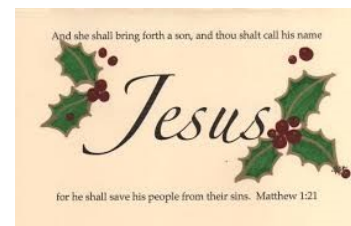




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DECEMBER
2018



PASTOR'S PEN

"The Promise"



Promises, promises, promises. We are people of promises. We promise to love and to cherish. We promise to pay back the loan on our home mortgage. We promise to tell the whole truth and nothing but the truth. Yet, many have found themselves at the end of broken promises...to be faithful, to repay a debt, or to love as long as we both shall live.

These broken promises can leave us vulnerable, cynical, and deeply hurt. During this season of Advent I want us to look at the idea of promise from the great Promise Keeper. God, throughout the Bible, makes a promise (or in biblical terms a covenant) to walk with us, encourage us, and redeem us. This promise began all the way back in Genesis with Abraham and was fulfilled in the person of Jesus Christ. God's promise continues today through the work of the Holy Spirit.

I will be teaching a Sunday school class called "The Promise," beginning this Sunday, December 2 at 9:15 AM in the Fireside Room. We will be looking at the strand of promise that weaves its way through the Bible, from Abraham, to Ruth, to David, and eventually to Jesus. This interesting class will be a great course through the Old Testament and the promise that God made to some fairly unsuspecting people. Come and join us as we travel 2,500 years leading up to the time of Jesus, the fulfilled promise.

I will also be preaching a sermon series during Advent called "A Light in the Darkness." In this series we will be looking at some of the most important promises God has given to us through the lens of the prophet Isaiah and how they apply to our lives today. It is easy to lose hope, as it would have been for those who followed God during the time of Isaiah. We will be looking at the promise that God makes in Isaiah 7:14, "Look, the young woman is with child and shall bear a son, and shall name him Immanuel;" in Isaiah 9:6, "For unto us a child shall be born...and his name shall be called Wonderful Counselor, Mighty God, Everlasting Father, Prince of Peace;" in Isaiah 11:1, "A shoot shall come out from the stump of Jesse and the Spirit of the Lord shall rest upon him;" and in Isaiah 40:3, "A voice cries out: 'In the wilderness prepare the way of the Lord.'" I look forward to remembering God's promises and being renewed in the hope of Jesus' coming again.

Advent devotionals are once again available for you to use during this special season. These free devotionals, titled "God With Us" are available in the gallery. I hope you will embrace this season of Advent, holding on to the promises of God, and being renewed in the strength, hope, and peace that we have through Christ.

It is a special time of the year and I pray that you will take advantage of all of the ways that we provide to help you draw closer to the Lord. May God bless you during this special season.

Waiting Expectantly,
Dave

COMING ATTRACTIONS:

Christmas decorating coming on Saturday, December 1 at 4:30 PM
RMC Christmas concert in our sanctuary on Sunday, December 2 at 3 PM and 7 PM
Presbyterian Women's Christmas Luncheon coming on Wednesday, Dec. 5 at 12noon
Youth Christmas party at the Dayton's house on Wednesday, Dec. 19 at 6 PM
Christmas Eve services here on Monday, December 24 at 5 PM and 10 PM
Family Promise here from Dec. 30-Jan. 6. Set up will be Sunday, Dec. 30 at 9:15am

MEMORY JOGGERS FOR DECEMBER 2018

The 2nd

Preaching
Dave Thompson
Greeters
Jim & Louise Graff
Ushers
Earl & Sharon
Henderson
Robert & Cathy
Culbertson
Liturgist
Jenice Fugere
Sound Booth
David Bauer

Communion
Marv & Janet Brown
Jim Hummel &
Paige Spalding
Marlene Spencer

The 9th

Preaching
Dave Thompson
Greeters
Gary & Jean
Schneider
Ushers
Edna Carlson
Peggy Wilson
Sonja Bennett
Megan Lorentz
Liturgist
Shari Dayton
Sound Booth
Chuck Leggate
Flower Delivery
Edna Carlson

The 16th

Preaching
Dave Thompson
Greeters
Bruce & Bernice
Phillips
Ushers
Gary & Judy
Lohnbakken
Jim Hummel &
Paige Spalding
Liturgist
Martha Davidson
Sound Booth
Jeff Gruizenga
Flower Delivery
Dave & Vicki
Thompson

The 23rd

Preaching
Dave Thompson
Greeters
Bob & Linda Fedric
Ushers
Janet Brown
Linda Broderson
Carla Bracken
Teena Bracken
Liturgist
Vicki Thompson
Sound Booth
Robert Culbertson
Flower Delivery
Chris Eriksen

Christmas Eve

5:00 PM
Greeters
Earl & Sharon Hen-
derson
Ushers
Chris Erikson
John Thompson
Coryn Martinez Sara
Thompson
Liturgist
Biff Hogue

10:00 PM
Greeters
Phyllis Brown
Ron Sperry
Ushers
Sharon Matthews
Sandi
Schoenberger
Carla Bracken
Teena Bracken
Liturgist
Russ Kline

The 30th

Preaching
David Thompson
Greeters
Kurt & Mary Grabow
Ushers
Bud & Joanne
Leuthold
Jim & Biff Hogue
Liturgist
Linda Luse
Sound Booth
Flower Delivery

January 6, 2019

Preaching
Dave Thompson
Greeters
Edna Carlson
Thelma Riggs
Ushers
Ken & Barbara
Eichenberger
Marjorie Stewart
Peggy Wilson
Liturgist
Tonya Appelt
Sound Booth
David Bauer

Communion
Heather Rosenfeld
Kathleen Butler
Robert & Cathy
Culbertson
Carla Bracken

INSIDE THIS ISSUE:

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Church Info

Office Hours: Mon—Thurs
8:30 am— 4 PM
406-252-3434
mainoffice@fpcbillings.org
www.fpcbillings.org
Worship @ 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 2019

Chris Eriksen
Jenice Fugere
Chuck Leggate
Heather McLean

Class of 2020

David Bauer
Carla Bracken
Ken Eichenberger
Sharon Lincoln

Class of 2021

Janet Brown
Jim Hummel
Bud Leuthold
Sandi Schoenberger

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, December 2. Thanks to all who brought food last month!

Session Notes: At its November 13th meeting, the session voted to receive the following individuals into the membership of our congregation: Linda Franson, Larry George, Fred and Sherry Henslin and Jim, Jill, Bradley, and Melanie Irwin.

Approval was given for Pastor Dave to baptize Larry George during the worship service on November 18th and for the baptism of Henry Feltham, infant great grandson of Jean Davis on Sunday, November 25 during worship.

The property committee was given permission to purchase one or more new laptops to replace old ones.

Chris Eriksen reported that he attended the recent Presbytery meeting in Bozeman. During this meeting the annual per capita fee was set for \$54.

The date for the annual congregational meeting was set for Sunday, January 27, 2019 immediately following worship.

Financial snapshot

| 2018 | Income | Expense | Net |
|----------|-----------|-----------|------------|
| November | \$106,428 | \$ 24,489 | \$ 81,939 |
| YTD | \$426,545 | \$435,565 | \$ (9,020) |

Sermons available on-line

Did you know that you can listen to sermons on-line at our website at www.fpcbillings.org? Just click the “Listen to Sermons” tab on the upper right front of our church’s homepage. Stay connected even when you are away. Sermon for the past twelve weeks are archived on our church’s website.

| NOVEMBER | 2018 |
|-------------------------------------|------|
| 4TH | 202 |
| 11TH | 264 |
| 18TH | 220 |
| 25TH | 159 |
| NOVEMBER AVERAGE WORSHIP ATTENDANCE | 211 |

Church Mice:

At this time of Thanksgiving and the beginning of Advent, the church mice reflect on the many blessings we have. We are inspired, humbled and grateful for the young people in our congregation who now as young adults are expressing their Christian faith through service to others and our church. Over the years we have known and loved them and that has come to fruition as they serve Christ in Sunday school and Youth Group. Heartfelt thanks to our student ministry interns: Dani Repka, Hunter Skov, Sara Thompson, Kristin Cochner and Lexi Frietag.



FLOWER SPONSORSHIP OPPORTUNITIES

Our 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 \$25. Special thanks to those who donated flowers in November. They were Tom & Jeannette Davis in honor of our Veterans; John & Suzanne Braun for the baptism of Valarie Marily Braun; Gary & Judy Lohnbakken in memory of Russell Lohnbakken; Fern Nelson in memory of Robert Nelson; Peggy Wilson in honor of faith, family and friends; and Jean Davis in honor of her great-grandson’s (Henry) baptism.

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. Our new sign up list is now available for 2019 in the narthex.

Christmas decorating to be held Saturday, December 1

We invite you to join us to decorate the church for Christmas on Saturday, December 1 at 4:30 PM. We will be decorating trees, hanging wreaths, arranging the nativities, and placing our Christmas banners around the church. Free pizza, salad, and refreshments will be served. Please join us and many hands will make the work much lighter. Come and help us spruce the church up for Christmas!



Financial pledge updates

We continue to receive financial pledges for our 2019 Budget. To date we have received 88 pledges totaling \$239,281. If you have yet to return a pledge card, we invite you to do so. They can be picked up in the gallery or by calling the church office. These pledges help us determine our church budget for the coming year. Thanks for your generosity as you contribute to the work of the Lord through our congregation.

Stephen Ministry Update

Our Stephen Ministry training continues every Thursday evening with 11 people from our congregation. Upon completion of the class, each of our church’s Stephen Ministers will be assigned a care receiver with whom they provide one-on-one skills of listening, encouragement, and spiritual help. The Stephen Ministers will gather at JoAnn Jones home for a Christmas party on Monday, December 17.

Stephen Ministry supervision is scheduled for the fourth Tuesday of each month at 6 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.

Our Church’s Leadership Team

Session: Moderator- Pastor Dave Thompson

Clerk of Session: Marlene Spencer

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)

Class of 2021

Janet Brown
 Jim Hummel
 Bud Leuthold
 Sandi Schoenberger (2)

Deacons:

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)

Class of 2021

Jo Ausk
 Sharon Brady
 Charlie Pinnick (2)
 Jean Schneider

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

Support groups continue to meet monthly

Two support groups meet at our church on a monthly basis. They are:

1. Our Grief Support Group meets the first Wednesday and the third Tuesday of each month at 10:00 AM and provides help, hope, and healing to those dealing with grief and loss.
2. Our RLI Group deals with “Real Life Issues” and meets the second Wednesday of every month at 10:00 AM. This group meets to discuss issues pertaining to end of life, death and dying, and spiritual questions.

Both groups are open to anyone in the church and community and maintain a high level of confidentiality. Both of these groups meet in our new conference room.

For questions about any of these support groups, please talk with Dr. Don Harr or Pastor Dave. Dr. Harr is a retired psychiatrist with a lot of years of experience in helping people cope and grow through their loss.



On a Personal Note:

Royal Johnson passed away on November 19 at his apartment at West Park Village. His funeral will be held at our church on Monday, December 3 at 10:30 AM with a reception to follow in the fellowship hall.

Ken Eichenberger was recently diagnosed with cancer and has begun chemotherapy treatments. He will be having surgery in Denver in January to remove the cancer.




Shelby McCuen, a student at Rocky, recently had surgery on her foot to repair a tendon.

Manny Stovall, Juanita’s son, had a defibrillator recently installed to help with some heart issues he was experiencing.

We had three baptisms during the month of November. They were Valarie Marily Braun, daughter of Eric & Natalie Braun; Henry Feltham, infant son of Andrew and Liz Feltham, and Larry George, an adult who was part of the new members class.

We express our appreciation to the family of June Pierce who recently gifted the church just over \$57,000 from her estate. What a nice gift for our church to use to carry out its ministry and mission.

Kindness
One of the greatest gifts you can bestow upon another. If someone is in need, lend them a helping hand. Do not wait for a thank you. True kindness lies within the act of giving without the expectation of something in return.

| SUN | MON | TUE | WED | THU | FRI | SAT |
|--|--|---|---|--|---------------------|---|
|  | | | | | | 1 10 Gluten Intolerance Group 4:30 Decorating the Church |
| 2 First Advent Food Bank Sun. 9:15 Sun School 10:30 Worship Communion 11:00 West Park worship 3 & 7 Rocky Mountain Concert | 3 9-1 Preschool 10:30 Funeral for Royal Johnson and reception to follow 6 Billings Child Care Meeting | 4 9:30 Women's Bible Study 6 Young Lives to use Coffee Room | 5 9-1 Preschool 10 Grief Support 12noon BLT 12 PW Christmas Luncheon 6 Youth Group 7 Choir Rehearsal 7 College group | 6 9 Bible Study Fellowship 1 Mission Committee meeting 6-8:30 Stephen Ministry Training 7 Christian Ed Committee | 7 9-1 Preschool | 8 10 Yellow-stone Calligraphy Group Bistro room |
| 9 Second Advent 9:15 Sunday School 10:30 Worship 11:00 West Park Worship | 10 9-1 Preschool 10 Worship Committee 12 Men's Bible Study Group | 11 9:30 Women's Bible Study 12 Finance committee 7 Session meeting | 12 9-1 Preschool 9:30 PW Board 10 RLI Group 6 Youth Group 7 Choir Rehearsal 7 College group | 13 9 Bible Study Fellowship 12 Congregational Care Team 6-8:30 Stephen Ministry Training | 14 9-1 Preschool | 15 10 Singles Group to meet at Western Emporium |
| 16 Third Advent 9:15 Sunday School 10:30 Worship 11:00 West Park Worship | 17 9-1 Preschool 4 Deacons mtg Stephen Ministry Christmas Party at JoAnn Jones' house | 18 9:30 Women's Bible Study 10 Grief Support 6 Stephen Ministry Supervision | 19 9-1 Preschool Circles Year-End Bash 12noon BLT 6 Youth Party 7 Choir Rehearsal | 20 NO BSF No Stephen Ministry training | 21 No Preschool | 22 |
| 23 Fourth Advent 9:15 Sunday School 10:30 Worship 11 West Park Worship | 24 No Men's Group Christmas Eve Services 5:00 and 10:00PM | 25  | 26 No BSF No Preschool 12noon BLT No College group No Youth Group | 27 No BSF No Stephen Ministry training | 28 No Preschool | 29 |
| 30 No Sunday School 10:30 Worship | 31  | | | | | |



Presbyterian Women

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 either Sandi Schoenberger or Marlene Spencer.

A PW Christmas luncheon will be held in the fellowship hall on Wednesday, December 5 at 12noon. For more information about this luncheon please talk with Marlene Spencer, Moderator of the PW group.

The PW board will meet on Wednesday, December 12 at 9:30 AM in the Fireside Room. PW groups will meet on Wednesday, December 19 with two groups meeting in the morning, two groups meeting in the afternoon, and a group that meets in the evening. Talk to Marlene Spencer about meeting times and locations.

Sunday school classes for all ages



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

Classes for Kids:
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 continues each week after the children’s sermon. Our student interns are leading this class for children ages kindergarten through the 5th grade.

Classes for Adults:
“The Promise” Join Pastor Dave for a special Advent Sunday school series titled, “The Promise” beginning on Sunday, December 2 at 9:15 AM in the Fireside Room. This four week series will look at the promise of Jesus’ coming to us in Bethlehem and all that this promise means for us today. This class is open to all and will continue through December 23.

Church and Society Class Schedule for December:

December 2: John Billings, author, “Outfitting in Montana and Wyoming,” and Barb Bush, editor. With many Bible verses about hunting and wilderness, is there a connection? If so, does this include trophy hunting? John will describe his connection and dependence on wilderness. We will also get a glimpse into the life and challenges of an outfitter.

December 9: Abbra Firman, Red Cross Disaster Program Manager in Eastern Montana will present, “A View into the Life of a Red Cross Volunteer.” Having recently returned from helping after Hurricane Florence, Abbra will describe the work of the Red Cross in providing emergency assistance, disaster relief, and disaster preparedness education. In existence since 1881, what are the present challenges of the Red Cross and how are these being met?

December 16: Alexander Koehn, foreign exchange student from Germany who is currently living with Don and Peggy Cluff from our congregation. Alexander is a junior at West High School and is a member of the cross country team. In this presentation Alexander will speak about life in Germany: churches, schools, and living conditions. After the presentation he will answer your questions.

December 23: Pastor Dave will present “The Promise” as he will help us look at various passages that tell of the coming of Jesus. What do these promises suggest and how can these promises help us with our daily lives? Come and be encouraged by God's word as we prepare for Christmas.

Youth News: Our middle and high school group meets every Wednesday for dinner, games, worship, and Bible learning.

Thanks to all who assisted with the annual senior Thanksgiving dinner on Wednesday, November 14. About 75 senior adults from our church enjoyed a delicious turkey dinner. Special thanks to Michelle Lee and Karla Mahan for coordinating the meal and all those who assisted with the dinner. We received a number of thank-you notes from those who attended.

We also appreciated those who provided our meals during the month of November. They were Heidi & Jim Duncan, Kelly Murch, and Jody Ferestad-Anderson. Our new sign up list for 2019 is posted on the “Youth News” bulletin board. If you would like to help provide a meal on one of our weekly gatherings, please talk with Sara Thompson, our meal coordinator.

The youth group will have its annual Christmas party at the home of Bob and Shari Dayton on Wednesday, December 19 at 6 PM. Bring a white elephant gift and enjoy some pizza complimentary of the Dayton’s.

We rely upon a great group of volunteers to keep the youth activities going and we continue to search for a full time person to work in this area.



Appreciation for Diaper Drive

Dear Pastor Dave and church members: Thank you so much for your generous in-kind donation of the diapers to YWCA Gateway. Your donation is so important to our efforts, as we work to provide life-changing and life-enhancing services to some of the most vulnerable members of our community. This donation meets a vital need, diapers (or the lack thereof) are a bigger issue in the community than people realize. Thank you immensely for this! —Merry Lee Olson, CEO of the YWCA

Singles group to meet on Saturday, December 15

Our church’s Singles Group will be meeting on Saturday, December 15 at 10:00 AM at the Western Emporium Restaurant, located at 3141 King Ave West. All single adults are invited to join this group which meets monthly. Questions about this group can be directed toward Tom Erskine or Phyllis Brown.

Men’s group

Our men’s group meets 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 studying the Sermon on the Mount which Jesus gives in Matthew 5-7. For more information about this group, please talk with Pastor Dave. The next meeting will be held on Monday, December 10 at 12noon. All men are invited to join us.

| Upcoming Committee Meetings in November | |
|---|----------------------------------|
| (All meetings are in the Fireside Room) | |
| Property Committee | Tuesday, December 4 at 12noon |
| Mission Committee | Thursday, December 6 at 1:00 PM |
| Christian Education | Thursday, December 6 at 7:00 PM |
| Worship Committee | Monday, December 10 at 10:00 AM |
| Finance Committee | Tuesday, December 11 at 12noon |
| Session Meeting | Tuesday, December 11 at 7:00 PM |
| PW Board Meeting | Wednesday, December 12 at 9:30am |
| Deacons Meeting | Monday, December 17 at 4:00 PM |
| Congregational Care Team | Thursday, December 20 at 12noon |

CASA volunteers needed

The success of our future depends on the wellbeing of our children, but in Montana they are among the most vulnerable. Statewide, the number of children entering foster care due to abuse or neglect in recent years has skyrocketed. In Yellowstone County, the number of children removed from their home has increased drastically from 182 in 2014 to 574 in 2017, resulting in more than 800 children currently in foster care. You could be the voice for one of these children by becoming a volunteer Court Appointed Special Advocate, with CASA of Yellowstone County. Our next set of training classes begins in January. Give Ben McKee a call at 259-1233 or visit our website at yellowstonecasa.org to learn more about our upcoming information sessions and how you can make a difference in the life of a child.

| | | |
|--------------------|--------------------|---------------------|
| Birthday’s | | |
| 1 David Marshall | 20 Teri Pattee | 30 Jay Kouba |
| 2 John Limbach | Edna Carlson | 31 Jenanne Luse |
| Judy Wallinder | Haley Kouba | Allison Dubs |
| Dorothy Leeds | Caliyah Stennerson | Isabella Stennerson |
| 5 Lowell Butler | 22 Gary Schneider | |
| 6 Jim Graff | 23 Jane Myhre | |
| 8 Bob Dayton | Louise Graff | |
| 10 Shirley Shirley | 26 Robert Muir | |
| 11 James Haefer | 27 Tim Janiak | |
| Jeanie Hekkel | Doris Backus | |
| 16 Tom Kreger | 28 Cathy McLean | |
| 19 Ann Chase | 30 Steve Bentley | |
| 20 Ed Dakolios | Jessica Grabow | |
| | Kurt Grabow | |

Mission News

As we go into the Christmas season, we are very blessed to help others in our church, community, and world. The “Pay it Forward” program is in full swing. Do you have your \$10 seed money to help others? Be creative, prayerful, and even silly as you seek ways to use your funds to help others. Let Pastor Dave know what you did, so he can share your idea with the rest of us.

We asked the congregation to donate diapers for the children at Young Families/Early Head Start through the month of October. Thank you so much for bringing in lots and lots of diapers!! They greatly appreciated the 2,417 diapers which were donated!

Our Noisy Offering was received on Sunday, November 18 totaling \$3,964.61. Our mission committee has added \$1,250 to this total, exceeding our goal of \$5,000. Wow!!! Thanks to all who gave to this offering that will go to purchase a community farm in a third world country through the Presbyterian mission program. More opportunities to give to this program will be made available through the Giving Tree during the Christmas season. Thanks to all for helping us reach and even exceed our goal!! You are an incredibly generous congregation!

The Angel Tree has tags for the “Family Farm Bundle.” This year we have the chance to give an animal or something else needed to run a farm for people in a third world country. The total price of the bundle is \$1,300. Let’s see if we can fund the whole thing. We also gave \$750 to the Peace Lutheran Church food pantry.

Thanks to all who have helped with our Family Promise week which our church hosted from November 18-25. Four homeless families stayed at our church during the week as part of this community outreach program. We once again will host from Dec. 30 to Jan. 6. To help, please talk with either Janet Brown or Chris Eriksen.

Long ago, there was a couple with a new baby who needed help. Thankfully shepherds, wise men, and probably others, helped Mary, Joseph, and the baby Jesus. Now we can help those in need.

Merry Christmas Everyone



Welcome New Members

We are happy to welcome the following new members. They were introduced during worship on Sunday, November 18 and include:

Linda Franson, a former teacher at West High who has lived in the Congo, Africa and most recently California.

Larry George, a retired salesman who has spent much of his life in Wyoming. He has been attending our church for about five years.

Fred and Sherry Henslin have worked for many years together as Fred was a surgical assistant and Sherry was the one who set his schedule. They have been members at Shiloh United Methodist Church.

Jim and Jill Irwin and their children Bradley (11th grade at Central) and Melanie (8th grade at Ben Steele). Jim works at the CHS Refinery in Laurel and Jill has been a pharmacist.