

PARACLETE

DECEMBER 2025

HOLY SPIRIT | EPISCOPAL CHURCH

130 South 6th Street East • Missoula, MT 59801 • 406.542.2167 • E-mail: office@holyspiritmissoula.org • Website: www.holyspiritmissoula.org

A publication of Holy Spirit Episcopal Church



Stewardship 2026 Your Generous Gifts Lift Holy Spirit

This month we'll draw a line under the tally of annual gifts from our generous parishioners that will support Holy Spirit over the year ahead. Already, we can see there is a strong commitment to our parish and a wonderful number of annual gifts from new members of our congregation.

Your support is welcome any time. And before the end of 2025 is still a very good time to make your annual gift. It's also a reminder to consider any tax-advised gifts before year-end.

Together, we are moving our church community toward what's next – a new year of worship, community and connection as we seek a new rector. Thank you for your important role in supporting Holy Spirit Episcopal Church.

– THE STEWARDSHIP COMMITTEE

Bishop Marty's Visitation – December 14

A day of celebration, Confirmation and blessing

The Rt. Rev. Marty Stebbins, the 10th Bishop of Montana, will make her annual visitation to Holy Spirit Episcopal Church on **Sunday, December 14**. Please mark your calendars for this special day in the life of our parish.

As chief pastor and teacher of the diocese, Bishop Marty will **preside and preach at both services**, with **Confirmation taking place at the 10:15 a.m. service**. We are thrilled to celebrate the Confirmation of two individuals into The Episcopal Church and to welcome them with joy and prayer.

This year's visitation will also include a **special moment of thanksgiving and remembrance**. We will honor longtime parishioner and devoted Altar Guild member, Mary Lou Cordis, as Bishop Marty

blesses the **Rose Vestments** given in her name. These vestments will serve as a lasting symbol of Mary Lou's faithful service and dedication to our worship life.

As is our diocesan custom, an **offering for the Bishop's Discretionary Fund** will be taken at both services. Your generosity helps meet pastoral needs across the diocese. Checks may be made payable to **"The Episcopal Diocese of Montana"** with "Discretionary Fund" in the memo line, or you may give through **Pushpay** by selecting "Bishop's Discretionary Fund" from the list of options.

Please join us for this meaningful Sunday of worship, welcome, and remembrance.

– REV. TERRI



HOLY SPIRIT | EPISCOPAL CHURCH
invites you to join us in welcoming

The Rt. Rev. Marty Stebbins
Bishop of Montana
Sunday, December 14, 2025

The bishop will preach and preside at both services, 8 a.m. and 10:15 a.m., with Confirmation at the 10:15 a.m. service. A special reception for the confirmands and the bishop will follow the 10:15 a.m. service. Please join us!

OUR STAFF

Clergy:

The Rev. Gretchen Strohmaier,
Co-Rector
Gretchen@holyspiritmissoula.org
The Rev. Terri Ann Grotzinger
(retired), Co-Rector
revterri@holyspiritmissoula.org
The Rev. Dorcie Dvarishkis,
Deacon
dorcied@gmail.com

Director of Music:

Dr. Nancy Cooper

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NEWSLETTER

Paraclete, from the Greek meaning 'Holy Spirit,' is published monthly, September through May, by Holy Spirit Episcopal Church. All material is due by the fifteenth of the month preceding the month of publication.

**HOLY
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Join us in person for Lessons and Carols on December 21

The Festival Service of Nine Lessons and Carols will take place on Sunday evening, December 21, at 7 p.m. in the church. The choir and organ will be in splendid voice, and the beautiful carols and anthems will be the perfect introduction to the last days before Christmas.

The Festival Service of Nine Lessons and Carols, which began in England in the early 1900s, is now a part of Anglican and Episcopal worship throughout the world. The service is made up of lessons alternating with the singing of congregational and choral music. Beginning with the story of Adam and Eve, the lessons trace the prophecies of the Nativity and end with the

beautiful passage from John: "In the Beginning was the Word...."

I invite all of you to join the choir on the 21st, and in the words of the beautiful opening prayer,
to hear again the message of the angels, and in heart and mind to go even unto Bethlehem and see this thing which is come to pass...

A festive reception will follow in the parish hall, hosted by the Wholly Fun Committee.

This service will not be live-streamed or recorded but is in-person only. We hope to see you there!

— DR. NANCY COOPER
DIRECTOR OF MUSIC

Reception following in the Parish Hall, hosted by the Wholly Fun Committee. All are welcome!

Rector Search Committee Update

Preparing the way: Our search for a new Rector

The Holy Spirit Rector search committee has been working on our Parish Profile, which describes who we are as a spiritual community, why Holy Spirit would be a fabulous place for a new Rector to want to work, and what a wonderful place Missoula is to live. This will become our advertisement for the Rector position at Holy Spirit. We have finished a draft Profile and are working on the graphic design with Kirk Johnson.

In addition to the Profile, the search committee is beginning work on the national Episcopal Church's Office for Transition Ministry's (OTM's) Portfolio. The OTM Profile is a set of answers to specific questions about the

position that Rectors searching for new positions can access.

You, our congregation have a role in this search! Stay tuned for our letter and digital copies of the Parish Profile so that you can contact Rectors and parishes you know that may be interested in our role at Holy Spirit. It is entirely possible that the Rector we seek is someone who doesn't know they want to come to Holy Spirit yet.

As always, reach out to any Search Committee member or write to: rectorsearch@holyspiritmissoula.org if you have any questions or comments.

— BILL DRUMMOND
SEARCH COMMITTEE CHAIR



Christmas Eve at Holy Spirit Episcopal Church

Three services, one Holy Night

Come celebrate the mystery of God's love born among us in Jesus through three distinct and meaningful services on **Christmas Eve, Wednesday, December 24**. Whether you're bringing little ones, gathering with friends, or seeking quiet reverence, there's a place for you here.

4:00 PM – Intergenerational Service

A joyful, family-friendly celebration with Christmas carols and a kid-friendly retelling of the Christmas story. Children are invited up front to help place figures in the Christmas crèche as the story unfolds. Communion will follow. All ages welcome!

6:30 PM – Outdoor Courtyard Service

Though our grand Holy Spirit tree no longer stands at the center of the courtyard, the spirit of gathering remains. Join us at 6:30 p.m. for a new experience of our **Outdoor**

Christmas Eve Service with Scripture, prayers, carol singing, and the telling of the Christmas story by firelight. We'll close with **Silent Night sung by candlelight**.

Dress warmly, bring family and friends—**leashed pets welcome**—and share in this peaceful, heartwarming celebration under the stars. *(Please note: there will be no Eucharist at this service.)*

10:00 PM – Traditional Christmas Eve Service

Our beloved late-night service with full choir, Communion, and timeless Christmas readings. We'll close the evening with **Silent Night sung by candlelight**, a cherished tradition that gently ushers in the holy mystery of Christmas.

No matter which service you attend—or if you come to all three—know that you are part of a community gathered in love, hope, and joy. Let's celebrate together.

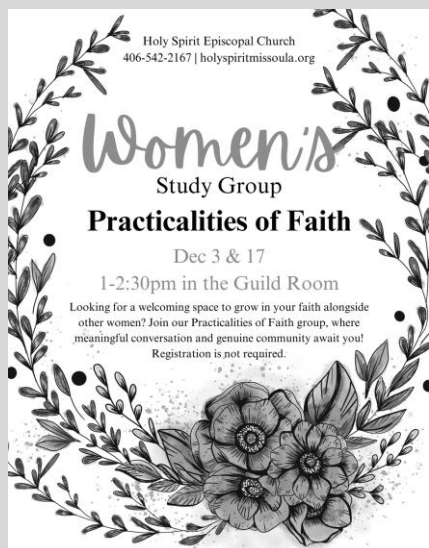
— REV. TERRI

When does Baptism take place at Holy Spirit?

Holy Baptism is full initiation by water and the Holy Spirit into Christ's Body the Church. Baptism takes place during the Easter Vigil service (Saturday evening, in April), and at a Sunday service about three times a year: the Day of Pentecost (at the end of May next year), the Sunday after All Saints' Day (early November), and the Feast of the Baptism of our Lord (the first Sunday after Epiphany, in early January). Baptism may also take place when the bishop visits (in December this year), and on a Sunday during the summer on a date to be determined. If you are interested in Baptism for yourself or for your child, preparation needs to take place. Please contact the office at (406) 542-2167 to speak with one of our co-rectors.

The next date for Baptism will be on January 11, 2026, the Baptism of Our Lord.





Women's Group: Living Our Faith Together

Looking for a space to reflect, connect, and grow in faith with other women? Come join the *Practicalities of Faith* group, a welcoming circle led by Julie Benson, where heartfelt conversation and spiritual companionship flourish. Whether you're navigating life's joys or challenges, this group offers a gentle place to share, listen, and explore how faith shapes our everyday experiences.

All women are welcome—bring a friend, bring your questions, and come just as you are. No preparation needed, just a spirit open to connection.

Upcoming gatherings:
December 3 & 17
1-2:30 p.m. in the Guild Room

Drop in for one or both sessions—no registration required. Whether you're new to Holy Spirit or a longtime parishioner, we'd love to have you.

Come be part of a supportive community where faith meets real life, and where women encourage one another to live with purpose, grace, and joy.

Creating Pocket Altars: A gentle invitation to pause

Saturday, December 6 • 1-4 pm • Parish Hall

Join Rev. Gretchen and Connie Gerke for a peaceful afternoon of creativity and reflection as we craft personal pocket altars—small, meaningful touchstones you can carry with you through the holiday season and beyond.

This hands-on workshop offers a chance to pause, reflect, and build something sacred: a mini-altar tucked into a pocket or pouch, designed to offer grounding, comfort, and connection wherever you go. You'll see inspiring examples and receive all the supplies you need.

To make your altar truly personal, we invite you to bring small photos, mementoes, or tokens that hold meaning for you.

Whether you're seeking a moment of calm, a reminder of love, or a portable piece of spiritual support, this workshop is a beautiful way to enter the season with intention.

Please sign up by Monday, December 1. Email Connie at: Connie@holyspiritmissoula.org.

— REV. GRETCHEN AND
CONNIE GERKE

POCKET ALTAR WORKSHOP

UNLEASH YOUR CREATIVITY!

Join Rev. Gretchen and Connie Gerke for a peaceful afternoon of creativity and reflection. Craft your own pocket altar – a small, meaningful touchstone to carry through the holiday season and beyond.



WORKSHOP DETAILS

- SATURDAY, DECEMBER 6
- 1 PM-4 PM IN THE PARISH HALL
- SIGN UP BY MONDAY, DECEMBER 1
- ALL SUPPLIES PROVIDED; FEEL FREE TO BRING PHOTOS OR MEMENTOES TO PERSONALIZE YOUR ALTAR.
- EMAIL CONNIE TO SIGN UP: CONNIE@HOLYSPIRITMISSOULA.ORG

The Holiday Market wraps up with the Bake Sale

Sunday, December 7 • After both services

Yes, it's back — and sweeter than ever! Our beloved Holiday Market Bake Sale returns on Sunday, December 7, following both the 8:00 a.m. and 10:15 a.m. services. Come treat yourself and stock up on homemade goodies just in time for the season!

Cookies, Cakes, and More!

From classic favorites to new temptations, there'll be plenty to choose from. Our legendary cookie table will be brimming with irresistible treats — mix and match your own assortment or grab a ready-to-go plate for easy gifting (or snacking!).

Calling All Bakers!

We need your help to make this event a delicious success. Dust off your recipe books, tie on your

aprons, and whip up your best baked goods to donate!

Drop-off times for donations:

- **Friday, December 5** — Parish Hall Kitchen (before 4:00 p.m.)
- **Saturday, December 6** — Parish Hall (10:00 a.m. to 12:00 noon)
- **Sunday, December 7** — Parish Hall (before either service)

Volunteers Needed!

We're also looking for cheerful helpers during both services on Sunday. If you can lend a hand, we'd love to have you!

To sign up, contact:

Laura Taylor at (406) 552-5825 or the Church Office (406) 542-2167.



*Holiday Market Chair
Sue Lowery*

Together, we made holiday magic!

Blowing fall leaves and a little sun, smiling shoppers, holiday piano music, and sales—what a weekend! The Parish Hall was transformed into a holiday store in four amazing days with bountiful donations and the hardest-working volunteers imaginable. This year's Holiday Market was a joyful triumph.

From tempting raffle baskets to antique tables glowing in the autumn sunlight, from Dalton Anderson's festive carols to the aroma of coffee and hot cocoa—it was two days of holiday magic. And the grand total? Over **\$15,156.00** raised!

Heartfelt thanks to everyone who donated, baked, sorted, sold, shopped, and smiled. You made this a Market to Remember. And a very special thank you to **Sue Lowery**, whose steady leadership and good cheer guided it all.

Stay tuned as the Christmas bake sale is coming soon — another perfect opportunity to share in the talents and love and generosity of our Holy Spirit Parish Family.



**Holiday Market Cookie Sale
December 7 following
both services**

Community Ministries The Hope in being SEEN

Parenting Place (PP) and the Child Abuse Prevention Network of Montana recently hosted a screening and discussion of SEEN: THE FILM. SEEN is described as an intimate exploration of how personal healing can profoundly impact the journey of parenthood. PP Executive Director, Ivy Anderson, noted how each parent in the film spoke of how they were repeating the parenting styles they experienced without realizing the harm they were perpetuating. The film lifted up the importance of a parent's mental health and the work of healing their own childhood wounds as they work to parent in new ways. As in so much of the work of PP, opportunities like gathering for SEEN spread awareness and uplift hope that it's never too late to repair relationships.

At its core, PP is about meeting parents and caregivers of children where they are at, truly seeing them, and nurturing trauma-informed practices that can reveal and heal. Our support of the staff and participants there weave us into these circles of hope. To learn more about the offerings of PP, visit parentingplace.net or give me a call at the church office.

Alongside you in nurturing hope for our community,

— THE VEN. DORCIE KAFKA
DVARISHKIS
dorcied@gmail.com
406-542-2167 church office



Missoula Food Bank Ministry Loving Our Neighbors: Partnering with the Missoula Food Bank

This season, Holy Spirit is proud to partner with the Missoula Food Bank to help nourish our community in body and spirit. From festive donations to hands-on volunteering, there are many ways to share the love—and we invite you to join in.

December Food Bank Donations: Fill the Basket, Fill a Heart

A huge thank you to everyone who's already contributed to our Parish Hall Donation Basket! As we approach the winter holidays, let's continue to share the wonder of the season with warm, non-perishable foods and baking items such as: dry/canned soups or beans, crackers, stuffing, canned pumpkin/cranberries, canned meats, applesauce and canned fruit, hot chocolate, marshmallows, oil, baking soda/powder, white/wheat flour, white/brown sugar, salt, seasonal spices, baking chips, nuts, cake/brownie/muffin mixes, or frosting.

Your generosity helps create holiday tables full of warmth and dignity.

Share Your Recipe: Teach a Cooking Class

Do you have a favorite family dish that warms you from the inside out? A clever kitchen trick or budget-friendly

meal idea? The Food Bank's Community Center includes a teaching kitchen—and they're looking for volunteers to lead cooking classes! To learn more or sign up, contact Ashlee Schleicher at ashlee@missoulafoodbank.org. Your recipe could become someone's new favorite.

Envelope Assembly Nights: Paper with Purpose Meets in the Parish Hall

📅 **Tuesday, January 13 at 5:00 PM**

📅 **Tuesday, January 20 at 5:00 PM**

Start the new year with hearts full and hands busy. Join us for a simple, joyful way to support the Food Bank's mission: folding, stuffing, and sealing fundraising envelopes. It's easy, social, and deeply impactful. Whether you come for one evening or both, your time helps turn paper into possibility.

Bring a friend, share a laugh, and be part of something meaningful. To sign up, text or call Rosemary at 406-570-7074, or add your name to the sheet in the Parish Hall.

Together, we can help ensure that every neighbor has a place at the table.

— KATHY BERMAN AND
ROSEMARY GOODFRIEND
FOOD BANK MINISTRY

Help provide socks and gloves for Missoula's houseless

WARM HANDS, warm feet!



Please donate a pair of men's and/or women's socks and gloves or warm hats

January 4, 11, and 18 in the parish hall or on the church porch

Bring your donations January 4, 11, and 18 Socks, gloves, and hats needed for houseless men and women

For the tenth straight year, Holy Spirit will be conducting its annual sock-hat-scarf-glove-mitten drive to collect warm apparel for our houseless brothers and sisters who are receiving shelter at the Poverello Center or are sleeping outside and being served by the Housing Outreach Team (The HOT Team). This season's drive will begin on Sunday, January 4, and will continue through Sunday, January 18. Ye olde red-and-white striped box will once again be set up in the parish hall to collect your wooly socks, hats, scarves, gloves and mittens. Donations also can be placed in a plastic bin located on the porch outside the church office.

The needs of the houseless are especially great this year, due to funding cuts, the closure of the Johnson Street shelter, and a winter predicted to be colder and snowier in the northern United States.

As always, we welcome items that are hand-knit, store-bought or gently used. Please remember: socks should be made from wool or synthetic fabrics such as Thermolite. Please NO COTTON! Cotton does not keep

out the cold and fails to wick away moisture, making feet feel damp and cold. Houseless men and women who sleep at the Poverello Center spend many of their daytime hours outside in our cold, snowy, and windy winter weather. The Pov's HOT Team also serves those individuals who are shelter resistant and sleep outdoors or in their vehicles. As a result, the Pov goes through countless pairs of socks and other wooly items in a single day!

We appreciate whatever items you can donate to this critically important drive. If parishioners would like to place a bin outside their homes or work spaces and accept donations from their neighbors, coworkers, or customers, please email me at lucia.solowork@gmail.com. I am happy to provide the bin and signage and collect the contents as needed.

As you are doing your holiday shopping this year, please remember to pick up some warm socks, hats, scarves, gloves or mittens for our houseless neighbors. Thanks in advance for your generosity!

— LUCIA SOLORZANO WORK
SOCIAL CONCERNS COMMITTEE

Cursillo Retreat coming to Camp Marshall this Spring, April 17-19, 2026

Planning is underway for a spring Cursillo retreat at Camp Marshall, April 17-19, 2026—and we're looking for team members, candidates, and support staff to help bring this meaningful experience to life.

Cursillo is a three-day spiritual renewal retreat rooted in Christian community, reflection, and growth. Whether you're curious about attending or eager to serve, there's a place for you.

To learn more or get involved, please contact Doug or Judy Anderson:

✉ Email: djka740@live.com

☎ Phone: 406-728-8822 or 406-360-3762



Exploring the Book of Common Prayer with Rev. Terri

Join me on *Tuesday, January 13 and 20, from 6:00–7:30 p.m.* in the Guild Room as we explore the practicalities of the Book of Common Prayer (BCP)—a treasure trove of wisdom, comfort, and guidance for our daily lives.

We'll look beyond Sunday worship to discover how the BCP can support personal prayer, deepen spiritual reflection, and offer language for life's milestones and moments. Whether you're a cradle Episcopalian or just learning how to pronounce "Episcopal," this is a welcoming space to engage, ask questions, and grow together.

— REV. TERRI

HOLY SPIRIT PARISH

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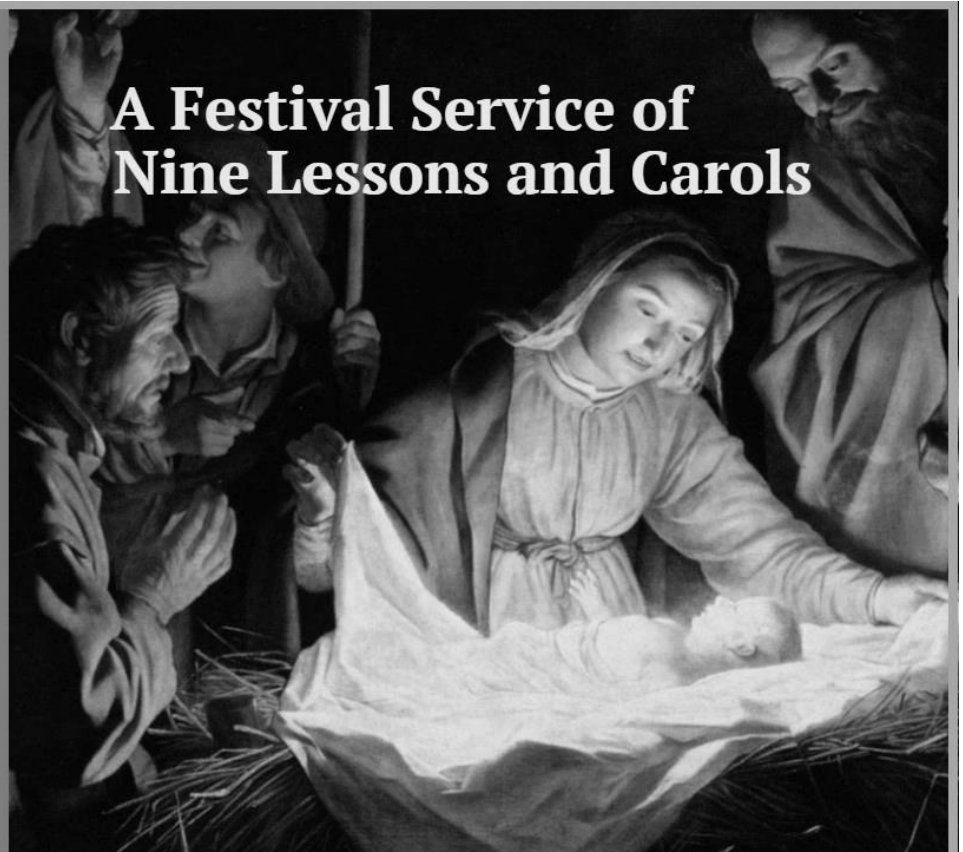
RETURN SERVICE REQUESTED



*The Christmas Story
in Word
and Song*

Sunday,
December 21
7 p.m.

*Reception follows in
parish hall hosted by the
Wholly Fun Committee*



A Festival Service of Nine Lessons and Carols