Mountain Proclamations

a publication of the First Congregational Church, United Church of Christ, of Mountain Home

www.mhfirstcongregational.org **December 2026** mhfccucc@gmail.com

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Poinsettia Dedications

NOTE changes from the announcement in November's Proclamation. You may start bringing in your live poinsettias (no silk ones, please). Those being shared as memorials or dedications, will be listed in the Christmas Eve bulletin so be sure to give this information to the church office by **Wednesday, December 16th** Forms are available from the bulletin table.

Poinsettias may be dropped off at the church office Monday through Thursday from 10 a.m. to 1 p.m. or brought in on Sunday mornings. **If you want your poinsettia back after Christmas, please be sure to put your name on it.** You may take your plant home any time after our Christmas Eve candlelight service.

Giving Tree 2026

It is that time of year again, the Giving Tree is in full swing. If you would like a tag or two, please see Ann Carlin either before or after church every Sunday starting Nov. 22nd through Dec. 15th. I have 21 tags, 10 boys, 11 girls.

ALL TAGS MUST BE BACK IN THE OFFICE BY DEC. 15TH so that they can be dropped off with the Giving Tree Program by Dec. 16th to be distributed to kids in our community.

PLEASE DO NOT WRAP GIFTS!!!

Sincerely,
Ann Carlin

2ND Hand Christmas & Goodies

In place of our usual Women's Fellowship Christmas Bazaar, this year we are holding a 2nd Hand Christmas & Goodies Event. We will have many gently used Christmas Decorations and unique gift items.

Horner's Corner will once again be present with fresh, homemade cinnamon rolls and slices of pie!

It will be held in the Fellowship Hall of our church from 8:00-12:00 on Saturday, December 5th.

We would appreciate donations of Christmas décor, fresh homemade pies, and lovely gift items.

Editor's note: The Women's Fellowship spends these monies on the church – coffee, tea, and other condiments for Fellowship Hour and potlucks. They also make contributions toward other needed items around the church as well as donations to charitable organizations around town. Come support those who support us.

For the Women of the Church

Women's Fellowship Christmas Party and recycled gift exchange

Women's Fellowship will hold their December meeting/Christmas Party Pot-Luck Luncheon at **noon on December 11th**. Hostesses are Linda Ramsey and Judy Case.

After feasting on our always delicious table of food, we will have a short meeting to wrap up the recent fundraisers, install the new officers for the 2027 year, toss around ideas for the new year and have a gift exchange. Everyone is asked to bring a homemade, recycled, re-gifted gift.

All women of the community are invited…the more the merrier!

Pianist needed!!

Dorraine Aggen will be leaving for Arizona after Christmas and we will need a piano player for worship and choir practice. If you or someone you know can do this, please contact Gail Banner or the church office. Below are the requirements necessary for this ministry.

Pianist duties for First Congregational Church

-Choir practice Thursday nights from 5-6
-Choir warmup Sunday mornings from 10:30 – 10:50 and choir performance during worship
-Prelude with songs of choice from 10:50-11:00
-Accompany hymns of pastor's choice during worship service
-Amen after prayer time
-Play songs of choice during offertory
-Play Doxology as plates being brought up for the blessing and as the ushers return to their seats

-Play the closing song and a 5-minute postlude after the service

There may be some times when a pianist is needed, such as funerals or special celebrations. Compensation is negotiable.

Red Cross Blood Drive

Our quarterly **Red Cross Blood Drive** will be on **Tuesday, December 15th from 10 a.m. to 3 p.m.** If you would like to help, check people in or serve snacks some time during the day, please contact Rick Parks.

Blue Christmas Service

Blue Christmas is a reflective service for those who are experiencing loss. This year's Blue Christmas service is held at Mountain Home Church of the Nazarene, 950 N. 7th East, on **Sunday, December 18th at 7:00 p.m.**

Blue Christmas service provides a quiet and contemplative worship service as an alternative to the more traditional gatherings. This is in honor of those who are experiencing grief and struggling with loss, particularly throughout the holidays.

Christmas Fund for the Veterans of the Cross

"The Greatest of These . . . Love" (1 Corinthians 13:13)

The Christmas Fund has been caring for active and retired clergy and lay employees of the United Church of Christ for over 100 years, providing emergency grants, supplementation of small annuities and health premiums, and Christmas "Thank You" gift checks each December to our lower-income retirees.

United Church of Christ congregations and members have blessed the Christmas Fund with their generosity for many years. This year, your care and compassion will be especially appreciated by those servants of the church who are facing a time of need. Thank you!

See the website (**www.christmasfund.org**) and the bulletin inserts for all the wonderful things that the Christmas Fund does for our active and retired clergy and their families.

We, here at Mountain Home First Congregational, UCC, will be taking this offering starting on **Sunday, December 14th and concluding on Christmas Eve.** Special envelopes will be provided in the worship bulletin or in the pew pockets on each row.

Christmas Luncheon

The Christmas Luncheon will be on **Sunday, December 20th** after worship. Ham, bread and beverages will be provided. Please bring a side dish or dessert to share. Everyone is invited to the table!

Christmas Eve Candlelight Service

Our Christmas Eve worship service will be at 7 p.m. on **Wednesday, December 24th.**

Office Christmas Schedule

There will be no changes to the office hours this Christmas and New Year's season.

Thank you

Trunk or Treat

On behalf of the Outreach Committee, I just wanted to again say a heartfelt **Thank You** to everyone in the congregation that donated your candy or your time to help with the Trunk or Treat. It was appreciated and I don't think I could have done it without you. We had a blast handing out candy and spreading joy to lots of people. The kids especially liked Tempe Eichman's jelly fish costume.

We started handing out candy and toys at about 5:30 and had a steady stream of kids and parents until 8. This includes a few repeat visitors, but everyone had fun and appreciated the candy.

With a grateful heart, I, again, say Thank you!

Erika Brandt
Outreach Committee member

From the National Office of the UCC

Dear friends,

Thank you to you and the many congregations across the United Church of Christ for your gifts to Neighbors in Need this year. Your gifts will fund the witness of our Washington D.C. Office of Public Policy and Advocacy, future grant recipients, the Council for American Indian Ministry and ongoing projects of justice across the United Church of Christ. How appropriate that during World Kindness Week, your gifts ripple outward, spreading compassion and justice throughout the country. Thank you for continuing to show love through great generosity.

Many blessings,
Rev. Rachel McDonald, Generosity Officer, OWCM and Special Mission Offerings

Fall Decorations

Thank you to Lee Wright and Sherry and Eddie Bush for the beautiful harvest decorations in the Sanctuary. Thank you for all the beauty you brought into our worship space. And a special Thank You to Lee Wright for checking the decorations weekly to be sure that they look wonderful all month.

Pie Sale

On behalf of Women's Fellowship, I would like to thank everybody who helped make the pie auction a successful fundraiser. We made over $1,700! Proceeds will be used to support church projects and fund community outreach donations.

Our thanks to everyone who baked pies and cheese cakes to the generous folks who bid on them.

Thanks, too, to Susan Broemeling for donating two beautiful glass pieces, Linda Miller for her donation of 2 pie shaped potholders and a table runner. These items brought in additional funds to the total raised.

Special thanks to our auctioneer, Roger Fogleman who kept the bids coming and put the "fun" in fundraising. Thanks to our cashiers Sherry Bush, Betty Ashcraft and Linda Ramsey and to Erika Brandt and Curtis Carlin who set up and arranged the pies ready for the auction.

Nadine Roberts, Chairman

Editor's Note: Thank you, Nadine Roberts, for coordinating this event again this year. Nadine has been organizing this since 2011!

Samaritan's Purse Operation Christmas Child 2026

Operation Christmas Child is one of the ministries of **Samaritan's Purse,** an international Christian relief organization that provides aid to people affected by poverty, disaster, war, and disease in more than 100 countries. Operation Christmas Child, which collects shoebox gifts filled with toys, school supplies, and personal care items for children in need around the world. These gifts are delivered through local churches such as **First Congregational Church** to share love, hope, and encouragement with children and their families. Since 1993, more than 244 million shoebox gifts have been distributed to children in over 175 countries and territories, bringing joy to boys and girls who may have never received a gift before.

A **heartfelt thank you** to everyone who donated items, contributed funds, and volunteered their time to help pack shoeboxes for Operation Christmas Child. We were able to provide a total of 24 boxes for children ages 2 – 14. Your generosity and dedication make it possible for children around the world to receive gifts, encouragement, and hope. Every toy, school supply, hygiene item, and dollar donated helps show a child that they are loved and remembered. Because of your kindness and willingness to serve, countless children will experience the joy of receiving a special gift this Christmas season. Women's Fellowship is still accepting monetary donations to help cover the costs of some additional items purchased and for mailing of the boxes. We appreciate our congregation for making a difference in the lives of children around the world.

Barb Fogleman

Thanksgiving Dinner

THANK YOU! THANK YOU! THANK YOU! To all who drove, cooked, decorated, served, cleaned up, etc. at our annual Thanksgiving Dinner.

We had our Annual Thanksgiving Dinner on Sunday, November 22, 2026. This wonderful night of food and fellowship started off with a prayer by Pastor Gary Smith. There were 65 people present, and 10 shut-in meals were delivered for a total of 75 meals; a great time was had by all. The festivities were put together by Erica Brandt, Curtis Carlin and their crew of Thanksgiving helpers. The cooks for the turkeys and hams were Gail Banner, Erica Brant, Sherry Bush, Ann Carlin, Allen Harris, and Sandra Moehn. The beautiful decorations were done by Erica Brandt, Eddie and Sherry Bush, Curtis Carlin, Judy Case, Heidi Harris, and Lee Wright. Delivery Drivers were Betty Ashcraft and Al Foster, Eddie Bush and Linda Ramsey.

A huge THANK YOU goes out to EVERYONE (too many to name individually) who stayed behind and helped to clean everything up; everyone who pitched in the clean-up made it go very quickly.

Sincerely,
Erica Brandt and Curtis Carlin
Social Committee

End of year giving

If you want credit in **2026** for your December tithe, be sure to have it to the church before **December 31st.** If you mail it, be sure that it is in the mail to be **postmarked** on or before December 31st. Anything received after that will go on you 2027 giving statement.

Pledges for 2026

If you were not able to get your pledge in at or before the Pledge Blessing on **Sunday, November 22nd**, no worries. Just bring it to church next Sunday, anytime during office hours, drop it in the UPS box (no money, please), or mail it back to us in the envelope provided with the Stewardship Letter you received. You lost your card? The church has more; just contact the office.

Community Service Opportunity

The Salvation Army would really appreciate some help with the bell ringing at Wal-Mart. The shifts are an hour and a half at a time. If you are interested in helping you may call Don Nesbitt at (208)230-4703. Or sign up at the link below: https://signup.com/go/GzMmDQD

Upcoming Events

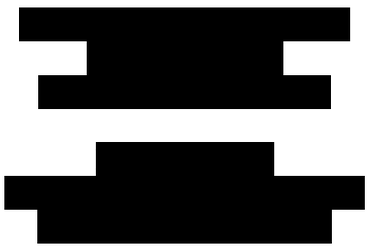
All Boards and Committees

Year-end Annual Reports are due in the office by **Thursday, January 7th** earlier if possible, so they can be prepared for distribution at our Annual Meeting on **Sunday, January 17th**.

2026 Annual Meeting

The Annual Meeting is on **Sunday, January 17, 2027**. This is the time when we review all the happenings of 2026 and finalize the budget for 2027.

Directory Update



Birthdays in December

2 – Richard Bush
15 – Todd Paille
15 – Lee Wright
16 – Alice Craft
20 – Regan Hinger
22 – Truman Parker
25 – Latasha Carroll
26 – Bud Weise
28 – Ethan Townsend

Anniversaries in December

8 – Sue and Wade Baumgardner
9 – Sherry and Eddie Bush
17 – Stephanie and Kevin Osgood
20 – Susan and Richard Broemeling
28 – Rita and David Olson

Special Angels for December

LITURGISTS (Polly Sanders)
6 – Phil Miller
13 – Mike Keas
20 – Christine Negri
27 – Gene Mussler

FELLOWSHIP HOUR (sign-up sheet)
6 – Gene and Susan Mussler
13 – Vickie Armstrong and Brian Sporleder
20 – Christmas Potluck
27 –

FLOWERS (sign-up sheet)

Christmas Décor and Poinsettias

ADVENT CANDLE (Curtis Carlin)
6 – Rita Olson
13 – The Eichman Family
20 – Diane Venski
24 – The Chancel Choir

USHERS (Paul Ingram)

PARAMENTS (Allen and Heidi Harris)

COMMUNION (Susan Walker)

From Pastor Deral

We're fast approaching the wonderful Advent/Christmas Season! 'Advent' comes from a Latin word meaning "to come to". As we know, it's the period of four Sundays before Christmas day when we announce that in the past God, in Jesus Christ, ***came*** into the world; that He ***continues to come*** in the present, here and now, through His Spirit; and that He will ***come again*** in triumphant glory at the end of history.

The writer Anne Lamott, in one of her books, says that our prayers keep bumping into three big words: *Thanks! Help! Wow!*

In an amazing way those three words also express the message of Advent. '*Thanks'* that Jesus first came into our needy world. We're grateful. The '*Help'* that we're continually given, through all of our days, through His Holy Spirit. We're depending on that. And '*Wow*!' – the anticipation of the glory that will be revealed when He returns. We'll bow in awe and adoration.

This year as we anticipate the arrival of Christmas, let Advent be a daily enchanting time of bumping up against – *Thanks! Help!* and *Wow!*

Pastor Deral

December 2026

Sun	Mon	Tue	Wed	Thu	Fri	Sat
		1 5:30 p.m. Women's AA	2	3 5:30 p.m. GSA 1064 5 p.m. Choir 6 p.m. Bells 6:30 p.m. Daisies	4 10 a.m. First Friday Quilters Bazaar Set-up	5 8 a.m. to Noon Second-Hand Christmas Bazaar 7 p.m. AA
2nd Sunday of Advent 6 10 a.m. Sunday School 11 a.m. Worship w/ Communion	7 5 p.m. GSA 1075 7 p.m. Diaconate Board meeting 7 p.m. Troop 57	8 5:30 p.m. Women's AA	9	10 4 p.m. GSA 1077 5:30 p.m. GSA 1064 5 p.m. Choir 6 p.m. Bells 6:30 p.m. Daisies	11 12 p.m. Women's Fellowship potluck and meeting **5 p.m. Troop 57**	12 7 p.m. AA **Lock-in - Noon**
3rd Sunday of Advent 13 10 a.m. Sunday School 11 a.m. Worship **AW Christian Ed mtg**	14 5 p.m. GSA 1075 6:30 p.m. Trustees 7 p.m. Troop 57	15 10 a.m. – 3 p.m. Blood Drive 5:30 p.m. Women's AA	16	17 5:30 p.m. GSA 1064 5 p.m. Choir 6 p.m. Bells 6:30 p.m. Daisies	18	19 7 p.m. AA
4th Sunday of Advent 20 10 a.m. Sunday School 11 a.m. Worship **AW Christmas Potluck Luncheon**	21 7 p.m. Church Council mtg	22 5:30 p.m. Women's AA	23	24 **7 p.m. Candlelight Christmas Eve Service**	25 Christmas	26 7 p.m. AA
27 NO Sunday School 11 a.m. Worship AW Outreach mtg	28	29 5:30 p.m. Women's AA	30	31 New Year's Eve		

January 2027

Sun	Mon	Tue	Wed	Thu	Fri	Sat
					1 New Year's Day	2 7 p.m. AA
3 NO Sunday School 11 a.m. Worship w/ Communion 2 – 6 p.m. GSA	4 5 p.m. GSA 1075 7 p.m. Diaconate Board meeting 7 p.m. Troop 57	5 5:30 p.m. Women's AA	6	**Annual Reports Due** 7 4 p.m. GSA 1077 5:30 GSA 1064 5 p.m. Choir 6 p.m. Bells	8 12 p.m. Women's Fellowship	9 7 p.m. AA
10 10 a.m. Sunday School 11 a.m. Worship **AW Christian Ed mtg**	11 5 p.m. GSA 1075 6:30 p.m. Trustees 7 p.m. Troop 57	12 5:30 p.m. Women's AA	13	14 5:30 GSA 1064 5 p.m. Choir 6 p.m. Bells 6:30 p.m. Daisies	15 10 a.m. First Friday Quilters	16 7 p.m. AA
17 10 a.m. Sunday School 11 a.m. Worship **AW Annual mts Potluck lunch**	18 Martin Luther King Day Office Closed 7 p.m. Church Council	19 5:30 p.m. Women's AA	20 1 p.m. PEO	21 4 p.m. GSA 1077 5:30 GSA 1064 5 p.m. Choir 6 p.m. Bells 6:30 p.m. Daisies	22	23 7 p.m. AA
24 10 a.m. Sunday School 11 a.m. Worship	25 5 p.m. GSA 1075 7 p.m. Troop 57	26 5:30 p.m. Women's AA	27	28 5:30 GSA 1064 5 p.m. Choir 6 p.m. Bells 6:30 p.m. Daisies	29	30 7 p.m. AA
31 10 a.m. Sunday School 11 a.m. Worship						