



January 2026

First Church Communicator

Monthly Newsletter of Castle Rock First United Methodist Church

GROW



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Gather • Reflect • Offer • Walk

A Wesleyan Journey of Grace-Filled Growth

ABOUT GROW

Discipleship is not a checklist—it's a lifelong journey of becoming more fully who God is calling us to be. Our discipleship pathway is known as G.R.O.W. This pathway gives us a shared language and a faithful rhythm for nurturing our relationship with God, one another, and the world God so loves. Rooted in Scripture and shaped by our Wesleyan tradition, G.R.O.W. invites every person—no matter where they are on the journey of faith—to take meaningful steps in following Jesus.

G – GATHER

“Let us not neglect to meet together...” — Hebrews 10:25

Discipleship begins with community. We are formed in faith not alone, but together. When we gather, the Holy Spirit shapes us through worship, prayer, conversation, and shared life.

R – REFLECT

“Search me, O God, and know my heart...” — Psalm 139:23

Discipleship is nurtured through inward practices that help us pay attention to God's presence in our lives. Reflection creates space for God to shape our hearts and guide our growth.

O – OFFER

“Present yourselves to God...” — Romans 6:13

Discipleship grows when we offer our whole selves—our time, gifts, resources, and compassion—for the sake of others. Faith becomes visible when love is put into action.

W – WALK

“Walk in a manner worthy of the calling...” — Ephesians 4:1

Discipleship is a daily journey—how we live, love, and respond to God's grace each day. Walking the way of Jesus is ongoing, relational, and life-shaping.

As we move through 2026 you will have opportunities to G.R.O.W on your faith journey. Open yourself up to G.R.O.W on your faith journey and see where the Holy Spirit Leads you.

Also thank you so much for the words, gifts, and showing up during the Holiday season. They made the season so special.

Be the Light and Love of God Everywhere

Pastor Matt Franks



A Healing Service: When One Stephen Minister Is Not Enough

By Jonathon Cole-Morrison

This past summer, the Stephen Ministry team was approached with a unique request: would we, as a group, be willing to perform a healing service for a church member who was facing an arduous medical protocol for the treatment of a frightening illness? This was something that the leadership of our Stephen Ministry team had to consider quite carefully because our program is not designed to offer care through group interaction.

In the normal course of our activities as Stephen Ministers, we provide confidential, one-to-one Christian care governed by a strict set of guidelines meant to protect the anonymity and privacy of our care receivers. Until this time, there has only been one exception; our participation in the church's annual Blue Christmas healing service. To be clear, our role during that solemn service has been to offer a compassionate presence, not to engage in the type of private care that is the hallmark of Stephen Ministry. So, when the decision was made to provide a healing service for this much-loved church member, we took great care to utilize the training and talent of our team while ensuring that we did not compromise either the mission or the autonomy of the Stephen Ministry program.

Our first task was to have a conversation with the individual for whom we were creating this service. The foundation upon which we were to build this effort had to meet her unique circumstances. Furthermore, we recognized that it was crucial to connect the service with her stated needs and wants, as well as those of her family, if our efforts were to be successful.

The question we then faced was by what standards were we to guide our efforts? So after having consulted with her, we sought clarification from the United Methodist Book of Worship to determine the UMC's position on healing services. Indeed, our denomination has quite clear guidelines from which clergy and lay leaders can fashion healing services to address a variety of situations. And while the guidance provided allows for great flexibility in the creation of such services, spiritual healing has a specific purpose: it is to renew and strengthen one's relationship with the living Christ.

Through this process of reconciliation of one's spirit with the Triune God, opportunities for physical and emotional healing of the body become possible, although not guaranteed. With this information, it became clear that our objective was to take our skills as Stephen Ministers and adapt them to serve in a new capacity. We would be offering the compassion of Christ to a wider audience of people in need and in a more public-facing manner. For the purposes of this healing service, we had to become a lay-led team for the congregation, as opposed to the individual servants we are within the Stephen Ministry program.



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A Healing Service:
When One Stephen Minister Is Not Enough
By Jonathon Cole-Morrison

From that point forward, we consulted with one another, and with our pastoral leadership—Pastor Matt and Reverend Sarah. Together, we created a new type of healing presence for members of our church. We combined the gifts, talents, and training of our pastoral leaders with those of our lay caregivers and joined with this family to seek God's blessings and solace as they faced the fears and uncertainties ahead.

For this service we chose to incorporate many of the traditional practices found in the UMC's Book of Worship: prayer, scripture readings, anointing with oils, and the laying on of hands to create a powerful, spiritual experience. (We are prepared to tailor future services to address the specific needs of the individual). However, what remained constant for those of us who brought our skills as Stephen Ministers into this new healing endeavor, was our understanding that we remain Christian servants and caregivers—always acknowledging that God is the cure giver. What was new to us was the recognition that we can take our Stephen Ministry training and apply it to caring relationships that exist beyond the confines of the program. Rest assured that Pastor Matt, Reverend Sarah and the Stephen Ministry program will continue to provide care as they always have. Now, though, you will have another option through which to seek Christian care. A healing service tailored to meet your spiritual needs!

In the days and weeks ahead, those of us who were involved in the preparation of this healing service will be collaborating further to design a program with the aim of being able to provide similar care to anyone who requests it. In addition, we will be sharing with you, through future newsletters, the many other distinctly Christian services of care that are offered here at Castle Rock First United Methodist Church. May God bless and protect you through the example of Christ lived out through the Holy Spirit within all whom you encounter.

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



Find out more info.
<https://www.fumccr.org/stephenministry>



Learning that Pastor Matt's first two sermons of the new year would be based on the two sacraments of the United Methodist Church, I was prompted to reflect on the connection to community that both of these sacraments provide. With Communion we gather in remembrance of Christ's sacrifice. With Baptism, whether it is an infant, a youth, or an adult, we come together in faith for the future of the new life in Christ as he/she is welcomed into community and supported by the Christian love each of us can offer him/her.

When you read the Stephen Ministry article this month, you may recognize me as the person requesting the healing ceremony. This request was prompted by an experience. I had over 20 years ago. Greatly distressed by a situation in our family my husband and I sought counsel with two very strong Christian friends. I was sobbing uncontrollably when we entered their home, but when the wife took Chuck and I aside, she held our hands and began to pray. The chest-heaving sobs that I couldn't stop on my own suddenly evaporated. The hairs on the back of my neck went up and I was immediately calmed, much like the sea Jesus calmed in Mark 4. The prayer and the touch had transformed my anxious heart. After my cancer diagnosis last summer, I realized the ripple affect of anxiety on my family and I requested the assistance of the the Stephen Ministers who could reassure all of us that God's love was with us every step of the way.

The private healing ceremony along with the support of our church friends — through their prayers, texts, cards, food, and other gifts of comfort were daily reminders that I wasn't journeying alone, isolated and afraid. I remain eternally grateful for these gifts of grace. And I know this grace extends to the community beyond our church walls because it is an integral part of who we are.

In his essay Areopagitica John Milton wrote: "I cannot praise a fugitive and cloistered virtue, unexercised and unbreathed, that never sallies out and sees her adversary, but slinks out of the race where that immortal garland is to be run for, not without dust and heat." Whether the "adversary" is a stranger in line at the grocery store, a prickly relative at a reunion, or an old friend we had a falling out with, we are called to love and forgive, to meet people where they are, and to set aside our egos. Sometimes it is easy; sometimes it isn't.

Be blessed as you engage in any connection with community.



**COMMUNITY
CONNECTION**



NEW WORSHIP SERIES STARTING JAN. 4TH

**GROW IN OUR
UNDERSTANDING
OF
THE SACRAMENTS**

WORSHIP 9 A.M. | COMMUNITY FAITH TIME 10 A.M.





He who was seated on the throne said, “I am making everything new!” Then he said, “Write this down, for these words are trustworthy and true.

— Revelation 21 5

As we come into the new year that is unfolding before us, may we seek God’s help to calm our minds. Through that calm may a peace come. Let this peace settle in us and flow from us. May it be visible to those we encounter and a light that they will seek for themselves.

In the light of this new year may our hearts be filled with love, a love for God that is strengthened through our faithful worship and action. May our hearts be filled with love for others: those who we find easy to love as well as those who are a challenge. May this love be reflected in the prayers we lift and the actions we take to be there for family and for those in need in this coming year. May our hearts be filled with love for ourselves. It will be hard to love others if we do not love and care for ourselves. Friends and family can help with this and reflect to us the goodness that is there.

As night comes and we feel weary from our work in the world may we seek sleep. May we ask God to bless this sleep and ready us for the next day. May we give thanks to the renewed energy we have to do what God has put before us. As always, we know that we rest and we head into a new day and a new year with God walking by our side.

Begin this new year seeing how God is making all things new. Hear those words that come that are trustworthy and true. Be blessed by peace and a heart filled with love.



Tuesday Morning Advent Bible Study

Will resume Bible Study on Jan. 6, 2026 and will begin a 6 week study using the the book
Three Simple Rules: A Wesleyan Way of Living by Rueben Job
All are welcome to join us.

Contemporary Studies Groups

The Tears of Things Join us for a new study of Richard Rohr’s The Tears of Things: Prophetic Wisdom for an Age of Outrage. This study explores the ancient wisdom of the Jewish prophets to find a compassionate path through the injustices of the modern world.

Sessions run from 6:30 to 8:00 PM via Zoom (Thursdays, Jan 9 – Feb 6)
In Person (Sundays, Jan 12 – Feb 9).

Come discover a life of empathy and enlightenment through Rohr’s insightful pastoral guidance.
For Questions reach out to Rev. Sarah via email: sms11@mindspring.com



OPPORTUNITIES TO G.R.O.W.

Upcoming Events

February 18th

6:30 p.m.

Ash Wednesday Service

April 1st

Stations of the Cross

April 2nd

A Holy Potluck 6 p.m.

April 3rd

Good Friday Service 6 p.m.

April 5th

Easter Services

6 a.m. Sunrise

9 a.m. Modern

11 a.m. Traditional

Every Wednesday

4 p.m. Bell Choir Practice

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

Marvelous Monday's

10 a.m.

*@ Coff33 in Downtown
Castle Rock*

Serve as a Liturgist,
Communion Steward,

Acolyte

Sign Up

At welcome desk

Red Bird Intergenerational Mission Trip

May 31st - June 7th 2025

If you are interested in joining the intergenerational mission trip to Red Bird Mission in Beverly, Kentucky this summer, please make a deposit of \$150 per person by the end of January to secure your spot. Once we have a final list of attendees, airline tickets and transportation will be confirmed along with a fun activity for our last day. This will likely be to Pigeon Forge or attractions in Knoxville, Tennessee depending on cost. If you have any questions, please reach out to Courtney Hay at haycourtney@gmail.com. Thank you!

Rev. Brenda's Wesley Tour of England

October 8-17, 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. The trip is sponsored by Rev. Brenda Lear of our congregation and Rev. Dr. Andrew Holmes, pastor of Roberts Park UMC in Indianapolis. Dr. Holmes was born and raised in the UK and will be our daily guide throughout the tour. There will also be guides at many of the specific sites throughout England.

Some of the sites on the itinerary include Epworth, Oxford University, Bristol, Aldersgate, Methodist Central Hall, the New Room, Wesley's Chapel and home, and Wesley family gravesites. There will also be some fun extras; such as Stonehenge, a West End show, Windsor Castle, and a dinner cruise on the Thames River. Cost of the trip includes round trip airfare.

For a complete itinerary and brochure, please visit:

bit.ly/JWTCRFUMC26





A G.R.O.W Retreat

Jan. 31st 9 a.m.-1 p.m.

Learn about the United Methodist Social Principles



Cost \$20.00
Sign up at
welcome desk

A G.R.O.W Retreat

Jan. 31st 9 a.m.-1 p.m. in Fellowship Hall

Cost \$20.00 Sign Up At The Welcome Desk

The Social Principles are a prayerful and thoughtful effort of the General Conference to speak to the issues in the contemporary world from a sound biblical and theological foundation. Come and learn about them as Pastor Matt leads us through a retreat.

GriefShare – New Session Beginning January 26, 2026

Our next GriefShare session begins Monday, January 26, 2026 at 6:00 p.m. at AdventHealth Castle Rock Hospital.

To register or learn more, use the link in the blast and select the AdventHealth 1/26 group listing: Castle Rock, Colorado GriefShare Groups – Grief Recovery Support – GriefShare

If you would like additional information, please feel free to contact me at the phone number or email listed below

Clarence Hughes

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Subscribe and Link

Don't forget to like our Youtube Channel and Facebook to see all of our content we share.

<https://www.youtube.com/@castlerockfumc> | www.facebook.com/castlerockfumc

Do You have a VIPP Opportunity?

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.



PICTURES FROM THE PAST MONTH



**DECEMBER 14TH
JOY SUNDAY**



**DECEMBER 28TH
BRUNCH CHURCH**

WOMEN'S RETREAT



**DECEMBER 17TH
BLUE CHRISTMAS**



**Christ the Savior is born,
Christ the Savior is born!**

**DECEMBER 24TH
CHRISTMAS EVE**





PUBLICATION DEADLINES

Newsletter Articles

21st of the Month

The Weekly Link

by Tuesday's at 5 p.m.

The Eblast

By Wednesday at 5 p.m.

Lord In Your Mercy **Hear our Prayers...**

Our World

The United Methodist Church

Mountain Sky Annual Conference

Bishop Kristen Stoneking

Our Pastors and Staff

Little Blessings Families

Marlyn Deam Friend of Karen Oliver

Leona and Garrett Mathes, sister

and brother-in-law to Chuck Bailey

Barb Christensen

Keith Bramer

Julie Bailey

Chuck Bailey

Sue and Callie Hurst

Dena Hartman. daughter of Diana

and Keith Bramer

Randall Ward Father of Sarah Shinn

Molieri

Beth Larson, friend of Jerri Groves

Betty Smith mother of Clayton

Smith

Ron Butler, father of Beth Tamborski

Family of Maxine Ferguson

Family of Bernadine Larkin

KING SOOPERS/SAFEWAY GIFT CARDS:

Did you know that 5% of your grocery purchases can be returned to our church if you have a Safeway gift card to load and reload OR have signed on with King Soopers and designated FUMCCR as your nonprofit organization? Did you know these funds help fund projects in and around the church? Would you like to help bring us back into the \$2-3K column?

If you frequent Safeway, simply purchase a grocery card from Theresa Kepple and add money. That card becomes the card you use to purchase groceries. If you wish to use King Soopers, go to KingSoopers.com/CommunityRewards and follow Step #1 to create an account and Step #2 to register our organization (FUMCCR). You will need to add our NPO number which is NPO#QM168.

Help and Hope Super Bowl **Canned Good Offering**

Will take place a couple of weeks before the Super Bowl

About Email Connections

Did the weekly email blast or Newsletter not make it to your email mailbox this week? If not go to fumcccr.org and click on the I'm New Tab and then click on [Join our Email List](#). Also, make sure that it is not hitting your spam folder in your email. If you have questions please let Pastor Matt know.

Fiscal Year End November 2025

	\$
Revenues	<u>181,735</u>
Expenses	
	\$
Personnel	88,001
Conf Apportionment	20,059
Trustees	33,316
Church Office	7,691
All Other	<u>2,739</u>
	\$
Total Expenses	<u>151,806</u>
Net Total	<u>\$ 29,929</u>