



THE GATEWAY

First United Methodist Church, Sheridan WY

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God Guides Native American Ministries

Sheridan, Wyoming; the best little Western town in the US, embraced by the Big Horn Mountains, small town beauty and charm, home of the First United Methodist Church Native American Ministry.

Our ministry was born in Sheridan in 2006. It came by surprise, unplanned and without direction. It was a gift from God. A gift that contained an enormous challenge; God asked that we take risks, that we walk into the fire, that we trust Him. And we did. As we entered the strange and frightening world of the Northern Cheyenne, we were cautious, guarded and clumsy.

We entered a world that was foreign to us, with people we did not know or understand. Having been taught mostly by Hollywood, we were afraid of Indian people. God gave us no time to get comfortable, we were immediately called to listen, to learn, to roll up our sleeves and get involved. We discovered that the Northern Cheyenne were beautiful people; loving, compassionate, generous.

Only God knew the plan and we followed the signals faithfully, but not without confusion and questioning. At times our ministry painfully struggled to discern what God wanted of us and to understand and let go of the opposition we encountered. Our Cheyenne friends helped us to understand their wounds and challenges. God's message was one of healing.

The years passed and our relationship grew and deepened. Before we knew it we were writing a petition to the 2012 General Conference. It was a petition that would lead to understanding and healing between God's people. It would acknowledge the wounds of the past and the pain in the present. We were lost and overwhelmed by the massive business going on at General Conference. We were aware of the presence of God as the petition passed unanimously.

The petition called for several things, one of which was research of the church, the church leadership and other prominent leadership in Colorado at the time of the Sand Creek Massacre. What is not well known or understood by many is the role the massacre at Sand Creek played in the Civil War, the Plains Indian Wars and the present challenges within the church and the four tribes.

Over the next four years the research was conducted by Dr. Gary Roberts, the gold standard for historians. Gary's research was presented to the church at the 2016 General Conference. Again, our Native American Ministry navigated General Conference to be present for this significant and monumental event in American History. The descendants of the Massacre dedicated an ancient song to the Chiefs that died at Sand Creek. The Church accepted the research report and passed an additional petition committed to continued support and healing. The Tribal representatives extended their hand of friendship to the Methodist Church, praying for freedom from violence and healing for all people.

As we wait for our Creator's next signal, we rest briefly, and we thank our loving God for blessing this little church in this little western town with such an important ministry.

**PRAYERS ~**

- ... for those facing serious illness: **Mac (& Lorraine) McKinney**
- ...for those dealing with loss: **Penny Becker & Family (Mont Becker), Zudie Martin's Family (Sally McGary)**
- ... for those dealing with health issues: **Lynn Balback, Hal (& Mertie) Quist**
- ... for those in elder care: **Sandy (& Bev) Stoker, Eyvonne Cotton, Zee Meyerstein, Betty (&Lou) Taberna, Shirley Zeglin, Jeannette Hall, Clint Foslien**
- ... for those who are housebound: **Mac & Bill Grimm, Mary (&Dave) Hanlin, Shirley (& Jerry) Higgs**
- ... for those in assisted living: **Trudy Brooks, Pat Solomon, Maxine Watson, Suzanne Knepper**
- ...for **Summer Travelers**
- ...for **Our Church & its ministries**

AN ORANGE THANK YOU!

Words truly do not express my gratitude for the delightful "Orange Day". It was truly a surprise when I turned around on the daisthe 'sea of orange' worn by all of you was ama-zing! Miss Glenda and her team created a wonderful celebration that will be remembered forever.

Thank you all for your prayers, your encouragement, your support, and especially your tolerance of the things I do. I do because I can, as praise to God (and to "make Pastor Don look good"!)

May the spirit of red and the mellow of yellow bless you! Your Gal Zell

"SUBSTANTIAL" Gift to Circle J Ranch

Circle J Ranch recently received a sizable gift from a past supporter from Hyattsville through her will and estate plan. **She gifted a percentage of her estate to the camp upon her death.**

Hopefully, more of us will do the same for our church as time goes on, large or small! We say to ourselves that was a great thing she did, perhaps we should do something like that? Have you mentioned our church in your will, estate plan or IRA? Most of us can't give what we would like to

at this point in our lives, however we all have the ability to remember our church like she did the camp. Thinking about it doesn't get it done. You need to take action now!! Some of us have, have you??!!

Building Modernization Update

Asbestos abatement and demolition will begin June 27th on the first (main) floor. Temporary homes for the nursery, and all church offices will be moved to the second floor. Guidance for finding these areas can be found on the orange insert in the Sunday bulletin. For help, go to Lynnea's office, which will be the first door on the right, second floor, after getting off the elevator (or west end stairs). We are in the final stages and this inconvenience should not last more than a few months.

We have received a bid of just under \$10,000 to treat the north side drainage issue. This is a significant reduction in price and is the result of a total different approach to solving the problem. The committee feels this option will work at a significantly less cost.

The July progress payment to the contractor will require the first draw on our loan. It is an amazing accomplishment to be this far into construction before borrowing. Steady contributions from our members and friends have made this possible. Nice job and keep up the good work!

For questions, please talk to any of the Modernization Committee Members and keep praying for guidance.

United Methodist Motorcycle Gang

The UMMG will ride again this summer and we invite everyone who would like to join us on motorcycle, car or truck. Proposed dates (they may change because of weather or schedules) are: **Saturday June 11, Saturday August 20 and Sunday September 18.** Saturday rides will leave from the church at 9:30am with lunch on the road and return mid to late afternoon. Sunday rides will depart from church after worship. If you see any community or church scheduling conflicts please inform Pastor Don.

Vacation Bible School

As Vacation Bible School came to a close on June 10th 130 people, VBS participants and family

members, enjoyed a picnic of Tacos and Nachos. **Throughout the week 78 children met** in the church sanctuary for and opening assembly of music and Snappy the Turtle leading the children into the day's lesson. Each day the children enjoyed science experiments, crafts using puffy paints, relay races at recreation, singing the VBS theme song, SHINE BRIGHT, listening to the story teller, and eating snacks made to look like a sailboat and the deep blue sea. **Thank you to our volunteers,** Tena Taylor & Austin Akers for running the AV system, Pastor Don for music, Casey Taylor with the 3 & 4 year olds, Sadie Koltiska helping with recreation, Zudie Martin helping with the picnic, Cyndi Clements, JennaRae Akers and Claudia Hall making the snacks and picnic.

Yellowstone Annual Conference Report

Report from the Lay Member to Yellowstone Annual Conference (YAC) 2016 conducted June 15-20 at Saint Paul's UMC in Helena, Montana

Items of Interest:

The Conference Budget was passed and the budget for YAC for Mission and Administration for the 2016/17 period is \$1,369,767 to be paid through Mission Shares that are submitted from Conference Churches. A copy of this budget is available in the church office.

The Slate of individuals that will comprise Conference Officiary for the 2016/17 year was approved by the Conference. A copy is available in the church office.

The final count on Petitions for the conference was a total of ten submitted.

One petition was pulled, one was forwarded to the Pensions officer for study and a report back, and eight were approved. The petition to request the Western Jurisdictional Conference to realign the Conference Boundaries and to allow Rocky Mountain and Yellowstone Conference to begin working on the formation of a new conference was passed by both Conferences. It will now be forwarded to the Jurisdictional Conference for their action. All of the petitions are on file in our church office and I recommend your review. Sheridan FUMC was recognized as one of the conference churches that have paid 100%% of Mission Shares. Also in the District Superintendent's report our participation in the Lunch Together Program was highlighted to the conference. Bishop Elaine Stanovsky is ending this four year term with the YAC and during the upcoming Jurisdictional Conference may or may not be reassigned to the YAC.

There were several study groups that I attended and I will share what I gleaned from the sessions with other groups in our church.

Thank You for the opportunity to represent FUMC at the Annual Conference, Carlton Bennett

Ministry to Syrian Refugees

Bonnie Brady shares this information about a church reaching out to refugees. A dear friend of mine, Laura Hahn, is going to Berlin, Germany to "Engage the Crisis". Thirty people from the Antioch Church in Tempe, AZ will be in Berlin, Germany from June 15 to July 20 to be the hands and feet of Jesus as they try to share the love and grace of Jesus with Syrian refugees fleeing war. One of the refugees is quoted as saying, "You Christians have shown us mercy. Islam has not". God is opening the door for "such a time as this" and we need to lift them up in prayer and also the individuals God has planned for them to encounter. Please pray for them during their time in Germany.

Baseball! Hotdogs! Peanuts! & Cracker Jacks!



Since 1/3 of the summer has gone by (fast I might add), here are the Billings Mustang game opportunities.

Saturday July 16 Opponent is Orem; Saturday July 30 Opponent is Great Falls; Sat/Sun Aug 6 & 7 Opponent is Ogden; Sat/Sun Aug 20-21 Opponent is Missoula. Saturday game time is 6:05, Sunday game time is 1:05. A Saturday game would mean returning to Sheridan about 11:30ish (pm).

We have always had a REALLY GOOD TIME! Check your calendar for your available dates. You will want to have this on your 2016 Summer Bucket List!

Ticket prices are: \$5.00 (senior citizens) and \$6.00 (regular field stadium seat). In the past we have purchased our tickets at the gate.

If you are interested, call Zell (674-4686) or Chip (673-5378). Plans for transportation and meals will be made with those wanting to go.

Around The World

Pack Your Bags! Off We Go Again!!

Sunday, July 17, Paige Dvorak will be taking us on a tour of Europe! WOW-o-WOW in 60 minutes!

We will be meeting at the Country Kitchen for a no-host dinner at 5:00pm. Come and join the fun, food, and GREAT Fellowship. See you then!

How Does Your Garden Grow?



Answer: Watering, Weeding, and Waiting! The weather is perfect for garden GOODIES! When you harvest that productive garden, **why not** designate what grows on some of your tomato/bean/pea/squash/cucumber plant (or plants) for our Farmer's Market Table? What a giving way to share the bounty of God's world! The proceeds of our table go to the Caring & Sharing Fund (helps people in need). Let's get those seeds/plants growing for good!

CHURCH FAMILY CAMP



Church Family Camp

If you participate in any activities of First United Methodist Church of Sheridan Wyoming, you are a member of our *church family*. As such you are invited to take part in Church Family Camp. This year **Church Family Camp will be September 9th-11th at Circle J** United Methodist Camp in Ten Sleep Canyon. The facility, on Ten Sleep Creek, has tent and R.V. spaces as well as cabin space. There are showers and flush toilets. Specifics still need to be finalized and we are interested in input from all who desire to attend. If you are interested please call the church office 672-9779.

For those interested, we have the **4-H Camp on Owen Creek reserved July 22-24** for personal camping.

MISSION OPPORTUNITY

A team from the Pennsylvania Conference will be here July 3-9 to among others things fix up the old church in Birney, Montana.

They will need some help with food and light carpentry. If you are interested in helping out in any way contact the church office.

Hopefully we will have more information about this mission opportunity in the next week.

How Is It Going?

As I walk around the church, observe the construction progress and listen in on committee meetings I realize what a great church we have. I took note of the many ways we all support our church and the various conference programs that come about regularly. It became apparent to me what a caring and giving church we are.

There are some compelling problems I feel I should share with you. Over the last two quarters of 2015 and during the first quarter of 2016 we

have been experiencing a deficit contributions over our expenses. This has caused us to have expenses exceeding income for the year 2015 and so far in 2016. We have not taken in enough income (contributions) to cover our expenses.

Don't panic! We have been able to build a small reserve fund which has seen us through these past dry quarters. We have been using the reserve fund to meet our expenses. If the situation continues with a continual drain on that fund, eventually it will dry up.

Some causes of the deficit spending have been added expense in the cost of upkeep and utilities for our new entry way. The elevator alone, while needed, has added to the building maintenance expense and the extra power needed to construct and remodel the basement and 3rd floor has also added unrealized cost. Increased expense in other categories such as office supplies, employee salaries, administrative and committee expenses add to the cost of running and maintaining our church.

We look for ways to reduce expenses and add efficiencies, but the truth is, it just costs more to maintain and operate our church. We had only a modest increase in our budget over the 2015 budget. Your gifts to the church are about the same compared to years past, but we are still coming up short of the funds necessary to at least break even.

It appears we as a Church suffer the same problems you do individually - increased expenses and no increase in income. Our dilemma is what additional steps can we take together to solve this problem. We can all make an effort to keep the commitment to our pledges which we made during our annual stewardship drive. We appreciate those of you that did not pledge a certain amount, but continue to contribute on a regular basis, that also has helped. Perhaps you could think about signing up to make your gift automatic by having your contribution deducted from you checking or savings account monthly.

We thought you should know our financial status. We encourage you meet your commitments this summer when giving historically falls short because of travel and summertime activities. If you are able consider a small increase or an extra gift to the church General Fund it would be appreciated. Mostly your prayers are greatly needed as we go forward.

Blessings, Butch Bennett, Lay leader