



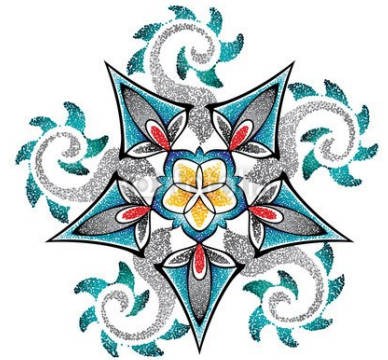
# THE GLAD TIDER

Stevensville United Methodist Church

January 2021

## A Wondrous New Years to You.

As Mac and I closed out the month and the Christmas season, putting our kids to bed became an increasingly incredible moment. They held so much wonder in their heads from taking it all in. And then there's the reality that they oozed with wonder inherently. Only such hearts could watch quietly as the candle lights of Christmas Eve flickered in front of them or share their popcorn strung up on a tree for the birds in the refuge or dress up in a Mary costume for weeks. So putting them to bed became the moment of telling the story of Jesus, of Love, of Generosity, of Mystery, of Light, of Wonder from every angle (and angel). Yes, Pete the Cat showed up. Yes, Scrooge McDuck & Mickey Cratchit gave them a vantage point. Yes, talking about their great anticipations helped. And somehow all that wonder rested for the night.



What happens when wonder rests? Does everything become dull and muted? Does motion cease or energy freeze? Do miracles exit the scene? I can't believe any of this could happen, because inherently wonder holds the capacity to surprise, bring forth beauty, and elicit the inexplicable. When wonder rests it doesn't stop being its nature, it simply gives space for other experiences, feelings, and even strength to recover.

To the degree that the darkest nights in Montana are captured in December and then ever slightly opened up again with light dawning earlier, I sense this is the experience of Christmas and Epiphany for us this year. We have embraced wonder as much as possible. And then some rest, hopefully, in the later days of 2020. And now, we're waking up to wonder in the new year, the new possibilities, the new discoveries and ah-ha moments. Wonder will call us forth into care for each other, look toward lasting solutions, and appreciate the subtle miracles before us.



Whether you are still delighting in the holiday wonders, resting in wonder as you restore strength in the assurance of the God of Wonder's presence, or aspiring through wonder for a new season, may your mingled surprise and admiration renew your spirit. May this wonder be a companion in the next year as we all grieve, heal, and lift our heads again. May this wonder even compel you to follow the bright stars in your life to find Love- a promise born and for us again this year.

Walking with Wonder,

Pastor Sarah



## Worship Service Updates

### Worship in January

As your pastor, I can't wait to lay eyes on each of you again and share a masked smile! However, I also know that post-holidays and January will be another crucial month for us to be diligent in care for each other and the community. We will worship via live-stream through January and pray for an alternative in the near future.

**Live-Stream on YouTube:** look for Stevensville United Methodist Church or on Facebook@SteviUMC . Your comments and prayer requests are welcome during the service.

Worship with readings in Glad Tider. Watch service later on YouTube.

Fellowship Hour at 11:30 each Sunday via Zoom.

<https://us02web.zoom.us/j/88369368077> Meeting ID: 883 6936 8077

Phone: 1-346-248-7799

I invite you to set apart time for God with prayer, study scripture, reflection, singing as loudly as you can, knowing that the Holy Spirit abides with you closely and gracefully.

### What to expect on Sundays:

- **Live Streaming Worship at 10:30** on YouTube Channel & Facebook.
  - o Announcements will begin at 10:15 and service will start at 10:30.
  - o YouTube: Search for "Stevensville United Methodist Church." Look for the video that says "Live" in the bottom right corner.
  - o Facebook: Search for "@SteviUmc." Scroll till you see the service.
  - o Services are recorded and available on YouTube by noon on Sunday.
- **Morning Study- 9:00- 10:00** with Disciplines Book.
  - o Join on Zoom: Go to zoom and join meeting with Meeting ID: 871 8901 3115 or use link <https://us02web.zoom.us/j/87189013115>
  - o No book necessary. Study based on the week's lectionary.
- **Fellowship & Communion at 11:30**
  - o Join Zoom: Go to zoom and join meeting with Meeting ID: 883 6936 8077
  - o Or use link: <https://us02web.zoom.us/j/88369368077>
  - o Fellowship: Each Sunday to check in and share a story.
  - o Communion: 1<sup>st</sup> Sunday. Bring your own elements (something to eat & drink).
- **Updates via Friday & Sunday Emails or Computer Assistance**
  - o If you would like to receive the announcements and updates via email, please contact Beth in the office.

The Wednesday morning Bible Study continues to meet in person once a week for fellowship, prayer, study and discussion. This past year we have immersed ourselves in a book of Lenten study, "The Wind, The Fountain and The Fire". A study of 1 John, 2 John and 3 John as well as the Old Testament prophet, Habakkuk. We read Richard Rohr's book, "Embracing an Alternative Orthodoxy", and we finished the year with the season's meditations from the Upper Room magazine. Richard Rohr's book frequently references the letters of Paul, and this led to our group deciding to study Paul's New Testament letters with a new understanding of his insight into the life of Jesus of Nazareth, and the purpose of Jesus the Christ. The group meets each Wednesday morning from 10:00 to 11 or so, and everyone is welcome. We invite you to join us as we explore our faith journey together.



## January 2021 Worship

### God is Holding Your Life

**“The works of God’s hands are faithful and just.” - Psalm 111**

**Life is a series of exclamations from “O No!” to “Help!” to “Oh Yeah!” We can swing between disappointment, helplessness, and gratitude on a daily basis. There are also seasons of our lives when we feel inundated with more of one than the others. As we enter the new year, we had hoped we would be past the “O No!” of the last several months. Instead we find ourselves with ongoing prayers for “Help!” The Book of Psalms knows all about this. Written over a span of time from exile and isolation to the rebuilding of the community, the poetry of the Psalms will accompany us in this series, reminding us that through it all, we can trust and even give our thankful “Oh Yeah!” because God is, indeed, holding our lives.**

**January 3: “These Lives are Precious”**

“God delivers the needy when they call.”

- Psalm 72

We do not live in a land ruled by Kings, as the hearers of our first Psalm of this series did. Nevertheless, the petitions of the psalmist for

justice, deliverance, defense of the poor and oppressed, and peace for all peoples is an undergirding theme of our faith. We are reminded that a just society is one that proclaims “these lives are precious” and worthy of protection. God, indeed, is holding our lives. Let this be our “epiphany” in this new year.

**January 10: “Awe and Wonder”**

“My God gives strength to the people and blesses the people with peace.” - Psalm 29

Strength and peace is the prayer of the Psalm this week. The Psalmist says “let me count the ways” that we can know the strength of the Holy One. With awe and wonder we behold the presence of God in all the elements of creation—water, fire, air, earth. And it is this glory that assures us that God, indeed, is holding our lives.





January 17: **“Where Can I Go?”**  
 “You have searched me and know me.”  
 - Psalm 139

This week’s Psalm text brings home this message: we are in an intimate relationship with God. There is nowhere we go that God is not present—no state of our being that results in our being abandoned. God has knit us together, has

January 24: **“In God Alone”**  
 “God alone is my rock and salvation... I shall not be shaken.” - Psalm 62

“My one and only!” So many songs have utilized this phrase to express devoted love. This week we see that this tradition goes back all the way to the poets of the psalm tradition. This is a love psalm of trust in the Holy One and Only who is the rock and refuge in the midst of life that sometimes feels as fleeting as breath. We put our trust in the One who, indeed, is holding our lives. [www.worshipdesignstudio.com/life](http://www.worshipdesignstudio.com/life)

January 31: **“Whole Heart Hallelujah”**  
 “The works of God’s hands are faithful and just.”  
 - Psalm 111

One mode of poetry in the Psalms is all-out praise and thanksgiving, such as the one for today. We also find praise even in Psalms of lament and complaint because “God is good all the time and all the time God is good!” Life is not always good, but when we engage in gratitude, we remember the evidence of God at work in our lives and we remember that indeed, God is holding our lives, even now.

**As a spiritual practice this month,  
 consider saying/writing a “collect” prayer for each week**

**This ancient prayer form has five parts:**

- 1) name for God;
- 2) why we call God by this name;
- 3) a petition asking God for something;
- 4) why we are asking for this...  
 “so that...”;
- 5) a sentence of praise.

**For example, we will pray this  
 together on January 3.**

Leader: Holy and Just God,  
 You have shown us what is right and good.  
 Open us this day to a vision of the world made all-right  
 so that we might follow your ways and know the peace of your reign  
 on earth as it is in heaven. People: We praise you for your steadfast presence,  
 holding our lives together in love. Amen.  
 Resources for this worship series come from Marcia McFee & Worship Design Studio.



## Looking Back on Advent & Christmas 2020

The traditions we hold on to in throughout the year can give us hope, joy, and a sense of normalcy. They became traditions precisely because they allowed us to find meaning in a unique way for a unique time. I pray that the rituals and traditions that you carried forth throughout the Advent and Christmas season, perhaps in a special 2020 format, infused your time and efforts with new life and meaning. Even we as a congregation did this, enjoying the awe of change in tradition.

Outreach Committee shared Advent bags with each participant of the church and offered a special thank you and holiday greeting to businesses of Stevi.

The Children’s Christmas Pageant kept us laughing as we watched the story of Christmas unfold over a zoom call in our families’ homes. Such great acting for camera! (Find a recording on the Stevensville UMC YouTube Channel.)



Blue Christmas Outside convened 16 of people as we lit candles and share a liturgy of loss for everything: life, livelihood and liveliness. (Read the litany on the website.)

Hanging of the Greens included some treasures from former years of the choir and chimes as well as beautiful pieces shared live with a small ensemble of Donna Lewis, Gretchen Spiess, Paul & Julie Ludington, and Mac Merchant.

Christmas Eve services included mini campfires, singing in the dark night sky and light candles (and head lamps) together. We even took the evening’s festivities to the Living Center with caroling and reading the Gospel story outside for the residents.



Thank you all who extended your efforts to make this season meaningful. Thank you all for the grace to receive these gifts as they were. Thank you to Christ for giving us a reason to live into our traditions- new and classic.



### January Birthdays

- 1/3 Arlene Halfhide
- 1/3 Debbie Severson
- 1/4 Ben Longbottom
- 1/4 Dan Lockman
- 1/6 Cyrus Anderson
- 1/14 Cameron Ruff
- 1/18 Anne Harn

- 1/22 Bob Edgar
- 1/26 Don Nelson
- 1/27 Helen Lowry

### Happy Anniversary

- 1/18 Donna and Ron Lewis
- 1/24 Gail & Lynn Moshier



## Building Update

An energetic crew that included Bob Edgar, Ben Longbottom, Jona, Sara and Luke Malo, Paul Ludington and John Fisher started filling the cargo storage container Wednesday of this week. Work will continue at 10:00 Saturday morning with a goal of Dec. 31 to have the fellowship hall ready for demo. Waste Less Works owner, Martin Farney along with Lou Ralls from Carl Construction did a walk through of the building this week and will be developing a plan to deconstruct and reuse the salvageable building materials. Martin feels he will be able to start a “soft” deconstruct in Jan. and have the site ready to start construction in early Feb.



## Thank Offering Totals as of 12/21/20



Loaves and Fishes Income	123.50
Pantry Partners Donations	350.00
Heart Butte/ Blackfeet Parish, Advance #910092	560.00
SAFE	280.00
Clothes Closet Donations	110.00
Genesis House Donations	105.00
Habitat for Humanity	155.00
UMCOR Gen 999895; US DSTR 901670; Intl DSTR	995.00
Flathead lake Camp Donations	545.00
Salish College Scholarship Donations	355.00
Sharing Tree, 1st Baptist	100.00
Church Refurbish MT-Donations	915.97
<b>TOTAL</b>	<b>4705.97</b>

**In honor of our dear one Sue, please submit your fondest or funny memory of Sue Cunningham via [steviumc@gmail.com](mailto:steviumc@gmail.com) by Feb. 15. The goal is to combine as a document for the February Glad Tider.**



## Warms My Heart

We want to hear from YOU, Anyone/ Everyone! Warms My Heart is a new section for the Glad Tider. On a first come first print basis we are collecting YOUR stories. What has melted you, made you feel good, showed you God is in everyone? Please consider reporting when you have noticed the Love of God . We will show the stories here and begin creating a legacy collection.. The stories can be 2 or 3 sentences or a full page. You can use names or not. Have fun with this, Warm My Heart!

Beth Harper-Schurman

If you have questions please email me at the office: [steviumc@gmail.com](mailto:steviumc@gmail.com)



Everyone is sitting in the living room waiting for the teenager to get home. I remember these dinner times when my own children were teens. We decide to go ahead and start into the kitchen for dinner. A little nervous at first, wonder why he is late? As we set down to eat in comes the grandson smiling from ear to ear. Everyone relaxes and the dinner talk is about his amazing day. "I got a \$25.00 gift card to downtown Missoula for my birthday!" "Went to Rockin' Rudy's, bought a boomerang, went to the park, my friends dog ate my boomerang, crazy dog." By the end of dinner we were all laughing.

Back in the living room he walks in and hands Poppy a brand new cane and says Merry Christmas Poppy. What a sweet surprise. Poppy was glowing with love for his great grandson. 20 minutes later he drops a black bag on my husbands lap and says Merry Christmas grandpa. My husband gives me a questioning look and places it under the tree for Christmas day. We know he doesn't have any money to be purchasing things for others right now.

I went out to my car to grab something and on my seat is a beautiful old jewelry box. My grandson asks, "Do you like it?" and I about jump over the car. "Do I like it? It is beautiful, thank you." Then I ask, " How did you come by these thoughtful things?" My grandson says, "My Birthday Gift Card," grinning. My heart is warmed because of his generous nature. The time it took to find these special items from his heart to ours and that he used his birthday money to purchase these items is a testament that will change us forever. This Christmas is different because of him, we have a decorated tree at Poppy's house-the first in 14 years.

## January Town Hall

Join Pastor Sarah for a town hall gathering on Sunday, January 17 at 11:30am after the live-stream service at 10:30.

The conversation is to bring any questions or comments for the good of the church: worship, administration, programming, or facilities. The Unified Board will have a retreat on Sat. Jan. 16 so updates from and queries for that team will be welcome. We'll talk building project updates, too.

Zoom Online: <https://us02web.zoom.us/j/85938881647> or Meeting ID: 859 3888 1647

Phone: 1-669-900-9128 with Meeting ID 859 3888 1647

## Ways to Contact Us

Office phone: 406-777-5443

Office email: [steviumc@gmail.com](mailto:steviumc@gmail.com)

Pastor Sarah's email: [revsarahmerchant@gmail.com](mailto:revsarahmerchant@gmail.com)

Church website: [steviumc.org](http://steviumc.org)

Office hours: Tues. through Fri. 9:00 A.M. to 2:00 P.M.



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Bulk-rate mail is not forwarded.  
If your address changes, if we have it wrong,  
or if you no longer want to receive this newsletter,  
please let us know.

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# The Glad Tider

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