW Board Meeting	Wednesday, February 8 at 9:30am
Worship Committee	Monday, February 13 at 10:00 AM
Session Meeting	Tuesday, February 14 at 7:00 PM
Congregational Care Team	Thursday, February 16 at 12noon
Fellowship Committee	Thursday, February 23 at 11:00 PM
Deacons Meeting	Monday, February 27 at 4:00 PM

The Shack movie coming in March

The fellowship committee is making plans to organize an evening to see the new movie *The Shack* when it arrives to area theatres in March. *The Shack*, originally a book written by William Young, explains the nature of God in a very interesting and unexpected way. Watch for more information in the church bulletin as it date approaches. A sign up list will be provided several weeks before we go to see the movie.

Birthdays

- 1 Leslene Cassel
- 2 Kerry Gruizenga
- Craig Hash
- Annabelle Buffington
- 4 Nicholas Wiens
- 5 Monica Parker
- 7 Marvin Brown
- David Bauer
- 8 Carol Harr
- 9 Shirley Harr
- Caitlin McRae
- 10 Earl Henderson
- Chuck Leggate
- Erica Nelson
- 13 Bill Letson
- Alexander Repka
- Danielle Repka
- John Quandt
- 14 Jody Mercer Wallace

- 14 Halle Lynn Spring
- 15 Michael Repka
- Kathy Ramage
- 16 John Reamy
- Tyler Carey
- 17 Carl Johnson
- Jack Quandt
- 21 Nichole Ferestad
- Curtis Pattee
- Lorrie Rimpe
- 22 Robert Thiesen
- Helen Montgomery
- 23 Bill Lorentz
- 24 Jean Marshall
- 25 Susan Stewart
- 27 Delores Reinhart
- 28 Lewis Schoenberger
- 29 Ruth Kaufman

Anniversaries

- 10 Gary & Jean Schneider



Mission News

How much do you know about the YWCA? The Program Director of Gateway House, Erin Lambert spoke at the Mission Committee meeting and shared that the YWCA helps people through a Child Center and Pre-Kindergarten; Clinical Services to help people who need counseling and legal issues; Co-Enrollment to help with skills training, jobs and housing; and Gateway House. Gateway House is a secure domestic violence shelter for up to 35 individuals in need of a safe haven. They serve those who have no other options. Gateway House, through YMCA helps families work toward a brighter, stronger future. The Mission Committee donated \$2,500.00 to Gateway House.



Last Fall, the Mission Committee gave \$5,000 to Kristin Van Nostran, a missionary who worked with World Mission. Kristin is no longer with World Mission so she is not getting the money. It was suggested that we give the money to Tracey King-Ortega who works with churches in Costa Rica, El Salvador, Guatemala, Honduras, and Nicaragua. The \$5,000 will be going to Tracey instead.

George and Kathy Goodrich continue their ministry work for our Yellowstone Presbytery. We will support them this year with a gift of \$2,500.

January’s Noisy Offering of \$753.58 went to Young Families Early Head Start. They serve children and their parents who will probably qualify for Head Start but are too young. They serve children birth to 4 years old. Our fun and noise will be transformed into books, musical instruments, and other needs for these very young children. The Mission Committee will be matching the funds for this worthwhile organization bringing the total donation to Young Families to \$1,507.16. Thanks to all who gave toward this special offering.

Family Promise returns to our church from March 5-11. Helpers are needed with set-up, meals, overnight hosts, and clean-up. If you have an interest in helping with this local mission need, please talk to either Chris Eriksen or Marv & Janet Brown. Family Promise is a local organization which helps homeless families get back on their feet.

“Trust in the LORD with all your heart and lean not on your own understanding; in all your ways submit to him, and he will make your paths straight.” —Proverbs 3:5-6