

february

FEBRUARY 2026

Issue No. 278

Random Acts of Kindness Month

With all the random acts of nastiness in our society, churches are being asked to extend an unexpected kindness to strangers as well as to people they know, including spouses, parents, children, pastors, and the world.

Worship WITH US

SUNDAY WORSHIP

9:00 am - Brady 1st & 3rd week
9:15 am - Dutton 2nd & 4th week
11:00 am - Choteau



THE SPARK

A spark is a small thing, yet it may kindle the world. - Tupper

Newsletter of the Choteau - Brady - Dutton UM Parish

I believe in a higher power too.

The difference is,
my higher power lowered
Himself to earth.
He became a servant.
He washed people's feet.
He performed miracles,
then slipped away
before the applause.

My higher power ate with the sinners,
wept with the weepers and carried
His own cross, where He loved me so hard
that He died, not for the good in me
but for the ugly in me.

My higher power is so big
and yet He wants to hear
about the details of my heart.
The grief that unravels me.
The anxiety that churns in me.
And my mustard grain of faith
that sometimes makes me question everything.

My higher power could have
made Himself a hero but
chose humility instead.
He could have stayed the Lion --
but He became the Lamb.

-ullie-kaye



FEBRUARY

Guess what? We did it! We made it through the darkest 10 weeks of the year! Mid-November to mid-January are the times when we have the least amount of daylight in the year. The Northern hemisphere is getting brighter one day at a time. As I am writing this, it is 40 degrees outside. It's still overcast and a little gray, but I see the light peeking through. Although we know that winter is far from over and negative temps and snow are sure to come our way for 2-3 more months, the light is breaking through.

Nature continues in its cycle - promising us that the light comes after the darkness, and we will enter another time of darkness next November. Not all of nature is predictable, but a lot of it is. As humans, we are in an unprecedented and unpredictable time. Yet nature teaches us that there will be light.

Jesus says in John 8:12, "I am the light of the world. Whoever follows me will never walk in darkness, but will have the light of life." The world seems mighty dark these days... so many are hurting. So many are suffering at the hands of oppressors. So many are experiencing compassion fatigue that leads to complacency and deep turmoil. Some days it sure does feel like I am walking in darkness.

I need this reminder from Jesus. I need a reminder from those who follow Jesus that we can be given the light of life when we extend our light to others, when we lift one another up, and when we stay true to the teaching of Jesus to love our neighbor, no exceptions. In Matthew 5:16 Jesus says, "In the same way, let your light shine before others, so that they may see your good works and give glory to your Father in heaven."

God offers us light if we are willing to turn on the light switch. Each time I reach out to a friend who I know is having a hard day, or I smile at a stranger who needs to feel seen, or I take the time to listen (even when I really would rather be alone) I turn the dimmer up on my light switch and allow God to bring a little more light into my life.

In the midst of all of the chaos, the injustice, the strife, I am reminded by the words of Jesus and by nature itself that light always comes after darkness. Even in the darkness there is light to be found. But I have to start by flipping on the light switch of LOVE.

Let God's Light Shine in You,

Grace and Peace,





February 1:

Micah 6:1-8; Psalm 15;
1 Corinthians 1:18-31; Matthew 5:1-12

February 8:

Isaiah 58:1-9a; Psalm 112:1-9;
1 Corinthians 2:1-12; Matthew 5:13-20

February 15:

Exodus 24:12-18; Psalm 2 or Psalm 99;
2 Peter 1:16-21; Matthew 17:1-9

February 22: 1st Sunday in Lent

Genesis 2:15-17; 3:1-7; Psalm 32;
Romans 5:12-19; Matthew 4:1-11

Skyline Lodge Study

Join us for Bible Study

1st & 3rd Wednesdays

11:00 AM

on the 2nd floor open space at

Skyline Lodge



PRE-K-6TH
DROP OFF—5:00 PM
PICK UP 6:00 PM

DINNER & DEVOTIONS—ALL AGES

Wednesday, February 11

CONNECT will be at Choteau UMC
and will be providing the meal.

GOOD GRIEF LOSS SUPPORT GROUP

Together, we find strength and comfort

2nd & 4th Wednesdays at 2PM
Choteau United Methodist Church
12 1st Ave NW

February 11 & 25

SUPPORT / SHARE

Loss includes death of a loved one or a pet, loss of independence, divorce, miscarriage, and so much more. If you are experiencing ANY kind of loss, you are welcome here.

Contact Rev. Kaitlin Elmore at
revkaitlin@gmail.com
for more information

Remember, we're all in the same boat!

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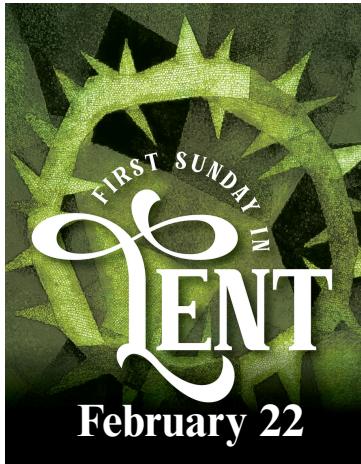
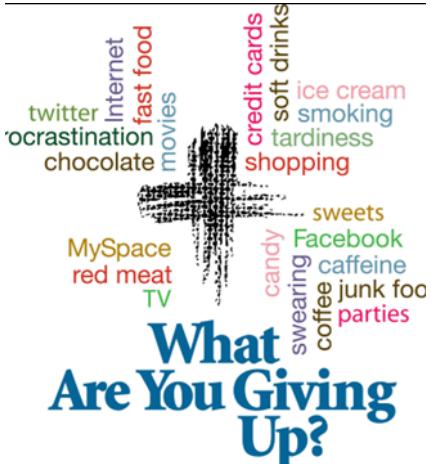
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Pancake Feed
Tuesday, February 17
5 - 7 pm
@ Choteau Pavilion

7th gr.—Adults—\$12
 K—6th gr.—\$6
 Sr. Citizens—\$10
 Preschool—Free

Sponsored by St. Joseph's Catholic Church



**Service of Repentance
 & Imposition of Ashes**

**Ecumenical Service
 at Trinity Lutheran Church**

Rev. Kaitlin Elmore and
 Pastor Cynthia Thomas, LMA
 will be leading the service.
 We hope you will join us
 for this deeply meaningful service.

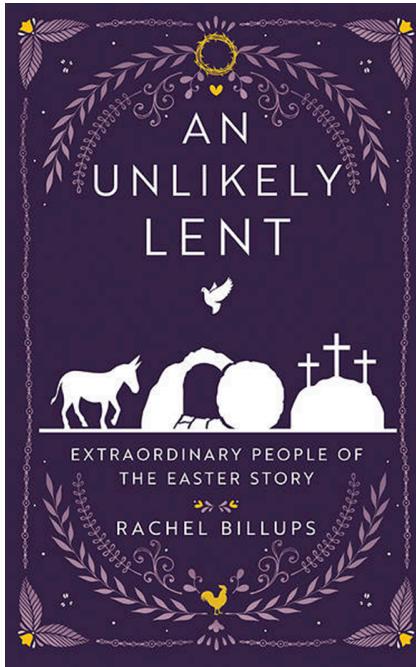


Lenten Study



Tuesdays - February 17 - March 31

2:00 pm – downstairs – Betty Phillips Room



Join us on the following **Tuesdays at 2PM** in the Betty Phillips room during Lent as we dive into “An Unlikely Lent: Extraordinary People of the Easter Story” by Rachel Billups. Books can be purchased for \$15 at the church office.

February 17th / Unlikely Offering: Mary of Bethany
February 24th / Unlikely Opposition: The Servant Girl
March 3rd / NO LENTEN STUDY
March 10th / Unlikely Freedom: Barabbas
March 17th / Unlikely Companionship: Simon of Cyrene
March 24th / Unlikely Courage: The Women at the Cross
March 31st / Unlikely Allies: Joseph of Arimathea and Nicodemus

YOUR MONETARY GIFTS AT WORK

The ministries of Choteau United Methodist church are made possible by your on-going financial contributions. Our congregation is 100% self-funded; we receive no outside funding.

Your gifts enable us to provide weekly worship, pastoral care, educational opportunities, youth group, Sunday school for children and adults, mission opportunities, the opportunity for us to provide responsible charitable contributions to help those in need, etc. Please consider making a financial contribution to Choteau UMC to support our life-transforming mission. To make a tax-deductible donation, you can send a check to our church office or contribute on Sunday during the offering. Financial statements are available upon request at the church office.

VITAL STATISTICS – Choteau UMC

2026 Budget for Choteau	\$ 128,500
Needed to meet budget – January	\$ 10,708
Received through January 18	\$ 8,654

Thank you for your on-going support!



Annual
Super Bowl Sunday
BBQ Pork
Rib Dinner

Carry-out ONLY

Sunday, February 8
Pickup at 12:00 Noon

Dutton UMC

Sponsored by Dutton UMC and Volunteers

1lb. Ribs only - \$10

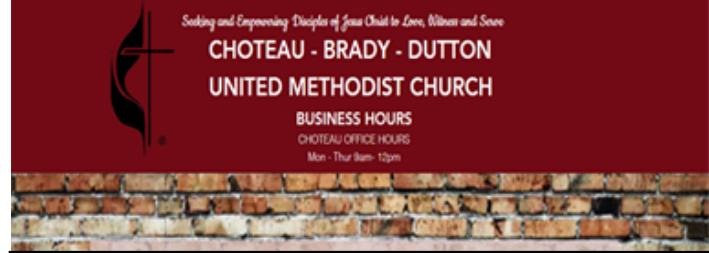
**1lb. Rib dinner with coleslaw, roll,
baked beans, and dessert - \$18**

**PLEASE ORDER
BY WEDNESDAY, FEBRUARY 4TH**

Order by calling

Vickie Maurer - 406-781-5504

Jean Harman - 406-868-1198



Website address: www.umchoteau.net

Bookmark the address above to your own computer (add it to your “favorites” list) so you can quickly click on it and stay connected! Use the website to check what’s going on and what’s coming up in the life of our parish.

Check out the new additions to the website:

· Sermons—video

And don’t forget our email address:

umc@3rivers.net

Like us on Facebook.com/Choteau UMC

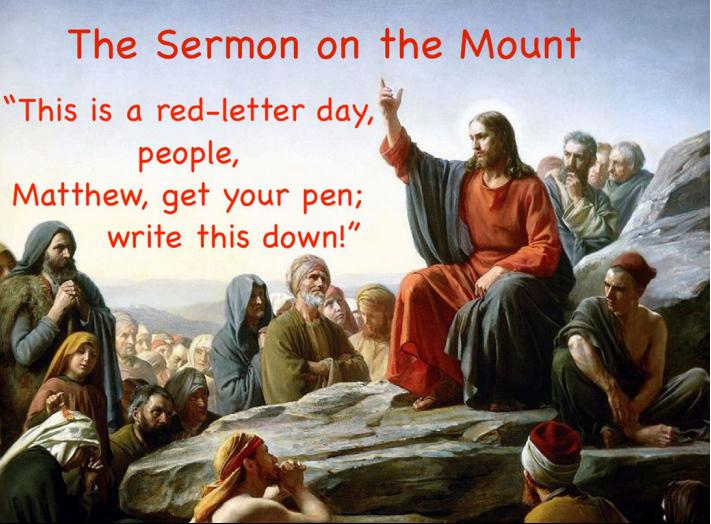
UPCOMING MEETINGS

Brady UMC Leadership Board

Tuesday, February 3 - 4:30 p.m.

Choteau UMC Leadership Board

Tuesday, February 10 - 7:00 p.m.



Found in Matthew chapters 5 through 7, the Sermon on the Mount presents a comprehensive vision for living in God’s Kingdom. Its teachings on character, compassion, and faith form the heart of Jesus’ message and invite everyone to a transformative way of life.



**2026 Mountain Sky
Five-Day Academy
for Spiritual Formation**
Monday, May 18, 2026
to Saturday, May 23, 2026
Rocky Mountain College - Billings, MT

Theme:

"Beholding God In the Landscape of Our Lives"

We find ourselves in the landscapes of our lives, longing for a closer connection to God. During this Academy, we seek to behold God through a rhythm of silence, community, learning, worship and fun. All are invited to this contemplative and transformational journey.

Beautiful Rocky Mountain College will serve as the setting for this Academy. As part of the Academy model, each participant will have an individual dorm room with a private bathroom. The Five-Day Academy begins on Monday afternoon, May 18th and ends on Saturday, May 23rd at noon. On the evening of the first day, there is a group dinner, a welcome and orientation, covenant group introduction, and a Eucharist celebration. Each day following includes curriculum sessions, times of silent reflection, discussions with the faculty, and Covenant Group meetings. There is also a nightly Eucharist Service, Morning Prayer and Night Prayer.

Registration rate is \$890. Refunds (minus a \$50 cancellation fee) will be considered until April 10, 2026.

Registration Link:

<https://mtnsky-brtapp.com/5DayAcademyforSpiritualFormation2026>

Rev. Dr. Safiyah Fosua and Ray Buckley are the featured faculty, and both Ray and Safiyah have podcasts on the Academy website if you are interested in learning more about them.

Puzzle!

Find and circle these words associated with the Lenten journey to the cross.

colt	denial	kiss	repent
confess	donkey	lots	silver
cross	forsaken	palms	sins
crown	Gethsemane	penance	suffer
crucifixion	Golgotha	Pilate	thorns
death	hosanna	prayer	vigil

E N A M E S H T E G R L W Y
C L E U X B M T H B U C W B
N R I K Y P A T E T I Y X Y
A V J G A L B R E Y A R P B
N G N L I S N L A I N E D X
E W M P R V R D H B N R D F
P S O G O L G O T H A B S C
D L N R O C O N F E S S I K
O T H T C P E K W U O U N D
M N S H N P W E D R H F S K
U N F O E T K Y C S G F O E
H E C R E V L I S W Q E C M
H V H N C X S O C C J R L O
F Q E S U D S H C A A Y M C
C R U C I F I X I O N S R V

G is for the Gift that we receive,
R is for the Reason we believe,
A is for Amazing that describes the hope it is raising,
C is for the Cross by which provides, all else is loss,
E is for effort that is not a part.
 That spells Grace, by which our lives can start,
 To be sure it's not a thing that we can do a thing for,
 Grace, not works, it's grace alone!

february

2026



Choteau-Brady-Dutton United Methodist Parish
Seeking and Empowering Disciples of Jesus Christ
to Love, Witness and Serve

SUNDAY	MONDAY	TUESDAY	WEDNESDAY	THURSDAY	FRIDAY	SATURDAY
1   Join Us for Worship	2 	3 Leadership Board Meeting 4:30 pm @ Brady UMC	4 11:00 AM Skyline Study 5-6 PM CONNECT Deadline for ordering Rib Dinner	5	6	7
8 Super Bowl BBQ Pork Rib Carry-out Dinner Dutton UMC 12 Noon	9	10 Leadership Board Meeting 7:00 pm @ Choteau UMC	11 2:00 PM Grief/Loss Support 5-6 PM CONNECT Meal at Choteau UMC	12	13	14 
15 Transfiguration Sunday  Bring a Friend This Sunday	16 	17 Lenten Study "An Unlikely Lent" 2 pm Shrove Tuesday Pancake Supper 5 - 7 pm Choteau Pavilion	18  6:30 pm @ Trinity Lutheran 11:00 AM Skyline Study NO CONNECT	19	20	21
22 	23	24 Lenten Study "An Unlikely Lent" 2 pm	25 2:00 PM Grief/Loss Support 5-6 PM CONNECT	26	27	28



Choteau-Brady-Dutton
United Methodist Parish
PO Box 108
12 First Ave NW
Choteau, MT 59422

Phone: 406-466-2641
Email: umc@3rivers.net
Web: www.umchoteau.net
Facebook.com/Choteau UMC

Rev. Kaitlin Elmore, Pastor
Lila Dunn, Admin. Assist.



Paper editions of the parish newsletter
are available at Choteau UMC in the
main and handicap entrances.

Seeking and Empowering Disciples of Jesus Christ to Love, Witness and Serve



**This month's newsletter is sponsored by:
Don & Dora Jermunson**



Lisa pictured on the right
with brother, Chris, and his wife, Jeni.

**In loving memory of
Lisa Bradley**

daughter of Connie Bradley



**Please continue to consider sponsoring an issue of The Spark
for \$40, and your sponsorship will be noted in the newsletter.**

What a nice recognition in honor or memory of someone, or as a gift!

Submit your sponsor information to the parish office.