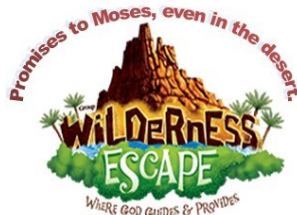




# THE GLAD TIDER

Stevensville United Methodist Church

June 2021



## VACATION BIBLE SCHOOL~ Free

**July 26-29,  
9 AM to 11:30 AM**

### REGISTRATION IS OPEN

406-777-5443  
steviumc@gmail.com

### SNACKS FOR STUDENTS

Will be provided each day

### BBQ LUNCH ON THURSDAY

Families Welcome

### ACTIVITIES

Singing      Crafts: Tie-Dye  
Games      Fun

## Come one, Come All

Neighbors near & far are welcome at all events.

**Join us for Worship  
9:00 AM ~ Outdoors  
10:30 AM ~ Indoors**

**August 15:** Blessing of the Animals: bring your pets for a treat.

**August 29:** Blessing of the Backpacks: Students & school staff bring backpacks for a special prayer & message of encouragement.

**Stevensville United  
Methodist Church**

216 College St.

Stevensville, MT 59870

[www.steviumc.org](http://www.steviumc.org)

**Sapphire Early  
Learning Center  
To Open in Late August!**

## More Summer Fun in Stevensville!

### All Free!

**Sapphire Early Learning  
Center and Stevi United  
Methodist Church at the  
Stevensville Farmer's Market**  
June 26th, July 24th, and Aug 21st  
Table Top Crafts to  
Make and Take

### Summer Concert Series 7PM to 8PM

Free will Offering.  
Bring lawn chairs and personal  
snacks for June and July  
performances outdoors.  
**June 11: Violin through the ages**  
**July 9: A Grand Night for Singing**  
**Aug. 13: The Joys of Chamber  
Music** with special  
performance from UM  
Music School Faculty

**Ice Cream Social For ALL ages**  
**August 22nd @ 11:30 AM**

## Prayerful Prep Leads to Fruitful Future

Having just finished Kindergarten Roundup with my eldest child, I experienced the future I had imagined at my very fingertips. How could she be so old, mature, poised, and cautiously excited? Didn't she just learn to walk or get her first tooth? The future is now!

Such have been my reflections about the church, here at SteviUMC and the Church of Christ as a whole. When I came just two years ago, the future of this local church was uncertain. Yes, people definitely wanted to keep worshipping, extending their faith in service and action, and providing unique gifts to each other and the community. But the aging facilities and the denominational discord both asserted a pressure, even anxiety, about such a future. Would a future in this church be possible and with who?

When considering the big C Church, many wonder what is the future of Christianity. As United Methodists this may look like a different structure and connection. As worshippers, especially after the pandemic, this may look like multiple congregations gathering simultaneously online and in-person. As community servants, this may look more like going to the need rather than waiting for people to come to a building or program.

I appreciate Diana Butler Bass's thoughts in her essay entitled "The Future of Faith as the Way to Salvation." "The question," she writes, "is an invitation to spiritual creativity. To imagine the future of faith, to awake to what we do not know, and to discover the power of simple actions." We can ask important questions like *what are we hearing?* We can be willing to discover what we don't yet know or understand. We can embrace expansive visions with one action at a time. The future is where we are.

Now, lest you say, *this is beyond my pay grade or skill set*, let me serve as a mirror to show how the people of SteviUMC are living into this spiritual creativity through a new building and ministry of Sapphire Early Learning Center.



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*Continued from page 1*

**What are we hearing?** We heard the need for child care in the area. We heard a desire to help this church survive for another 100 years. We heard a hope to preserve the historic building. We heard trepidation and a willingness to engage.

**What we do not know.** We learned we did not know all the ways we have to die to ourselves, shift as we embrace more inclusivity, unpack old practices that may or may not serve us. However, as we came to acknowledge these truths, the “don’t know” questions evolved. We went from “How are we going to pay for a new roof?,” a question filled with anxiety to “What are we going to do under a new roof?,” a question filled with spiritual curiosity and creativity.

**What vision and simple actions can do.** We began by getting clear about what we want and who we are. We then considered options to live out our values. And small step after small step, we are creating something expansive and supportive for SteviUMC and the larger community.

Key in all these big questions and particular examples is the fact that the future will be informed by and even includes elements of the present and past. Therefore, when we invest our time and resources into these expansive visions, we’re also honoring who we have always been: generous, community-oriented, service-minded, and grounded in hope.

This summer in August we will begin more in depth conversations about our shared future and vision together at SteviUMC and within the Bitterroot Valley. We will meet in home gatherings to ask the questions, name what we don’t know, and live into small actions for the expansive vision. Specifically, we will consider what generosity in all ways will look like, not only to fund a new building, but most especially to continue in vital ministry.

If you are ready to give a financial donation to support the new building and ministry, those gifts would be humbly received and put to good use now. However, a whole church and larger community fundraising effort will begin in earnest with the August meetings and worship series in September. Today, we simply begin by recognizing how to approach the future with the right attitude, prayer, and consistent action and vision now.





## June 2021 Worship

### Lift the Curtain:

### Theology in Theatre



Jesus used stories, parables so often to instill a lesson, make clear what seemed complex, and constructively critique the status quo that hurt, oppressed, and trapped people and creation. Such stories stick so it comes with no surprise that we continue to tell stories, even perform and sing them, in order to convey a message of truth. Musical Theatre has offered a transporting, transformative medium to reach us at our core about the human condition and even the wisdom of God. Forgiveness, belonging, hope, community, struggling against overwhelming powers, and claiming one's identity all move across the stage in ways that we, too, become the actors even as the Holy Spirit opens our hearts to experience the grace and truth anew.

This month we'll explore *Theology in Theatre* through the musicals of *Godspell*, *Waitress*, *Les Misérables*, and *Company* by unpacking the rich themes in sermon and scripture and sealing our memories with the songs that reach deep within. Thank you to our musicians, Mac Merchant, Arielle Nachtigal, and Leasi Mana, for bringing the stories to life. May we hear the message of God as we *raise the curtain*.

#### June 6: *Godspell*: Following Jesus to Create a “Beautiful City”

We are Easter people, set free to live like Jesus. Now, we are also Pentecost people, empowered to live like Jesus in and through community. Pentecost is a season that begins 50 days after Easter and lasts until Advent. Such a huge season invites us to practice this over and over. *Godspell* reminds us of these two commitments: walking daily with Jesus and building up the kin-dom of heaven, the church through the grace, wisdom, and empowerment of the Holy Spirit. These actions can take on so many iterations, but in the end, they work together for what is good and pure and holy for all.

**Scripture:** John 13:1-17, Matthew 28:16-20, Philippians 4:8-9

**Prayer:** Creator God, thank you for our life, purpose, and daily bread. Savior Jesus, thank you for showing us the way to love in practical and transformational ways. Holy Spirit, thank you for the wisdom and power to share the message of love. Holy Trinity, give us the courage and understanding to embrace these gifts day by day for the delight and oneness with you. Amen.

#### June 13: *Waitress*: In the Sight of God, “You Matter to Me”

The story known as the “Adulterous Women” from the Gospel of John unpacks an intense moment while leaving some holes to be examined, showing us that our lives and relationships hold such complexity. Woven throughout this story are tricks and treachery as much as quiet reflection, public shame, and unexpected grace. Could it be that what presented on the outside wasn't what concerned Jesus as much as what was on the inside? *Waitress* parallels this story by journeying with a woman surprised by pregnancy and longing to be known in a way that matters deeply. In both stories, the love of God wraps around the women in ways the law could never bend.

**Scripture:** John 8:1-11

**Prayer:** Gracious God, we take a moment to lean into your arms. We come with assurance. We come with trepidation. We come vulnerable, wanting to be known in ways that matter, that see our true selves. And still we know there are choices and thoughts that can distract us or tell lies. Thank you for wrapping us in grace and love. Help us believe we are worthy to be called your beloved even while we're called to be who you created us to be. Amen.







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## June 20: Les Misérables: Forgive Ourselves and Others

Jean Valjean, the main character of Victor Hugo's book *Les Misérables*, encounters the complexity of forgiveness at every angle. When he most needs it, forgiveness is denied, trapping him in prison and a fugitive lifestyle. When he least expects it, when he feels least deserving, forgiveness is granted in abundance. Within every external encounter of forgiveness, he grapples with forgiving himself. What does freedom through forgiveness actually look like? Can it be for anyone, even ourselves? How does forgiveness bless the next generation? Even while the journey with forgiveness is lifelong, Jesus calls us to lean into the complexity with the heart of God, the heart of a father for a lost son.



**Scripture:** Psalm 103: 10-11, Luke 15:11-24

**Prayer:** Merciful God, Suffering Servant, and Graceful Spirit, forgive me that I might forgive myself. Forgive me that I might forgive other. Humble me to understand more fully the gift and grace of forgiveness. Help me in my hard-heartedness. Help me in my doubt that forgiveness is worth it. Help me experience a peace when I can let go. May I know your compassion anew this day. Amen.

## June 27: Company: "Being Alive" through Fidelity of Prayer and Action

Fidelity of prayer sounds so simple, so basic, but it is actually the way of holiness and wholeness with the world and God. Community and purpose mature from this place that leads to holy action. The connection in prayer not only imbues a person with spirit and nourishment, but also it allows one to recognize life and the fullness therein despite complexities, hardships, and uncertainty. We are not alone. And full life is not about getting it right or perfect. It's about engaging, and getting into the boat. Prayer leads us to our feet, which in turn will call us back to our knees in prayer. Throughout it all life flourishes.



**Scripture:** Ephesians 6:18, Matthew 14:22-36, Luke 8:22-25

**Prayer:** Thank you, Holy One, for this incredible and crucial way to be one with you and the world. However I pray, through silence, song, lament, gaze, or spoken word, may we gain even the slightest understanding and appreciation for the mystery and grace that permeates my heart. Help me be faithful to prayer. Give me courage in living from that prayer. And in the in-between, may you fill the gaps I don't quite grasp with love and patience. Amen.



## Pastor's Note

### Conferences as a Conduit of Grace

Holy Conferencing is a celebrated activity for United Methodists even if in name it sounds like a contradiction. Can a conference be holy? Can you be holy at a conference? This reality lies within the DNA of Methodist theology, as John Wesley, the founder of the denomination, believed that conferencing was a means of grace. "Along with searching the Scriptures, fasting, prayer and Communion, Wesley taught that Christian conference is a practice that helps people experience God's grace," reflects Rev. Steve Manskar of the Global Board of Discipleship.

For early Methodists, gathering together to rely on Christian community encouraged them to develop their spiritual faith, serve and follow Jesus, and uplift one another. This is just one "method" of the *Methodist*.

While Wesley saw individuals formed as a disciple in part by being a part of a large community, he also encouraged deeper formation to happen in small groups, class meetings, and doing consistent projects together so people found support for daily practices of life.

These days, Holy Conferencing can occur in official capacities during Annual Conference, a gathering of clergy and lay people of the Mountain Sky Conference, which includes all of Montana, Wyoming, Colorado, Utah, and Salmon, ID, and General Conference, the worldwide gathering of United Methodists. These events have been thrown off the regularly scheduled times due to the pandemic, but rest assured, we will still engage. Annual Conference is Oct. 21-24 in Ogden, UT and/or online. ***SUMC needs a lay representative for this event where we discuss and vote on the way ministry happens specifically in our region.***



General Conference is rescheduled for Aug. 29-Sept. 6, 2022 in Minneapolis where six representatives from our conference will participate with hundreds from around the globe, hopefully to find grace in resolutions of divisive issues and carry on the work of Methodists & Christians everywhere.

Holy Conferencing also happens at the local church.

A year ago this month, we engaged in Holy Conferencing to discuss, pray about, and vote on the future expression of ministry at SteviUMC. During that June 6 meeting, the Building Team proposed a new building design and nonprofit ministry enterprise called Sapphire Early Learning Center (SELC). We discussed the current reality of the church's facilities and finances. We looked to the future in line with God's mission. That day, 93 percent of the 43 attendees voted enthusiastically to leap into this new building and ministry. Today, the skeleton, including beautifully humongous trusses, joins the historic building while the new ministry of SELC has already enrolled 15 students.

That conference filled many with a grace of assurance even in a dream. It empowered people to practice their faith and serve God. It allowed people to engage in careful, prayerful, and respectful conversation. Beyond that conference, I pray that people continue to be filled with grace and supported in decisions, fearless conversations, and ongoing faith formation. Whether it is a Town Hall meeting, a regularly scheduled charge conference, or a special conference of vision and purpose, may we continue to embrace our identity and responsibility as Methodists, "going on to perfection," together.





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## Unified Board and Town Hall

We continue to consider how to prioritize delayed maintenance, painting the historic building, replacing the roof, and the emergency exit stairs in lite of cash flow . We will continue to be good stewards. Be in prayer for these items and be in gracious awe of all that has come thus far.







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## Mark Your Calendars

### Montana District Laity Learnings

Join the Congregational Resource Ministers (CRMs) the first Tuesday of every month at 7pm for a focused conversation. Each month will focus on an administrative or discipleship learning, which contributes to the work of creating beloved community and developing church vitality.

**Zoom ID: 97852748299. Password: 239086.** If you need help connecting with zoom, please contact Eric Strader, [estrader@mtnskyumc.org](mailto:estrader@mtnskyumc.org)

**June 1st- Staff Parish Committee Personnel. The work of human resources**

**July 6th- Growing in Racial Hospitality: Post Covid welcoming people into community**

### Join us for a Summer Concert Series in Stevensville of LIVE professional performances.

**June 11:** Violin through the Ages (Outdoors), **July 9:** A Grand Night for Singing (Outdoors), and **August 13:** The Joys of Chamber Music with a special performance from UM Music School Faculty (Indoors). Open to everyone, bring your family and friends, and for the outdoor venues, a lawn chair and your snacks. Music begins at 7:00 PM at The United Methodist Church, 216 College Street, Stevensville. The events are free. Any goodwill donations will support the Sapphire Early Learning Center opening in the fall.

### Stevensville United Methodist Church in June

**June 13th, 12PM to 2PM: Unified Board~Zoom Meeting ID: 84052002327**

**June 20th, 12PM: Town Hall~in person and on Zoom Meeting -ID: 89880390275**

### Disciplines Sunday Study

Disciplines: a Zoom Study Experience for all. A lectionary based study of scripture. Sundays at 9am. Join via Zoom link or with Meeting ID: 833 5373 5385 Passcode: 887867



### Wednesday Bible Study Hosted by Lenny & Karen Johnson at 10am.

For more information, please call the office, 406-777-5443

## UMW MAY 2021 UPDATE

Stevensville United Methodist Women sponsor fundraisers to raise money for a multitude of charities that work with women, children, social justice and climate issues.

Rummage Sale will **not** be held this year due to construction but donations to UMW would be appreciated so we can continue to support charities. If you would have spent money at the Rummage Sale, please send your donation to Stevensville UMC with a note that the money is for UMW so we can continue in these support efforts. Thank you in advance.

### UMW Meetings

July 17<sup>th</sup>: Annual picnic with short business meeting. Location and details will be advertised in the UMC weekly announcements.

Peggy McCarthy, UMW President

## 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.



## Ways to Connect:

**In Person Worship:** 9:00 AM Outside (weather permitting) & 10:30 AM Inside.

**Live Streaming Worship at 10:30** on YouTube Channel & Facebook.

- 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.

## FREE Summer Concert Series

Join us for a Summer Concert Series in Stevensville of LIVE professional performances: June 11, July 9, and August 13 at 7:00 PM. To Benefit Sapphire Early Learning Center a Goodwill Donation would be much appreciated.

## Free Vacation Bible School

**Stevensville United Methodist Church**

**July 26th through 29th**

**9:00 AM to 11:30 AM**

~ CHANGES OF ADDRESS ~  
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.

ELECTRONIC SERVICE REQUESTED

Stevensville United Methodist Church  
216 College  
Stevensville MT 59870

The Glad Tider

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