

# THE MESSENGER

May 2026

FIRST UNITED METHODIST CHURCH

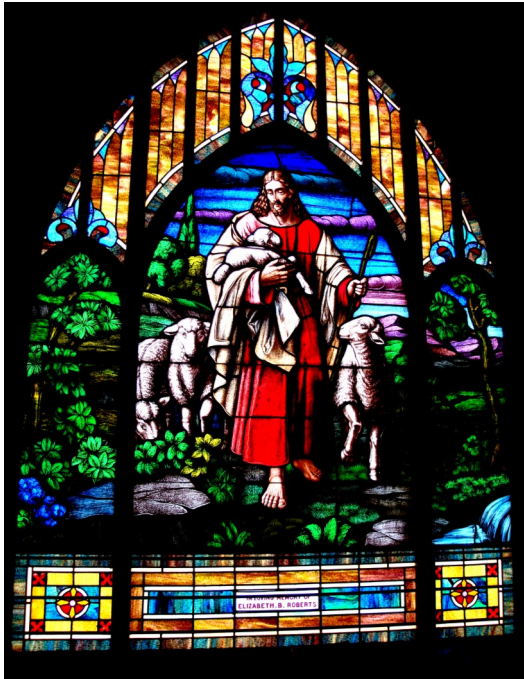
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REVEREND CALVIN HILL

Our mission statement: *Passion for Christ, Compassion for all.*



## IN THIS ISSUE:

- Pastor's Message
- Faith Walks
- Easter Sunday Photos
- Invitation Sunday
- Children's Ministries
- Pastoral Accomplishments
- Spring Benefit Luncheon
- UMW Serves Others
- Mother-Child Project
- Special Offering
- 2026 Annual Conference
- Trustees Address Several Issues
- New Video System
- A Note of Thanks
- Calendar of Events
- Birthdays & Anniversaries
- Church Information

## PASTOR'S MESSAGE: CELEBRATING TWO SPECIAL DAYS

Pastor Calvin Hill

The month of May arrives like a quiet invitation as the earth is in full bloom, the days get longer, and our hearts feel the warmth of the sun. This month holds two observances that, at first glance, seem simply patriotic and sentimental; but when looking closer, they carry a deep spiritual view—Mother's Day and Memorial Day.

The Psalmist writes, "*Give thanks to the Lord, for He is good; His love endures forever.*" (Psalm 136:1) For many, Mother's Day reminds us that God chose to bring life into the world through love and sacrifice. Whether your relationship with your mother is tender or complicated, or you are still looking for a nurturing love, it is Mother's Day that calls us to recognize the fierce, often unnoticed gift of those who shaped our lives. As God's children, we are called to be that same kind of God-loving presence for one another. That presence acknowledges a theological nurturing love, the truth that God chose to bring life into the world through love, sacrifice, and the body of a woman as she gives life.

My grandma used to say, "Be of good spirit during your wife's pregnancy when you speak to her, your child needs to feel loved from the very beginning. It builds faith." It's as the Psalmist says, "*Give thanks to the Lord, for He is good; His love endures forever.*" When we do so, it's a good Mother's Day.

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## PASTOR'S MESSAGE

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However, May also brings a day of reminiscence. On Memorial Day, we are asked to speak the names of those who gave everything in service to all. John states, "*Greater love has no one than this: to lay down one's life for one's friends.*" (John 15:13) Many of us don't glorify war, but we do honor the courage of many who served; and as followers of Jesus, we understand sacrifice. Remembrance is sacred for many during this month. In fact, it is what we do every time we gather at the Lord's Table—we remember.

So let this month of May be a time where we tend to our roots of the people who formed us and sacrificed for us. For they held a faith that sustains us and showed a love that outlasts everything.



Looking for a place to express your thoughts and glean from the thoughts of others on the sermon of the week? Come join those pondering life through a lens of faith on a series of faith walks, which will be held on Mondays beginning at 6:30pm at Serenity Trail. Contact Jim Hutchinson (307-629-0810) for more information.

# Easter Sunday



Left: Easter Sunrise Service at Greenwood Cemetery  
Below: Easter Breakfast enjoyed by many in the Fellowship Hall following the Easter Sunrise Service



Left: Members of the Methodist Singers provide special music during the Easter Sunday Church service



## INVITATION SUNDAY May 10

Invite an acquaintance or a friend to church on Sunday, May 10. Bring food to share during fellowship time.

Dessert will be provided.



## CHILDREN'S MINISTRIES

Submitted by Carl Sundstrom

Children's Sunday School met twice. Lessons included Jesus healing the man born blind and how that action caused the church leaders to start plotting against Him, which led to His crucifixion. Discussion included sometimes being punished for doing the right thing because people did not understand.

We had a special treat when Bette Sample returned to the classroom to read the story of Joseph and the Coat of Many Colors. It was great having Bette back for a Sunday!

Next week, part two of the story of Joseph will be presented when he fulfills two prophetic dreams, pardons his brothers, and sends food to save his family.

## PASTORAL ACCOMPLISHMENTS

Newcastle First United Methodist Church is proud to recognize our clergy: Pastor Calvin Hill and Pastor Marcia Romano.

Pastor Hill will officially receive his doctoral degree on May 19 at a ceremony in Claremont, California. His new title will be Reverend Doctor Calvin Hill.

Pastor Marcia recently completed the requirements to become an officially licensed pastor in the Methodist church.

Congratulations, Pastor Hill and Pastor Marcia!! We are so proud of you, and we are blessed to have you serving our church.

These accomplishments will be recognized on Sunday, May 10, with special music by Navajo singers during the church service and refreshments during fellowship time.



## SPRING BENEFIT LUNCHEON

Submitted by Chris French

United Methodist Women (UMW) hosted a Spring Benefit Luncheon on Friday, April 24, to raise funds for the WCSD #1 Aquatic Center. Casseroles, salads, and desserts provided by UMW and members of several others churches in the community were served to over 100 people who attended this community event. Nearly \$3,500 was raised for this worthy cause. UMW is sincerely grateful to the individuals who provided food and to those who worked at this event.



## UMW HELPS OTHERS

Submitted by Chris French

United Methodist Women (UMW) met April 1 with fifteen women in attendance. Norma Lease gave the devotion prior to the meeting. Business items at the meeting included:

- UMW matched up to \$1,000 of the congregation giving of \$1,035 for UMCOR Sunday.
- Six (6) tubs of food collected for the "40 for Lent" Campaign were delivered to the B.R.E.A.D. office.
- Members discussed using JoAnn Fassbender's memorial monies to purchase new shrubs for the church yard. Additional information is being collected before moving forward with this project.
- UMW approved donating \$300 to the WCSD #1 Aquatic Center, the beneficiary of the Spring Benefit Luncheon.
- Final plans were made for the annual Spring Benefit Luncheon to be held on April 24.
- Through the month of May, UMW will be collecting items for the Mother-Child project to benefit mothers/babies/toddlers served by the local Public Health office.

All women of the Church are invited to the next UMW meeting on Wednesday, May 6, at 9:30am in the Fellowship Hall.

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# Mother-Child Project



UMW (United Methodist Women) is sponsoring the Mother-Child Project, which benefits infants and toddlers who receive services from the Weston County Public Health Office. UMW encourages all women of our church to provide the much-needed supplies for this Mother-Child Project. Donations of the following supplies can be placed in the designated tub in the church narthex; financial donations can be sent to Vanita Epperson at P.O. Box 831 by May 31.

- |                        |                        |                       |
|------------------------|------------------------|-----------------------|
| • Baby lotion          | • Baby oil             | • Bath/hair wash      |
| • Baby hair brush      | • Baby wipes           | • Booties             |
| • Bath toy             | • Bath temp toy        | • Medicine dropper    |
| • Rattle               | • Ring toy             | • Finger toothbrush   |
| • Teething ring        | • Sippy cup            | • Bib                 |
| • Plate w/spoon        | • Stacking cups        | • Stacking blocks     |
| • Age-appropriate book | • Unbreakable mirror   | • Digital thermometer |
| • Childproofing kit    | • Small stuffed animal | • Security blanket    |

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## SPECIAL OFFERING

The Finance Committee thanks everyone who donated generously to the recent special offering. A total of \$2,291 was collected for the replacement of the front doors of the church.



# 2026 ANNUAL CONFERENCE

June 10-13  
Billings, Montana

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Dear Clergy and Laity of the Mountain Sky Conference of the United Methodist Church,

Grace and peace to you in the name of the One who calls us into community, to love boldly, serve joyfully and lead courageously!

I hereby call the regular 2026 session of the Mountain Sky Annual Conference of The United Methodist Church to meet on **June 10-13, 2026**, in Billings, Montana. All regular sessions and worship will take place at the Billings Convention Center.

The Vision Statement of the United Methodist Church announced last year is to “Love boldly, serve joyfully and lead courageously in local communities and worldwide connections.” Our theme this year, “**The Way of Loving Boldly**,” draws from this new Vision Statement and pairs it with the path that we are called to walk with Jesus Christ. Micah 6:8 grounds us scripturally:

“He has told you, O mortal, what is good,  
and what does the Lord require of you  
but to do justice and to love kindness  
and to walk humbly with your God?”

The annual conference experience this year begins with several optional learning journeys, inviting us to physically experience our walk with Jesus to love boldly. These include **Heart Mountain, Lame Deer, The Free Store**, and the **Montana Women’s Prison**. Some of these journeys will be day-long excursions, and others will be just an afternoon, but in each, we hope that through experience, learning, and relationship, our hearts will be opened to love our neighbors more fully and boldly.

This year’s annual conference will be a deep dive into what it means to love boldly by engaging hopes of persons and groups expressed in petitions and resolutions, hearing of mission and ministry happening around the conference and world, and committing ourselves to invitation and action as the people called United Methodist. Through worship and reflection, we will deepen our understanding of how love intersects with acts of service, repentance, and reflection. Your attendance is always essential for building our covenant community, and especially this year as we [vote for delegates who will represent Mountain Sky at the 2028 General and Jurisdictional Conferences](#). This will be the first time that our delegates are named as delegates from the Mountain Sky conference. We will elect 4 delegates to General Conference (2 clergy and 2 lay persons), and 18 delegates for Jurisdictional Conference (9 clergy and 9 lay persons). I ask you now to prayerfully consider serving in this way. 2028 will be another historic conference season as we move fully into a regionalized church. You can find more information about the nomination and election process [here](#). The deadline for nomination is now April 17, 2026.

We will also welcome [Bishop David Wilson of the Great Plains Annual Conference](#), who will be preaching at the ordination service. Bishop Wilson, who hails from the Oklahoma and Oklahoma Indian Missionary Conference, is a partner with Mountain Sky in the work of repentance and repair on the massacre at Sand Creek. Bishop Wilson, a member of the Choctaw Nation of Oklahoma, holds the distinction of being the first Native American elected to serve as a bishop in the history of The United Methodist Church.

You can find more about [Annual Conference 2026](#) on the conference website, including deadlines for submissions of petitions and reports, registration and lodging information, and other opportunities for mealtime gathering and learning.

Let us prepare our hearts and minds for this important time of gathering and holy conferencing. May the Holy Spirit guide us on “The Way of Loving Boldly!”

In hope and faith,

Bishop Kristin G. Stoneking

# **TRUSTEES ADDRESS SEVERAL ISSUES**

Submitted by Carl Sundstrom

The Board of Trustees met April 3 with six members in attendance. Items of business included:

- After meeting with JoAnn Fassbender's family, an estimate was requested to replace the plexiglass over the stained glass windows on the front of the church with protective glass. The committee viewed the estimate as reasonable and decided to ask to have the estimate upgraded to cover all the stained glass.
- The Trustees will use Don McColley's memorial to cover a cost overrun on the TV monitor installation.
- The Trustees felt the billing for the repair of the parsonage garage door was excessive and will pursue an adjustment.
- The security system has been tabled pending input from the conference. Pastor Marcia is the liaison with the conference security team for this project. A doorbell camera has been installed and is in use in the Administrative Assistant's office. The Trustees have designated funds for installation of a more secure system. Further life safety suggestions were considered. Chuck will contact the Fire Department to start first aid classes. The Trustees discussed offering these classes to the community as an outreach for the church.
- The Trustees joined Pastor Hill in encouraging a swift conclusion to the Methodists Helping Methodists policy revisions and preparing for a Charge Conference to consider the proposed changes.
- An explanatory presentation has been presented to the Administrative Council, regarding why the replacement of the HVAC system for the Fellowship Hall and Sanctuary is the Trustees' highest priority. The considerations that influenced this decision will be available upon request from the office.

The next Trustees meeting will be Tuesday, May 5, at 6pm in the Church Parlor.

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## **NEW VIDEO SYSTEM**

Submitted by Carl Sundstrom

About four years ago, the Board of Trustees suggested replacing the aging overhead projector with television monitors. It seems like a long time since the idea was presented, but those monitors are now up and providing bright, clear images and text to enhance our worship services.

The goals the Trustees established for the project were to modernize the worship experience, improve the visibility and vibrancy of the images, select and acquire high quality monitors which had good reviews for the intended use and reliability, and complete the installation with minimum alterations to the Church. Restoring sanctity to the Chancel was a priority.

Initially the suggestion was a modernization project to be accomplished "sometime in the future." In 2023, a regional company estimated a "turn-key" installation at \$20,000, which left us wondering if there was any hope of even starting it! But when the projector failed and the limitations of our back-up projector required the operator to sit in the

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## NEW VIDEO SYSTEM

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the Chancel, it took on greater importance. The unqualified support of Pastor and Sheri Hill and our District Superintendent, Rev. Mark Calhoun, were instrumental in moving the project along.

The support of the pastor and district superintendent evolved into the church receiving a \$2,000 grant from the Big Sky Conference and a separate gift of \$10,000 from the First United Methodist Church of Wheatland when it ceased operations. We also were fortunate to find premium monitors at a significant sale price. The cost to install the monitors was not budgeted and resulted in a cost overrun of approximately \$1,200, which was offset by using the Don McColley Memorial. No monies from the Church operating budget, savings account or trust funds were used. Although managing the project ourselves required a lot of time, research and effort, we were able to complete it for significantly less money than the original estimate, which should be noted does not include the inflation of the last few years.

The monitors were sized and positioned based on recommendations Sharon Roness provided after researching many considerations, including viewing angles, mounting height, uncontrollable ambient lighting, and distance to the rear of the Sanctuary, to name a few! It should be noted that due to architectural limitations, the TVs had to be mounted slightly lower than recommended to minimize their intrusion into the Chancel. The compromise seems to work well, and we encourage anyone who has trouble viewing to try another place in the Sanctuary.

Two separate orders were placed with 21 Electric: one to install the required cabling and power supplies, and one to install the monitors themselves. Carl



Carl Sundstrom coordinated both jobs. Carl also made the several required connections to the computer outputs, the signal splitter and receivers, and the four monitors.

Sharon then modified our ProPresenter program to work with the new system and trained Audrey Knight and four operators to use it. Sheri provided advice and encouragement from her past experience with a similar system in Browning, Montana. The new system has been in use for over a month with virtually no trouble, which is significant for a project of this complexity!

The Trustees wish to thank all who helped with this project. We hope you find the new system an improvement!

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## A NOTE OF THANKS

Our community of faith sincerely appreciates the time and effort the members of the Trustees and the Media Ministries Committee put forth to enhance the worship experience at First United Methodist Church! You did an awesome job! *FUMC Community of Faith*



## CALENDAR OF EVENTS

- 3: Finance Meeting, 11:30am  
Church Parlor
- 3: Media Ministries, 11:30am  
Fellowship Hall
- 4: Faith Walks, 6:30pm, Serenity Trail
- 5: Prayer Team, 9:30am, Church Parlor
- 5: Worship/Welcome Meeting, 10am  
Fellowship Hall
- 5: Trustees Meeting, 6pm, Church Parlor
- 5: Methodist Singers, 7pm, Sanctuary
- 6: GiGi's Closet Open, 9am-1pm
- 6: UMW Meeting, 9:30am, Fellowship Hall
- 7: National Day of Prayer
- 10: Mother's Day
- 10: Invitation Sunday (carry-in )  
Pastoral Celebration (dessert provided)
- 11: Faith Walks, 6:30pm, Serenity Trail
- 12: Prayer Team, 9:30am, Church Parlor
- 14: GiGi's Closet Open, 9am-1pm
- 17: Ascension Sunday
- 18: Faith Walks, 6:30pm, Serenity Trail
- 19: Prayer Team, 9:30am, Church Parlor
- 20: Administrative Council Meeting, 6pm  
Church Parlor
- 24: Pentecost Sunday
- 25: Memorial Day
- 25: Faith Walks, 6:30pm, Serenity Trail
- 26: Prayer Team, 9:30am, Church Parlor
- 27: GiGi's Closet Open, 9am-1pm
- 31: Trinity Sunday

## BIRTHDAYS/ANNIVERSARIES\*

- 4: Pat Townsend  
Keaton Hampton
- 5: \*Bart & Nicole Gregory
- 6: Harry Wilcomb
- 8: Norma Lease
- 9: Heidi Wood
- 11: Curtis Townsend
- 16: Steve Price
- 17: Maizy Owens
- 22: Marcia Romano
- 23: Lavonne Roberts
- 29: Robin Romano
- 30: Homer Hastings  
\*Gary & Brenda Clarke  
\*Ed & Bev Kiesling

## CHURCH INFO



Office Hours: 8am-noon M-TH

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406-845-8135  
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Radio: Sunday Service at 10am on KASL