

The Spark

Newsletter of the Choteau-Brady-Dutton UM Parish

JANUARY 2026 Issue 277

The Work of Christmas

by Howard Thurman

When the song of the angels is stilled,
when the star in the sky is gone,
when the kings and princes are home,
when the shepherds are back with their flocks,
the work of Christmas begins:
 to find the lost,
 to heal the broken,
 to feed the hungry,
 to release the prisoner,
 to rebuild the nations,
 to bring peace among the people,
 to make music in the heart.

As we enter the New Year, I can't help but reflect on all the changes from beginning the year with a partial knee replacement, not knowing where God (and Bishop Stoneking) would lead me next, with heavy doses of anxiety and hope, to moving from Colorado to Northern Montana to be with you all. I am reflecting with awe and wonder at a divine plan that I could have never dreamt up on my own. Choteau, Brady, and Dutton United Methodist Churches have been a huge part of that divine plan. I am so grateful for each and every one of you and the work that we are doing together to share the light of Christ with the world.

I never imagined that God would put such a wonderful partner in my life so soon. Jeremy Brown and I have decided to join our lives, and we will get married this June! Jeremy has been the kitchen manager at Benefis Teton Medical Center for the last 16 years, and he is looking forward to not only being in my life, but in yours too! He is up to the challenge of taking on a new role as PH (Pastor's Husband).

Along with this wonderful partner comes a package of his 4 wonderful children— Dylan (24), Angela (10), Autumn (9), and Ellie (8). When I first got to Choteau, several church members asked how I could bring young families to the church. This was not the plan, but God has a spectacular sense of humor!



**Thank you for welcoming my new family
into our church family with open arms!
We are overwhelmed with your love
and support as we journey
in faith and hope together.**

**Grace and Blessings to You and Yours
in 2026 and always!**



Rev. Kaitlin

Worship WITH US

SUNDAY WORSHIP

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



January 4: Epiphany Sunday

Jeremiah 31:7-14; Psalm 147:12-20
 Ephesians 1:3-14; John 1:(1-9), 10-18

January 11: Baptism of the Lord

Isaiah 42:1-9; Psalm 29
 Acts 10:34-43; Matthew 13-17

January 18:

Isaiah 49:1-7; Psalm 40:1-11
 1 Corinthians 1:1-9; John 1:29-42

January 25:

Isaiah 9:1-4; Psalm 27:1, 4-9;
 1 Corinthians 1:10-18;
 Matthew 4:12-23

PROCRASTINATION

One of the most tragic things I know about human nature is that all of us tend to put off living. We are all dreaming of some magical rose garden over the horizon—instead of enjoying the roses that are blooming outside our windows today.

Dale Carnegie

Skyline Lodge Bible 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
 Resumes Wednesday, January 7

GOOD GRIEF LOSS SUPPORT GROUP

Together, we find strength and comfort

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



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

Happy New Year!!

Once again, we are ringing in the new year! Whether the year went by super fast or felt like it trudged on, whether it was full of joy or tinted with difficulty or a mix of both, we reflect on God's grace in those moments.

We will begin a new Sermon Series on Sunday, January 25th using the book "Making All Things New" by Henri Nouwen. Together we will explore what it means to live a spiritual life amid our sometimes hectic and restless lives. Nouwen helps us to see how Jesus responds to our paralyzing worries by offering us a new life, a life in which the Spirit of God can make all things new for us.

Making All Things New is an easy, short read. If you would like to follow along, you can purchase the book on Amazon for \$10.



Dear UM Church,

Thank you for all the yummy cookies, cornbread, and dinner rolls for the Blood Drive. We are blessed by your generosity and willingness to help others. Hope you all had a wonderful Christmas, and the new year is full of God's blessing.

Cindy Lowry

Dear UMC Members:

On behalf of Opportunities for All Scholarship, I wish to thank you for your generous donation to The Lights of Love Project. All funds contributed during this season will provide funding for the continued scholarship work supporting the OFAS Mission.

Your contribution of \$300 will be used for the benefit of those individuals in Teton County who will be able to experience the opportunity to participate in enrichment programs because of your generosity.

Thank you again for your support of OFAS!

*Marsha Hinch, Vice-President
Board of Directors OFAS*

Dear United Methodist Congregation,

Thank you for your very generous donation of \$300 for Neighbors Helping Neighbors. We understand that this donation was part of a grant to the church from the Town Pump Foundation. Our sincere thank you also to The Town Pump Foundation.

This donation has been applied to our most recent project; "The Choteau Youth Alliance" Child Care program asked for our help for parents who were unable to pay their bills for child care. These parents relieved and grateful for our help which allows these children to continue to receive care into the new year.

Linda Sentz, Volunteer for Neighbors Helping Neighbors

Dear Church Family,

I want to take a moment to express my heartfelt gratitude for the incredible support, prayers, and kindness you have shown me during the difficult time of Terry's illness and death. Knowing that I am surrounded by such a caring and faith-filled community has brought comfort, strength, and peace to my heart. Thank you for being there for me, for reaching out with words of hope, gifts of food and flowers, and for lifting me up in prayer. I am truly grateful for each of you and for the love that binds us together as a church family.

Thank you again for your unwavering support.

With love and appreciation, Lila



Altar Committees and Others of All 3 Parish Churches for all your assistance in preparing the churches, sanctuaries and grounds for Advent and Christmas season. Special thanks to Perri Lindgren for dedication to lowering/raising the Advent wreath during the season at Choteau UMC.



Did you know?

The large, beautiful banners that adorn the altar of Choteau UMC especially during the Advent/Christmas and Lent/Easter Season were crafted by **Jerry Dunkel**. Jerry is a member of the church but now lives in Great Falls. Thank you for your gift and talent that we appreciate each year!

ALL who so graciously accept requests to read scripture and other readings for worship services in 2025. Hope you all will continue to honor requests in 2026! Thanks so much! - Lila

Choteau UMC is grateful to have received \$500 from a grant submitted to Town Pump Foundation in 2025 for the "Adopted Family/Charitable Giving" fund. A contribution of \$300 was given to each of the three local charities: Neighbors Helping Neighbors, Opportunities for All Scholarships, Inc., and Choteau Elementary Pantry.

JANICE FARRELL & OTHERS for their continued support and participation with the Conrad/Brady Christmas Giving Tree Project.

MUSICIANS, VOCALISTS & TECHNICIANS: Mary Sexton, Cheryl Schlepp, Lorran Depner, Lila Dunn, Glorioso Bell Ringers for all of the extra hours of rehearsal and beautiful music provided during this Advent/Christmas season and throughout the year for our Parish churches.

COMMUNION STEWARDS: Juli Kostelnik, Linda & Brooks Coffland, Dora Jermunson, Nancy Preitauer and Vickie Maurer for your dedication to preparing communion elements throughout the year.

Sharon Haug, Diane Inbody, Juli Kostelnik, Jaynie Gollehon, Carol Keller, Gwen Goodell, and Larry Harman for your many hours of dedication to the recordkeeping of the churches finances and special projects throughout the year and especially at year-end.

Georgia Buck, Duane Halverson & Others for your dedication and special efforts to provide hospitality beverages and treats for the congregations after worship each Sunday. Thank you Cheryl Schlepp for continuing the Christmas Eve tradition of Angel Food cakes for Jesus' birthday at Brady UMC. We are very appreciative!

CRYSTAL CARLSON for your assistance as PowerPoint tech throughout the year but especially for Christmas Eve service. You are appreciated!
- Lila



Longest Night Service

Rev. Kaitlin and Barbara Arensmeyer from Trinity Lutheran Church for providing a meaningful Longest Night/Blue Christmas Service on December 14.

Duane Halverson, Kelly DeBruycker, Connie Rogers, Dora Jermunson, Diane Inbody and Lila Dunn for providing the food items for the recent Blood Draw. Your generous contributions are appreciated!

BIG thanks to the "Snow Angels", Perri Lindgren, Norman Haug, Martin Family for your assistance in keeping the parking lot and sidewalks cleared of snow. - Lila

Brady All-Class Reunion

July 18, 2026

A Brady School Reunion committee has been formed and is planning an all-class reunion for Saturday, July 18, 2026 in conjunction with Brady Western Days. Initial plans for July 18 include parade participation, time for visiting at the Brady Community Hall and Brady Community United Methodist Church, program, viewing of memorabilia, and food. We are also working on a book, which will span all graduating classes 1929 – 2005.

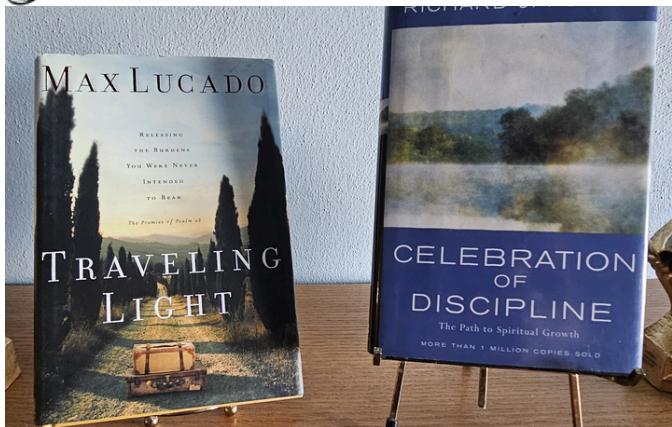


If you are interested in attending please contact Barb Coffman via email at bcoffman@3rivers.net or 406-781-2298 or Janice Farkell via email at jafarkell@3rivers.net or 406-788-4880 by January 1, 2026. Please include the year you graduated, maiden name, mailing address and phone number. This is a pre-registration so that we can get an estimate of how many people plan to attend. A formal registration form with cost for attending will be sent out by March, 2026.

We want to include you in the book whether you plan to attend or not. Please contact Janice Farkell for more information regarding the book.



Parishioner's Picks



Ease into a new season with Max Lucado's *Traveling Light*. Based on Psalm 23, the author's words offer fresh interpretation for those who are feeling weary.

Richard Foster's classic Quaker thought in *Celebration of Discipline*, walks the reader through the inward, outward, and communal disciplines that bring balanced freedom to Christian life.

There's no man like snowman:

What did the snowman say to the aggressive carrot?
- "Get out of my face."

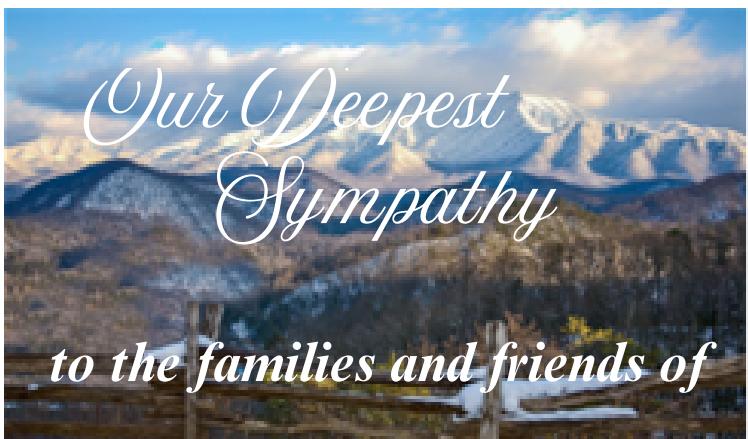


What do you call an old snowman?
-Water.

What do they sing at a snowman's birthday party?
- Freeze a jolly good fellow!

What do snowmen eat for breakfast?
-Ice Krispies.

What is a snowman temper tantrum called?
- A meltdown.



Willis Heron

Death – December 7, 2025

Memorial arrangements pending.

Lisa Bradley

Death – December 18, 2025

Daughter of Connie Bradley



CHRISTIANS
Caring for each other

**Please remember
to contact Rev. Kaitlin**

**(office 406-466-2641;
cell 903-276-7857)**

**when one of our UMC family
members needs a card or visit
because of loneliness, illness
or other crisis in their lives.**

JANUARY

Birthdays & Anniversaries

2	Casey Jo Rasmussen
5	Norman Haug
	Ethan Haug
8	Joey Clark
9	Jeff Howard
13	Joni Haug
14	Melody Martinsen
15	Connie Bradley
	Ajay Dyer
17	Jeanette "Tootie" Rasmussen
22	Connor Christman
23	Scot Sessions
24	Garrett Depner
25	Barrett Cocolli
	August (Gus) Halverson
	Flint Rasmussen
	Gene Sentz
26	Pastor Alyssa Nant
27	Jami Gameon
28	Sarah Sentz
30	Gertie Cocolli
	Anna Lee Erickson
31	Addi Christensen
	Cody Christman
	Jacquey Cooney

Dear 2026,

Come gently please.
Whisper softly of changing.
Let my heart adjust to new rhythms.
Bring me joy over happiness.
Gratitude over complaint.
Love over judgment.
Rest over exhaustion.
May my feet keep walking –
even when the soil is rough.
Let me grow where growth is needed
and be still where I am asked to wait.

Be good to me.

ullie-kaye



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 – Chateau UMC

2025 Budget for Choteau \$ 44,444

(This budget figure for Aug. – Dec. 31, 2025)

Needed to meet budget – December \$ 44,444

Received through December 28 \$ 41,090

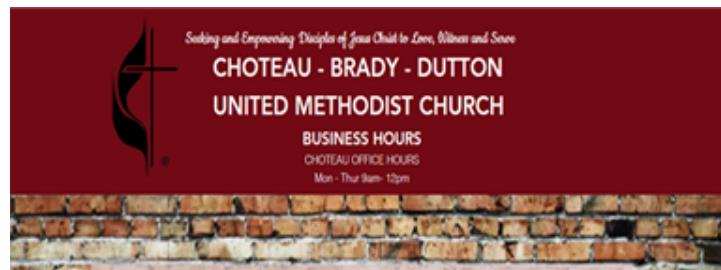
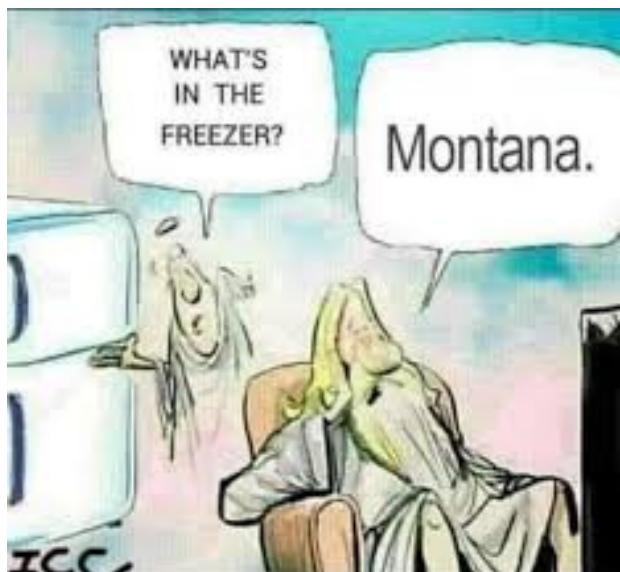
Thank you for your on-going support!

HUMAN RELATIONS DAY

~ special giving ~

Sunday, January 18

Human Relations Day provides a way for United Methodist communities to come together to invest in those in need of hope and an opportunity to thrive. Your gifts on Human Relations Day support after-school programs, prison outreach, gang intervention, youth development and other ministries in communities across the United States.



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](https://www.facebook.com/ChoteauUMC)

UPCOMING MEETINGS

Choteau UMC Leadership Board

Tuesday, January 20

7:00 p.m.

THIS YEAR I WANT TO BE MORE LIKE JESUS:

- > Hang out with sinners.
- > Upset religious people.
- > Tell stories that make people think.
- > Choose unpopular friends.
- > Be kind, loving and merciful.
- > Take naps on boats.

January

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
SUNDAY WORSHIP 9:00 am - Brady 1st & 3rd week 9:15 am - Dutton 2nd & 4th week 11:00 am - Choteau		Office Hours : Mon - Thurs 9am - Noon (406) 466-2641 umc@3rivers.net www.umchoteau.net Facebook.com/Choteau UMC		1 <i>Office Closed</i>  <i>Looking Toward the New Year</i>	2	3
4 <i>Holy Communion</i> 	5	6	7 11:00 AM Skyline Study 5-6 PM CONNECT	8	9	10
11  Baptism of the Lord Sunday Guest Speaker: Brooks Coffland	12	13	14 2:00 PM Grief/Loss Support 5-6 PM CONNECT	15	16	17
18  Human Relations Day ~ special offering ~ Guest Speaker: Heather McCartney Duty	19 Rev. Martin Luther King Jr.'s Birthday Observance	20 Leadership Board Meeting 7:00 pm @ Choteau UMC	21 11:00 AM Skyline Study 5-6 PM CONNECT	22	23	24
25 	26	27	28 2:00 PM Grief/Loss Support 5-6 PM CONNECT	29	30	31



Choteau-Brady-Dutton
United Methodist Parish
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Email: umc@3rivers.net
Web: www.umchoteau.net
Facebook.com/Choteau UMC

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

First Std
U.S. Postage



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

**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.