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Pastor's Pen

"Looking Back, Looking Forward"



As I look back upon 2018 there are several highlights that stand out. The first was our memorable trip to Israel where 44 traveled to the Holy Land for a 12 day journey. It was a wonderful experience of seeing many places, but even more so it was a great way to deepen relationship with people in our congregation. The old adage is true that if you really want to get to know people, take a trip together!

Our relationship with Better Together Preschool soared to new heights this year as they reached maximum enrollment capacity (44 students) in their program. The preschool has brought a heightened vitality to the church and its programs and I am grateful for the good working relations with their preschool staff.

Mission giving continues to climb and we made headlines with the Presbyterian Mission Program for donating \$5,000 through out Noisy Offering in November. They highlighted this offering among their staff and plan to share how this fun and effective offering impacted a community with a "farm bundle." Items from our Christmas Angel Tree also went to support the ministry of missions in third world countries.

I continue to take an active role in our community by serving on the board with Habitat for Humanity. My role with the Billings Police Chaplains program took on more significance as I was recently elected Chaplain Coordinator. In this role I oversee the program, handle the scheduling of all of the chaplains, and work with the department to ensure that our ministry is beneficial. I continue to serve as chair of our Presbytery's Pastoral Ministry Team, a group of 12 pastors and elders who work with a number of churches and pastors within the bounds of Yellowstone Presbytery.

As we look forward to a New Year, I have much optimism that the church will continue to grow and flourish. God's love, forgiveness, and grace that is offered freely through Jesus Christ is a wonderful message we are able to share. In the midst of a hurting world and community, the ministry of Good News is always so very important. We will continue to provide opportunities for all to grow closer to God, to learn more about faith, and to express ways to live out our faith on a local, national, and international level.

I look forward to our "New Start 2019" sermon series beginning on January 6 and a Sunday school class featuring *The Great Adventures of the Apostle Paul* beginning on Sunday, January 13. Let's keep the momentum of this past year going as we enter into 2019. Together we can continue to provide a place where people can grow in the love and grace of Jesus Christ.

In Christ,

Pastor Dave

Coming Attractions:

Sunday school classes resume on Sunday, January 6
Books will be collected in January and the sale will begin in February
"New Start 2019" sermon series begins on Sunday, January 6
The Great Adventures of the Apostle Paul begins on Sunday, January 13 at 9:15 AM
reFUEL group begins on Sunday, January 13 from 6-7 PM in the Fireside Room
Congregational meeting coming on Sunday, January 27 after worship
Youth Ski Retreat coming to Butte on February 22-24

Memory Joggers for January 2019

January 6, 2019

Preaching
Dave Thompson
Greeters
Edna Carlson
Thelma Riggs
Ushers
Ken & Barbara
Eichenberger
Marjorie Stewart
Chris Eriksen
Liturgist
Tonya Appelt
Sound Booth
David Bauer
Communion
Heather Rosenfeld
Kathleen Butler
Robert & Cathy
Culbertson
Carla Bracken

The 13th

Preaching
Dave Thompson
Greeters
Megan Ascherman &
Daughters
Ushers
Cindy Leggate
Sharon Mathews
Diane Noddings
Peg Ostlund
Liturgist
Janet Kline
Sound Booth
Chuck Leggate
Flower Delivery
Chris Eriksen

The 20th

Preaching
Dave Thompson
Greeters
David & Robyn
Bauer
Ushers
Jerry Koch
Bob Fedric
Bill White
John Reed
Liturgist
Bill Lorentz
Sound Booth
Jeff Gruizenga
Flower Delivery
Jack & Karla Mahan

The 27th

Preaching
Dave Thompson
Greeters
Carla & Teena
Bracken
Ushers
Marlene Spencer
Sharon Brady
Betty Ann Nesmith
Linda Luse
Liturgist
Judy Cuff
Sound Booth
Robert Culbertson
Flower Delivery
Chuck & Cindy
Leggate

February 3rd

Preaching
David Thompson
Greeters
Pam Harr
Jo Albin
Ushers
Earl & Sharon
Henderson
Bob & Cathy
Culbertson
Liturgist
Deb Wiens
Sound Booth
David Bauer
Communion
Bill & Colleen
Lorentz
Kathy Baskett
Phyllis Brown
Sharon Mathews

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Church Info

Office Hours: Mon—Thurs
8:30 AM— 4:00 PM
406-252-3434
mainoffice@fpcbillings.org
www.fpcbillings.org
Sunday School @ 9:15 AM
Worship @ 10:30 AM

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, January 6. Thanks to all who brought food last month!

Session Notes:

During the December 9th meeting of the session, the property committee reported that new computers have been purchased for the office and for Pastor Dave. The nominating committee has been successful in recruiting individuals to serve as elders and deacons to replace those whose terms will end in January. The Christian Education committee’s request to allow the youth to attend a ski retreat in Butte on February 22-24, 2019 was granted. Permission was given for The Reverend David Thompson to preside at the baptism of Zoey Harr, daughter of Travis Harr on Sunday, January 13, 2019 during our morning worship and for the baptism of Liam Heidt, infant son of Jileasa and Mike Heidt on Sunday, January 27, 2019 during our morning worship service.

Financial snapshot

2018	Income	Expense	Net
December	\$ 91,093	\$ 52,979	\$ 38,114
YTD	\$ 519,882	\$ 486,860	\$ 33,022

DECEMBER	2018
2th	212
9th	230
16th	195
23th	179
Christmas Eve	378
30th	158
December Average Attendance	225

Sermons available on-line

Did you know that you can listen to sermons on-line at our website at www.fpcbillins.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.

Church Mice:

Thanks to all of the people in the congregation who responded to volunteer in the Family Promise program for the upcoming year. We would like to especially thank the “regular” volunteers who have been there for a long time to take down and set up: Bob Culbertson, Chris Eriksen, Carla Bracken, Teena Bracken, Sharon Lincoln, and Marge Myhra. Family promise returns to our church December 30-January 6 and your help with this program is always needed. It is gratifying to have a good response to this program that helps many people in our local community.



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 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 December. They were Dave & Vicki Thompson in celebration of Sara’s graduation from MSU, Juanita Stovell in memory of Jay & Tyler Stovell, Linda Luse in honor of Jenanne Luse, and the Muir family in celebration of Bob & Barbara’s 65th wedding anniversary. 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 and lots of spots are available in the New Year.

Christmas decorating appreciation

Thanks to all who helped put up Christmas decorations on Saturday, December 1. We had a number of people come to hang greens, put up out nativity displays, and decorate trees. We will be taking down the decorations on Monday, January 7 at 11:00 AM if you would like to help. Special thanks to the worship committee who oversee the decorating and taking down and the Presbyterian Woman’s group for providing the meal.



Financial pledge updates

We continue to receive financial pledges for our 2019 Budget. To date we have received 104 pledges totaling \$268,701. 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 will resume on Thursday, January 3 at 6 PM in the Fireside Room and will continue through February. 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. 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:

We extend our condolences to the family of Royal Johnson who passed away in November. His funeral was held in our church on December 3.

We share our sympathies to the family of June Thomsen who passed away on December 16. Her funeral will be held in our church at a time to be determined.

Peggy Ostund (January 3) and Sue Bentley (January 7) will both be having knee replacement surgeries soon.

Bill Lorentz is recovering from back surgery he had on December 20.

Jean Embley has returned home after being hospitalized last month at St. V’s for several days.

Congratulations to Bob and Barbara Muir who celebrated their 65th wedding anniversary on December 27.

Diane Noddings fell and broke her ankle while in California last week.

Jeanne Hekkel was recently diagnosed with cancer and will be having surgery soon.



Congregational meeting coming on Sunday, January 27

Our annual congregational meeting will be held on Sunday, January 27 immediately following our worship service. The purpose of this meeting is to elect a new class of elders and deacons, elect a nominating committee for the coming year for the selection of elders and deacons, review the 2018 financial statements, hear reports from the past year, and to review the 2019 proposed budget. Annual reports will be available on Sunday, January 20, a week prior to the meeting. We invite you to take a report and look it over prior to the meeting on Sunday, January 27.

SUN	MON	TUE	WED	THU	FRI	SAT
		1 Holiday Office Closed	2 10 Grief Support Group Family Promise Here	3 FP Here 12 Property Com 1 Mission Com 6-8:30 Stephen Ministry Training 7 CE Committee	4 12 Habitat for Humanity meet- ing in Fireside Room Family Promise	5 Family Promise Here 10 Gluten Intolerance Group
6 Food Bank Sun. 8:15 FP Clean-up 9:15 Sun School 10:30 Worship Communion 11:00 West Park worship	7 9-1 Preschool 10 Worship Com- mittee Meeting 11 Christmas Un- decorating 6 Billings Child Care Meeting	8 9:30 Women’s Bible Study 12 Finance Com- mittee 7 Session Meeting in the Fireside Rm	9 9 BSF Leaders 9-1 Preschool 10 RLI Group 12noon BLT 7 Choir Rehearsal 7 College group	10 9 Bible Study Fel- lowship 11 Fellowship Committee Mtg 6-8:30 Stephen Ministry Training	11 9-1 Preschool	12 10 Yellow- stone Callig- raphy Group Bistro room
13 9:15 Sun Sch 10:30 Worship Baptism of Zoey Harr 11:00 West Park Worship 6 reFUEL group	14 9-1 Preschool 12 Men’s Bible Study Group	15 9:30 Women’s Bible Study 10 Grief Support Group 12 West Park Min- istry Team Meeting	16 9 BSF Leaders 9-1 Preschool 9:30 PW Board 6 Youth Group 7 Choir Rehearsal 7 College group	17 9 Bible Study Fellowship 12 Congregational Care Team 6-8:30 Stephen Ministry Training	18 9-1 Preschool	19 10 Singles Group to meet at Western Emporium
20 9:15 Sun Sch 10:30 Worship 11:00 West Park Worship 6 reFUEL group	21 Holiday Office Closed	22 9:30 Women’s Bible Study 6 Stephen Minis- try Supervision Fireside Room	23 9 BSF Leaders 9-1 Preschool 12noon BLT 6 Youth Party 7 Choir Rehearsal 7 College group	24 9-11 Bible Study Fellowship 6-8:30 Stephen Ministry Training	25 9-1 Preschool	26
27 9:15 Sun Sch 10:30 Worship Baptism of Liam Heidt 11 West Park Wor- ship 6 reFUEL group	28 12 Men’s Bible Study Group 4 Deacons Meet- ing	29	30 9- BSF Leaders 9-1 Preschool 12noon BLT 6 Youth Group 7College group	31 9-11 Bible Study Fellowship 6-8:30 Stephen Ministry Training		

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.

The PW board will meet on Wednesday, January 9 at 9:30 AM in the Fireside Room. PW groups will meet on Wednesday, January 16 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.

The PW is also responsible for serving at funeral receptions and for providing cookies and refreshments after worship each Sunday. We appreciate the good work of the PW groups as they help our congregation in many ways.

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 in-terns are leading this class for children ages kindergarten through the 5th grade.

Classes for Adults:

The Great Adventure: Traveling with the Apostle Paul– Come and journey with the Apostle Paul from his birth, his early years, his conversion experience, to his imprisonment in Rome. Pastor Dave will help us to see how this man of incredible faith handled adversity and hardships, from riots in Ephesus to being ship-wrecked on the Mediterranean. This six week class will begin on Sunday, January 13 and will continue through February 17. This class will be held in the Fireside Room on Sunday mornings at 9:15 AM.

Church and Society Class Schedule for January:

Our church and society class is held on Sunday mornings at 9:15 AM in the Church & Society Room. A differ-ent guest present every week. Here is the lineup for January:

January 6: Dr. Alan Muskett, Cosmetic and Reconstructive Plastic Surgeon, “Just Shoot Me.” Author of two books and a Gazette contributor, Dr. Muskett brings wisdom, humor, and a deep faith into his presentations.

January 13: Steve Loveless, CEO of St. Vincent Healthcare. Steve will describe how St. Vincent fulfills its mission, vision, and values, including Good Humor, as a faith based organization. Learn about the challenges of St. Vincent’s in serving the community, especially the poor and vulnerable.

January 20: Dr. Danell Jones, English Professor, MSUB. “A Christian African’s Reaction to Early 20th-Century London.” The African writer A.B.C. Merriam-Labor was a devout Christian, educated in Anglican schools in Sierra Leone. When he went to London in 1904 he was shocked at what he found there. Hear Dr. Jones describe how his life spiraled downward and what were the forces that caused such dramatic changes. In addition to winning awards for her poetry and writings, Dr. Jones is a co-founder of the Big Sky Writers’ Workshop.

January 27: Dr. Tim Lehman, Professor of History and Political Science, Rocky Mountain College. A Chris-tian Nation? Was American founded as a Christian nation? From the Puritans to the present, Americans have had divergent answers to that question. We will explore some of the historical answers including the writers of the Constitution, American revivalists, Abraham Lincoln, and contemporary understandings of "One Nation Under God."

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

We appreciate those who provided our meals during the month of December. They were Dave & Vicki Thompson; Jeff, Tonya, and Morgan Appelt; and Bob & Shari Dayton. 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.

Special thanks to Bob and Shari Dayton who hosted the youth group’s annual Christmas party on Wednesday, December 19. Bob and Shari provided pizza and refreshments and the kids exchanged white elephant gifts. It was a great evening!

Our new 2019 meal sign up list is on the “Youth News” bulletin board near Pastor Dave’s office. Lots of spots are available for the winter and spring. Your help in provide a meal on Wednesday evening to about 30 youth and adults is greatly appreciated!

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. Youth group will resume on Wednesday, January 16 at 6:00 PM.



Book sale to be held in February

The Presbyterian Women’s group will once again be having a book sale starting in February. During the month on January you are invited to bring books to the church and place them in the children’s library. They are happy to receive a variety of books, from children’s book to adult books of a variety of adult books. Please sort them according to the designated genres.



Singles group to meet on Saturday,

Our church’s Singles Group will be meeting on Saturday, January 19 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, January 14 at 12noon. All men are invited to join us.

Upcoming Committee Meetings in November	
(All meetings are in the Fireside Room)	
Property Committee	Thursday, January 3 at 12noon
Mission Committee	Thursday, January 3 at 1:00 PM
Christian Education	Thursday, January 3 at 7:00 PM
Worship Committee	Monday, January 7 at 10:00 AM
Finance Committee	Tuesday, January 8 at 12noon
Session Meeting	Tuesday, January 8 at 7:00 PM
PW Board Meeting	Wednesday, January 9 at 9:30am
Congregational Care Team	Thursday, January 17 at 12noon
Deacons Meeting	Monday, January 28 at 4:00 PM

Come and reFUEL on Sunday evenings

Do you have a desire to get to know people in the church in a more personal way? Do you wish to study the Bible and see how God’s word applies to your life? Join us for reFUEL (Fellowship, Understanding, and Encouragement in the Lord) beginning on Sunday, January 13 from 6-7 PM in the Fireside Room for an eight week study on 1 John. Co-led by Bruce Hoffman and Pastor Dave, this series will include time of sharing, study, and prayer. For more questions, please talk with Dave.

New Start 2019 sermon series begins this Sunday

Pastor Dave will begin a new sermon series titled, “New Start 2019” beginning this Sunday, January 6. In this six part series, Pastor Dave will help us see how God wants us to begin the New Year in a new way. Don’t look just to survive in 2019, but to thrive in this new year.

Birthdays

1	Fern Nelson
3	Willard Johnson
4	Mary Rottrup
5	Greta Murray
	Pat Stowe
7	Bob Shirley
10	Zackery Bennett
14	Nick Goettel
15	Robert Sterup
	Carol Drum
16	Louis Dubs
17	Martha Davidson

20 Thelma Riggs
Bruce Phillips

24 Robert Keenum
Ron Stowe

25 Richard Davidson

26 Tyler Goettel

27 Katelyn Morrow

29 Mark Parker

30 Jean Schneider
Kay Hein

Anniversaries

6 Kurt & Cathy McLean

15 Kyle & JoLayne Buffington

Mission News

We are looking forward to a new year of serving God’s children and people in Billings, within our state, and around the world.

Family Promise returns to our church December 30-January 6 and your help would be appreciated during that time. Help is needed with meals, overnight hosting, and activities. A sign up list can be found on the bulletin board near the Fellowship Hall entry or talk with Marv & Janet Brown or Chris Eriksen.

The mission committee looks forward to creatively serving individuals and groups who we have been helping in the past and finding new opportunities to help those folks that God puts on our hearts.

Thank you for the amazing support for the Presbyterian Giving Catalog through our Angel tree and noisy offering. Our Noisy Offering collected over \$5,000 and our Angel Tree brought in an additional \$3,008 that will go toward purchasing livestock, seeds, education and agricultural training, bunk beds for children, jerry cans, kitchen kit, garden well, sewing machines, water filtering system, and other items. A total of 42 items were purchased.

During the month of December our congregation provided several meals from for the HUB, a shelter that provides warm meals in downtown Billings to the homeless population. The staff and those served by the HUB greatly appreciate these warm meals. Karla Mahan made chocolates which were distributed to several local nursing homes.

Our church’s mission committee meets the first Thursday of each month at 1:00 PM in the Fireside Room. We are always open to new ideas in ways we can reach out to help others in our community and beyond.

Because of the LORD’s great love we are not consumed, for his compassions never fail. They are new every morning; great is your faithfulness. I say to myself, “The LORD is my portion; therefore I will wait for him.”
—Lamentations 3:22-24



Foundation News and Gift

The First Presbyterian Foundation met on Monday, December 10 for its year end meeting. The Foundation gave a check to the church in the amount of \$31,085. These funds will go toward the General Fund of the church which supports the church’s mission and ministry. We thank all who give toward the church’s Foundation during this past year. The purpose of the Foundation is to provide a sustainable income to the church through the generosity of its donors. Each year the Foundation gives 3% of its fund balance to the ministry of our congregation, while the fund principle continues to grow for years to come.

The Foundation would like to thank everyone who made a donation to the foundation in 2018. For more information about the Foundation or how to make a planned gift to the church, please talk with Jenice Fugere, Tonya Appelt, or Jim Hummel. The new email address for the foundation is: foundation@fpcbillings.org

Donation receptacles have been moved

Are you curious as to where the donation boxes are for eye glasses, PW toiletries, Gateway House Tumbleweed or Lost & Found? Check out the mahogany cabinet in the hallway between the Fireside Room and Fellowship Hall. Still not sure? Ask Sandi Schoenberger or Pastor Dave