

May 2026



First Church Communicator

Monthly Newsletter of Castle Rock First United Methodist Church

Graduate Sunday May 24th

Will be held on Sunday, May 24th and is a time to celebrate and honor all of our high school or college graduates! If you are parents or grandparents of a graduating senior, please send the following to Josh Hay at josh.hay@gmail.com.

Only include:

PICTURE

Student Name..

Graduating From...

Attending (or Working at)...

Studying...

Related To...

Cutoff Date is May 10th



Help & Hope Mother's Day Food Drive May 3-10

Help & Hope Mother's Day Food Drive

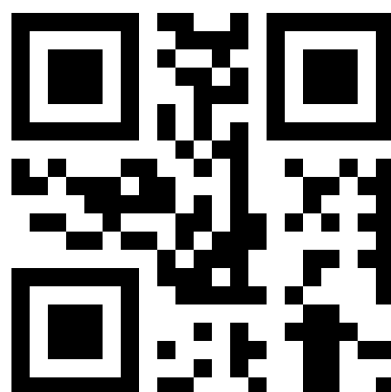
Mother's Day Food Drive Our next food drive that supports the food pantry at the Help and Hope Center will be on Mother's Day (May 10th). Our new grocery totes will be handed out following our service on May 3rd.

We will be accepting food donations and baby care items such as diapers, baby wipes and formula.



Backpack Ministry Thank You

We offer our sincere thank you to Mike Vitek and his team and everyone who donated to this year's backpack ministry.

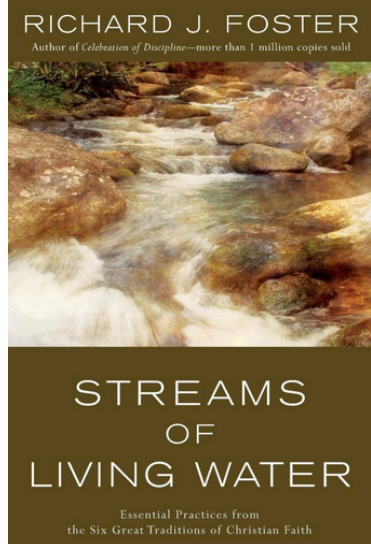
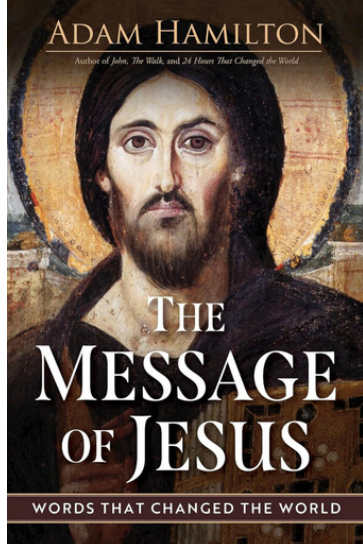


Scan QR Code to connect with us or go to www.fumccr.org to find out more about us.

Church Potluck May 24 following Worship

After the May 24th service honoring our graduates, we will be having a Brunch Potluck. Bring your favorite egg casserole dish, muffins, fruit or other favorite brunch items to share and enjoy a great fellowship time.





New and Engaging Bible Studies

If you are looking for a way to study portions of the Bible more closely, you are encouraged to join any of these offerings. Both studies this spring will draw you closer to the life of Christ.

Tuesday morning group meets at 9:30 in the church library and has begun discussing Adam Hamilton's *The Message of Jesus: Words That Changed the World*. Anyone who could not make the first 2 sessions is encouraged to join us in May. For more information, contact Julie Curran at 443-326-7957.

Monday evening and Friday evening contemporary studies with Rev. Sarah are beginning *Streams of Living Water: Celebrating the Great Traditions of Christ* by Richard J. Foster.

The Monday in-person group meets in Fellowship Hall, April 27 to May 18, June 1 to June 8; 6:30 to 8:00PM.

The Friday evening Zoom session meets: May 1 to May 15, May 30 to June 12; 6:30 to 8:00PM. Contact Rev. Sarah for the link.

Church Outdoor Work Day May 16th

The trustees will have various projects for us to tackle to help make the Church grounds look nice. More info to come out soon. But will have various projects for all skill sets. There will be a signup sheet at the welcome desk on May 3rd.

Blast and Link Submissions

If you have church photos, a related project or event to promote, or a card of thanks or invitation to share with our church, please email your copy no later than Tuesday morning to Julie Bailey at juliesings@gmail.com

Leah Circle, United Women of Faith

Our Leah Circle fully embraces the vision of United Women of Faith:

“We are a powerful, fearless force driven by God’s love and united in sisterhood. With a focus on women, children and youth, we act for justice and transform communities. We face the realities we see in the world, even when they are not the ones we would like to see. However, our goal is not to bear witness simply to harms but also to God’s love by acting boldly to change those harms.”

Leah Circle, which meets on the second Thursday of each month provides a great opportunity for the women of our church to connect with others over lunch, conversation, devotions, and an informative program.

The **May 14** meeting of Leah Circle begins at **11:45 AM** and is a potluck luncheon. Anyone attending for the first time need not bring a thing. There will be a brief business meeting, devotions, and a program presented by Julie Bailey on the benefits of play and recreation as an adult based on various scriptures. And ideas from Kevin M. Gushiken’s book *The Theology of Play*. Our lunch gatherings in June and July at Fairgrounds Regional Park are more informal with casual conversation over a sack lunch. In August we gather for lunch at Duke’s in Castle Pines. May is a great time to join this congenial group of women.



Josh Working During Our Extreme Homemaker Event on April 4th



**STEPHEN
MINISTRY**



Newly Commissioned Stephen Ministers

By Cheryl Smith

Congratulations to our newly commissioned Stephen Ministers, Lori Rafferty and Pat Jones. We have grown to be a blessed team of 13 Stephen Ministers. We are so grateful for Lori and Pat's commitment to offering compassionate, one-to-one care to those in our congregation and community who are facing life's challenges. Their dedication will be a true blessing to many. We are also excited to welcome our newest Stephen Leader, Jonathon Cole Morrison. Lori and Pat completed 50 hours of training as Jonathon did 1 year ago with one of our leaders, Maryalice McHugh. Jonathon then continued his training with an additional 25 hours of the Bridges Leader training this year to be commissioned as a new leader.

I am constantly moved by this team's commitment to "being" rather than "fixing" In a world that often wants a quick solution, our team works in the name of Christ to offer the much rarer gift of a listening ear and a steady heart. Please help us to welcome our new Stephen Ministers and new Leader as they embark on what we all say is a life changing experience to serve humbly as the caregivers while allowing God to be the cure giver. If you wish to have or know someone who would like to have a Stephen Minister walk alongside someone in confidential Christian companionship, please let Pastor Matt or Rev. Sarah know or contact me as the referral coordinator Cheryl Smith 303 506-2476 we will happily arrange for a Stephen Minister for one to one caring relationship.

This Month's Reflection by Louise Moleri

When sitting with a care receiver in their grief, pain or despair, it isn't always easy to relate to their experience if you haven't been there yourself. Even though I fully empathize with them, it is not my pain, so I don't really know how hard what they are going through is to them. For instance, after losing my best friend last year, experiencing the death of someone I dearly love, allowed me to relate more fully with those who are going through grief.

I now find myself going through a different experience that is new to me, but not for some of the care receivers I have walked with. A couple of months ago I tore the tendon in my right rotator cuff. That triggered pain in my right hip and knee from earlier injuries, and I have found myself in unbearable pain a few nights; once it was bad enough that I had to get out of bed and try to get comfortable in a recliner. Crying out, praying for God to relieve my pain, I felt despair like I have never felt before. I thought about my needing assistance getting dressed, washing my hair and becoming dependent on others, which was something I had never really thought about. Amid those thoughts, it occurred to me that I could relate so much more to others in similar situations.

I've never believed that God sends painful lessons for us to learn, but I do believe God is walking with me in them. I am so grateful for my Stephen Ministry training, which has allowed me to look at adversity from a different perspective.

Community Connection by Julie Bailey

As we move through this Easter Season toward Pentecost, the birthday of the church, and as we look closely at the book of Acts via Pastor Matt's sermons, our community connection to one another grows stronger and our lives more meaningful. I recently asked a few people what they treasured most about our church. The responses varied, but these truths resonate for all of us as we rely on the Holy Spirit to guide our steps

"I love First United Methodist Church of Castle Rock for many reasons. The congregation has always been welcoming and caring. I have been on the receiving end of that care and support through many trials during my fifty-five year membership. I am pleased to be a part of a congregation who welcomes all and one who provides community and mission support." — Laryce Nitsch

"I love the fellowship. I know that even if I only see them on Sunday morning, this church family would be there for me when I need them. Knowing that I have a ready-made family of Prayer Warriors is a huge comfort to me. - Maryalice McHugh

"I am so grateful for my church which is a sanctuary where I find both a deep sense of belonging and the loving space needed for spiritual growth. It serves as a grounded community which I call my family and supports me through life's inevitable transitions, offering a shared commitment to grace and understanding. More than just a weekly gathering, it is a place that challenges me to grow and provides the strength to extend compassion to others through service as a Stephen Minister." — Cheryl Smith

"Prevenient grace! I am grateful for the loving way our diverse congregation supports and encourages one another and reaches out to our community." — Lois Price

"I'm thankful for Stephen ministers and their love and concern when I need it. Lois has been there when I lost Guy, when I broke my left foot and right wrist simultaneously...and she's a GREAT travel companion! I never knew what Stephen Ministry was at Evergreen UMC, but I'm continually blessed by FUMC-CR Stephen Ministers! Like having your own personal love blanket!" — Jeri Groves

"What I love about our church? The love and support we show our surrounding community which we express through food collections, Knot Again, the back pack ministry, and in other events and ministries ." — Joyce Morales - Caramella

"In 2026, Kay and I celebrate 30 years as members of CRFUMC. What I am most grateful for is that, in all our years here, I have never felt God's love as strongly as I do within our church family today. We've grown beyond the idea of what a church is 'supposed' to look like. Instead of simply saying we love our neighbors, we now truly strive to love all neighbors—not just those who look or live like us. Our church has become a place that is genuinely welcoming to everyone. In worship, I appreciate the small but meaningful signs of that—like the occasional giggle of children in the sanctuary, the blend of traditional hymns with modern music, and Matt's messages that both inspire and challenge us. I am grateful to be part of a church family that chooses love over judgment, that meets people where they are in their faith, and that doesn't expect perfection. Our church isn't perfect, and neither are we—but embracing that together, in the love of our Lord, is what makes CRFUMC so special to me." — Pat Jones

Upcoming Events

May 3rd

3 p.m. Castle Rock Orchestra Concert

May 10th

Help and Hope Mother's Day donations due

May 14th

11:30 Leah Circle, Fellowship Hall

May 16th

Church Workday

May 20th

6 p.m. Knott Again

May 21st

Men's Lunch at Pegasus at 11:30 a.m.

May 24th

Graduate Sunday

Pentecost Potluck Following Service

May 31st-June 7th

Red Bird Mission Trip

June 7th

Summer Worship Hours Begin

8:30 a.m. Outdoor & 10 a.m. Modern Service

June 11th-13th

Mountain Sky Annual Conference in Billings Montana

June 17th

6 p.m. Knott Again

June 28th

11:30 a.m. All Meal Groups Potluck

August 19th

6 p.m. Knott Again

September 16th

6 p.m. Knott Again

October 8-17th

Wesley Tour of England

October 21st

6 p.m. Knott Again

Every Wednesday

4 p.m. Bell Choir Practice

5:30-7 p.m. Chancel Choir Practice

Marvelous Monday

10 a.m. @ Coff33 in Downtown Castle Rock



Red Bird Mission Team

Departs May 31st

As our mission trip travelers prepare for their trip to Kentucky at the end of May, you may wish to learn more about Red Bird Mission, its history, its mission, its needs. Located in Southeastern KY, Red Bird Mission provides education (a pre-K-12th grade school), a health clinic, housing improvement, outreach, and economic opportunity.

Our group will undoubtedly have much to tell us in June when they return, but you can learn more about RBM at this website at <https://www.redbirdky.org/history>

KAIROS PRISON MINISTRY

For several years John Tamborksi has been a Kairos Prison Ministry volunteer. He has asked our Church family in the past to demonstrate our support of the prisoners participating in the Prison Ministry by signing links to a Paper Pray Chain. In early April, John asked for volunteers to attend the closing ceremony of the 3½ day weekend at Buena Vista Correctional Complex to show the prisoners attending the weekend experience that there are people that support and care about them.

Eight people accepted John's invitation – Lisa Andrews, Rosie Andrade, Ben Caramella, Joyce Morales-Carmella, Jonathon Cole-Morrison, Brad Cole-Morrison, Ann and Mike Vitek. For the eight of us the closing ceremony had a real impact on us. In addition to the eight of us, twenty-two other people attended the closing ceremony. We listened to the 30 prisoners share how the Weekend is changing their life knowing that Christ cares for them. After the closing ceremony, most of the participants thanked us individually for coming and praying for them.

Reflection from Rev. Sarah

“A Mother’s love is something that no one can explain, It is made of deep devotion and of sacrifice and pain, It is endless and unselfish and enduring come what may, For nothing can destroy it or take that love away.” — Helen Steiner Rice

As we approach another Mother’s Day, may we reflect gratefully on the skills and gifts given to us by our mother – or that mother figure in our life.

A wise mom will start early, teaching boundaries to her children. She will never stop loving them, but it would be very unloving of her to make them dependent upon her for the rest of their shared lives. They provide those life lessons we need as we make our way in the world. At a point they send us on our way. We need a mother’s love, which is why God made women the way He did. But we also need limits and boundaries so we don’t take advantage of the servant’s heart God has placed in so many moms. So in light of the fact that we all only have so much to give (and God made us that way on purpose), I’d like to attempt to bestow a Mother’s Day gift today. I’d like to offer the gift of limitations. God can do everything, but you and I cannot! So, if you need permission to set some limits and boundaries in your life, I hope this will help you today, no matter who you are (man, woman, or child).

As we make plans for Mother’s Day Sunday, may we remember that smile that greeted us, that voice that guide us and kept us safe. Whether they are still with us or exist in our memories, let us enjoy and let us give thanks for the person they helped us become.

Your arms were always open
when I needed a hug.
Your heart understood
when I needed a friend.
Your gentle eyes were stern
when I needed a lesson.
Your strength and love has guided me
and gave me wings to fly.
— by Sarah Malin

The Stephen Ministers Are Here for you...

During this season of pastoral transition, The Stephen Ministers recognize that change can often feel uncertain or overwhelming, and the Stephen Ministers want you to know that you don't have to navigate these feelings alone. We invite you to reach out if you find yourself needing supportive space to process your thoughts or simply a compassionate ear to listen to your concerns. If you would like to connect with someone who can walk alongside you during this time, please feel free to contact Cheryl Smith or Maryalice McHugh, as we are here to offer care and encouragement whenever you feel the need.



Reflections from Pastor Matt

Hebrews 12:1-2 CEB

So then, with endurance, let's also run the race that is laid out in front of us, since we have such a great cloud of witnesses surrounding us. Let's throw off any extra baggage, get rid of the sin that trips us up, and fix our eyes on Jesus, faith's pioneer and perfecter. He endured the cross, ignoring the shame, for the sake of the joy that was laid out in front of him, and sat down at the right side of God's throne.

In the world of track and field, the change-over zone is a 20-meter stretch of track where the magic — and the tension — happens. It's the space where one runner, at full tilt, must pass the baton to the next. Pass too early, and you lose momentum. Too late, and you're disqualified. Everything depends on what happens in that narrow, critical stretch.

Life is a series of change-over zones. And right now, I find myself standing in several at once. There is the personal one: Laura is graduating, making the shift from being my kid to being my adult kid. That transition is full of joy and full of logistical questions I didn't fully anticipate — How is she getting to Ohio? When will she come home? How do I get myself to a meet in Tiffin? It's a baton pass that takes more finesse than it looks from the outside.

Then there is the pastoral one. Change is not something we are ever truly prepared for — it simply arrives, and we decide how we will meet it. This particular change-over comes with real adjustments for all of us. I won't be the one standing at the graveside or at the front of the sanctuary when your most important moments happen. If we run into each other at Walmart or a local brewery, I'll be genuinely glad to see you — but I'll leave the church business behind, because that's not my lane to run anymore. These aren't losses so much as they are the natural shape of a healthy transition. I want us to meet this one well — marked by grace, by gratitude, and by the kind of momentum that carries a congregation forward without breaking stride.

And then there is the literal, physical baton of moving. Ashley and I won't be leaving Castle Rock until Emily graduates — she's entering her junior year, so we're here for a while yet. But the process has already begun: the office is being packed, and Arvada is on the horizon. As United Methodist clergy, Ashley and I have developed something of a sacred art when it comes to packing a house and an office. We know how to do it. That doesn't mean it's easy — this kind of change-over always takes finesse.

I had planned to write one more letter next month, but with DCHS graduation and a mission trip arriving at the same time, I want to say what's on my heart now — while I have the room to say it fully. Thank you.

Castle Rock FUMC, you helped me heal. We did things together I will carry for the rest of my life — things I will point to and say, that is what the church can be. I am forever grateful for a congregation that doesn't just talk about sharing God's love and light, but actually goes and does it, in this community and beyond. You have another leg to run. I won't be running with you for this one — but I will be praying for you. And more importantly, you are surrounded by a great cloud of witnesses to a 151 year old history, cheered on by a God who has never once stopped watching the race.

Run and Love Well
Pastor Matt



Pentecost!!! May 24th

On May 24th, 2026, the United Methodist Church will celebrate Pentecost, marking the Holy Spirit's descent on the disciples as described in Acts. This day symbolizes God's ongoing work and the diversity of spiritual gifts. Congregants are encouraged to **wear red** to represent the Spirit's fire and energy, creating a vibrant display of shared faith in the sanctuary.

Summer Worship Schedule Starting June 7th

8:30 a.m. Outdoor Chapel
10 a.m. Modern Service

If you are interested in helping with setup/teardown let Pastor Matt know we will have a training session in May. We will also need people to help drive the golf cart. Starting in May we will be having a sign up for all of these and for favorite hymns suggestions for our pop up choir to sing.

Pop Up Choir Hymns Selection

As we plan for the Summer Pop Up Choir we like to sing favorite hymns. So put your favorite hymns down on the sheet at the welcome desk.

Year to Date March 2026

Revenues	\$	291,564
Expenses		
Personnel	\$	160,639
Conf Apportionment		31,876
Trustees		74,522
Church Office		14,184
All Other		5,880
Total Expenses	\$	287,102
Net Total	\$	4,462