



First Church Communicator

April Newsletter

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Scan the qr code for all of our social media presence

Easter Glory

This year's season of Lent culminating in Holy Week provided us with a variety of opportunities for spiritual connection and growth.

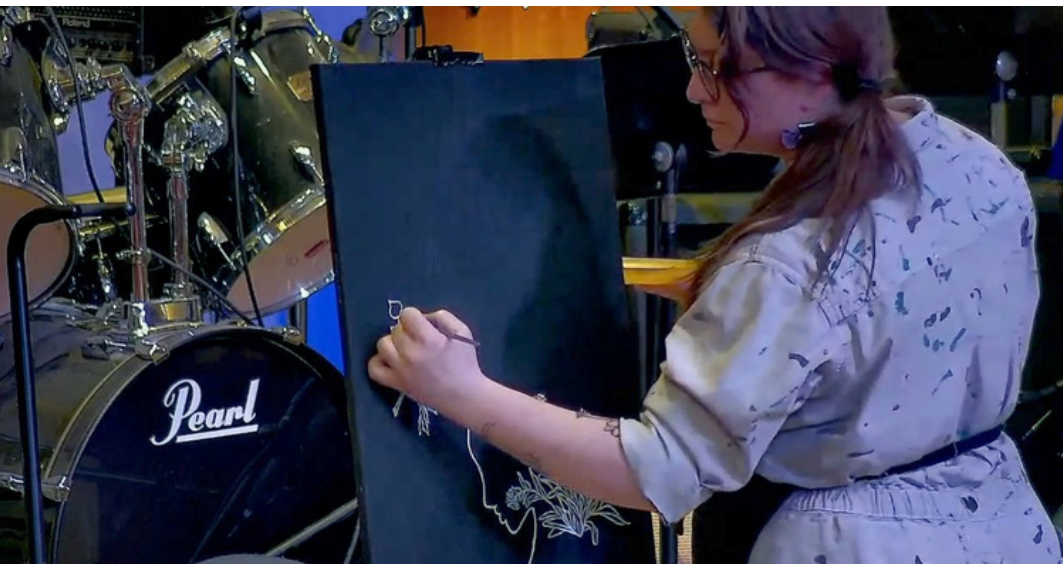
Beginning with Ash Wednesday, we could choose from a variety of opportunities: weekly Communion between services, Rev. Matt's Wednesday night online Vespers, his sermon series based on Magrey R. DeVega's book Questions Jesus Asked, two Bible Study Groups exploring that book and Bob Burkhart's On the Road to the Cross, and weekly videos during worship reminding us of the vital service our Stephen Ministry provides.

Beginning with an exuberant worship service on Palm Sunday, Holy Week included walking through an artistic presentation of the Seven Stations of the Cross, worshipping together on Good Friday, and gathering for worship at dawn on Easter Morning before our regular two services.

Six candles, palm fronds of welcome, dramatized scripture readings, a poignant presentation of "Watch the Lamb" by Gene Ackerman, a gathering at sunrise near the Peace pole, a colorful flower-studded cross, an empty tomb on the altar, an artist at work painting and embracing the symbolism of the Resurrection—all of these brought us meaning and inspiration.

As we move toward Pentecost, may these experiences remind us of God's amazing love for us.





150 YEARS 1874-2024



Serving In Love

Committee on Missions

We will meet at 6 pm on April 11 to continue plans for upcoming mission projects. These projects include the Prison Backpacks, the Mother's Day Help and Hope Collection, the June Food Collection Event (at King Soopers benefiting Help and Hope) and our Youth Mission Trip to Puerto Rico.

Knot Again

Due to the History Night event on April 17th, Knot Again will meet on Wednesday, April 24

Serve Around The Community

You can help around Castle Rock by going to <https://volunteercastlerock.crgov.com/>

A Volunteer Opportunity:

The Outreach and Hospitality Team is looking for some volunteers to make follow-up phone contact with Sunday morning guests and visitors. A script to guide conversation will be provided and the time commitment is just a few hours on Sunday afternoon. If this seems like the perfect fit for you, please let Pastor Matt know you are available.

Community Kids

If you can help with providing and serving food to the children who come to our after-school SOCK program on Tuesday afternoons, please sign up at the welcome center.

Backpack Ministry

On **Sunday, April 14th**, there will be an opportunity for our Church family to participate in our backpack ministry program. Our backpack ministry program responds to Christ's concern for prisoners (Matthew 25: 36, 39, 43). At this time, our Church is the only organization that provides backpacks to indigent men and women being released from the Douglas County Detention Center.

Prison ministry goes back to the beginning of Methodism. Eight years before John Wesley's heart-warming experience of God's grace on Aldersgate Street, he had already begun practicing acts of mercy as an essential part of faith. One of his acts of mercy was to visit prison five days a week.

When Mike Vitek informed Kenny Teague, Minister at the Douglas County Sheriff Detention Center, that our Church was going to do our Backpack Ministry again this year, he asked Mike to thank the members for this ministry and to let them know how much the Detention Center staff appreciate it. After consultation with Kenny, we want to provide 48 backpacks (36 for men and 12 for women).

We purchase the backpacks and then fill them with a wide variety of personal items, such as toothbrush, toothpaste, socks, towel/washcloth, razor, socks, wallet, and other personal items. There is also devotional material in each backpack to help these men and women get their life on track with spiritual help.

Please stop by the table in the narthex and choose a card listing an item or items to be purchased or give a cash donation for the purchase of the backpacks and/or the needed supplies and toiletries.

The supplies for the backpacks need to be returned to the Church by **Sunday, May 5th**.

Moments in Methodist History / History Night

Pulitzer Prize-winning poet Robert Penn Warren noted, "History cannot give us a program for the future, but it can give us a fuller understanding of ourselves, and of our common humanity so that we can better face the future."

On April 17th, we'll not only be celebrating our own church history, but exploring the settling of Colorado, Douglas County, and the arrival of Methodism in the Rocky Mountains. Our guest speakers will be local historian and retired teacher John Berry, local author Joe Gschwendtner (Castle Pines Connection, Five Bright Sunbonnets), Pastor Matt Franks, and Laryce Nitsch, whose team of researchers has been working for several months updating the past 50 years of our church history.

Refreshments will be served and books will be available for purchase. The event begins at 6:30 pm and will last approximately 90 minutes.

History Night



April 17th at 6:30 p.m.

at 1200 South Street, Castle Rock
Desserts and Beverages will be served

Come learn more about our Methodist roots and the people who settled in Douglas County and Castle Rock in the late Nineteenth Century

Featured Speakers: John Berry,
Joe Gschwendtner, Rev. Matt Franks



COMMUNITY GAME NIGHT!

April 25th from 6pm-8pm

U-NO it's time for an intergenerational night of fun and we're happy to report that our Community Game Night is back for its second year!

The Youth will be hosting a community game night in Fellowship Hall on Thursday, April 25th from 6pm-8pm. Bring your favorite board or card games to play and food to share! You'll be SORRY if you miss out. We may not have a MONOPOLY on fun, but it is not a TRIVIAL PURSUIT to engage with friends and outwit them if you can.

Leah Circle, United Women in Faith

Leah Circle's last two formal gatherings of the calendar year will be April 11 (lunch provided) and May 9. We meet at 11:45 in Fellowship Hall for food, a brief business meeting, devotions and a program.

In April, in conjunction with our own church history month, Julie Bailey will present a program titled "The Life and Poetry of Hymnist Fanny Crosby." In May, we'll share a pot luck luncheon with Love Circle. Rev. Matt will present a program titled "The Journey: a look at my connection to my heritage."

Guests and drop-ins are always welcome, and spring is a great time of year to consider becoming a part of this group. In June and July we'll bring our own sack lunch and gather in one of the Castle Rock Parks, and in August we'll have our traditional summer luncheon at Duke's in Castle Pines.

The Contemporary Studies Group

The Contemporary Studies Group has chosen its next book, *The Gospel of Mark: A Beginners Guide to the Good News* by Amy-Jill Levine. Walk through the Bible's earliest source for the life of Jesus with scholar Amy-Jill Levine as she examines John the Baptizer, the Little Apocalypse, the Transfiguration, and several of Jesus's most notable stories and parables. The Good News of the gospel message comes alive in this book as readers see Jesus as divine and human, powerful and weak, approachable yet mysterious. The book features an in-depth study of select passages and illuminates the Gospel in its historical context and as a source for the other gospels.

In Person Sessions run Mondays from April 15, 2024 to May 20, 2024; 6:30PM to 8:30;

Zoom Sessions, Fridays from April 19, 2024 to May 24, 2024; 6:30PM to 8:30PM

Stephen Ministry

During Lent, our Stephen Ministers have shared with you different aspects of our ministry. So, for whom are Stephen Ministers trained to provide care? They are for people experiencing divorce, the death of a loved one, hospitalization, loss of a job, a terminal illness, a relocation, the birth of a child, an empty nest, the transition into retirement, loneliness, the sandwich generation, problems at work, a spiritual crisis – and the list goes on and on. Many of these needs might otherwise go unnoticed or slip through the cracks because we would have lacked the staff to meet them. With Stephen Ministry, we have a team of well-trained Christian caregivers who can provide care in these situations.

These are the obvious crisis that someone could find themselves in. But there are also less obvious needs for which a person could benefit from the care of a Stephen Minister. There is the quiet sufferer, the unnoticed one. This may be someone who encounters a series of smaller losses, stresses, or problems – any one of which he or she could normally take in stride – but when added together pose a bigger challenge.

Stephen Ministers listen, accept, care, and walk with a person who is going through a difficult time. They provide support, prayer, scripture, forgiveness, and unconditional acceptance – in appropriate ways to meet the needs of the care receiver, never passing judgment on the situation.

How can you help? Take time to listen and care for those around you. When you see someone going through a difficult time, tell him or her about our Stephen Ministry and connect that person (with their permission) to Pastor Matt or Rev Sarah. When you encounter a difficult time, be receptive to care for yourself. We are here for you.

find us and our testimony videos online at
<https://www.fumccr.org/stephenministry>

WOMEN'S SPIRITUALITY RETREAT

May 3-5, 2024 Sign-ups are now available at the Welcome Center for this year's Women's Spirituality Retreat, When Change Comes Knocking at the Door. The cost is \$140 which includes 2 nights lodging and 5 meals. The retreat will begin with dinner on Friday evening and conclude after worship on Sunday. Led by Revs. Sarah and Brenda, the retreat will be held at Ponderosa Retreat Center in Larkspur.

Adult Discipleship Opportunity: Be a VIPP (Very Important Point Person)

Volunteers are needed to organize social and educational events such as outdoor activities, museum trips, and concerts. Interested individuals can sign up at the Welcome Center to become a VIPP for one activity.

Paul's Mystery Ship

The Church has done a great job of supporting Paul's Mystery Ship over the past years. Here are some events to take note of.

"Charity of the Month of April"
@ 105 W. Brewing Company

Picklepalooza Rally Against ALS:
Pickleball Tournament
Sat., June 8th from 7-1 p.m.

September 22, 2024 @ 1:30 p.m.
Walk starts/Ends @ 105 W. Brewing Co.

for more info about Paul's Mystery Ship
go to
<https://www.paulsmysteryship.com/>

Jesus with us and the Joy of Springtime by Rev. Sarah Steidtmann

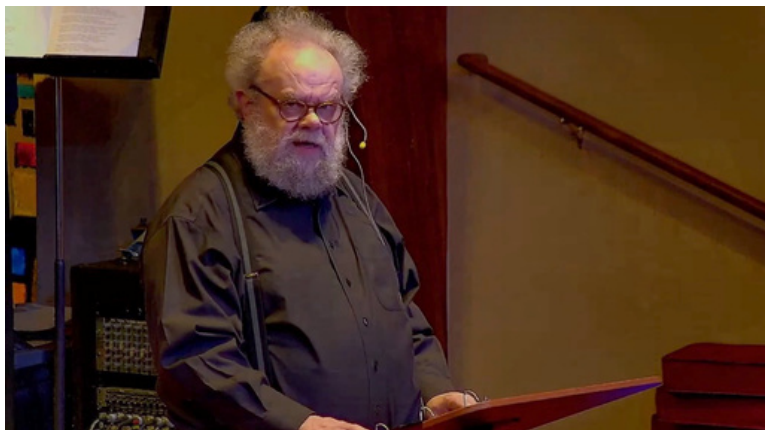
I love the freshness of spring each year. I walk taller, feel healthier, enjoy more color in my face and a boost in my energy. Everything about spring breathes of life and newness. I love seeing green fields and getting out in nature. I can't get enough of watching children running and playing joyfully in the yard, exploring each square foot as if it were brand-new. I can't help but lift my face to thank Jesus for the smile He gave me through His wonderful creation of springtime.

In the time of Jesus' ministry, the disciples took joy in discovering the alpha and the omega, the one who was and is and is to come. Then things came crashing down when the one they were following was arrested convicted and put to death. What do you do when a world event comes crashing in to your reality?

Like Peter, when you are asked if you are "one of them" a follower of Jesus, is it easier to deny a connection with our Lord and give in to the fear that we all feel when our world suddenly falls apart? Do we seek to stay in connection with Jesus? Do we continue to work on nurturing our faith. ?

Like the disciples do you run and find a place to hide? Do you retreat to an upper room and lock the door in hopes that you will not be found? Yet even in that hiding place, Jesus enters and says, "Peace be with you." At that point you know that you have not been left alone. The disciples were able to climb out of this time of crisis and find the joy that the Messiah remains with them—and so can you.

If springlike praise has faded in your heart, ask Jesus to plant in you fresh seeds of joy. May you find in this season of Spring many blessings.



Michael Kiefer as the Narrator on Good Friday



Rev. Sarah Steidtmann leading Worship on Easter

Rooted In Love

by Rev. Matt Franks

We love because God first loved us.~1 John 4:19 Common English Bible

I was looking at the offering envelopes that arrived two weeks ago. At the top of the envelope were the words Enter To Worship and Depart to Serve. It has stuck with me that on Sunday mornings when we gather to worship then we depart out into the world to serve. This month, as the beauty of spring unfolds around us, let's reflect on the concept of worship and how it fuels our service to others.

The act of entering our church signifies more than just attending a service. It's a conscious decision to step away from the daily hustle and immerse ourselves in God's presence. Engaging in the acts of worship: prayer, singing, and reflection. We replenish our spirits and reconnect with our faith.

But worship isn't meant to be a passive experience. It's the fire that ignites a passion within us to serve. As we depart from the sanctuary, that love and inspiration translate into action. We become the hands and feet of Christ, carrying His message of compassion and hope into the world.

Here are some ways to translate your worship into acts of love:

- **Volunteer:** Look for opportunities to serve within our church community or you can also help around the community of Castle Rock by going to <https://volunteercastlerock.crgov.com/>
- **Random Acts of Kindness:** Surprise someone with a helping hand, a heartfelt note, or a small gift.
- **Spread Positivity:** Offer a genuine smile, a listening ear, and words of encouragement to those around you.

Remember, the love we experience in worship is meant to radiate outward, touching the lives of others. Let us use this spring season as a time to not only enter to worship but to depart, empowered by love, to serve our community, and glorify God.

Reflection Questions:

- How does worshiping with your church family renew your spirit?
- What are your passions for serving others?
- How can you incorporate acts of love into your daily life?

Together, let's make this a season of abundant worship and impactful service!

Peace be with you,

MF



BEING A LOVE FILLED CHURCH



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SUNDAY'S IN APRIL

9 A.M. MODERN WORSHIP | 10:45 A.M. TRADITIONAL WORSHIP

In April, the church will focus on the importance of love, exploring how it strengthens relationships, inspires service, and fosters spiritual growth within the community and beyond.

New Member Class

Are you new to the United Methodist Church, Our Church, or want a refresher?

Pastor Matt will host a four-week gathering Starting April 7th at 6 p.m. That will look at our history, our theology, our discipleship, and other things.

If you are interested there will be a sign-up up sheet at the Welcome desk.

Significant Events in the United Methodist Church:

This year is crucial for the United Methodist Church, with three major meetings ahead. Pastor Matt will host a gathering on **April 21st at 2 p.m.** to pray and discuss the upcoming events.

Here are the key dates:

April 23 – May 3, 2024:

UMC General Conference

June 20-23, 2024:

Mountain Sky Annual Conference

July 10-13, 2024:

Western Jurisdictional Conference

Stewardship Month

In April we will be handing out our Stewardship Commitment Cards. This will help us plan for our 2023-2024 Program Year.

Commitment Sunday will be April 28th

Year to Date	February 2024
	\$
Revenues	<u>273,235</u>
Expenses	\$
Personnel	177,824
Conf Apportionment	27,949
Trustees	57,483
Church Office	11,706
All Other	<u>6,803</u>
	\$
Total Expenses	281,764
Net Total	<u>\$ (8,529)</u>

Beginning April 16 Tuesday Morning Bible Study group will be exploring Paul's letter to the Romans. Paul's words help us to understand what faith looks like in practice, how we love people, how we make decisions, how we live in community, and how we foster unity with others. Join us at any point on Tuesdays through June at 9am in the library.