



THE GLAD TIDER

Stevensville United Methodist Church

January 2022

Just about a year ago a once gorgeous and mighty pine fell over in the church's front yard. WOW! What a sight! We had some fun thinking about ways to get together, and so we had a bonfire with s'mores. I mean, there was plenty of wood to burn! But of course, we only used a few branches for the toasty gathering and the rest found a home at a sawmill. All that seemed to remain was the stump.

Being part of an extended front yard for my kids, since the parsonage is across the street, we run around and over this stump a lot. We even pause at times to see what has changed, look for bugs, and stand "tall." As I paused the other day, I saw the remnants of what was. The stump seemed like a big wound with scars running the length of the roots still buried beneath the grass. This looks like it hurt and reminds me of what was.



Then, I turned to walk toward the front door at the church and saw the picnic table. This picnic table is the cousin of another one being made *from* the tree that fell. It's not dead or lost or useless; the tree will be in our midst still in a very life-giving, inviting, hospitable way.

As we come into a new year, I recognize the many beautiful things that have been altered, reshaped, felled to the roots. 2021 was a year when loved ones and communities still suffered greatly under the scourge of the pandemic. The building facilities of SUMC changed dramatically, particularly with the demolition of the 1990 Fellowship Hall. Beloved events or gatherings didn't happen or were simplified.

Yet, from these realities also came rebirth and hope for those with eyes to see. We discovered new priorities and ways to connect with the people, including methods of being a church for each other in all circumstances. An expanded building transformed into a church and community engagement center. New rituals of outdoor worship services, summer concerts, and volunteer opportunities holding babies developed alongside a renewed involvement in choir, children's Sunday school, and worship as well as hope and ideas for what has yet to take form.

Jesus asked a man, sitting by the pool of Bethesda, who was crippled for 38 years, "Do you want to be well?" Depending on where we stand and look at the stump or the picnic table, we may respond differently.



I remember when I was whole and well. OR I am nothing much, not anything that can be enough. OR I am well, just in a different and unexpected way.

For followers of Jesus, we are not judged by our response. We are simply invited into life- the all of life with worn-out, stumpy parts, scars, and inherent beauty. And to be well is to be seeking after God's heart of wholeness (not unflawed perfection) and noneness rather than what was or will be, especially in terms of progress. In saying *YES* to that, *I will be well*, you see the pine tree and maybe even your unpolished neighbor, work-in-progress community, and grace-poured-over self for all that it was and is and will be.

The Christ Mystery at hand...in our front yard.

I invite you to take a moment to look at the stump or a place in your world that has changed and "see." How is Christ living, dying and transforming in this space?

Into the new year, I faithfully go, with you,

Pastor Sarah



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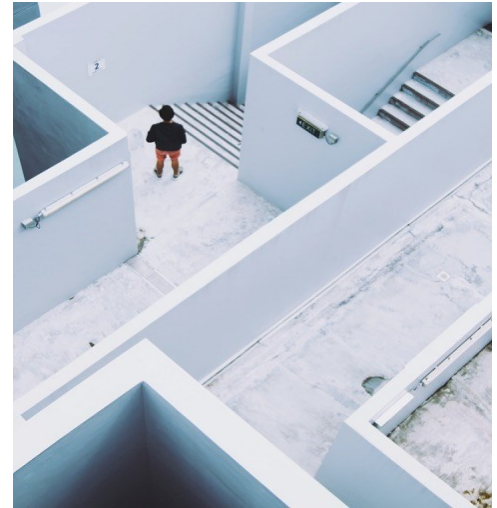
Town Hall: January 23rd at 11:45 in the Fellowship Hall

Please mark your calendars. Your input is critical.

January's topic: Is the Church an Escape Room?

Escape rooms can be fun games with clues about next steps in order to solve a puzzle and leave the room, but they can also be discouraging. The Church is to be transparent and we should know where the door is! We'll do a literal tour through this townhall to reorient ourselves to the spaces and their uses.

(This is a collective effort - not top down decision making)



We'll also take a tour through goals, organizational roles, and leaders for the first half of 2022 to reduce confusion and increase contentment. We'll engage in conversation to discover ways to live faithfully into our mission at SUMC.

SUMC Mission

As disciples of Christ, we offer a path to hope, inclusion and purpose for a community in need of healing care, community engagement, faith formation and compassionate love.

What does it mean to be a church that offers healing to creation or those suffering care-giver burnout? What could community engagement look like through the lens of mental health? How does faith formation go hand in hand with service or leadership? What types of fellowship can engender hope?



January 2022 Book Club -TIME CHANGE

We will meet in the Fellowship Hall at the United Methodist Church in Stevensville on January 12th at 3:00PM.

We welcome new (and old) members. We have great discussions on a variety of topics and genres.

Contact Mary Nelson (dmnelson02@msn.com or 406-529-4840) for more information. **Happy Reading!!**

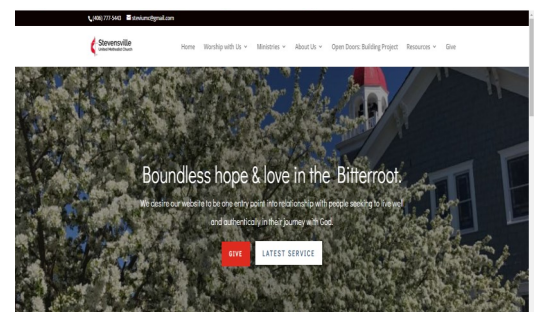
January 2022 Liturgists

1/2 Janice Belcher
1/9 Ed Sperry
1/16 Mary Costello
1/23 Bev Schneider
1/30 Lenny Johnson

Checking the SUMC Calendar online:

Go to the Website:

www.steviumc.org
Click on Calendar





January 2022 Worship

Epiphany is known as an “ah-ha moment,” but lightning or burning bushes are not required. The subtle “flashes of eternity” are enough to make us connect to God and holiness. Throughout January and February, worship will guide us through the Lord’s Prayer as Jesus taught in the Sermon on the Mount. This familiar prayer, examined from the original language of Aramaic, can open us to a depth of connection with God, each other, and ourselves as we reflect on this full body, mind and soul prayer.

January 2: Covenant Renewal Service

The Covenant Renewal service began with John Wesley, the founder of the Methodist movement. He realized the importance and value to recommitting to our covenant and connection with God especially in the New Year. Many of us make goals or recommitments to something-eating well, exercise, study, getting good sleep, enjoying each moment for what it is. For John, he believed all Christians needed to reflect on their relationship with God through Jesus Christ and the Holy Spirit and respond again to that which they have been called. Such a relationship is one of boldness, courage, humility, honesty, and deep love. May we be renewed through prayer, scripture, confession, song, and a common voice to live as a community into this covenant with God again this year.

Scripture: 2 Kings 23:1-3

Prayer: My God, I am yours alone. May my commitment in word, deed, thought and aspiration be inspired and empowered by your love and grace. Amen.

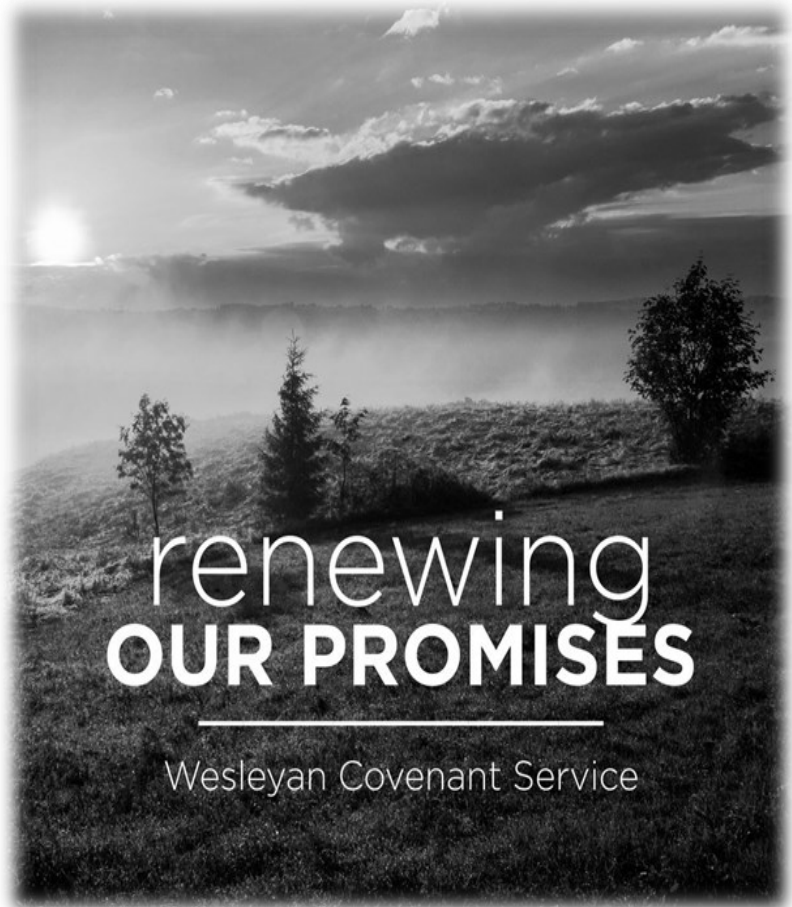
January 9: The Lord’s Prayer: *O Birther!*

Father-Mother of the Cosmos

The opening line of Jesus’ prayer to all is like opening a curtain to infinity! It’s enormous, radiant, indescribable, and still so intimate, personal, and individually as much as collectively touching tenderly. The Aramaic guidance to understanding this line leads us to a fuller picture of the Trinity, a recognition of God’s desire for all the universe to know, and an appreciation of our beloved life within the whole, sustained by God. A deep breath of *Abwoon* can be the only way to start into this immense prayer.

Scripture: Matthew 6:9-13 (Kings James Version)

Prayer: O Thou! Breathing-Life of All, we are ever grateful that you sustain us by your very source and energy of breath, love, grace, and creativity. May our prayers- whether alone, in nature, or at work- allow our whole selves (body, mind, and spirit) to embrace and revel in you with awe even as we do this with every creation. May our breaths match the breaths of the trees, which sing your praise. Amen.





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January 16: The Lord's Prayer: *Focus Your Light Within Us- Make it Useful*

Saying God's name elicits a connection and unity, and designating it hallowed sets it apart as holy and for a purpose. Thankfully, this act of blessing/naming something holy not only conveys that truth upon it, but transforms us to fully embrace that actuality within us. We make space in our heart just as we make space in the world for the Holy. The result comes in practical expressions of healing through the tangible and intangible: the cold compress and compassion. Being set apart for purpose allows even many, the Beloved Community, to expand and be useful. How will we make space within while drawing the circle wide?

Scripture: Matthew 6:9-13 (Living Bible), Matthew 6:1-8, Romans 12:9-18

Prayer: Holy One, even as we deem that set apart truth upon you, we hear you calling us holy: made for a purpose as we become the vessels that can shine your light. In our own spheres of influence, teach us how to live out this prayer in direct practice with a community that includes others, clears out clutter that distracts or harms, and shows compassion. Amen.



January 23: The Lord's Prayer: *Create Your Reign of Unity Now*

Fairy tales and movies fill our imaginations with kingdoms, all their dazzle and authority. Jesus invites us to a much bigger, holistic image in the 3rd line of the Lord's Prayer. *Thy Kingdom Come* is really an invitation to enter a workshop of envisioning and preparing for new creation (life, transformed hearts, new perspectives) with the "rulership" of will/desire inherent in each of us that says, "I can." Such an energy, such a compelling force can't help but create what is aligned with God's great imagination and desires. How are we "artists" in our daily lives that can't *NOT* make and how is that urge connected to God's goal? Here we pray a bold prayer with new imagination.

Scripture: Matthew 6:9-13 (New International Version), Psalm 19, Col. 3:23-24

Prayer: WOW! God, you have made us marvelously and mysteriously in your image and creativity. Give us the insight to understand and capture that "I can" energy in unity with who you are and what you desire. May we work, create, nourish, even imagine the new in such a way that delights you. Amen.

January 30: The Lord's Prayer: *Your One Desire Acts in Us*

"In this fourth and central line of the prayer, heaven meets earth in acts of compassion," notes Neil Douglas-Klotz. Through the lines leading to this part, we have prepared a space, attitude and unity with God in such a way that the outflow is a given! The harmonious cooperation with God and humanity becomes a natural rhythm. Consistent like a heart beat, invigorating as breath: the action of being in the flow. Consider your natural rhythms- the ones you've practiced and the ones that are automatic. How are they lived out in matching God's rhythms, God's desires, God's whispers?



Scripture: Matthew 6:9-13 (New Revised Standard Version), Matthew 25:34-40

Prayer: Heaven and Earth- they can seem so distant from one another, O God. And sometimes they seem to crash into each other, better still, splash into each other, creating an impact centrally but also rippling out to touch beyond. God, we pray that in us, there can be such a splash so that the ripples- lived out through our actions, compassion, and words- mark others with your message of love. Amen.



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SUMC Winter 2022 Retreat at Flathead Camp

Feb. 11-13, 2022

As promised in last months Glad Tider, here's the scoop on the February church wide retreat. Beyond gathering and having fun in a relaxing atmosphere, we don't have any agenda, program, or boxes to check. Everyone is invited and welcome to participate in the entire weekend...or just a portion of the time, depending on your schedule. We will have a short worship time on Sunday morning.

Some particulars:

- ◆ Check in at 12PM Friday afternoon and Checkout at 12PM Sunday afternoon, come for some or all.
- ◆ Cabins reserved are Plains and Hi Line. These are comfortable four-season cabins. Sleeping capacity 30-40 in 4 large sleeping areas and 2 smaller bedrooms. (Imagine Bunk Beds!)
 - Plains has 2 bathrooms with a shower.
 - Hi Line has one bathroom with shower. West bath house is available. Both cabins have working kitchen areas with dining.
- ◆ Breakfast and Dinner are group meals: On your own for Lunch, Snacks. Shared food to be assigned prior to the weekend. Prep and dining location dependent on number of participants.

Campers provide their own sheets, blankets, sleeping bags, pillows, toiletries, towels, and all personal care items.



Friday Dinner: 2-3 Soups with Bread/Rolls, Juice

Saturday Breakfast: Pancakes, Eggs, Sausage, Toast, Fruit, Coffee, Juice

Saturday Dinner: Spaghetti w/meatballs, Salad, Garlic Bread, Juice

Sunday Breakfast: Breakfast Casseroles, Toast, Coffee, Juice

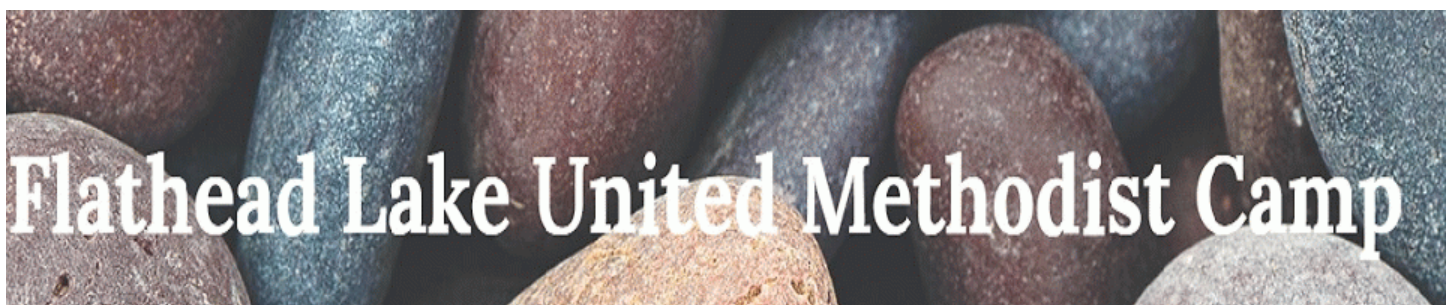
- ◆ **Cost: (to be pro-rated as to the length of your stay)**
 - Plains, Hi-line Cabins \$35/adult per night
 - \$32/ youth (12-17 years)
 - \$30/child (6-11 years)
 - \$0/ 5 years and under
 - \$120 minimum nightly rental/cabin

Activities might include: Reading, Music, Games, Worship, Firepit, Folf, Ice Skating, Skiing, Napping.

Pre Registration is required by January 30th.

For more information contact Pastor Sarah, or Dean Diers at 406-304-8153.

Flathead United Methodist Camp is a beautiful and sacred place, wintertime is quiet and cozy. Come and enjoyed this time of fun, food, fellowship and peace with your church family.





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Sapphire Early Learning Center Families

Who we are – family members and pets.

Hello! We are the Almaguer family! My name is Ariel and my hubby is Myles. We have a large wonderfully blended family of five kids. Our oldest is Layne who is 20 and our daughter Kamryn who is 15 who live in Phoenix Arizona with their mom. We love to visit them during the cold months there and they come to spend holidays and summers here (to get away from that dry heat). At home, we have Jacquelynn who is 10, Willa who is 5, and our little peanut Ellum who will be 2 in June 2022. Our house is pretty busy and we like to say we have a kiddo in every stage of crisis here.

We also have 7 hens as pets. Our little chicky ladies are very sweet and we love having them.



Where do we live? Where are we from?


We live in town in Stevensville. I grew up here and graduated from Stevensville high school in 2001. But met my husband in Denver. We moved here in 2016 and absolutely love it here. My husband grew up in a very small town called Eaton in Colorado, so he loves small-town living.

What are our favorite activities?

Our family loves to get together and spend time with each other. Our favorite activities include Sunday dinner every week with my parents. We also do a lot of rafting in the summer down the Blackfoot and Alberton George. This last year we taught Willa to ski so we are looking forward to a fun year of skiing this year. Ellum may try his hand this year!

What is a goal as a family – our family mission – for this year?

Our mission is to make memories with family. There is nothing more important than the memories you make with each other. We live to experience life with one another and find joy even in the hardest times.



Sapphire
EARLY LEARNING CENTER
STEVENSVILLE • MONTANA

Giving Thanks to SELC Volunteers

Thank you to all of our wonderful volunteers at SELC! We have had some great baby holders, and they have really helped out at the busiest time of the day. The children have enjoyed special snacks on Fridays. The classrooms have had a special clean every Saturday, and set up work continues in the classrooms. The next project will be murals painted in the classrooms. Thrivent Financial has given us a grant for \$250.00 for paint and supplies and Mary Reynosos, one of the teachers with an art degree and I will start on that project very soon. There are still volunteer spots open, we can still use baby holders and snack makers, if you are interested or have another way you would like to volunteer please call me at 406-426-0799. Thank you again to all our wonderful volunteers! Gina Farnham



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Recycling Program

- Good News! Our church recycle program is expanding beyond plastics to also include aluminum cans. These will be collected by me, Lisa Nicholls, on the 4th Sunday of each month. Please drop them directly into the back of my black Ford Escape which will be located in the church parking lot, before and after service, tailgate open. (This plan seems a lot easier than dumping them in the Pastor's garage!) Please make sure they're empty and rinsed if they contained beer. The cans will be donated to AniMeals, a Missoula nonprofit organization dedicated to rescuing, feeding and healing cats. AniMeals is a No Kill Adoption Center. Check out their website: www.AniMeals.com



Start off the new year by refreshing your fellowship time after worship. Coffee and tea will accompany your conversation.

As you linger, color one of the beautiful pages of the Lord's Prayer.

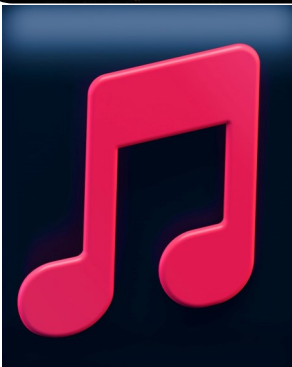
The coloring sheets are available throughout the week for any visitor to add beauty.



United
Methodist
Women
FAITH • HOPE • LOVE IN ACTION

Announcements

- ♦ Communion Sunday, Jan. 16 at 10:30 service.
- ♦ Choir on Tuesdays at 7pm resumes Jan. 4
- ♦ Wednesday Bible Study at 10am resumes Jan. 5
- ♦ Unified Board Retreat: Sat. January 15, 9-12pm
- ♦ United Methodist Women: Jan. 15, 10-12pm, Fellowship Hall



Ways to Contact Us

Office phone: 406-777-5443
Office email: steviumc@gmail.com
Pastor Sarah's email: revsarahmerchant@gmail.com
Church website: steviumc.org
Office hours: Tues, Thurs, Fri. 10:00 A.M. to 3:30 P.M.

Sapphire Early Learning Center 406-625-2660
Sapphireearlylearningcenter.com
director@sapphireearlylearningcenter.com

Worship Opportunities

In Person Worship: 10:30 AM

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.

Children's Sunday School



***Youth 3-10 years old
during worship
service, 10:45-11:30am**

SELC is Hiring!

If you are passionate about learning and growing in the Early Childhood Education profession this may be the career for you. We are now accepting applications Pay is DOE. Early Childhood experience, High School diploma/GED, CPR and First Aid are a plus, but not necessary. All training will be provided at no cost to you. Please contact SELC at 406-625-2660, director@sapphireearlylearningcenter.com



~ 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

Non Profit Org.
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Stevensville, MT

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