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The Communicator

March, 2017



with god we will [WITNESS]
Returning...Repairing...Restoring...

By **Rev. Nayiri Karjian**, *Interim Lead Minister*

nayiri@fcucc.org

From the light of Epiphany we enter the darkness of Lent. No other season on the liturgical calendar seems as dramatic to me as the walk from the star of Epiphany to the desert of Lent, when the angels' song of joy and peace on earth turns into tears and lament.

Most of us appreciate the movement from darkness to light, not the other way around. Yet, the liturgical church calendar, at this junction, takes us from light to darkness, only to take us back to the daybreak of Easter.

It is intriguing that these seasons of the church year reflect the seasons of our hearts and life journeys. Our lives consist of movements and transitions from light to darkness, joy to despair, laughter to tears, and back again. The journey seems to be more circular than linear, darkness and light more intertwined than fissured.

Perhaps because we polarize darkness and light - darkness is "bad," light is "good" - we fear and evade darkness, forgetting that darkness has a nurturing side as well. In ancient times darkness represented primordial chaos, prenatal darkness of the womb, the months of dark, enfolded gestation. Creation and germination take place in darkness, as seeds are planted in a dark womb, in the underground of the earth, from which they receive nourishment to bud into, and be born to, life.

As I prepare for Lent, I find myself pondering the serpent who embodies both darkness and light. Serpents can be poisonous yet they symbolize regeneration, renewal and health, hence the physician's emblem.

This Lent we will move from Prisms to Serpents. Our Epiphany Prisms continue to help us discover new ways of looking at the world, especially through the lens of race and white privilege. Our Lenten Serpents can help us lament the venom of bigotry and hate, so in releasing it, we can regenerate and renew, repair our hearts and relationships, and restore our world to health and wellbeing.

It is challenging to enter the time of darkness, dimness, the sadness of Lent when we have to contemplate the most painful moments of Jesus' life on earth, and therefore, ours as well. Yet, Lent's darkness could be spiritual and nurturing, out of which we emerge learning, growing and healing. For only when we walk through the darkness, embrace the pain, can we emerge from it healing and renewed.

Epiphany and Lent intersect. Darkness and light intertwine. The ashes of suffering and pain become ashes out of which new life is born. But for now, in the season of Lent, we live with the darkness, the emptiness, the pain, the struggle and yes, the violence of Jesus' story reflecting our own, confronting us with the reality of our world and our lives. We do so with the faith and confidence that even moments of darkness can nourish and strengthen our hearts toward the dawn of Easter that will surely come!

Peace and blessings, Pastor Nayiri

MARCH 2017 WORSHIP | THE FORUM

march worship with god, we will [witness] returning...repairing...restoring...

Sunday morning worship services are at 8:30 & 11:00 a.m.
with Faith Formation Hour in-between at 9:45 a.m.

05
March

first sunday of lent

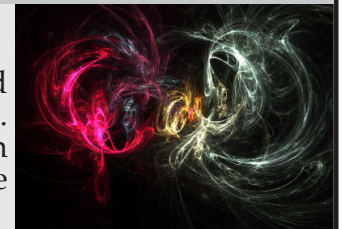
Today, on the First Sunday of Lent, we embrace our theme *Returning Repairing Restoring*, as we gather for this multigenerational service and share the banquet of the Lord's Table. **Rev. Nayiri Karjian** preaches about the First Dysfunctional Family - Adam and Eve and the Serpent, featured in Genesis 2. **Ruth Roland** shares special music.



12
March

second sunday of lent

Today we continue to walk the Lenten journey of anguish and sorrow, crucifixion and suffering, of retuning and repairing. **Rev. Nayiri Karjian** preaches about Good and Evil based on Job 1. The Chancel choir shares Kevin Memley's simple "Be Still and Know" (11:00).



19
March

third sunday of lent

On this day **Rev. Jacque Franklin** preaches about the Trial of Jesus, as we continue to reflect on *Returning, Repairing and Restoring*, and healing shame and guilt. The Bells of St. Vrain Handbell Ensemble shares worship music, including an arrangement of "Precious Lord, Take My Hand" featuring **Jay Norman** on clarinet. The Chancel Choir shares the "Agnus Dei" from *The World Beloved: A Bluegrass Mass* (11:00).



26
March

fourth sunday of lent

Today, as we continue the Lenten journey we ponder why Jesus had to die and why violence is part of our story of salvation, healing, repairing and restoring. **Rev. Nayiri Karjian** preaches. We receive the One Great Hour of Sharing Offering. The Flute Choir shares worship music, and the Chancel Choir sings an original composition by Russ Ware (11:00).



The forum

Have you ever attended The Forum? It is in session most Sunday mornings September through May at 9:45 a.m. in the Carey Chapel through the efforts of your Forum Team (**Howard Ray, Don Allred, Bruce Latimer, Cathy White, and Leah Davis Witherow**). Send your questions and comments to hlay99@gmail.com. To access the Forum schedule, visit the FCC website www.fcucc.org and select **Faith Formation, Adult**, then **The Forum**. If you have missed one or would like to revisit a past session, you can even select **Listen to the Forum**.

For the March schedule of The Forum, please turn to page 5.

ASH WEDNESDAY SERVICES | A JUST PEACE CHURCH



Ash wednesday services March 1, noon and 6:30 p.m.

By Rev. Nayiri Karjian, Interim Lead Minister

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Ash Wednesday begins the season of Lent, a season of forty days, not counting Sundays. The day is about ashes, which in biblical time were worn, along with sackcloth during times of mourning and grief. Ashes represent that which burns and turns to dust, causing not only heartache and defeat, but also reminding us of our humanness, fragility and mortality.

Ashes have another side to them. They are used to clean and refresh metal, such as silver. You may also recall the mythical Phoenix that, near the end of its life, settles into its nest of twigs which then burns ferociously, reducing bird and nest to ashes. Out of those ashes, a fledgling Phoenix rises – renewed and reborn.

Join us on Ash Wednesday to walk the Lenten journey of desert and wilderness, of remembering Jesus' suffering, crucifixion and pain, of returning to God, repairing and restoring our hearts and our world.



our just peace designation!

By Rich Law, "The Peace Guy"

lawrt55@gmail.com



On January 29, 2017, at the Annual Meeting of the Congregation, our Church unanimously voted to publicly proclaim First Congregational Church a *Just Peace Church*. Thank you First Congregational Church for your on-going commitment to peace-building.

For those who are unfamiliar, *Just Peace* is a special designation within the United Church of Christ that gives churches a proud public identity based on the quest for peace—with each other, in our neighborhoods, in our communities, and in our nation and world.

We are now publicly proclaiming that we are a church actively engaged in equipping and working towards peace and justice. We will faithfully strive to create a church-wide focus on equipping, advocacy and dialogue around specific peace and justice issues relevant to our church and the wider world.

Currently, our community, nation and the world are broken and in great need of peace. If we believe that peace-building can and should begin with us, then it's up to us to decide where to begin that work. We may initiate and nurture an inter-faith dialogue with our Muslim and Jewish neighbors. We may take a closer look at the impact of poverty and homelessness in our city. We may offer training in our church on how best to have productive conversations with folks with whom we disagree. *Just Peace* work is any work that will help us bring peace and healing to others.

So, which issues will we commit ourselves to in the name of *Just Peace*? Where will we focus our energy as we equip, advocate and dialogue with one another? That is entirely up to us. It will be an organic process led by our Church Council, pastoral leadership, and committed volunteers.

ADULT FAITH FORMATION



Lent and the generous leadership series

By **Jessica Gemm**, LCC Chair
jess.robinson@gmail.com

During the upcoming season of Lent, it's a good time to step back and reflect about how each of us is contributing our gifts and what other strengths we might want to share with our congregation, and to **prepare** to serve the needs and opportunities now and in the future. To that end, the Leadership Cultivation Committee (LCC) is sponsoring a Faith Formation series throughout Lent as part of our efforts to explore different ways of cultivating leadership gifts and developing specific skills to lead over the long term. This series is *not* about recruiting for current openings – instead, it is dedicated time for anyone interested to listen to how God is speaking about what we have to share and how we need to grow.



The theme for this 5-week series (from March 5 through April 2) is Generous Leadership, to explore what that looks like in practice, in contrast to the feelings of scarcity we may sometimes have, especially around finding people to help! Here are some of the questions we will explore:

- How can we help uncover and develop leadership abilities that people want to share, and how can we honor a 'holy no' when they aren't ready?
- How can we better understand ourselves as leaders, our gifts, and what fills us up, so we can (eventually) find the right outlet?
- How can we be more present as leaders, to those around us, to feedback, to what God may be saying to us?

Our intention is that this is a drop-in series--while each week may build on the last, please show up anytime. The preliminary outline of sessions is below, though this may change depending on who shows up! Please join us in the Gregg Library.

Week 1 (March 5) - Empathy

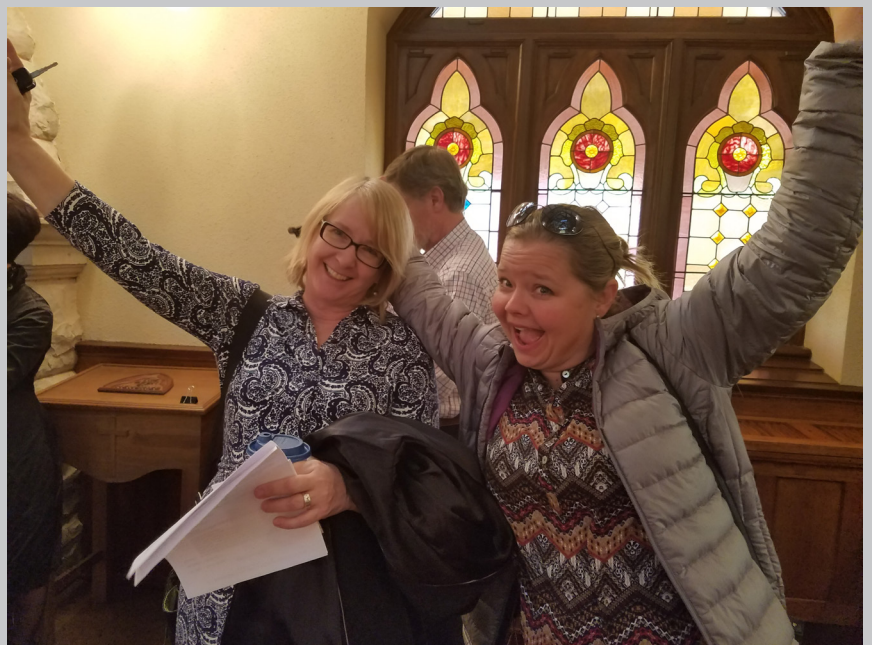
Week 2 (March 12) - Self-Awareness

Week 3 (March 19) - Listening & Feedback

Week 4 (March 26) - Spiritual Gifts

Week 5 (April 2) – Topic to be based on group feedback

Questions? Contact **Jessica Gemm** or **Nancy Henjum**
nancyhenjum@msn.com



Great energy at the conclusion of the Annual Meeting of the Congregation on Sunday, January 29, 2017.
 Thank you to everyone who attended!

Home farming, spirituality in nature, people and wine (& tasting), and guns-suicide impact

Each Sunday morning at 9:45 a.m. the Forum meets for an hour in the Carey Chapel to listen to members of our own congregation as well as selected outside speakers. The Forum satisfies both the soul and the intellect. We have four speakers lined up just for you:

By **Howard Ray**, FCC Member

hray99@gmail.com



March 5: Christine Faith

Backyard Farming Along the Front Range

Come learn some of the ups-and-downs of backyard food production along the Front Range. Topics will include tips and tricks for increasing yields, methods for reducing your work load, and how to keep your sanity while not breaking the bank. Christine Faith is a local backyard farmer whose award winning blog, *Right to Thrive*, is an information clearing-house for backyard farmers. Christine teaches on-line and live classes to beginning backyard farmers, designs backyard farms, and is involved the Galileo Garden Project through District 11 (working with FCC member and Galileo School Principal Rich Law).

March 12: Dave Seyfert

John Muir, Teddy Roosevelt, and Spirituality in Nature

In 1903, President Teddy Roosevelt visited Yosemite and spent several days with well-known naturalist John Muir. The conversation they shared during this camping trip was instrumental in sparking Roosevelt's wilderness protection agenda. We'll recall this historic meeting and discuss the spirituality expressed in John Muir's writings. Dave has keen insights into historical events in our nation's history; we remember well his presentation on the Underground Railroad in the Civil War era. Dave is a 35+ year FCC member who founded and led the Forum for 28 years. What a legacy he established! Recently retired after a career in Human Resources management in the healthcare field, he is now an adjunct faculty member in the Sociology Department at Pikes Peak Community College. Dave is a lifelong "UCCer," his dad having been an ordained UCC minister. On a personal note, Dave and Linda are expecting their tenth grandchild later this year!

March 19: Mike Larkin

New Wine into Old Wineskins: People and Wine (Parables, Process, and Places)

Through the lens of Luke 5:37, this non-traditional wine tasting will explore contemporary themes in wine tasting and culture. Specifically we will be looking at the process of sparkling wine (and tasting), the loss of geographic knowledge, and how drinking wine can "make you a better person." Mike is the chair and teaches in the UCCS Department of Geography and Environmental Studies. He is generally loved by his students: "Mike Larkin is an approachable, down-to-earth guy who wants his students to be successful." Although his biblical knowledge is limited, he has been teaching about the geography of wines and vines for a decade. But wait a minute - will there really be a wine tasting at the Forum? Come and see!

March 26: Erik Wallace

Gun Violence and Suicide in America

Gun violence in America is not only a civic dilemma of epidemic proportions, but it is an alarming public health crisis as well. Dr. Erik Wallace, associate dean of the Colorado Springs branch of the University of Colorado School of Medicine, will address the health risks for injury and death associated with owning a firearm (with suicide being the greatest risk by far). He will discuss the "need to decide as a society" how many firearm related injuries and deaths each year are acceptable, stating that "the number we see today far exceeds what our society should be comfortable with." Erik is known within the medical education community for his commitment to excellence and innovation. His civic mindedness, partnered with his scientific expertise, promise to result in a compassionate presentation. Plan to join us as together we examine this profound national problem.

HEALTH MINISTRY | CONGREGATIONAL LIFE



mental health first aid class

By **Peggy Weissman**, *Chair of the Health Ministry Team*

peggyw776@gmail.com



You may know how to perform CPR, perform abdominal thrusts on a choking victim, or how to control bleeding. But can you administer first aid in a mental health crisis? Statistics show that one out of every four people is struggling with a mental health issue. This is true even in our church. The Health Ministry Team is continuing its education efforts presented last fall and is offering an excellent, nationally endorsed course called Mental Health First Aid. This course is free. It is being held on two Saturday mornings, from 9 a.m. to 1 p.m. on April 22 and April 29, with a light lunch to boot. It will be held in the Gregg Library.

This course prepares participants to interact with a person in crisis and connect the person with help. First Aiders do not take on the role of professionals—they do not diagnose or provide any counseling or therapy. Instead, you will learn to support someone developing signs and symptoms of a mental illness or in an emotional crisis. You will be able to use a five-step action plan, which includes assessing for risk of suicide or harm, listening nonjudgmentally, giving reassurance and information, encouraging appropriate professional help, and offering self-help and other support strategies. The course includes a comprehensive list of community mental health resources.

REGISTRATION IS REQUIRED!

Please contact Peggy Weissman at peggyw776@gmail.com no later than April 20.



congregational life (jan. 19 — febr. 19)

By **Emily Bond**, *Communications Coordinator*

emily@fcucc.org

THANK YOU

We extend our thanks to the following people who served as liturgists in the last month: **Amelia Kemp, Bret May, Emma Brachtenbach, Mandy Todd, Drew Moore, and Royce Field.** **Susie Marten, Shanon Kilzer, Candace Datz, and Russ Ware** have provided beautiful worship music. **Mike Gerbig, Heather DeZarn, Karen Peace, Suzanne Bayer, Casey Scott** provided great support during Kids' Community Worship. **Mike Aragon** assisted **Del Hokanson** with childcare support during the Annual Meeting on January 29. **Twenty-three FCC Members** attended the Rocky Mountain Conference's annual event, **Congregations Alive!** **Scott Correa, Jane Gazal, and Jay Warren** assisted with the Confirmation Retreat. While **Mandy Todd** attended a music conference in Nashville, **Susan Holman, Pam Lehmkuhl, Susie Marten** and **Dave Nath** provided excellent leadership during Chancel Choir rehearsals.

CONGRATULATIONS

Great congratulations go to **Ben and Lynn Young** who became grandparents on January 19 to their new granddaughter, **Fiona Parker Young!** FCC Member, **Jeff Dodson**, was officially called as the Senior Minister at First Congregational in Grand Junction. His Service of Ordination took place at FCC on February 26.

PRAYERS

Prayers have been extended to **Lori Miskel**, who had a car accident. **Judy Jacob's** sister, **Mardell Remick**, is experiencing advanced Parkinson's disease. **Andrea Barker's** mother, **Lynn Roberts** in Santa Fe, suffered a stroke and is also undergoing treatment for breast cancer. **Chris Bjork** is recovering from pacemaker surgery; **Phil Tate** is recovering from back surgery, and **Marcy McNeill** is recovering from surgery. **Diana DiMara** is recovering from knee surgery, and **Lisa Cook** was hospitalized. **Linda Mooney's** mother, **Lorene Mooney** is settling into assisted living, and **Dr. Jeffrey Kulp** is recovering from hip replacement surgery.

CONDOLENCES

Ken Painter and his family lost his ex-wife, **Nancy**, who passed away on January 26 after a short stay in hospice in South Carolina. **Ruth Koenigsamen's** mother, **Phyllis Zimmerman**, passed away on February 4 in Columbus, Nebraska.

Matching gift challenge this Lenten season to culminate Easter Sunday

By **Ruth Roland**, *Director of Financial Ministry*

ruth@fcucc.org



At the Annual Meeting of the Congregation on Sunday, January 29, members engaged in a powerful discussion about: 1) living within our means as a financial necessity, and 2) adopting an aspirational budget to prepare our ministry for the next settled Lead Minister. Church Council members are grateful for all the comments and suggestions which were, without exception, thoughtful and constructive.

Ultimately, the budget recommendation passed on a voice vote with the understanding that \$40,000 in additional gifts will be needed in order to fill the open organist position to support our worship ministry, hire a church office administrator to free up staff to focus more effectively on ministry, and to pay our congregational nurse after eight years of pro bono care for our congregants.

Now that we have our aspirational budget as a planning document, it is time for us as a congregation to ponder Matthew 6:21 "for where your treasure is, there your heart will be also." I find this text to be remarkably relevant and challenging in my own life. Is my treasure residing in the place where I want my heart to be? What does my family's budget say about our hopes and dreams for this church, our community, and our world?

Each of us will ponder and respond individually, but we are grateful to new member and Our Whole Lives Team Chairperson **Marcie Mayer** who has publicly offered up her treasure and heart by challenging others to join her in making an additional gift to the church. In February, five other families joined Marcie to create a Matching Gift Challenge of \$20,000 for new and increased gifts during the period March 5 – April 16 (Easter Sunday).

Here is what this means in a nutshell:

- If you have never pledged because you thought your pledge was too small, your pledge will now be matched, \$1 for \$1.
- If you are expecting a tax refund this spring, giving a portion of it to your church will now be matched, \$1 for \$1.
- If you would like to increase your pledge, your increase will be matched, \$1 for \$1.

Participating is easy. Contact me at ruth@fcucc.org or call me in the church office with your wishes, complete an online pledge form at <https://fcucc.org/estimate-giving-pledge-form/>, or simply make a gift online or in the offering plate. On Easter Sunday, we will return all these gifts to God in celebration of the Risen Christ who renews all things, including our 143-year-old congregation, in anticipation of our next steps with a new settled Lead Minister.

1
you donate

2
they match

3
double
the impact

LA FORET THANKS | RMC CAMPS

Thank you from La Foret!

By **Larry McCullough**, *Executive Director*

La Foret celebrates the long and beneficial relationship with First Congregational. Your confirmation class and summer retreats are on our calendar for 2017, and, of course, many of your youth participate in multiple Rocky Mountain



Conference events through the year. We are thrilled that our purpose to provide sanctuary for all to consider the transcendent issues of life remains tangible within your wonderful church.

We have good news to share, and you are part of it. We have received a grant from the State Historical Fund (\$200,000) for the exterior restoration of Ponderosa Lodge that requires matching funds from La Foret (\$83,000).

Over ten years ago your congregation gave La Foret \$65,000 for the renovation of Ponderosa Lodge as part of a capital campaign. After helping with a new roof three years ago, the balance (\$44,000) is helping with the required match! THANK YOU.

The renovation is mostly external--replacing rotten logs, changing drainage, and fixing cracks in the foundation. The building won't look very different, but it should last another 90 years with these solutions.

We are so thankful. Because of your generosity, we can preserve the essence of the historical character and honor the building and its original owners, while maintaining its National Historic Register status. We could not do it without you. Or, more precisely, we can only do it with you. Thank you and bless you.

ROCKY MOUNTAIN CONFERENCE SUMMER CAMPS AND EVENTS

Register Today!

FCC Camperships are immediately applied for 1/3 of the cost of the early registration price.

Contact Candace (candace@fcucc.org) for more info!

Registration Deadline is May 15 for published prices, which reflect Early-Bird rates! Scholarships are available.

Visit RMCUCC.ORG for more information.



Theology on fire

By Jeanie Tate, Gregg Library Team Chair

jeneanetate@yahoo.com

ESTD  2007

JAMES W. WHITE LECTURESHIP

Peter Rollins was born in 1973, East Belfast, Northern Ireland in the time of The Troubles. He grew up immersed in violence, unemployment, and a vicious war between Protestant and Catholic. It's estimated some 1600

people died in those years. Rollins left school at the age of 16, worked for a homeless center, and eventually enrolled in an intensive one-year course for the disadvantaged, later earning a BA and PhD from Queen's University, Belfast. He's now recognized as a leader in the Emerging Church and calls himself a "pyro-theologist" posing some very combustible questions. Is religion necessary to live a life following Christ's teaching? Is God a psychological crutch? Can we live with doubt, unknowing, ambiguity and still live a rich religious life? Do we have to believe in life after death?



Insurrection: to believe is human; to doubt is divine, 2011, is not about abandoning belief in God. For Rollins it's about finding a way to live the life of Christ without expecting all the answers. To live that life, it's essential to find fellow travelers who can share life's losses, difficulties, and doubts with you. He concedes the church could be that community (but more often he talks about conversations in an Irish pub). This community should be a space for comfort, not explanations. Doubt is divine. God is a mystery we will never understand and that's okay.

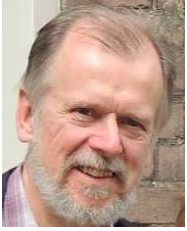
The title *Idolatry of God: breaking our addiction to certainty and satisfaction*, 2012, certainly gets attention. One reviewer's version is "You can't be satisfied. Life is difficult. You don't know the secret." Rollins calls this emptiness The Gap – separation from God, explained by traditional Christianity as the consequence of Original Sin. The author feels this

vacuum cannot be filled by God. God exists among us but is not our problem solver or giver of satisfaction. The author describes four case studies of performance art (he calls it liturgy) that have been used as community builders. They are certainly innovative and deserve a second look.

The Divine Magician: the disappearance of religion and the discovery of faith, 2015, is the most radical of the three books. Rollins coins the term sacred-object meaning whatever we think we must have for happiness. One example is the apple in the Garden of Eden. The real danger comes when we need a scapegoat for not achieving what we want most: for instance Fascism's persecution of the Jews in the 1930s or today's racism. For him religion's dogmatic beliefs and promise of a perfect world are destructive. Faith is all you have--that assurance that you are loved and will find fulfillment (and even joy) following Jesus' teachings.



PEOPLE AND EVENTS IN EARLY FCC HISTORY



A peek in the past: Hymn of praise

By **Chris Steenbergen**, *Church Historian*

chris.steenbergen@yahoo.com

When FCC erected its first church building in 1878 on Bijou Street, across from Acacia Park, it included a Burdett reed organ. Walter B. Manning was appointed "Organist and Chorister." A few years later, around the time of the arrival of Pastor Gregg, he left and was replaced by early member Elisabeth E. Campbell as organist and M. E. Irving as chorister. The chorister probably just led the congregational singing. Only towards 1890 is there a line item in the church finances for payment of a conductor and a male quartet. By that time, Irving had long left and Mrs. Campbell had been replaced by Nellie Kerr around 1887.

In that year, plans for the new church on Saint Vrain had started, and they included a large pipe organ. At a price of \$4,643 (equivalent to about one million dollars today) it was commissioned from Hook and Hastings of Boston which was the largest organ building company of that time, constructing about 20 organs a year. FCC's organ, Opus 1432, counted as a medium size organ with its 2544 pipes of wood, zinc and lead/tin alloys. The three manual, fifty rank organ featured a slider chest and tracker system and was powered by a water wheel. (Until the drought of 1925, the City



of Colorado Springs had provided 800,000 gallons a week free of charge. The water wheel was then replaced by a 5 horse power blower motor.)

In the summer of 1889, the parts were shipped from Boston to New Orleans and up the Mississippi, followed by a train ride to Colorado Springs, where the organ was assembled in the already finished church. Dedication services were held in October, and it is likely that Nellie May Kerr was the organist, although there's no clear record of her term. The daughter of Prof. James H. Kerr, she was born in 1868 and from 1875 had grown up at FCC, becoming a member in 1882. She went to Colorado College, where she was known for her musical talent. Also in 1889, Henry Blackmer had come to town and FCC. Henry, at the time a judicial clerk, married (now) Helen Kerr in 1891 and the couple's two children were baptized at FCC. In 1905 the family moved to Briarcliff, New York for Henry's business. His subsequent fall from grace was described before ("Not all Saints"). After her divorce from Henry, Helen moved back to Colorado, living in Denver with her two children, where she died in 1962. Helen Kerr Blackmer was buried at Evergreen Cemetery.



ONE GREAT HOUR OF SHARING



one great hour of sharing 2017

One Great Hour of Sharing® is the Lenten Offering of the United Church of Christ that supports disaster, refugee, and development actions. FCC will receive this special offering on Sundays, March 19 and 26.

Words cannot capture the anguish of people when they lose everything in a disaster or have to leave it behind while fleeing war or conflict. Through One Great Hour of Sharing, lives are literally changed daily. Your support provides clean water, food, medicines, shelter, healthcare, education and so much more.

In 2015, the OGHS offering was \$2.2 million. An additional \$831 thousand was given to the United Church of Christ Disaster Ministries in support of specific disaster relief efforts. You can find OGHS on the web: www.ucc.org/oghs and on [Facebook](#).

What is One Great Hour of Sharing®?

One Great Hour of Sharing, as part of Our Churches Wider Mission, is the special mission offering of the United Church of Christ that carries God's message of love and hope to people in crisis. The UCC works with international partners to provide sources of clean water, food, education and health care, small business micro-credit, advocacy and resettlement for refugees and displaced persons, and emergency relief and rehabilitation. OGHS also supports domestic and international ministries for disaster preparedness and response.

How is the United Church of Christ's offering used?

Almost 60 percent of the UCC's offering supports international development initiatives, including annual support for missionaries. Currently there are four OGHS supported missionaries and two Global Mission Interns working in disaster relief, health care, education, sustainable agricultural development, and refugee support. The offering also funds disaster preparedness and response, and disaster related volunteer initiatives in the U.S.

Where and how are OGHS funds shared?

The United Church of Christ responds to development, disaster, and refugee needs in 138 countries, and provides disaster relief and immigration assistance in the United States. Funding decisions are made by asking our worldwide mission partners, "What would you have us do with you?" The United Church of Christ responds as a member of organizations such as Church World Service and the ACT Alliance. We also support the direct mission efforts of churches and church-based organizations that the United Church of Christ and the Christian Church (Disciples of Christ) have direct partnerships with through Global Ministries. Nearly one-third of the UCC's offering is shared through Church World Service to support refugee, disaster, development, and advocacy programs.



1.9 billion people have gained access to clean drinking water since 1990 because you cared and that saves lives!

CONGREGATIONS ALIVE!



Reflections on congregations alive

By **Del Hokanson**, *Director of Children's Ministry* (and others)

del@fcucc.org

Having been involved on the organizing committee of Rocky Mountain Educators to host three Congregations Alive conferences over the past six years, I have to admit this one was the most powerful. Hearing the president of the National UCC church John Dorhauer respond to current domains on White Privilege and Immigration issues resonated and helped to remind us of the significance of the UCC and how we have always been that community with the core mission to focus on peace and justice. *If not us, who? If not now, when?* Leanne Hadley reminded us of the historical and biblical journey of children in the church and challenged us to wonder what would happen to the church if we responded to God's vision of putting children in the center. Over 20 First Congo people were part of the 160 people who were inspired and ignited by incredible keynote presentations, powerful worship and diverse and useful workshops from Feb 2-4 at First Plymouth UCC in Englewood. I challenge those who went to spread the fire throughout our community. Talk it up. Let's share looking through God's loving lens and make a "little toil of love" to our world every day. Here are some attendee reflections:

BLAKE PELTON: Here is one sequence of messages that really hit me.

In Rev. John Dorhauer's session on The Possessive Investment in White Privilege, he explained that the premise of integration and diversity in the Civil Rights Movement was flawed from the start because it assumed a norm of whiteness into which others would be absorbed and from which others were diverse. He described the Civil Rights Movement as an attempt by whites not to achieve racial equity, but to assuage their guilt while keeping their economic advantages, which he referred to as the cash value of whiteness. He provided figures to back up his statement that the Civil rights Movement did nothing to change the economic advantage of being white.

Dorhauer said that we are allies when we disrupt the norm by changing the things that confirm whiteness as the norm (the pictures on the walls of our church, the color of skin represented in our church publications, who gets promoted, who gets arrested, etc.)

As the day progressed I found myself feeling overwhelmed by the magnitude of the problem, and I was tempted to feel too small to make a difference. In his closing sermon Dorhauer shared this Emily Dickinson poem, encouraging us to continue in our "little toil of love." As I drove home with this poem on my mind, I found myself visualizing the impact of every candle, no matter how small, adding to the light

in a dark room, and I felt determined to continue in my "little toil of love."

SCOTT TETRICK:

As a first time RMC conference attendee, I was struck by the awesome responsibility FCUCC has had and the depth of gratitude that is provided to us. We are part of so many stories! It started with the linkage we have to our children, and how we intentionally engaged not only in teaching (not preaching), but learning from them. I attended the discussion on white privilege, and I was absolutely struck by how we need to articulate the message that ignoring our privilege separates us from others, and personally from the wonders of our God. As adults, we walk this razor's edge, between compassion and righteous anger that children and Jesus' teachings have so easily navigated--they are hard-wired for compassion!

GLORIA LATIMER:

Through a personal story filled with humor and vulnerability, Reverend Leanne Hadley encouraged us to continue on personal and spiritual commitments and not let the political environment zap our emotional energy for the things that matter most to us. That whether we love being with the kids, have a passion for social justice, or know we have another gift to share, we focus on the ministry in which we've been called. We need people who are the "glue" and hold things together when life is chaotic. Reverend John Dorhauer motivated me to talk about "white spaces" with friends and understand the difference between acceptance of other religious values and inclusion of other values in our churches. Thank you, Del, for serving on the planning committee for the conference.

Be the Church
Protect the Environment
Care for the Poor
Forgive often

Reject racism
Fight for the Powerless
Embrace diversity
Love God
Enjoy this Life!

JOAN LANDRUM: I felt very fortunate to have been able to attend the Congregations Alive conference in Denver. How inspiring it was to meet people from UCC churches from all over the world. Leanne Hadley reminded us that now, more than ever, our children need our church and our resiliency. We need to be the role models who show that now is the time to do the right thing for all people. I was able to hear Rev. Dr. John Dorhauer deliver a sermon that was very moving. We all need to remember what Rev. Dorhauer shared from the words of one of Emily Dickinson's poems "there is no time to hate." Thanks to Del and the Church for guiding me to the conference!

CONGREGATIONS ALIVE!

Scenes from the 2017
conference in Denver
- *Congregations Alive -*
IGNITE!



STEPHEN MINISTRY | POPS



A stephen ministry miracle: what wasn't in the newspaper!

By Lois Matthews, *Stephen Ministry Leader*

ldmatt333@comcast.net

This may be a well-known story to many in the Springs--the story of Captain David Rozelle, who in 2003 lost his right foot as he was leading a convoy while serving in Operation Iraqi Freedom. He spent eight months recovering at Ft. Carson. During that time he continued to ski, snowboard, and mountain climb, and he even participated in triathlons in California.

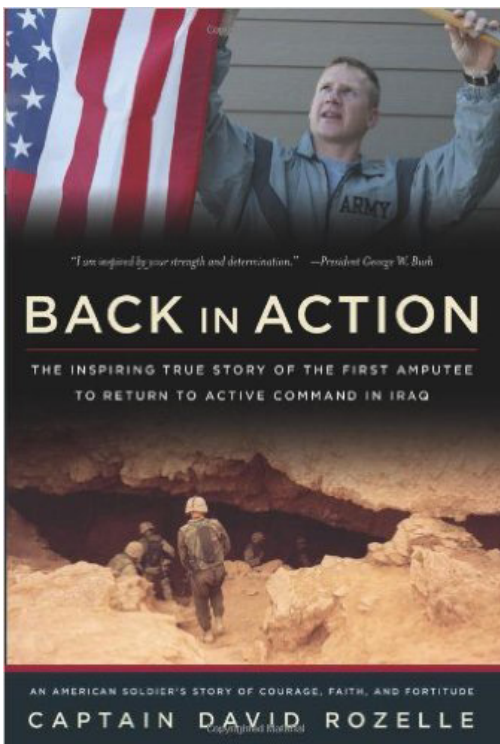
But what many may not know is that while in Colorado Springs, he became a Stephen Minister! Here's a bit of his story:

In May 2004, David's church, First Presbyterian in Colorado Springs—a Stephen Ministry congregation since 1981—was preparing to train another class of Stephen Ministers. David attended an information session and applied to serve as a Stephen Minister. In the application interview, "David described how he felt called to minister to other amputees," said Stephen Leader Arlene Bosma. "His dedication to his family, God, and his country was obvious and very inspiring."

"He took Stephen Ministry training because he wanted to be better prepared to help those in need," Bosma said. "What I admire most in David is how he remains so focused on other people."

Two weeks later—just a few sessions before he completed his Stephen Ministry training—David returned to Iraq, the first soldier in history to become an amputee and then resume his command on the same battlefield. And, back in Iraq, he frequently found himself using his Stephen Minister caregiving skills. "There are never enough chaplains to cover the needs," he said.

A book about his journey, *Back in Action: The Inspiring True Story of the First Amputee to Return to Active Command in Iraq*, was published in 2005.



This information about David Rozelle appeared on the Stephen Ministry website.

POPS

SAVE THE DATE!

Saturday, April 8 - 6:00 p.m.

A Night Out In Manitou!

organized by **Allison & Mike Gerbig**

Watch for an Evite and RSVP promptly to secure a dinner reservation. Please contact **Jane Ridings** at

janeridings@hotmail.com for more POPS info or to

be added to the distribution list.

Put on your walking shoes for dinner at the Loop, then horse racing at the arcade, and wine at Swirl for anyone who wants to extend the night.

POPs = Parents Out Party Somewhere (a social group for seasoned parents. Parents of any description, looking to share the joys and stresses of parenthood, are welcome.)

LENTEN FILM SERIES | PASTOR NAYIRI'S SCRIPTURE STUDY

Questions or comments, please contact Jerry White at 471.8215.

Call Jerry if you need child care during the evening event(s).

Adopt the film series for Lent

By Jerry White, Film Series Coordinator

gerald.white@mindspring.com



Lent, the season of "Bright Sadness," brings with it the opportunity to adopt one or another practice to observe the 40 days between Ash Wednesday and Easter (actually 47, but Sunday's don't officially count). Consider adopting the First Congregational Lenten Film series as one of your practices this Lenten season. Imagine throwing Fat Tuesday and Ash Wednesday into a VitaMix and then adding a dash of philosophy, theology, adventure, pathos, mystery

– preceded by a first rate pot-luck dinner and followed by engaging and often vigorous discussion. Just the thing for reflection, renewal and reconnection. Each Friday in Lent we'll screen a short film along with a full length feature, one or both tied (sometimes loosely) to the scripture and sermon of the following Sunday.

We'll see some of the world's most interesting films, spanning over 50 years of great cinema. We'll have the opportunity to connect the remarkable DabbaWalas lunch delivery system in Mumbai with love and loneliness and family. We'll take a look at the story of Job played out in the streets of Miami, trial by neglect and deceit described in Matthew mirrored in our contemporary times, reflect upon Jesus on Death Row and consider the depth of feelings that can be associated with Good Friday transferred to today's Mediterranean. All on the big screen in the FCC Sanctuary.

Set aside time each Friday evening in Lent to sit together and feel the reality that can be created through the illusion of images at 24 frames per second.

FRIDAYS DURING LENT:

**POT LUCK
6:30 P.M.
FOUNDERS' ROOM**

**FILMS
7:00 P.M.
SANCTUARY**

DISCUSSION TO FOLLOW

BLEAK MIDWINTER SCRIPTURE STUDY WITH PASTOR NAYIRI

Extended through March!

Fridays:

March 3, 10, 17, 24, 31

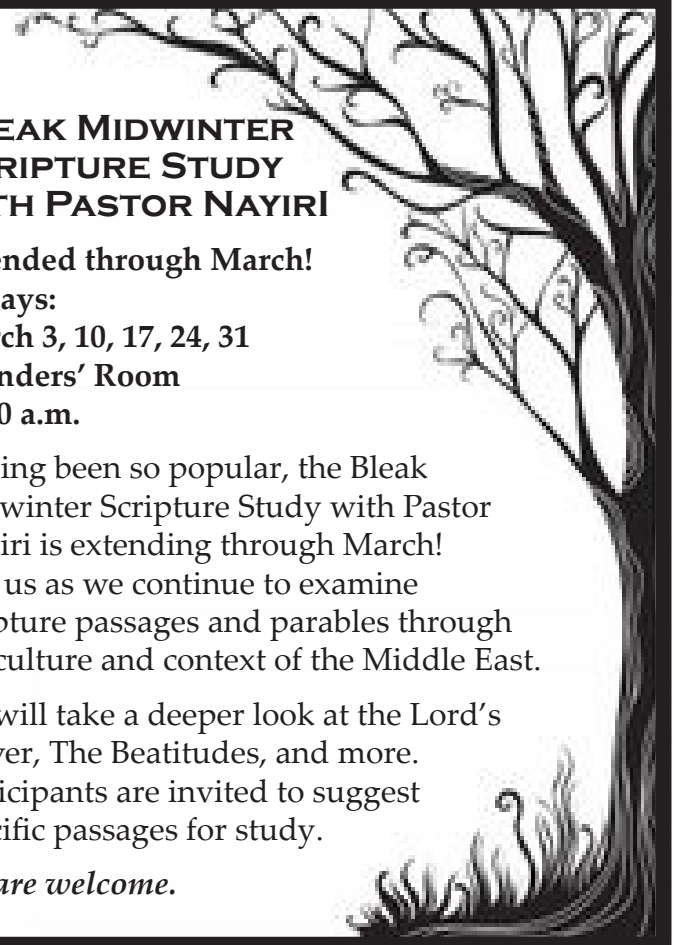
Founders' Room

10:30 a.m.

Having been so popular, the Bleak Midwinter Scripture Study with Pastor Nayiri is extending through March! Join us as we continue to examine scripture passages and parables through the culture and context of the Middle East.

We will take a deeper look at the Lord's Prayer, The Beatitudes, and more. Participants are invited to suggest specific passages for study.

All are welcome.



HOLY WEEK AND EASTER

MAUNDY THURSDAY SERVICE OF FOOTWASHING AND TENEBRAE Thursday, April 13 at 7 p.m. in the Sanctuary

Maundy means **commandment** in Latin. Jesus' commandment to "love one another as I have loved you" demonstrated when Jesus washed the disciples' feet and shared bread and wine is the focus of the day.

Tenebrae means **darkness**. During the service as the story unfolds, candles are extinguished and darkness increases. At the end of the service one light is left burning, the Christ candle, the light of God's love. The Christ candle is removed from view, then restored, for in the darkness of the cross the light is eclipsed but not extinguished. The shadows are those of the cross, the light is that of the resurrection.

This contemplative service will include communion, foot-washing as well as liturgy from Seder meal.

EASTER RESURRECTION WORSHIP

Sunday, April 16 at 6 a.m., 9 a.m., and 11 a.m.

After forty days in the wilderness and ashes, we gather to celebrate Jesus' resurrection and rebirth! Join us at 6 a.m. for an informal sunrise service on the Front Portico, and at 9 a.m. or 11 a.m. for a celebration of God's amazing gift of rebirth and second chances, when silence breaks into morning, the earth awakens and the garden springs to life! Join us!

FCC Cooking School Dates for your Calendar!



April 7:

Alyce Morgan: *"Springtime and Easter Brunch ideas"*



May 19:

Robert Burnet, owner of **Mama Pearl's Cajun Kitchen:**
"Cajun style cooking, including a Bread Pudding to die for."



June 23:

TBD: *"All American Red, White, and Blue menu"*
for 4th of July gatherings



July 21:

Susan Schenk, caterer: *"Middle Eastern Cuisine"*



August 18:

Patti White: *"Peaches under the Tuscan Sun"*
featuring Palisade peaches



September 22:

(Serve at Marion House Soup Kitchen)



October 20:

Mary Freig, from **Savory Spice Shop:**
"Creating new holiday dishes out of old recipes and new spices"

MINISTER OF PASTORAL CARE | AN AMERICAN CONSCIENCE

minister of pastoral care now 100% UCC

By **Jacque Franklin**, *Associate Minister of Pastoral Care*

jacque@fcucc.org

The Rev. Dr. Jacque Franklin, your Associate Minister of Pastoral Care, now has official standing in the United Church of Christ denomination as of February 9, 2017.



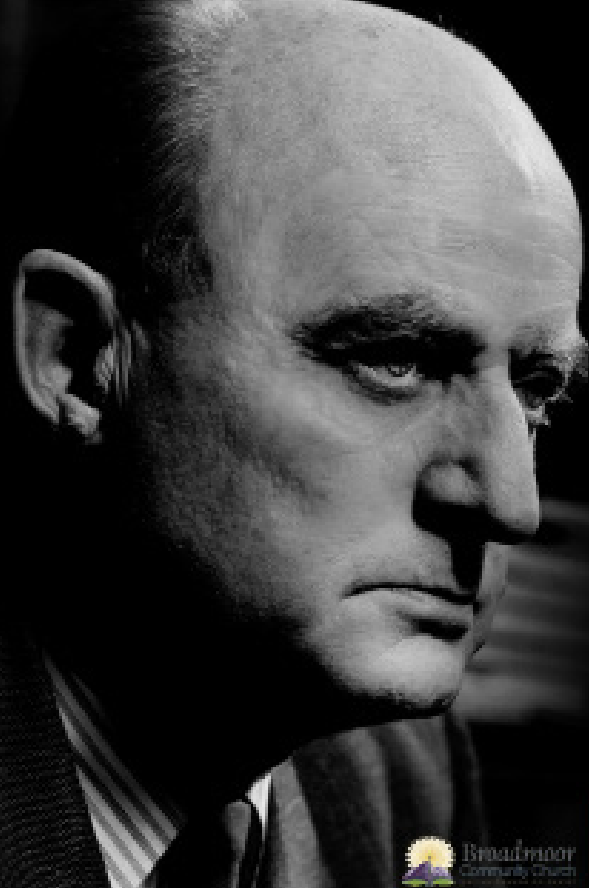
Previously I had dual standing which meant that I had one foot in the American Baptist Church and one in UCC. I received dual standing to become your called Associate Minister in 2008. Since then I've attended annual meetings of the Southeastern Association and Rocky Mountain Conference, participated in a General Synod, and taught membership classes. I've witnessed a Rocky Mountain Conference that has grown in vitality and support. I am encouraged at the outspoken stand the denomination is taking on national and world issues. I've experienced an energetic congregation that gives generously to the community and to the conference. I am impressed with UCC.

And I have come to recognize that it is my denominational home. So, I rewrote my spiritual journey; completed a battery of tests and psychological evaluations; called in five references and added them to my file of transcripts from college, seminary, and Dr. of Ministry program.

**UNITED CHURCH
OF CHRIST**



The Church and Ministry committee approved me for standing in the UCC denomination and waived the requirement of Ecclesiastical Council. Woo Hoo! Now my name will appear on the list of UCC ministers in the UCC Year Book. I can be elected as a delegate to General Synod and now I can do a number of other things that only a UCC pastor can do. Thank-you for your support over the years! I truly love this denomination and feel I have found a home.



AN AMERICAN CONSCIENCE

The REINHOLD NIEBUHR Story

with special guest, filmmaker:
MARTIN DOBLMEIER

Film & Filmmaker Panel

Reinhold Niebuhr's "Serenity Prayer" remains one of the most quoted writings in American literature. Yet Niebuhr's impact was far greater, as presidents and civil rights leaders like Martin Luther King, Jr. often turned to Niebuhr's writings for guidance and inspiration on the most volatile political and social issues of the 20th Century. Niebuhr rose from a small Midwestern church pulpit to become the nation's moral voice — an American conscience — during some of the most defining moments in American history. Rich in archival material, the documentary includes interviews with former President Jimmy Carter, Civil Rights leader Andrew Young, New York Times writer David Brooks, author Susanne Hoeftel and a host of internationally recognized historians and theologians.

"Niebuhr was always present in my mind when I was President and facing the constant threat of nuclear war."
— Jimmy Carter

SUNDAY,
MARCH







05

3 PM

LIBRARY

21c

1175 Chapel Hills Dr.
CO Spgs, CO 80920

YOUTH MINISTRY



A Journey into Discipleship

By **Candace Datz**, Director of Youth & Adult Ministry

candace@fcucc.org

At the end of January (inauguration weekend to be specific), our thirteen confirmands and four adult chaperones went on an incredible retreat into the core of our city. Focusing on our theme of learning what it means to be a disciple of Jesus in the real world, we went in search of people who are speaking truth to power, acting in solidarity with the oppressed and marginalized, and shining their lights wherever they might find themselves.

That Friday evening, we made our way to the Fine Arts Center, where the Keep Colorado Springs Queer group was hosting the opening of a poetry book called *Inauguration* by local poets Idris Goodwin and Nico Wilkinson. Our youth saw an incredible queer community come together on one of the hardest nights of the year and speak their truth of visibility and action and hope.

The next morning, we walked to ESM to hear about the new long-term women's housing they're creating in that space. We then traversed to the parking garage at Nevada and Colorado, where Raven Canon spoke to us about the new street newspaper she founded, *The Springs Echo*, and how that's providing work and voice for the houseless community in our city. After that, we visited Mary Malia at Inside/Out Youth Services, and heard about the expansion that they're doing to provide LGBTQI+ youth with safe space in the northern part of town through a partnership with Library 21c. We then had lunch on the grass in front of the Penrose Library, catered by Seeds Community Café, as Chef Lyn Harwell and activist Steve Handen talked to us about the various work they're each doing in the city with at-risk people.

And then we made our way to Acacia. We were amazed by the traffic in the area and, as we got closer, by the vast sea of people who had shown up to march for women, immigrants, the earth, the queer community, and for hope. Our youth spread out into the crowd, interviewing people about why they were motivated to be there and if their faith tradition had compelled them to show up. After listening to the speakers and feeling the momentum and energy of the participants, we headed back to the church. Patience Kabwasa from Colorado Springs Food Rescue met us there, and we talked about food justice in our city. And then we had a great surprise to end the day. State Rep. Pete Lee and his wife Lynn and State Senator Michael Merrifield dropped by to talk to our youth about the work that they're doing from the public policy side of things. It was an incredible 24 hours.

As we talked with each of these local heroes, we asked them about why they do what they do and what kinds of self-care and spiritual practices they do to sustain them in their work. Each person shared different things from meditation and hiking to marathons and church-going. Our youth are amped up and energized to do the work of the kin-dom and to do it in ways that are sustainable and long lasting.

2ND MISSION TRIP SOUP FUNDRAISER

SUNDAY, MARCH 12
12:15 PM - FOUNDERS' ROOM

- Homemade soup by the FCC Youth Group
- All are welcome

Support FCC Youth as they raise funds for this summer's
Youth Group Mission Trips:
Middle School Youth: La Puente, Alamosa
High School Youth: DOOR organization, Chicago



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Lois Benson*Membership Clerk***Chris Steenbergen***Historian*

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Rev. Dr. Jerry Jordan*(1973-1988)***Rev. Dr. James White***(1989-2005)*

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THE COMMUNICATOR

First Congregational Church
20 East Saint Vrain Street
Colorado Springs | CO | 80903



RETURN SERVICE REQUESTED

First Congregational UCC is an Open and Affirming Congregation. We invite people of every age, ace, marital status, sexual orientation, gender expression, means, ability and spiritual tradition to join us in the love of God and neighbor through Christian worship, dedication to education and commitment to service.



We welcome you to contribute to *The Communicator*!

The Communicator invites articles, notices, and letters relevant to the life of our congregation.

Accepted submissions may be edited for length, clarity, and correctness.



Opinions expressed by writers do not necessarily reflect official FCC policy.

**DEADLINE for the next issue (April 2017 Issue)
is Wednesday, March 15, 2017.**

Please send to: emily@fcucc.org AND petehokanson@gmail.com

THE
COMMUNICATOR
IS AVAILABLE

- AT CHURCH
- VIA EMAIL
- VIA WEBSITE

www.fcucc.org

REQUIREMENTS:

- ☉ Include author's name, church role, contact email, and contact telephone number.
- ☉ Include a title suggestion and, if desired, photos, etc.
- ☉ Full page articles should be a MAXIMUM of 500 words (one page in size 12 font).
**If articles include photos or graphics, please submit a shorter article.
- ☉ Short articles and announcements are welcomed and will be vetted to decide about inclusion.
- ☉ May be a MSWord attachment or an email.
- ☉ Accepted LATE submissions may be placed in the next edition or may be sent out via weekly e-blast.