



# April 2026

## First Church Communicator

Monthly Newsletter of Castle Rock First United Methodist Church

*Holy Week*



### **Wednesday April 1st Stations of the Cross 10 a.m.- 7 p.m.**

This self-guided devotional experience is an opportunity to connect with the Jesus last moments in our beautiful sanctuary.

### **Thursday April 2nd A Holy Potluck 6 p.m. in Fellowship Hall**

A Maundy Thursday Dinner Church opportunity. BBQ Meat & Drinks will be provided. What to bring to share?

Last Names:

A-M: Desserts

N-Z: Side Dishes

### **Friday April 3rd Good Friday Service 6 p.m. In The Sanctuary**

This service centers around the final day of Jesus life with readings, music and other reflective elements.

### **Easter Sunday April 5th 3 Services**

6 a.m. Sunrise Breakfast Service | 9 a.m. Modern Music Service | 11 a.m. Traditional Music Service

**Find out more at [www.fumccr.org/easter](http://www.fumccr.org/easter)**

# Words from Pastor Matt

## The Roadmap

When I was a teenager, my dad and I drove to Kansas City for a Royals vs. Cardinals game. This was back in the days before GPS or MapQuest printouts; all we had was the paper map in the glovebox. Somewhere along the way, Dad asked me to pull it out so we could find our way to Kauffman Stadium.

When I opened it, I realized the map was a relic. It was riddled with physical holes from years of folding, and it was so outdated that the "Kansas City" it described was mostly just farmland. As I looked out the window at the bustling suburban development, Dad asked for our location. I just looked at the paper and said, "According to this, we're in a cornfield. And a few miles back? We were driving through a hole in the paper." We ended up navigating through several more "holes" and outdated landmarks before we finally found the stadium.

We often try to navigate our lives using old maps—clinging to past hurts, rigid rules, or our own narrow expectations of how God "should" act. When we do this, the reality of God's presence doesn't match the paper in our hands. We find ourselves staring at "farmland" when God has already built a city, or falling into "holes" where our old ways of thinking simply provide no guidance.

This Holy Week, I invite you to open yourself up to the story of the Gospel of Matthew. In Matthew's account, we see a world where the old maps were being torn apart. From the palm branches to the empty tomb, God was revealing a new landscape of grace that the old maps couldn't predict. Don't let an outdated map keep you from seeing the new thing God is doing in your life today.

## Holy Week Readings

To ground yourself in the Holy Week I invite you to everyday pray the opening prayer, Read the daily Scripture Reading, pray the closing prayer.

Opening Prayer: Almighty God, You sent your Son, our Savior Jesus Christ, To suffer death on the cross. Grant that we may share in his obedience to your will And in the glorious victory of his resurrection; Through Jesus Christ our Lord, Who lives and reigns with you and the Holy Spirit, One God, now and ever. Amen.

Palm Sunday: Matthew 21:1-17

Monday: Matthew 21:18-22:14

Tuesday: Matthew 22:15-23:39

Wednesday: Matthew 24:1-25:46

Thursday: Matthew 26:1-46

Friday: Matthew 26:47-27:56

Saturday: Matthew 27:57-66

Sunday: Matthew 28:1-10

Closing Prayer: We thank you for the journey of this week, for walking us from the gates of Jerusalem to the silence of the tomb and into the light of the morning. Having witnessed the obedience of your Son through these scriptures—from his humble entry to his final breath—we ask that the words we have read would take deep root in our hearts. Amen.

**NO ONE HAS TO FACE LIFE'S CHALLENGES ALONE.  
OUR STEPHEN MINISTERS CAN HELP.**



Find out more info.

<https://www.fumccr.org/stephenministry>



## Stephen Ministry by Lois Price

One day when I was having a very rough time I came crying to the church and the office manager gave me some tissue and told me to go into the library. She said I needed a Stephen Minister and she would call one. Soon she came back and said I should go to a home where there was a Stephen Minister and gave me the address and directions. I was asked some questions and filled out a form. Next day the same person I had seen called and asked me to meet her for coffee. I didn't have enough fuel or money to drive from Elizabeth so I said I would pass. I wasn't sure what this Stephen Ministry was all about. It seemed it was something I couldn't afford. I regret not starting a caring relationship at that time.

A few years later there was a Stephen Ministry Sunday and my friend from the choir, Jim Wickline took me by the arm and led me to the table, gave me an application which I completed and assured me that it wouldn't cost anything. Since my children were getting to be more self-sufficient I could make time for the 50 hours of training. What a blessing that turned out to be! I learned about how to actively listen, how to find a balance between passiveness and aggressiveness, how to draw and maintain healthy boundaries, and how to leave results in God's hands. The training alone was a life changer.

Then came caregiving. I learned new things from each care receiver I walked beside. Some have become lifelong friends. Others came into my life and moved on. Being a Stephen Minister has enhanced my relationship with God and taught me how to let God's love flow through me. I am a care giver, not the cure giver (that's God's job!) I've seen miracles of God's grace, forgiveness, comfort, and presence. As God's perfect love flows through me I have no fear and I don't have to force anything to happen. I'm learning to trust that my experiences have lessons for me and God is always present to help.

When my husband passed away, I was ready to enter a caring relationship with a Stephen Minister. I re-read the booklets about journeying through grief. It enabled me to keep moving forward through the grief process. My Stephen Minister supported me with prayers, encouragement, and did some practical things to help me that weren't in the job description of a Stephen Minister. What could have been a time of breakdown became a season of learning. I wasn't alone and I began learning to ask for and accept help. Accepting help has never been natural or easy for me. It's a process as are so many lessons in life.

Please consider whether God is calling you to be a Stephen Minister, or if you know someone who needs one.



# COMMUNITY CONNECTION

by Julie Bailey

Rachel Billups' *An Unlikely Lent* provided us with a lot to consider during Lent about discipleship and community. In addition to Pastor Matt building his sermons on her book, we had a fine turn-out during Community Faith Time to discuss her book and relate it more personally to our lives.

As we looked closely at the ordinary people doing extraordinary things in the last week of Christ's life, we reflected on how individuals such as Simon of Cyrene, Joseph of Arimathea, and Nicodemus, among others, supported and served our Lord in His final hours. These ordinary people call us to be "unlikely" allies and companions showing unlikely courage in offering and receiving from each other,

Here are some quotations from *An Unlikely Lent*:

"There is something beautifully horrific about experiencing some forms of suffering. And perhaps that's because we do not suffer alone."

"As we walk through our own seasons of grief, hardship, or uncertainty, we, too, are called to carry the burdens of others. We carry one another's burden not to fix one another. We are not qualified to solve one another's problems most of the time, but we can simply be present to ensure that no one suffers alone."

"Share your pain with someone you trust. Ask for prayer and seek community. Because while suffering may be part of the human experience, isolation does not have to be. We were designed to be in deep relationship with one another."

{Quoting former U. S. Surgeon General and author Vivek Murthy} Billups writes, "The love required to build community must not be reserved only for close family and friends or those who share our beliefs and life experiences; it must also be extended to neighbors, colleagues, people of different backgrounds, people with whom we disagree, and even people we consider our opponents. It requires recognizing something deeper and more fundamental that connects us."

Reflecting on the book and Pastor Matt's Lenten sermons, we might ask ourselves: Is God asking us to "move from cautious curiosity to courageous commitment" and how do I do that?

"Carry each other's burdens, and in this way you will fulfill the law of Christ"  
— Galatians 6:2 NIV

# Words from Rev. Sarah

How do you feel on Easter Sunday? I can't say that I remember every detail of every Easter Sunday. But in my memories of Easter Sundays past, there is a common thread of joy.

Throughout the year, I try to smile when I am sharing my faith community, with family or friends. I am pretty sure the smile never leaves my face on Easter Sunday. There is a special feeling on Easter Sunday. The church is full of bright colors and smiling faces; laughter and fellowship and the smell of Easter lilies fill every corner; and, best of all, God's people loudly sing their Easter praises. Together we share the joy that the Lord has risen, he has risen indeed.

I hope we can keep that Easter joy throughout our lives. I don't have a special guidebook on how to make every day like Easter Sunday or an easy way to summon those special joyful feelings. Life will present us with challenges that we must face. We remember that we have Jesus. We always have the Savior who suffered, died, and rose for us, who has guaranteed us forgiveness and eternal life. Even when the joy of Easter has passed and we are back to our regular routines, we still have a special reason to be joyful. We run to Jesus because he is our Savior. In him we remain confident all the way to eternal life.

God desires us not to be discouraged, sad or despondent, but to be radiant in the joy of the risen Lord, in the joy of the resurrected life to which we are all called. The simple joys of a beautiful day, a good conversation or a shared meal with loved ones bring a lightness to our hearts that helps us to experience God in the day-to-day. May it be so as you move into Easter and the days beyond.



## Graduate Sunday May 24<sup>th</sup>

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](mailto:josh.hay@gmail.com).

Only include:

- PICTURE
- Student Name..
- Graduating From...
- Attending (or Working at)...
- Studying...
- Related To...

# A Heartfelt Thank You

Dear Church family,

Thank you everyone who participated in making it possible for me to receive my Orbit reader 20 Braille Machine. It was so kind and generous of everyone who donated money in this project. I very much appreciate your generosity as my life will be so much more accessible. Because of your support, this machine helps me to easily accomplish all the tasks of daily living, Instead of getting out my heavy Perkins Braille and needing paper every time I need to write something down, I can just quickly and efficiently turn on this new machine and do so. Your kindness and love will make it so much faster for me to just open a file and read the bulletin at church and to participate in our activities. For this I am truly grateful.

I can't express enough how happy and wonderful this machine will be for me. Another aspect of this generous gift is that I can read many books in Braille. For me this is a fabulous dream come true. In addition my many doctor appointments, I am so blessed and fortunate to have the church's beautiful and honorable help, making life even more wonderful.

Thank you again, everyone, as I am so grateful in having my dreams answered in having a Braille machine. Thank you so, so much for being the amazing church family that I am so privileged to have.

Blessings to all!  
Callie Hurst

*Note from Pastor Matt: This money was available from our HOME Teams use of Time and Talent Funds. Thank you all for helping make this happen.*

## G.R.O.W Discipleship Pathway

At Castle Rock FUMC the G.R.O.W. discipleship pathway provides a clear, rhythmic guide for deepening your relationship with Christ. By moving through the stages of Gather, Reflect, Offer, and Walk, participants transition from communal worship and personal reflection to active service and daily life with God.

This intentional journey is designed to help every individual, regardless of where they are in their faith, take the next step toward a more vibrant and transformative spiritual life.

## Invitations Matter

Inviting people to church matters because a personal connection is the most effective way to break down the "intimidation barrier" of walking into a new place alone. By offering a "sit with me" invite, you provide a sense of immediate belonging and a supportive "third space" outside of work and home. InUltimately, it's a simple act of value that offers others a path toward community, hope, and a safe place to explore life's biggest questions.

# 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.

### VIPP - Very Important Point Person

Volunteers are needed to spearhead activities that take groups to museums, concerts, the mountains, educational events, etc. It is a one-time commitment. Previous events have included the Colorado History Museum, Indian Paint Mines in Calhan, viewing the fall colors, Flying W Ranch. Is anyone up for a trip to Breckinridge to visit the Father Dyer sites?

### Face to Face 2026:

A Journey of Faith & Fellowship  
 Join us for Face to Face, a unique spiritual retreat designed specifically for older adults (ages 60+) to rediscover Christ's presence and navigate the seasons of aging with grace. This four-session program—held April 29, May 1, 4, and 6 at Central United Methodist Church—offers a supportive space for discipleship, meaningful discussion, and community. Lunch is provided daily as we explore our faith together from 9:00 AM to 4:00 PM. Talk to Pastor Matt or John Tamborski for more info.

### Wesley Trip to England:

There's Still Room! - October 8-18, 2026 This exciting trip to England will visit many sites from the lives of John and Charles Wesley and bring the history of Methodism to life. It will also include some other fun sites, such as Stonehenge, a West End show, Windsor Castle and a dinner cruise on the Thames River. Brochures and sign-ups are located at the Welcome Desk.

Year to Date February 2026

	\$
Revenues	267,095
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Expenses	\$
Personnel	143,958
Conf Apportionment	28,928
Trustees	660,033
Church Office	12,632
All Other	(588,371)
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Total Expenses	257,181
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Net Total	\$ 9,914

## Upcoming Events

#### April 9th

11:45 a.m. Leah Circle

#### April 12<sup>th</sup>

Prison Ministry Backpack Supplies Due

#### April 15th

6:00 p.m. Knot Again

#### April 16<sup>th</sup>

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

#### April 21st

7 p.m. SPRC

#### April 22nd

6:30 p.m. Trustees

#### May 24th

Graduate Sunday

#### May 31st-June 7<sup>th</sup>

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 28th

11:30 a.m. All Meal Groups Potluck

#### October 8-17<sup>th</sup>

Wesley Tour of England

#### Every Wednesday

4 p.m. Bell Choir Practice

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

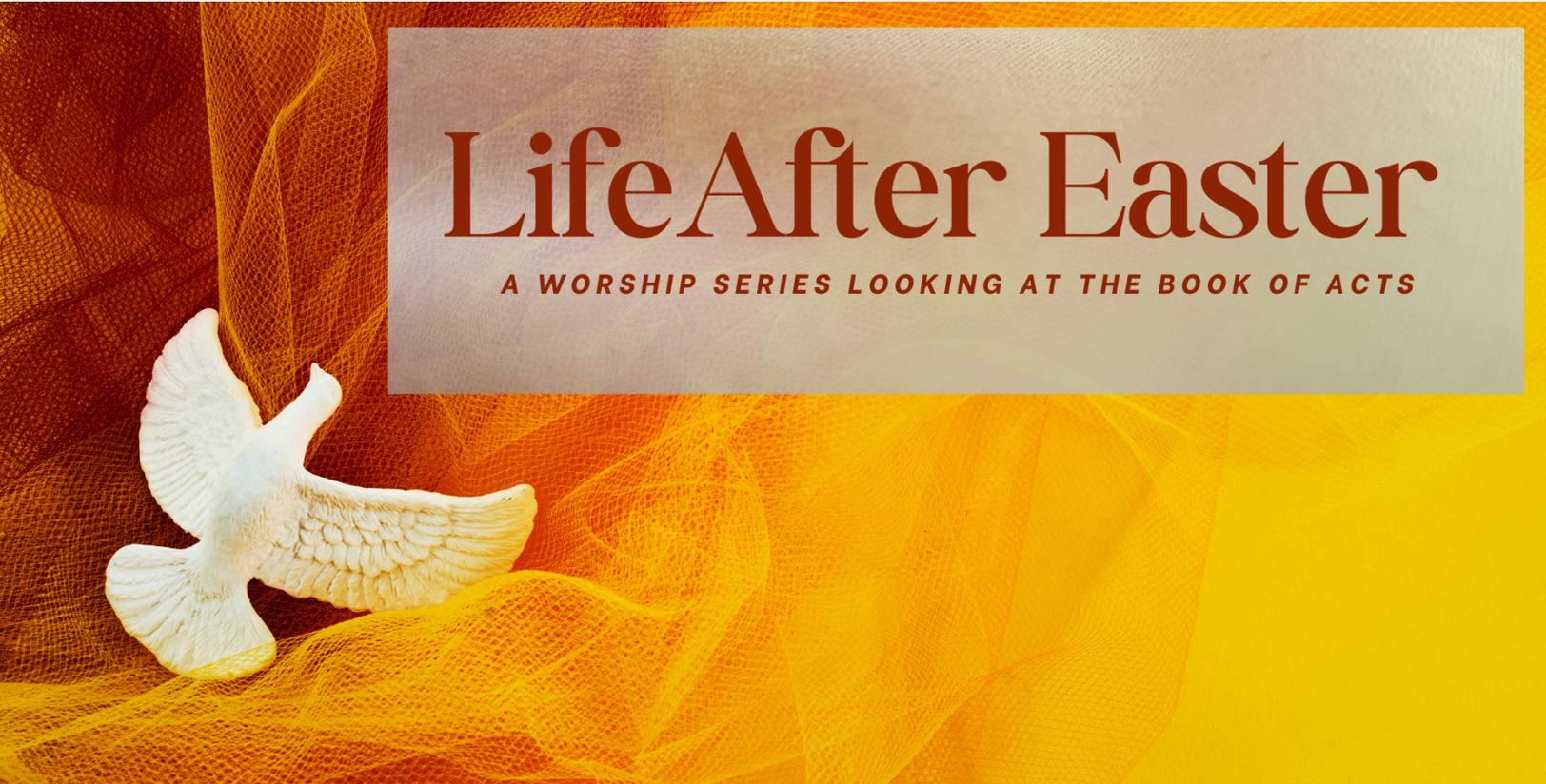
#### Marvelous Monday

10 a.m. @ Coff33 in Downtown Castle Rock

A photograph of a church interior. In the foreground, the backs of several people are visible as they stand in a sanctuary. In the background, a large wooden cross is mounted on a wall. The lighting is warm and focused on the cross.

CONNECT  
WITH US

[WWW.FUMCCR.ORG](http://WWW.FUMCCR.ORG)

A white ceramic dove with its wings spread, resting on a piece of orange, textured fabric. The background is a gradient of orange and yellow.

# LifeAfter Easter

*A WORSHIP SERIES LOOKING AT THE BOOK OF ACTS*