

First Church Communicator *Renewed*

TO LIVE LIKE JESUS,
TO SERVE LIKE JESUS
TO HAVE FUN LIKE JESUS.



Castle Rock
First United Methodist Church

January 2023
Newsletter



In this issue of the Communicator, we will be looking back with our eyes on the future to be renewed. So that we can Live, serve and have fun like Jesus in 2023.



Stay up to date with us at
www.fumccr.org



Pastor Matt's Space

email: matt.franks@fumccr.org

social media @mattdamethdoist

"In God, we live, move, and exist."
~Acts 17:28a (Common English Bible)

As I shared on the 1st Sunday of January instead of resolutions, I try to live into a theme for the year and incorporate that into my leadership as a pastor. This year my theme is "Renewed."

I want us as a Church to be renewed so that we can live like Jesus, serve like Jesus, and have fun like Jesus. When we center our lives on Jesus we can live, move, and exist to be renewed so that we can live like Jesus, serve like Jesus, and have fun like Jesus. I know this will take time, energy, and effort but I am reminded of this quote:

"Renewing the church is like remodeling your house: It takes longer than you hoped, costs more than you planned, and makes a bigger mess than you ever thought possible."
--Paul Smith, as quoted in Christianity Today, 25 October 1993, 73.

I know we can be renewed to be the Church we are called to be for the present and future and we do that by building off of what we did in the past. Learning what worked, what did not, and what needs to be retired. This is how renewal works looking back so we can move forward. I am looking forward to this year with this community.

What Am I reading?

I have an Amazon Idea List for books I like to suggest you can find that here:

<http://a.co/9fQNdWz>

Right now I am taking a break from reading traditional reading of books however I am reading various articles from

<https://theunstuckgroup.com/>

<https://www.seeallthepeople.org/>

<https://hackingchristianity.net/>

And listening to these Podcasts:

The Moth

History Doesn't Suck

No Stupid Questions

In Trust

What Is going on at the Church?

Photo Directory Update

I am waiting on a few things before we fully print the photo part of the directory. I have the address, birthday, and anniversary portion printed just waiting on a few photos before I print those. I am hoping to have it in your hands by Jan. 29th if everything comes together. So if you want your photo in the directory please email it to me at matt.franks@fumccr.org

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Catch me for Coffee

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What is Your Strength? Join us on Jan. 23rd at 6:30 p.m. and find out.

Have you ever wondered what your strength is? You may think you know but sometimes things that are strengths go unnoticed or underused. Would you like to learn from your strengths? If so join me for a Zoom meeting to talk about the Strengthsfinder assessment and the book *Living Your Strengths: Discover Your God-Given Talents and Inspire Your Community* on **Jan. 23rd at 6:30 p.m.**

I will have copies of the book for sale in my office for \$20.00 you will need an unused copy of the book because it has a code for the assessment. We learned from the Ad. Council taking the assessment that the Kindle version of the book does not provide a digital code for the assessment.

Before the meeting please take the assessment (code for assessment in the book) and read the first three chapters of the book.

Please register for the zoom meeting at <https://bit.ly/crfumcstrengths>



**The men's lunch will be
on January 19th
Thursday at 11:30 a.m.
at Pegasus
Email Larry at
lkpratt45@yahoo.com if
you plan on attending**

**Youth Ministries
January Events!**

Sunday, January 8th
8:30am-10:30am
New Year Celebration!

Thursday, January 26th
6:00pm-8:00pm
*Community Valentine
Card-Making Party*



ISAIAH 40:31

“But those who hope in the Lord will renew their strength; they will fly up on wings like eagles; they will run and not be tired; they will walk and not be weary.”

Rev.Sarah's Message:

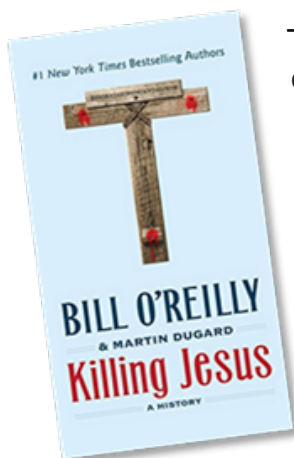
Many of us take stock at the end of a year, set goals, or make new plans for the year before us. Perhaps you have made a few resolutions for the coming year. Perhaps, you'll lose weight, exercise more, watch less television, or spend more time with God. The problem with resolutions is that sometimes they are only skin deep.

Perhaps there is a longing to let go of what we're caught up in and the habits that are a part of our daily life. Each time we are still for a few minutes, there's an opportunity to let go, a chance to

release what holds us back from being all that we are called by God to be. With the coming of a New year we have a chance to center ourselves in the roots of our faith.

It might be a sense of bringing full awareness and attention to our experience, to the people around us, to a conversation with our children. It might be a sense of letting go of reactivity and coming back to resolve with more patience and clarity. It might also be balancing the tendency most of us have to get caught up in stress. We seek to give more attention to feeling grateful for what we have, holding on to positive moments, and things we enjoy. Or it might be a sense of wanting to bring more kindness and compassion to how we treat ourselves, how we treat others, or even how we treat the people we find difficult in our lives. All of that can be cultivated, sustained, and developed through any amount of time we spend in prayer and building a relationship with God. This past year may have been hard, but the Lord is here to reignite our lust for life in 2023. Go into this new year with the power of God behind you, and you'll be lifted up on angel's wings.

New Title for the Contemporary Issues Group



The iconic anchor of *The O'Reilly Factor* details the events leading up to the murder of the most influential man in history: Jesus of Nazareth. Nearly two thousand years after this beloved and controversial young revolutionary was brutally killed by Roman soldiers, more than 2.2 billion human beings attempt to follow his teachings and believe he is God. *Killing Jesus* will take readers inside Jesus's life, recounting the seismic political and historical events that made his death inevitable — and changed the world forever.

Look for the sign-up sheet is available at the welcome center.

Zoom Sessions will be on Fridays from February 17 through March 31, 2023 from 6:30PM to 8:30PM.

In Person Sessions will be on Mondays starting February 20 through April 3, 2023; 6:30PM to 8:30PM

Building on the Blessings by Julie Bailey

Many, many moons ago when I was 12 years old and learning Bible verses in preparation for confirmation, I immediately zeroed in on the short ones. The Beatitudes could wait. The first verse committed to memory was verse 1 of Psalms 107: "Oh give thanks to the Lord, for he is good, for his steadfast love endures forever!"

Across each of our lives we've experienced God's love in so many ways and in response, we've offered our lives to him in service, to live each day a little more like Christ, to be one more little light shining in the darkness. In the past year, as our church has transitioned in leadership and more fully emerged from the confinements of the pandemic, we have begun an important renewal process, one that nudges us to grow deeper in our faith, in service, and in commitment to community.

But we're not starting from scratch. We have established a remarkable basis on which to build and grow. For this reason, I write to remind us of the many extraordinary things we have accomplished in the past year.

We are strengthened by a variety of groups that bring us into fellowship and a greater understanding of God's plans for us — people coming together to study a contemporary issue with Rev. Sarah, or Scripture on Tuesday morning. There's a monthly Zoom on being an antiracist led by Rev. Brenda.

We have teams of caring individuals devoting countless hours to helping others. Our Stephen Ministry has devoted over 300 hours to eight care receivers and will be offering a training for new Stephen ministers in 2023. Some of our volunteers have devoted their energy to projects like the Backpack Ministry, the annual Time and Talent Auction, the Cookie Walk, the Giving Tree, Knot Again's sleeping bags, and nearly 600 thinking-of-you gift bags. Hundreds of pounds of nonperishable foods were donated to the local Help and Hope Center. Leslie Spencer and her team of volunteers set new records with the Harvest Dinner proving that "many hands make light work" (and great food!) while a multigenerational cadre pitched in to help promote, prepare, serve and clean-up.

Worthwhile programs for the children and youth in our community are a priority. Josh and Courtney Hay have begun their second year as youth leaders; seven youth were confirmed in June following a mission trip to Galveston, Texas; monthly social and outreach events remain an integral part of their growth; youth led a church service in May; and the Perk Up coffee shop will soon return to our fellowship time on Sunday morning. Vacation Bible school's theme this year was "Sing!" ; children's Sunday school gathers weekly downstairs at 9:30; under the devoted guidance of Theresa Kepple, the S.O.C.K program is in its 12th year with its own cadre of volunteers providing activities and a nutritious meal after school once a week. Little Blessings has a new director, Delaney Peterson, and continues to thrive as a day care option for working parents.

Music continues to grace our worship in varied ways. Out of the Chancel Choir and Band come more musicians, soloists, performers to grace our worship service. Our hearts have been lifted by guest musicians like John Redmond and the Colorado Brass.

We delight in the improvements to our building and grounds: Our kitchen was back in service after several months of renovation required after water damage; Little Blessings rooms were refreshed; new video screens were added to the sanctuary and our livestreams expanded. Plants were watered,

weeds were pulled, the outdoor chapel refreshed, and the parking lot and sidewalks were cleared with the help of gracious volunteers.

Communication improvements include a new look for our weekly email blast and monthly newsletter as well as screen images during worship. We have a new church directory that will continue to grow in size as it empowers us to know one another better and learn names, note anniversaries and birthdays. Volunteers have stepped up to manage financial bookwork and monthly communications. In welcoming Pastor Matt's leadership we have received renewed energy for new missions, visions, plans.

Wow, huh?

I may have missed some important successes and blessings here at CRFUMC; nonetheless, all service has been vital to our growth as a church. In Jeremiah, chapter 29, verse 11, we are reminded "For I know the plans I have for you," declares the Lord, 'plans to prosper you and not to harm you, plans to give you a hope and a future.'"

God's "plans to prosper" likely don't match our earthly definitions. His plans are far bigger, and they always further His good. Maybe His plans to prosper you are plans to pull you into His work. Plans that invite you to care for others in the most practical ways. Plans that bless you more deeply and richly than you could have ever imagined.

There is room for everyone at this table that unites us. Where will you find a seat?

Cookie Walk

From Laryce Nitsch and Phyllis Tumey, co-chairs on Castle Rock United Women of Faith:

Thanks so much to all those who baked and bought cookies. Our cookie walk was a great success. Funds raised help us contribute to The United Women in Faith mission projects as well as maintaining and making upgrades when needed to the church kitchen. Your support is greatly appreciated.





Stephen Ministry Space

As we begin a new year, we often take a reflecting look back. Sometimes we look back with longing; we think about happier times, easier times, comfortable times. Other times we look back with regret; what could we have changed, done differently or better. A new year can be a new beginning. But for someone who is dealing with grief, finding peace and solace can be evasive. The hustle and bustle of Christmas is gone and there is more time to feel alone with their thoughts. It is at these times that they need to feel loved and valued, more than ever before. This presents an opportunity to reach out to those you know or suspect are suffering. Be aware of friends and family who have stopped calling or participating. Take the time to call, visit or send a caring card. Let them know you are still there for them, even if they say they are fine. And remember that there is a caring team of Stephen Ministers available to help, whether it is for yourself or someone you care about.

Blue Christmas 2022 reflection

By Clarence Neal

This year's Blue Christmas service was available, through the miracle of technology, to be watched online. I was able to watch it in "real time" from my location in Illinois. As Joe mentioned in his article "Prescription for a Blue Christmas: Hope", it offered an opportunity for everyone to reflect on the loss of a loved one, close friend, illness, deep debt, or just feeling beaten down by life.

There was an opportunity to write down what was on your mind, bring it forward and leave it in a basket at the front and receive an anointing from one of the Stephen Ministers, light a candle of hope for the future, then pass by one of the Stephen Ministers for an opportunity to have them offer a prayer for what your mind, before you returned to your seat.

Pastor Matt spoke of the hope for tomorrow. I used that as an inspiration to rewatch the service and gain a deeper appreciation for the opportunity offered. I was able "in my mind" to reflect on what I wanted to write down and leave in the basket. I would encourage others to watch the Blue Christmas 2022 service available on the church website. If you would like to speak with one of our Stephen Ministers, contact the church office, Pastor Matt, or one of our Stephen Minister leaders.



Keep In Mind

Tuesday Morning Bible Study will meet from 9:30 -11 am on January 10, to begin a study of Paul using Adam Hamilton's book *The Call*. Anyone who has a spare copy of *The Call* who would like to loan it to our group, please leave a copy in the church office with your name on it and a note requesting its return. This group is open to anyone who wishes to study Scripture, people, and events of the Bible up close.

S.O.C.K. Volunteers are needed to provide and prepare meals for our Tuesday afternoon SOCK program (Serving Our Community Kids). Sign up at the Welcome Center.

Please contact the church office for links to these Zooms:

- Stephen Ministry Supervision meets the second and fourth Thursdays at 6:30 pm
- Rev. Sarah's Contemporary Discussion Group, Zoom Sessions: Fridays at 6:30
- Coffee Time with Rev. Sarah, Wednesdays at 9:30 a.m.

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Save The Dates

January 8: taking down of the greens between services
January 10: Tuesday Morning Bible Study at 9:30 in the church library
January 12: Leah Circle of UWF, 11:45 am, Fellowship Hall
January 24: Love Circle at 1 pm, church library
January/February issue of the Upper Room is available at the Welcome Center.

**Don't forget
to hit like or
share on
our social
media post.**



WAYS TO GIVE TO CRFUMC



Offering Plates

In-person offerings may be dropped in the offering plates



Mail or Dropped off

Offerings can also be mailed or dropped off at the church office
1200 South Ave.
Castle Rock, Co. 80104

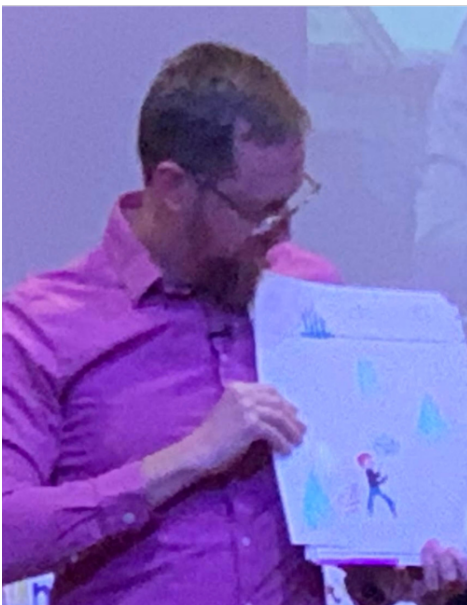


Online/Text

Web Site
www.fumccr.org/give
or
Text GiveTo FUMCCR to
73256

Looking Back on 2022





Pastoral Transistion



**Saying Goodbye to
Rev. Rob**

Saying Hello to The Franks

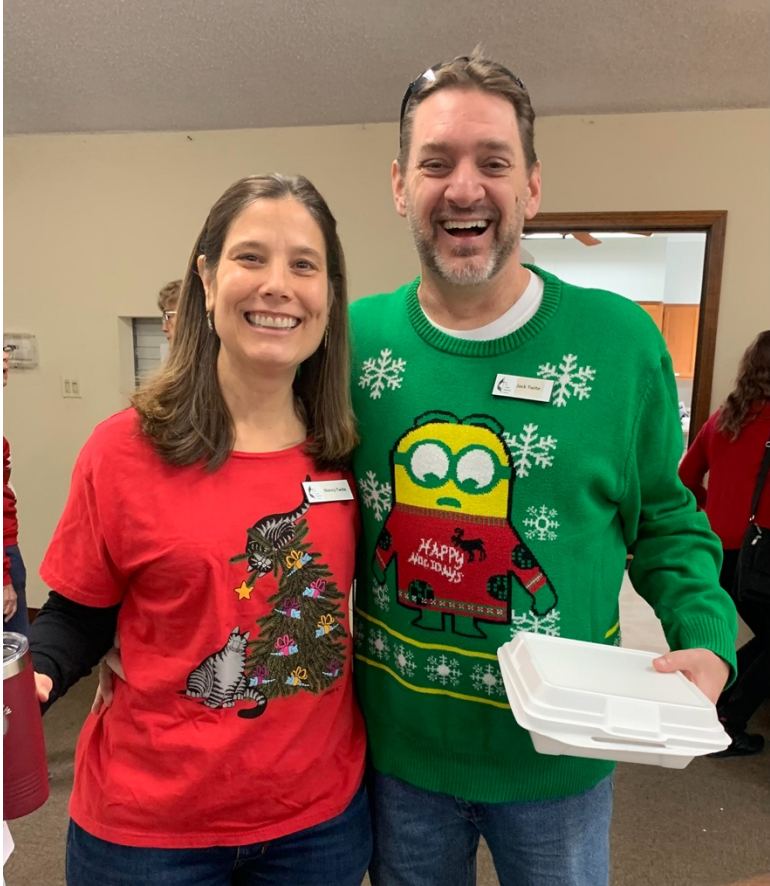












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