



AUGUST 2025

First Church Communicator

Monthly Newsletter of Castle Rock First United Methodist Church



**CONNECT WITH US ONLINE AT WWW.FUMCCR.ORG
OR SCAN THE QR CODE**

Friday Fellowship

Meet us at 10am for a snack, a favorite drink, and casual conversation.

July 25 - Ooh-de-Lally, 488 Crystal Valley Pkwy,

August 1 - Crowfoot Wilcox, 734 Wilcox

August 8 - Apres (Ecclesia) 221 Perry

August 15 - Black Rock, 4985 Factory Shops Blvd

August 22 - Lost Coffee 390 Perry

August 29 - LaLa's, 340 Wilcox

Need more info?

Call or text Julie Bailey at 303-981-4027



A HEARTFELT THANK YOU

The team of Nancy and Donna would like to thank you all for the beautiful retirement celebration and putting up with us for 20+ years! Surrounding us with your blessings during the service touched us deeply. It was an overwhelming feeling of God's love through you all. We treasure our personalized hymnals, card and all your kind words and efforts to make our retirement meaningful. Our heartfelt thanks to you all and just a reminder.....you have not seen the last of us.

Love, Nancy and Donna

NEW CHURCH T-SHIRTS!

Show your church pride with new tees available at www.blackbirdthreads.com/shop for \$21. Choose from vibrant purple or cobalt blue. These shirts run small, so order one size up for the best fit. All purchases must be made on the website. Shirts will be delivered to the Church when completed. August 8th is the last day to order. If you have questions ask Pastor Matt.

TUESDAY MORNING BIBLE STUDY

Tuesday Morning Bible Study resumes on August 5th at 9:30am in the church library to continue the study of the three letters of John and the book of Jude. New people and drop-ins are always welcome in this fellowship and study group that uses various translations of the Bible and historical data to better understand the Bible and how God's Word impacts us today.

Looking for a Good Devotional Book?

Check out

<https://store.upperroom.org>

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

www.youtube.com/@castlerockfumc

www.facebook.com/castlerockfumc

HABITAT FOR HUMANITY

BY CHERYL SMITH

1 Peter 4:10: "Each of you should use whatever gift you have received to serve others, as faithful stewards of God's grace in its various forms."

We, the FUMC of Castle Rock congregation, live the fundamental principle of faith, a reflection of God's love, and a pathway to living out one's purpose. As a church we have been Habitat for Humanity volunteers for well over 30 years with members going and serving in many different states, doing many types of work. One place we have had a strong presence in is the San Luis Valley Habitat in Alamosa, Colorado. We have been coined as the "best volunteers" who are consistent, talented and easily managed by a long standing construction foreman named Michael Murphy.

The FUMC church of Castle Rock has been serving in Alamosa for 25 years. We were first connected to Alamosa by Jan Porter and Marilyn Bundy. We've had groups going consistently every summer under the leadership of Tom and Cynthia Johnson. There was even a youth group that went one summer representing FUMC.

This year, Clayton and I were able to assist with the 25th house being built by the San Luis Valley Habitat for Humanity under the leadership of the Director Audrey Liu. My favorite part is meeting the homeowners and seeing the pride and appreciation they see in their new home. This home owner for this house is Trudy. She is a single mother of three beautiful children. This has been a two year project with lots of hours, prayers and hard work.

Habitat for Humanity's philosophy includes direct builds, rehabilitates, and repairs of homes in partnership with families in need. Their model involves "partnership housing," where future homeowners contribute "sweat equity" by working alongside volunteers on their own homes and the homes of others. Homes are sold to partner families with affordable, no-profit mortgages, making homeownership accessible.

San Luis Valley also sponsors a wonderful fundraiser called Bike and Build. The race contributions go toward Habitat for Humanity and the race course takes the bikers by many of the houses built by Habitat. With the refreshments from the race being served by the homeowners and volunteers.

Clayton and I had a wonderful time representing FUMC and we hope to get a great group to join us next June. Naomi Dickerson has cooked for groups in previous years, and makes food to share with great love!

(photos on the next page)



UWF -Leah Circle

The Leah Circle of United Women in Faith will gather at 11:30am on August 14 for lunch at Duke's in Castle Pines. Place your reservation with Maryalice McHugh (303-947-8726) by August 12. This group invites all women in our church to join in the monthly fellowship as a regular attendee or an occasional drop-in. All are welcome. Watch the Blast and Sunday Link for details about each upcoming program. This group meets on the second Thursday of each month at 11:30am in Fellowship Hall. There is no official membership required, and inclusion in our directory is optional.

This summer Leah Circle has been collecting items for Project CURE's "Kits for Kids," to be brought to our September meeting. A list of items needed is available at the Welcome Center. Project C.U.R.E. (Commission on Urgent Relief and Equipment) Kits Programs all share the mission of delivering smaller, localized medical supply kits to points of need around the world. Each Kits Program is an opportunity for groups and individuals to participate in our life-saving work. Since its inception in 1987, Project CURE has become the world's largest distributor of donated medical supplies, equipment, and services to doctors and nurses serving the sick and dying in more than 135 countries. More information is available at projectcure.org.

A list of items being collected can be found at the Welcome Center. If you would like to donate a few items, Phyllis Tumey.

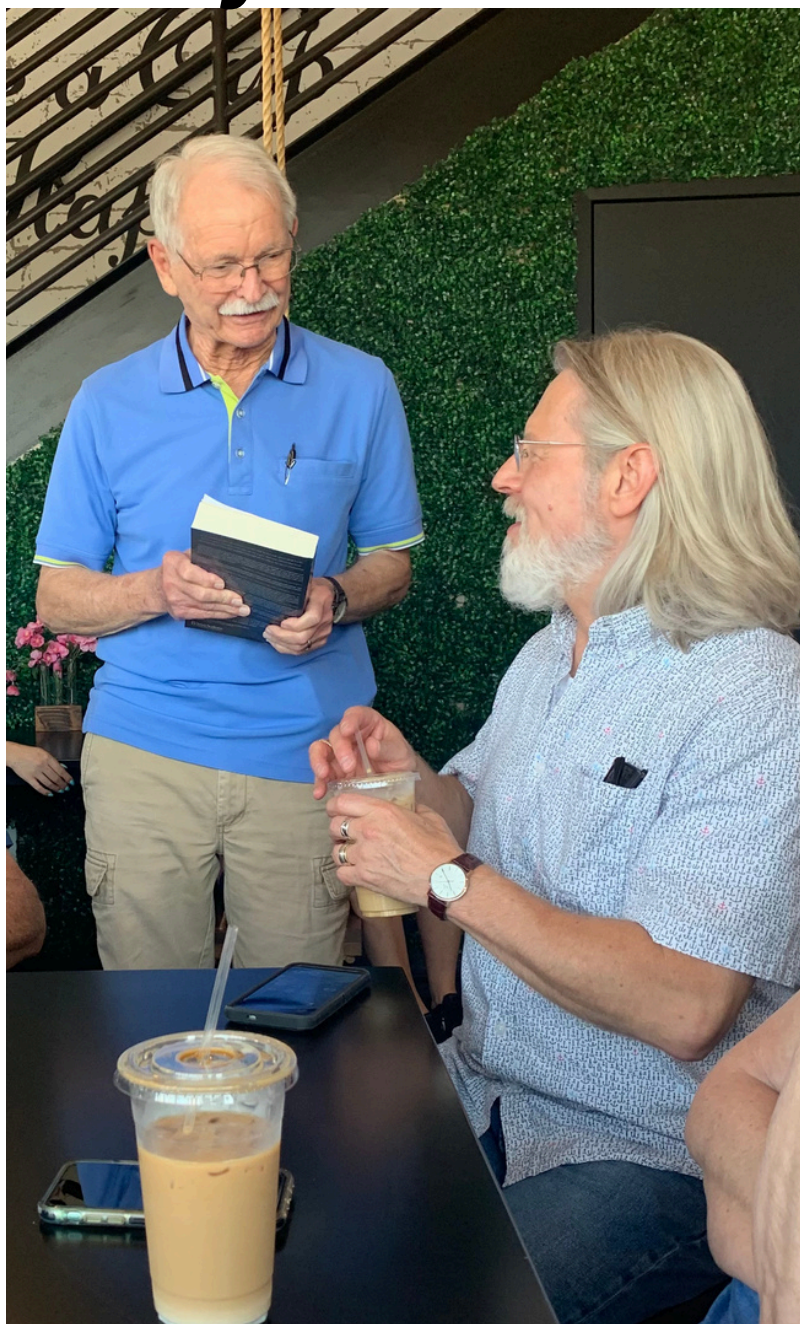


United Women of Faith Leah Circle

**meets on the second Thursday each month
11:30 am, in Fellowship Hall
for lunch, devotions, and a program.**

**All church women are welcome
and encouraged to join in our monthly fellowship.**

Some Fellowship Friday's Picture



Sharing the transforming love and forgiveness of Jesus Christ
to impact the hearts and lives
of incarcerated men, women and youth,
as well as their families,
to become loving and productive citizens
of their communities.

**More Kairos
info to come
soon.**

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



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



Listening: Beyond Hearing by Joe Gschwendtner

Since early January, we Stephen Ministers have been learning about the attributes of a good listener, enabling us to better ourselves within client relationships. *Listen Like You Mean It*, authored by Ximena Vengochea, has been our framework. Sensitively written, the book deconstructs the skill of listening (yes, skill!) by defining what a good listener should be.

Listening doesn't sound that complicated as a concept. What's not to understand really...? Aren't we really on autopilot when responding?

Actually, our learning process involves relationship analysis, evaluating attributes of personality and style. The goal is to become better at our business (ministering), diving more deeply and effectively into issues adversely affecting our client's souls. A good listener is an effective communicator, and, in our case, a good counselor. A poor listener tends toward selfishness and even egocentricity, which could result in advice based on false premises.

Paying less than full attention to a speaker can be a form of disrespect. Poor listeners subconsciously check in and then out of what is being said, often missing essential information. To change that tendency requires that we empathize with our speaker, humbly putting ourselves in their shoes.

We must also stay in the present, at full attention, ignoring distractions in one's head or even externals, like cell phones. When we are "full on," we not only hear the speaker, but can also read the visuals, the speaker's non-verbal body language. These emotional cues deepen the conversation and provide a fuller understanding of our receiver's real concerns.

In becoming better conversationalists, we must also recognize that we come to any connection with prejudices, that is, our own predetermined thinking. If we do not “leave them at the door,” we impact the openness of the discussion and may well bypass issues critical to the speaker. Should listeners concur with certain comments and proceed to inject their agreement into the dialogue, one is really an “empathetic interrupter,” impeding the flow of the information necessary to truly help a friend or client.

Also, when we inject our own opinions, we can actually hijack the discussion, diminishing the good that might have been achieved. We can help by enriching the dialogue, the result of asking refining questions that can clarify key issues. Questions that require yes, or no answers are of no use, dead ends. Also, when the visit is over, we learned it is good procedure to confirm your comprehension of what was heard. Oftentimes we can misconstrue care receivers’ responses, especially those laden with emotion.

Listening can occasionally become unproductive. This happens when someone may want to get something off their chest and just simply be heard. This can be useful to the speaker but may require the conversation be redirected to make it productive. Failing that, author Vengoechea provides various “outs” that convey the interview is ending. Some of these off-ramp methods were discussed including “timebox,” time-outs, diversions and even interruptions.

Regardless of the utility of the conversation to the speaker, the whole of it is absorbed by good and dutiful listeners. These conscientious listening activities can wear us down, rendering us less effective. In fact, professional counselors are often afflicted with what is called “Listeners’ Drain.” Simply put, we become tired, even burned out. A restoration and recovery process may be necessary before we can return to our clients as useful helpers once again.

Listening deeply and with genuine empathy shows our receivers they are cared for, valued, and their issues not ignored. Listening well is a skill. Done with all the senses, it offers genuine moments of connection and acceptance. And this brings about healing powers that are our goal.



Intergenerational Red Bird Mission Trip 2026

Have you ever wanted to go on a mission trip?
Have you been on mission trips in the past and yearned for the day you could do it again?
We've got you covered!

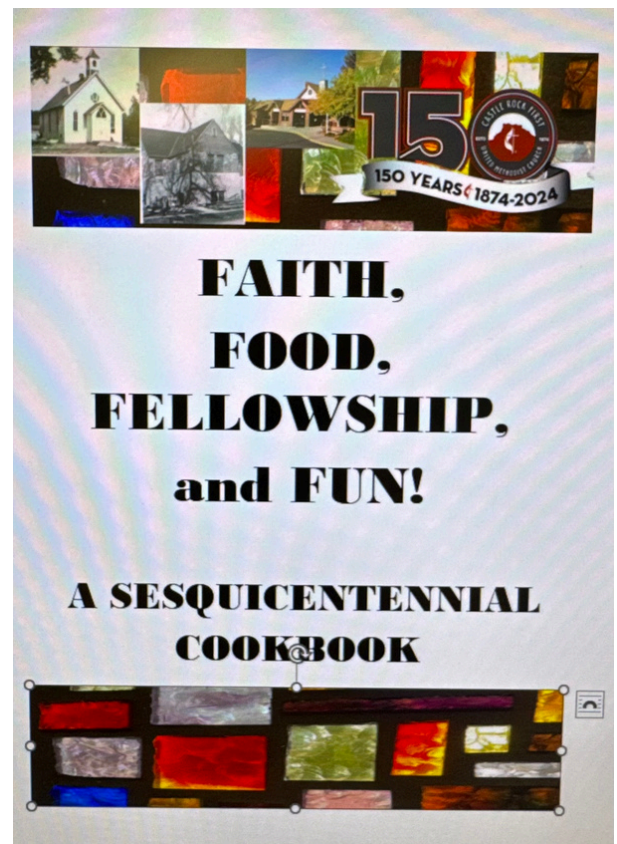
Save the Date: Sunday, May 31st to Saturday, June 6th, 2026

We will be traveling to the Red Bird Mission in Beverly, Kentucky. Many of you likely remember them visiting and filling up the fellowship hall with their handmade crafts. They have work camp opportunities and we'll take a group of all ages to work with them for the week. We'll also include a fun activity that is yet to be determined.

Information coming soon on how to sign up for this intergenerational mission trip opportunity!



Having Fun With Handing Out Water Bottles



FAITH, FOOD, FELLOWSHIP, AND FUN: A SESQUICENTENNIAL COOKBOOK.

Save the date — Sunday, August 24th— for the delivery of our much-anticipated cookbook — Faith, Food, Fellowship, and Fun: a Sesquicentennial Cookbook. As part of the launch, we're inviting you to a "taste and sample" event between services on that day. Those who contributed recipes have been invited to present samples of their tastiest concoction in the style similar to the cookie walk.

Thanks to everyone who ordered a copy. If we have any extra copies at the end of August we will let you know. We will also have thumb drives of the book available for \$10 for anyone who missed ordering a cookbook. Many thanks to all who submitted recipes. Special thank you goes to Kari Sorah who chaired the cookbook team and her her mom, Rene Archer, who helped underwrite the cost of paper and printing.

Community Connection/Friday Fellowship

If you missed the July 27th sermon, I hope you can find it online and watch it. During the 8:30 service Pastor Matt talked about how the board game Connect gives us a chance to engage with others in a playful manner while trying to win the game. At the 10 o'clock brunch church service, he posed several important questions for each table to discuss:

- When have you felt truly supported by someone else?
- What does it mean to lift someone up in your life right now?"
- What kind of community are you hungry for?
- What's something that feels better when you do it with others?

These questions prompted me to explore the importance of connecting with others. We are reminded of the reason for connecting with others in this scripture:

"I want to see you so that I may impart to you some spiritual gift to make you strong. That is, that you and I may be mutually encouraged by each other's faith." Romans 1: 11-12 (NIV).

To this I would add wisdom from Christian blogger Lauren Fortenberry,

"Sometimes people just want to be heard. No fixing it. No solutions. No 'Here's what I'd do.' There's a whole language of love that begins with ears that listen and ends with a smile that says 'I'm here.'"

Joe Gschwendtner's Stephen Ministry piece this month underscores both quotes, and Cheryl Smith's piece on the Habitat for Humanity provides another window of understanding the human connection through service. Our VIPP events and Friday Fellowship gatherings offer more opportunities to sit and listen to each other's life stories, the stories behind our personal lives, where we grew up, how we met our spouse, what things inspire us or make us sad.

Beyond our own fellowship we have "community connection" moments that lovingly validate others. Sometimes it shows up as we distribute water bottles to parade watchers. Whether you view it literally or metaphorically, we were simply saying, "You are probably thirsty sitting here in the sun. Take this and be blessed." Other times, it's just one-on-one, as when a stranger noticed I could only prepare my fountain drink at Taco Bell with one arm. Before I knew it, she'd risen from her booth and stood beside me to help with the lid and straw.

I recently heard of someone, troubled by a family issue, who was stopped by a neighbor out walking. The neighbor simply asked, "How are you doing?" The dejected person was reluctant to reveal the worry weighing him down, but somehow the Holy Spirit said to him, "Sure. Go ahead, tell her." He poured his story out, saying much more than he intended. A few minutes later the listener said, "I'm so sorry. I'll be praying for you." It's as simple as that one brief encounter: reassurance that you are not alone.

As Pastor Matt frequently reminds us, we are a connectional church. May we continue to grow in our faith as we take the time to notice others in need of connection and not be afraid to recognize our own need for an empathetic companion on our journey. As spiritual leader Ram Doss said, "We're all just walking each other home."

Note: The community connection page of our church newsletter serves to highlight not only the variety of connection opportunities available, but also the individuals who have "led the pack" in providing such opportunities. If you have suggestions for future articles, please contact Julie Bailey (303-981-4027, juliesings@gmail.com)



Rev. Sarah's Space

email:

sms11@mindspring.com



"God is our refuge and strength, an ever-present help in trouble." Psalms 46:1

As we watch the news and weather reports we hear about the challenging rain, flash flooding, tornados and wild fires that our nation is experiencing. As we enter the final days of summer, may we pause and see what lessons we can take from these disasters as we confront those storms in our day to day experience.

There is a benefit in staying positive. We understand that storms are a part of life and prepare ourselves mentally for them. This positive focus will also help those who are struggling through the loss and pain of the disaster. We can be a light where light is very much needed. As we make our way through the challenges, people are given reason to hope and believe they can also make it to the other side.

We need to take ownership of our actions and decisions during tough times. As we are taking up that responsibility, we also need to allow ourselves to receive encouragement and comfort from others. It is not necessary to be the tough one who can go it on their own. We need cheerleaders who keep us going. This support from others helps to energize us in a time when we are weary from confronting the storm. Through this compassion and kindness, we can foster a supportive community.

The Psalmist reminds us that in the midst of life's storms, we can always find refuge and strength in God. He is always there for us, ready to help us and give us the strength we need to overcome any challenges that come our way. We are reminded we are not alone, and that God is our constant source of support and comfort.

Let us pray:

Dear Lord, I praise You that Your Word stands fast forever and ever, and that Your precious promises encourage us to rest in Your love. Draw near to every member of Christ's Body, and protect Your people, the sheep of Your pasture. Calm us during the storms of life that we encounter. Let us see the ways the storms of life we encounter make our faith stronger. May each remind us that we are not facing these challenges alone. Amen,

WESLEYAN VILE- TALITY

RECLAIMING THE HEART
OF METHODIST IDENTITY



ASHLEY BOGGAN

Contemporary Bible Study

They meet in person on Monday evenings and on Zoom on Friday evening will begin discussions on Wesleyan Vile-tality: reclaiming the heart of methodist identity by Ashley Boggan. This book calls us back to the roots of our identity. Centered on the moment John Wesley "submitted to be more vile" in spreading the love of God to all people, Ashley Boggan argues that Wesleyan "vile-tality" is at the core of who we are as Methodists.

All sessions begin at 6:30pm.

Monday night discussions in-person run from
August 4 to September 15

Friday Zoom dates, from
August 8 to September 19.



Brunch Church Pictures

