



The Glad Tider

A Note from the Pastor: Muck Boots

And we know that for those who love God all things work together for good, for those who are called according to his purpose. ~ Romans 8:28

On the eve of Earth Day, I write this note as the snow falls out my window. My daughter and I just finished deciding what shoes to wear.

"I think you need boots," I said. "Which ones?" she replied?

Isn't that the question?! Despite the wet heavy flakes falling in earnest, the weather app told me that would only last until lunchtime. And so far nothing was sticking to the sidewalk.

"Not snow boots," I advised.

Since rain would take over the precipitating roll in the afternoon, rain boots seemed like a wise choice. And off she went to navigate springtime in Montana. But the more I thought about it I wish we had a third option, an option that many people in damper parts of the world or on a farm have on hand.

Muck boots.

Muck boots are just perfect for what this afternoon will likely be- mucky. The convergence of rain and snow and wet along with dirt and mud expanding as budding plants push through. This will also meet all the leftover gravel and dirt spread by snow trucks the last six months. The muck then is mixed with deer droppings and old leaves blowing under the gray skies. Muck boots really offer the best tool for when everything is just in flux, mix-up and a bit of unstable gunk.

Muck boots are also a great tool for generative work. I mean seeds stick to the sole and move to a new part of the earth where they might fall off and become a new growth. Muck boots give the wearers permission to step in and even play with the messy, delighting in the world around them rather than feeling weighted down. This analogy fits well concerning topics where opinions and emotions get intermingled and sometimes hot; muck boots become a cooling agent because they ensure everyone is together and engaged with a little play in order to address the "muck" around. Muck boots even empower wearers to explore beyond their comfort of neat and clean into areas where unexpected things are happening, old roots can be pulled out, or new life can be intentionally cultivated.



Inside:

Pastor's Note • P1 & 2

Worship • P3

Office Team • P4

Unified Board • P4

Directory Updates • P4

SELC • P5

Financial Update • P5

Capital Fund Update • P6

Faces of Faith • P7

Safe Gatherings • P7

Continued on page 2

Continued from page 1:

Three years after the world shut down, in the spring following a long winter, with the continued shaping and growth of SELC, alongside the Unified Board working diligently to attend to administrative duties while aspiring to guide wider ministry programs, and in the larger cultural mix of political, economic and social realities, muck boots are faithful shoes to walk the way of Christ. As Christians, we are called to attend to the places that are messy, on the edges and broken open, just as we are called to join others in seeing the potential for life abundant and healing. As a church, muck boots have helped and will continue to ensure playful and intentional efforts like attending to the seeds planted long ago and ones yet to be sown; conversing robustly with grace about hospitality and diversity, and humbling ourselves as we see Christ everywhere, not just where nice Sunday shoes are appropriate.

In May, we will continue worship asking the questions: What in my faith needs resurrection: raised life and meaning again? This question invites us to look at our practices and words as a faith community and in our spheres of influence. As we discover what needs to be re-consecrated- made holy again- we may need to create language and practices to help others understand our values. What is discipleship? What is hospitality? Who is our neighbor? Beyond theoretical conversation, these questions and answers guide how we behave in the world and why it matters that love motivates us. Maybe love is like muck shoes: it can go everywhere for good even when mess or flux abounds.

The peace of the resurrected Christ be
with you today and always,
Pastor Sarah Merchant



STEWARDSHIP THOUGHT

“

Give regularly. Stewardship
is not a once-a-year
consideration, but a week-
to-week, month-to-month
commitment requiring
discipline and consistency.

RANDY ALCORN

United Methodist Men
& UMW are hosting a
church-wide yard sale
again this year
Saturday, June 17
(the weekend before
the 50-mile sale)



So, when you're cleaning & purging,
keep us in mind!

The men will pick up large,
cumbersome items.

Else, bring us your (CLEAN) stuff
to the Fellowship Hall
starting Sunday, June 11.

Thank you for sharing!

Please: No clothes, books, or large appliances



May 14: It Only Takes a Spark: Love Inspiring Love

Love needs to be a robust word, a robust reality, a robust action. As Rev. Dr. Jacqui Lewis entitles her book, *Fierce Love* is what are, what we are made for, what we are made of. Love takes us beyond a name, which is most definitely enough, and gives us an energy and force that guides, delights, and can ultimately connect our values to our actions. Robust love woven with values will inform life from creation care and power sharing to relationships with forgiveness, vulnerability and deep discovery of inner wisdom.

Scripture: John 14:15-21

May 21: Bending the Form: Tools of Death into Tools of Life

What does it look like to reclaim tools used for destruction and transform them into tools that cultivate life? In our world, country, even home, we have tools that are death dealing like guns and bombs. Some tools are even more subtle, the ones that become forms of idolatry, severing connection with God and those closest to us. But the prophets and Jesus didn't suggest we just get rid of them, bury them, throw them "away," as if out of sight out of mind. They call us to refashion them, bending the metal even as we bend our beliefs and attitudes toward a way of life. Such bending can be therapeutic to those who are victims of violence brought by way of destructive tools. Such bending can be liberating, setting one free for a new purpose. Such bending can be like a hug, the one that God wraps us in mercy, as we become peacemakers, "for they will be called children of God."



**Scripture: Isaiah 2:4
Matthew 5:3-12**

May 28: (Pentecost): The Spirit Fills Any Space

The Spirit takes on any number of expressions in the scripture- dove, water, fire, foreign language, and wind- and too, the Spirit fills any number of beings to be a sign of the Holy. On the day of Pentecost, when the twelve disciples and thousands of others "receive the spirit," they are transformed and repurposed. The Spirit has filled them that they're saturated within and drenched without because the Spirit in line with the heart of God seeks the whole of each created thing for good. On this Holy Day, we remember how the church- the community following Jesus' way- was born by being filled and sent with each unique expression of the Spirit indwelling. If this can happen with people, how can it happen in the spaces, organizations, relationships, and projects that our gifts and talents help generate? Perhaps the all of us and our place of influence become the co-creating space of the Holy.



**Scripture: Acts 2:1-21,
1 Corinthians 12:4-13**

Sharing the Load: The Office Team!

Hannah Norris serves as the virtual assistant.
Carol Douthit serves as the on-site office assistant.



They make a great team that makes sure our communication, publications and Pastor Sarah are all up to speed ☺ As this team has found their groove, they want to outline their unique duties. Beyond the list below, they will consult with Pastor Sarah and others about other projects. Both can be reached at steviumc@gmail.com

Who do I contact:

Carol (on-site)

- Create bulletin, print & fold
- Organize Glad Tider printing, folding and mailing
- Receive prayer requests by phone
- Keep attendance records
- Facilitate Loaves & Fishes Donations
- Print other communication forms, materials
- Develop worship slides
- Provide on-site administrative help

Hannah (Virtual)

- Maintain, catalog and respond to office email
- Create and distribute weekly emails
- Curate monthly Glad Tider
- Organize liturgist and greeter volunteers
- Manage online presence (website, Facebook, YouTube)
- Create any publications (signs, mailings, etc.)
- Maintain directory lists
- Manage rental agreements and calendar
- Maintain church calendar & activities

The Unified Board

The Unified Board met on April 18. Fred Douthit gave the Trustees report on converting the exhisting phones in the parsonage and the church to cell service and the board agreed to the plan. Lenny Johnson reported on the Church's finances. Howard Young gave an overview on Stewardship and Finances. The board discussed Safe Gatherings and decided volunteers and people hired who are working with children should have background checks. Pastor Sarah reported on the new office assistants, Carol Douthit, in person, and Hannah the virtual assistant. Pastor Sarah will attend the Annual Conerence virtually. VBS will be held this summer dates to be announced. During June and July we will hold two Sunday services each week.



The Directory: To Know and be Known

Updated directories of engaged people within the community of SUMC are ready for May Day! We have copies available beginning April 30.

The office administrators and various helpful volunteers have curated names, pictures and contact information to be as current as possible. The directory is a “living” document so any updates or pictures to share are welcome. The office will have updated versions at every quarter (the 1st of January, April, July and October) if you would like to pick up a new one or have a digital copy sent to you.

Please send any updates or questions to Hannah at steviumc@gmail.com.

June & July Worship:

9am-Outdoor, reflection
and meditation

10:30am Indoor worship



EARLY LEARNING CENTER
STEVENSVILLE • MONTANA

Summer Camp

June 19 - August 18

8am-4pm

5 years through 4th grade

FOR MORE INFO CONTACT:

CHERYL@SAPPHIREEARLYLEARNINGCENTER.COM



FIRST QUARTER FINANCIAL UPDATE, 2023

The Board, staff, and volunteers of Stevensville United Methodist Church would like to give a sincere “Thank You” to all the faithful members and friends who generously give from their financial resources to support the mission and ministry of SUMC.

Each month your Unified Board reviews the financial condition of the church using the comprehensive reports generated by Church Treasurer, Lenny Johnson. At the March Board meeting your Unified Board asked that the members and friends of SUMC be given an update on the financial condition.

The first quarter figures for 2023
Income: \$27,215 ~ Expense: \$33,500

These numbers fall in line with first quarter figures from the past five years, with expenses exceeding income by 6-9 thousand dollars. While this continuing shortfall in income is concerning, the good news is we have the means to make up this deficit by depositing monies from our contingency fund to the general fund as needed to cover expenses. We realize it is not an infinitely sustainable solution, but the Board is grateful for the flexibility.

As you consider this information, your Unified Board asks you to prayerfully consider, according to your means, an increase in your generous financial support of SUMC’s mission and ministry.

~ Howard Young, Unified Board Finance Representative

Big Projects, Big Bucks, Big Hearts:

Capital Fund Update

This month Lenny Johnson collated all the efforts by the SUMC community to address deferred maintenance and current facility needs and build future capacity for ministry. The table below shows a line-by-line break down of what was spent and where resources have come from. The story behind these numbers is just as profound.

SUMC is a very generous community of people who take giant leaps of faith. Not only does this group see the stewardship necessary to maintain and care for a historic building, but also this community invests into the future, planting seeds for trees they may never see or may see only the first fruits. This effort parallels Moses, David and Jesus, who led people into new and exciting futures even if they wouldn't get to delight in them all the way.

In the last 3 years, SUMC has spent some significant money on significant capital, but each one of those contributors, great and small, should be proud and receive this grand thank you. While such contributors, whether formerly committed or newly inspired to commit, and each donation are still vital to the work and wellbeing of this congregation, may the story of what everyone together has done encourage all to continue planting and watering the seeds that are bursting forth in life even now.



Stevensville United Methodist Church

Capital Expenditure Summary 2020-2023

Capital Improvements - Fellowship Hall / SELC and Related

Architectural Design	\$	21,784	
Building Permits	\$	8,166	
Storage Container Rental	\$	1,620	
Reestablish Irrigation System	\$	5,763	
Fellowship Hall / SELC Additions (Shelving, Painting, Window Covering, Conference Room, Railing, Exit Windows)	\$	7,557	\$ 44,889
Church Fire Escape	\$	13,800	
Conference Room	\$	1,780	
Sanctuary Technology	\$	3,061	
Parsonage Air Conditioner (Partially Funded by Designated Donation)	\$	5,389	
Church Roof Replacement	\$	134,812	\$ 203,731

Donations and Revenue from SELC February 2021 - April 15 2023

Methodists Helping Methodists Loan	\$	1,120,799	
Loan Payments paid to Foundation and received from SELC			
Loan Interest Paid to Foundation by SUMC	\$	63,568	
Loan Interest Collected from SELC	\$	39,730	\$ (23,838)
Loan Interest and Principal Billed to SELC	\$	76,770	
Loan and Principal Paid by SELC	\$	51,180	\$ (25,590)
Deferred Principal Collected from SELC (not yet sent to Foundation)	\$	11,450	
Deferred Principal available from Bequest	\$	7,263	\$ 18,713
Insurance and Utility Reimbursement from SELC			
Insurance Share Paid by SELC	\$	3,466	
Utilities Share Paid by SELC	\$	2,775	
One Fund Donations and Expenses			
Donations Feb 2021 - March 2023 (Includes donation of \$102,000)	\$	173,955	
Capital Campaign Firm Expense	\$	22,300	
Transfers to cover other expenses (Primarily Roof)	\$	125,345	\$ 26,310

Faces of Faith



*Natasha & Steve
Svelmoe*

Natasha and Steve, former UMC church goers, have moved to Hawaii! With the unending winter we have been having, we envy them! Natasha is from Ukraine. She has taught Philosophy and as an RN, taught nursing. She has two daughters, and Steve has helped raise them. One daughter is in Florida, one is in Ukraine, her parents are in Kiev, and there is one grandson. Natasha says she has painted the Ukrainian Easter eggs in the past. Natasha and Steve met on the internet. They corresponded quite a while, and then he flew to Ukraine to meet her in 2000. They then married and returned to the U.S. Steve is from San Francisco, and is a CPA. His favorite Biblical story is the Sermon on the Mount. We wish them well in their new home!

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Stevensville United Methodist Church welcomes the Belden family into this community of faith. Martin and Rosalynn Belden are the parents of 6-year-old Maxwell and 3-year-old Amelia. Martin is in the Marine Reserves and Rosalynn is a nurse. The family moved here from Missoula where they had attended a Methodist church. On moving to the Bitterroot Valley they decided to try SUMC and have come to feel that “these are our people.”

Rosalynn expressed that what you choose to do with your faith has an impact on the world. Martin addressed the importance of sharing God’s love through inclusion. Each shared a favorite quote. Rosalynn quotes E.B. White: “I arise in the morning torn between a desire to improve the world and a desire to enjoy the world. This makes it hard to plan the day.” Martin attributes the following to Abraham Lincoln: “Whatever you are, be a good one.”



*The Belden Family:
Martin, Rosalynn,
Maxwell, & Amelia*



Communion as Community

This sacrament of grace is a gift to all of us. Typically we celebrate communion on the 1st Sunday of the Month, however, in May we will do this on the 2nd Sunday. May 14th will be a beautiful day of graces: communion, chimes, and remembering the mothers of our lives.

Safe Gatherings ~ Safe Sanctuaries: Renewed Efforts for Volunteers

Our community values and delights in young people as we worship and fellowship together. Part of this value includes safety of mind, body and spirit. Toward that effort the Unified Board wants to highlight the aspiration to hold safe gatherings (formerly known as safe sanctuaries). This policy not only uplifts the wellbeing of children and young people, but it sets up the adults attending to them in a successful way.

Beginning this spring, Unified Board is implementing a new effort of background checks & brief online training for congregation members who work with young people up to the age of 18 in the nursery, Sunday school, or VBS. These two efforts (a background check valid for 3 years and online training) on the volunteer’s part provide an important step toward a robust expression of Safe Gatherings.

As you sign up to volunteer, you will receive an email to sign up through the Mountain Sky Conference Safe Gatherings’ page. The church will cover initial charges, but you are welcome to give a donation to cover the \$37 fee. Thank you for helping build a safer space for all ages and promoting connection for all generations. To learn more about the Mountain Sky Conference’s commitment and efforts please visit <https://www.mtnskyumc.org/safe>.

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: Tuesday through Friday 9am to 12pm
Sapphire Early Learning Center 406-625-2660
Sapphireearlylearningcenter.com
director@sapphireearlylearningcenter.com

Nursery & Sunday School
For kids during worship
service, 10:30-11:30am

Worship Opportunities: In Person Worship: 10:30 AM . Live Streaming Worship at 10:30 on YouTube Channel & Facebook



- UMM- Every 2nd Saturday from 8am to 10am in the Fellowship Hall. See you on May 14th.
- UMW of Faith- every other 3rd Saturday, 10-12 am. Fellowship and mission. Our next meeting is May 20th. Contact Sue Pearson, Secretary.

Upcoming Events



ELECTRONIC SERVICE REQUESTED

Stevensville MT 59870
216 College
Stevensville United Methodist Church

The Glad Tider