



The View

October 2023

1025 Central Avenue
Great Falls, MT 59401
(406) 453-4317



A while back, I came across a post on social media with several pictures: bronze statues and reliefs of dogs burnished to a bright gold from thousands of passersby who had pet them for luck, or else simply because dogs—metallic or otherwise—are made to be pet.



My favorite image in the post, pictured above, is from a bronze plaque on the statue of St. John of Nepomuk at the site of his martyrdom, the Vltava River in Prague. I am captivated by the image because the loving caress of the multitudes has transformed the dog into an almost-angelic figure, glowing so radiantly in contrast to the dark patina of the rest of the relief that its light has partially illuminated the other figures depicted.

It got me thinking about the transformative power of love. We often hear the old cliché about generational trauma and cyclical violence, “hurt people hurt people,” but almost never the positive corollary: loved people love people. But that is exactly the truth our world needs right now. Love effects noticeable change in its objects that cascades outwards in a ripple effect.

That also means our understanding of what *transformation* looks like has to be different. Not so much a smelting-and-recasting, remaking us in an instant as something unrecognizable, but a slow and gentle burnishing that reveals our innate brilliance over time. At its core, Christianity is more about being than doing, more about accepting what is offered than obtaining what is earned.

God's grace is what love looks like without conditions, and it is that grace that allows us to shine through all the layers of tarnish.

Within the broader Christian tradition, there are embodied rhythms and rituals through which we encounter God's grace, called *sacraments*. As Disciples, we don't use that term as often as our Catholic and Orthodox siblings, but within the broader Christian tradition, sacraments are understood as *efficacious signs*. That is, they communicate God's love for us through symbolism, but they also have an effect on us as embodied creatures who inhabit a material universe.

Rituals like communion and baptism are not how we earn God's grace—that would be an oxymoron. But they are *marks* of God's love for us: "mark" both in the sense of an identifying characteristic and in the effect it has on us.

So for the next seven weeks in Faith Formation and weekly worship, we'll be exploring the seven practices most commonly called sacraments in the Christian tradition: what they teach us about God and how they manifest God's love in our lives in tangible ways.

I hope you'll join us on Sundays at 9am for Faith Formation and worship at 10:15am, as we learn more about the *marks of love*.

Yours in God's amazing grace,
Pastor Stephen.
pastor@gfccc.net

Joys/Concerns

Our thoughts and prayers go out to:

Our World

- Earthquake in Morocco.
- Striking auto workers and other laborers, for more just labor relations.

Our Community

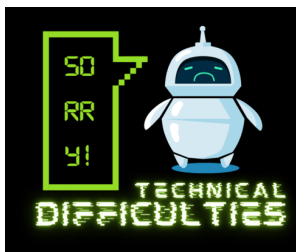
- Upcoming election, that citizens will choose wisely and that whomever is elected will govern justly with concern for the well-being of all.
- For medically-vulnerable people in the oncoming flu/COVID/RSV season, and that folks in the community will make choices with those people in mind.
- We give thanks to God that SB99, Montana's recently-passed ban on gender-affirming care for minors, has been temporarily enjoined, allowing trans and gender-diverse young people to continue receiving life-saving care. We pray that this decision is a precursor to a final injunction of the bill when it goes to trial.

Our Church

- Barb Kakalecik's grandson Henry—recovering well from motorcycle accident.
- Calissa's dad Fred—recovering from stroke.
- Shelly and Brett Fagenstrom's grandniece who is in NICU in Seattle.
- Jeremy Comstock's mother, dealing with health issues and recent loss of her husband.
- Arlene Morrison, who is recovering from a head injury after falling.



Halloween is around the corner, and we'll once again be hosting a party for our community! Anyone who was at last year's Halloween party knows that we're probably gonna have a *lot* of guests joining us, so we'll need folks willing to sign up for volunteer roles as well as donate candy. You can find a box for candy and a volunteer sign-up in the Fellowship Hall. Costumes are encouraged for all!



Those of you who join us for worship via YouTube may have noticed that our livestreams have been malfunctioning quite a bit in recent weeks. We apologize for this inconvenience, and are working on identifying the source of the issue and a solution. We ask that you bear with us as we navigate technical issues so that our community members who cannot attend in person are able to continuing worshipping with us.

COMMUNITY HEALTH FAIR

Saturday, October 21st

10am-3pm

Education and resources for whole-human health and wellness
from community partners including Alluvion Health, Planned Parenthood, and more!

Free of charge and open to all!

Central Christian Church



1025 Central Avenue

Youth-Led Service

On October 29th, we will be celebrating the younger members of our community with a youth-led worship service. After worship on the 15th, kids and youth who are interested, along with their parents or guardians, are invited to stick around for a brief planning session for that upcoming service.

Financial Corner

Each Montanan can create a Charitable Gift Annuity with \$10,000 or less and receive an income for life. The tax breaks are significant and 6 members of our church have taken advantage, it may be better than an IRA. - Ask our endowment and trust chair, Randy Knowles.

FISH

Town Pump has selected **FISH** to be part of the 23rd annual **"Be a Friend in Deed, Help Those in Need"** campaign.

Town Pump will match each dollar collected by FISH up to \$25,000 from September 1, 2023, through November 30, 2023.

If you wish to make donation, mail donation to FISH P.O. Box 662 Great Falls MT 59403.

Thank you for your help to reach our goal of \$25,000. This is a text block.



Wishing a very **Happy October Birthday** to our members celebrating soon:

- 7 April Buley
- 10 Daniel Stinson
- 10 Lori Novak
- 11 Jean Muir
- 15 Viv Hunter

Wishing a very **Happy October Anniversary** to our members celebrating soon:

- 6 Keith & Lynn Yahraus
- 7 Mauri & Lori Novak
- 18 Bill & Kristen Raaen

October Calendar

- 3 Essentrics with Lynn
- 4 Book Club
- 8 Vision Council Meeting
- **9 Indigenous Peoples' Day**
- 10 Essentrics with Lynn
- 12 LGBTQ Board Meeting
- 17 Essentrics with Lynn
- 18 Book Club
- 19 Lydia Group
- 21 Community Health Day
- 24 Essentrics with Lynn
- 26 Lydia Evening Group
- 29 Youth-led Service

- 30 Halloween Party
- **31 Halloween**
- 31 Essentials with Lynn

For entire church calendar go to: [Church Calendar](#)



Church Events
