Montana-Northern Wyoming Conference
United Church of Christ
2016 Alderson Avenue
Billings, Montana 59102
Phone (406) 656-8688
ucc@mnwcucc.org

April 2020 eNews

Help in all Ages

Millwaukee Art Museum

The Adoration of Love, Hector Hyppolite, 1946

Wider Church and Community Resources

Click on these links for resource information.

Click on this link to a comphrensive index of CoVid 19 Resources mnwcucc.org.

UCC Disaster Team
Daily Briefing Facts

Global Co-Workers
Ministries Continue

throughout the world

UCC eNews
Pastoral Letter from UCC leaders

Eden Seminary free online certificate courses
Finances, Conflict

World Council of Churches
Youth and Young Adult voices sought for new WWC Book

Charter for Compassion
Building resiliency skills

Conference Highlights

Click on these links for more information.
Church newsletters and worship links are also found at mnwcucc.org.

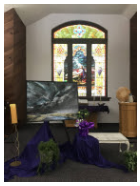
Columbus Community UCC
Members make masks needed in community

Glendive UCC
Sharing VBS with Zion Lutheran church

First Billings UCC
Wiconi Mutual Aid Networks (W'MAN) formed to meet CoVid needs

Mayflower UCC
Virtual Talent Show, Bedtime Story Time, Baby Book Club, Movie Discussions

Miles City United
Funds 4 small businesses in Africa and Central America



Red Lodge UCC
Rev. Peterson on a place for lament with Easter people

University UCC
Creates an interactive map of church neighborhood groups

Powder River UCC
Rev. Knoblauch distributes worship packets to homes

God-seeds

Rev. Dr. Marc Ian Stewart

God Forever Graceful and Loving

Lord, you have been our dwelling place in all generations.

Before the mountains were brought forth, or ever you had formed the earth and the world, from ever-lasting to everlasting you are God.

Psalm 90, NRSV

An old British hymn has returned to my memory this past month, “O God, Our Help in Ages Past.” It seems so apropos to these times of pandemic. Humanity has been through this before. Plagues and disease of various types have so decimated past populations it seemed that only God could help.

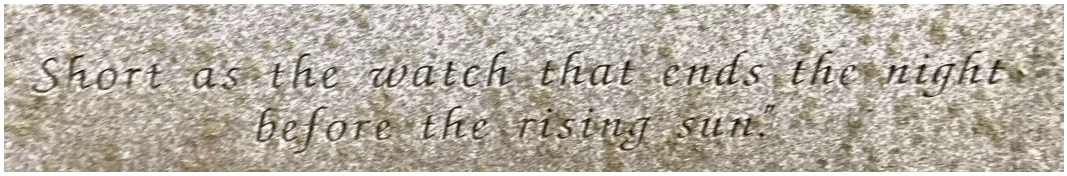
I’ve even had my own encounters on the brink. Twenty-five years ago, I stepped into a hole in the middle of the raging spring waters of the Pere Marquette River (Michigan) and my fly-fishing waders flooded. I was swept into a 30-foot snag of downed trees and debris. The current tugged me to go under as I held onto a slippery fallen tree for dear life and tried to shimmy my way to shore. I knew I might die then and there. Five minutes later I was ashore. “There but for the grace of God” my time could have been up. Ironically, the earworm of the old hymn may not even have made it to the fifth verse, “Time like an ever-rolling stream soon bears us all away.” Perhaps I would have been just as glad not to have that in my mind if I was going down.

We are now living in a world different from anything most of us have ever known. It is not a thing which we can escape in an unaccountable five minutes of grace. How many of us have started the 15-day CoVid 19 incubation clock over and over again in a wait to see if we got exposed and infected? I did, after being in Seattle in January and L.A. in February, and the grocery store last week. How many adjustments can one make to their life perspective in a certain amount of time? There have been times in the past month when life changes have happened each week. There have been weeks when life changes have happened each day. There have been days when life changes have happened each hour. It seems forever since we started online worship in our churches, and another forever before that when we practiced 6-foot personal distancing from each other, and another forever before that when we elbow-bumped during church in the Passing of the Peace. How long ago before that was Christmas, when we gathered with hardly a care?

“A thousand ages in your sight are like an evening gone…” May it be so among us, because right now it feels like last week was a year ago. There has been so much reorientation in our lives that I am beginning to wonder how much of it is real. No, I am not

losing my mind (on a good day), but are all the zoom meetings, all the updates on how to keep protected, all the contrary political and health solutions offered, all the economic stimulus details really going to “save” us?

My father, a master mariner in the British Merchant Marines before going into authorized ministry, had engraved on his tombstone the continuing hymn verse:



This verse defined his call to ministry, when on his watch on a New York bound cargo ship he saw a sailor swept overboard during a North Atlantic storm. In my father's complete grief at that moment, the sun shone around the storm clouds, and he felt his call to a life of ministry. (The last time I heard my father preach in the year before he died of cancer, he shared this story.)

In my way, too, I keep watch for what is real among the present day warnings, advice, politics, and assistance. Even though it feels anything but short, I am beginning to sense again that the ways God is with us do not change. It is not a long wait with God:

The beauty of a new day is there to be appreciated, just like always.

The gift of companionship is offered even if not felt as a hug, elbow bump, or face to face smile.

The hope that “passes all understanding” is not mired down in yesterday’s, or the last hours, developments.

Some things of God never change. The final verse of the old hymn is almost the same as the first:

“O God our help in ages past, our hope for years to come,
Still be our God while troubles last, and our eternal home.

Introducing mnwcucc.org

WEBsite Resources

Welcome **Covid 19** **Churches** **Events** **Ministries** **eNews**
Camps **Partners** **Stewardship**

Our Conference WEBsite now includes weekly and monthly updates, such as the most recent CoVid 19 resources and copies of the most recent church newsletters. Click on the logo or menu above to go to the mnwcucc.org WEBsite.

Information to be found by clicking on specific menu buttons:

Welcome: brings you back to the home page

CoVid 19: *see detail links below*, *may change daily*

Churches: physical and virtual addresses, pastor, newsletter link, worship info and link, donation info, *virtual meeting and events information will soon be transferred to a link on the Covid 19 menu*

Events: links to conference and national event information and registrations

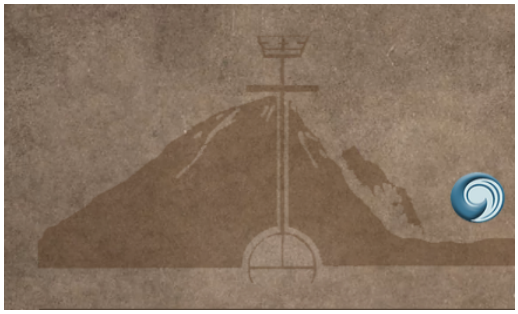
Ministries: links to Conference Documents and Ministries

eNews: archive of current and past Conference eNews

Camps: Outdoor Ministry information and Carlee Downer Scholarship form

Partners: links to Conference Mission Partners and various national UCC various ministries

Stewardship: resources for church financial development



CoVid 19

Press on Links below to View Resources

Government Assistance Resources

Social Justice

Church Finances

Insurance Assistance

Health Cost Debt

Grief in Crisis

Pastoral Care and Self Care

Children and Youth

Electronic Voting

Climate Change

Public Lands

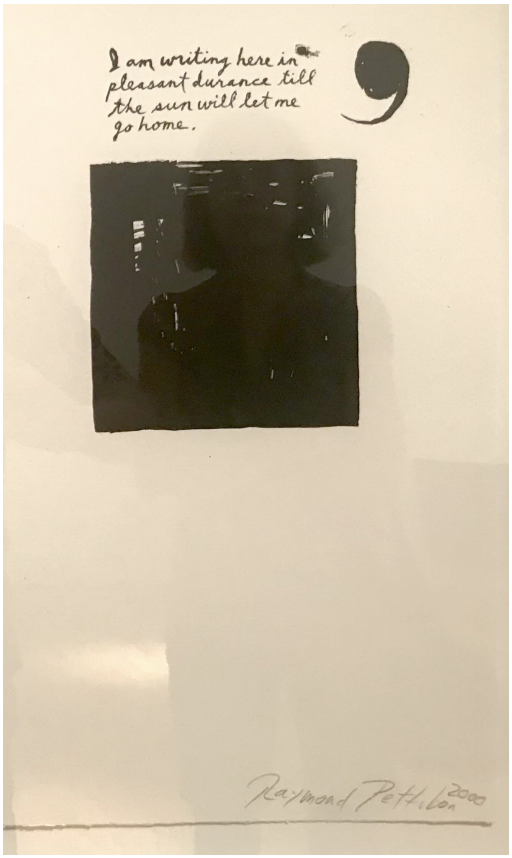
Anti-Racism Resources

Border and Immigrant Issues

April 28 and 29

Virtual Spring Cleaning Clergy Retreat

Because we never know when shelter in place will come to an end (Lord have mercy!), we want to welcome you all to our Montana-Northern Wyoming Conference Virtual Spring Cleaning Clergy Retreat!



This will be a great time to enjoy one another's virtual company, deepen our relationships, and spend the time creating and playing!

Here is what is being planned on your behalf! Cost is only $25/person! Save money while not going to Chico. Order now! Zoom seats are filling up fast!

Tuesday, April 28 **Registration will be available soon at mnwcucc.org**
click "events"

9:00 a.m. Yoga
10:00 a.m. Worship
11:00 a.m. Virtual Café
12:00 p.m. Lunch
1:00 p.m. Museum Tour
2:00 p.m. Pentecost Paint by the Numbers
4:00 p.m. Virtual Pub
7:00 p.m. Netflix Party, "Keeping the Faith"

Wednesday, April 29

9:00 a.m. Yoga
10:00 a.m. Worship
11:00 a.m. Virtual Café
12:00 p.m. Lunch
1:00 p.m. Museum Tour
2:00 p.m. Creation Paint by the Numbers
4:00 p.m. Virtual Pub
7:00 p.m. Broadway Show Tune Sing-A-Long

Calendar

Mondays Time of Healing and Centering, 11 am, Zoom meeting

Tuesdays Worship Planning for Pastors, 2 pm, Zoom meeting

Wednesdays Church leaders check-in, 3:30 - 5 pm, Zoom meeting

Thursdays Local Church pastors and Chaplains social hour, Zoom meeting

April 14 Human Resources Committee, 7 pm, Zoom

April 20-22 Clergy and Spouse Retreat, RESCHEDULED: see below

April 28-29 Clergy and Spouse **VIRTUAL RETREAT**

April 20 Committee for Outdoor Ministries, 7 pm, Zoom meeting

April 23 Board of Directors, 1 pm, Zoom

April 25 Ordination Ecclesiastical Council for Lisa Harmon, 10 am - noon, Zoom meeting

April 30-May 3 "Let's Talk about It" Weekend, Plymouth UCC Helena POSTPONED TBA

May 2 Ordination Ecclesiastical Council Tom King, 1:30 - 3:30 pm Zoom meeting

May 9 Rocky Mountain College commencement (virtual platform planned)

July 22-25 National Youth Event Postponed to 2022