



# The Church Bell

Volume 80, Issue 1

Next Issue: February 18, 2025

Submission Deadline for Next Issue: February 13, 2025

Submit articles using the announcement request form at  
[firstconggreeley.org/announcements](http://firstconggreeley.org/announcements)

**Please Join Us for Our Grand Opening Celebration!**

**Saturday, February 8, 2025, 1pm-3pm**

**First Congregational Church**

**2101 16th Street**

**Greeley, CO 80631**



First Congregational Church  
2101 16th Street  
Greeley, CO 80631

**1pm:** Doors open for you to explore the space  
**1:30pm:** Ribbon cutting, blessing, & proclamation  
**2pm:** Formal & self-guided tours

Refreshments and music throughout; children welcome!

Please invite your friends, family, or others in the community who might be curious about what's been happening here!

*\*We invite you to bring hand warmers and new or gently used sweatpants to support our partners at the Housing Navigation Center & Cold Weather Shelter.*



## **Developing Capacity for Extraordinary Relationships: Class beginning February 5 during Wednesday Night Live**

*"I have come that you might have life and have it fully."* This is one of Jesus' declarations about why he came to earth. And yet, people often live life in survival, happy to be just... alive. On days full of lessons, appointments, meals to make, laundry-to-do, and all the day-to-day to manage, *to the fullest* sounds a bit too... extraordinary? For life.

And yet, if this is what Jesus called us to, what if we could take even one more step closer to this extraordinary life with some simple practices? And what if those practices, just small shifts to our everyday lives, make our relationships more fun, fulfilling, and enjoyable?

If this interests you, Tammi VanDrunen invites you to join her this winter for *Developing Capacity for Extraordinary Relationships*, a 10-week course filled with practices to move us into a more fulfilling, joyful life. She'll lead the group through conversations about what we're learning, and we'll practice together. Some light homework is expected (think five pages of reading and some reflective practices to integrate the learning into your life), but it's worth it!

We start **February 5 from 6-7:15pm**, and childcare is provided. Dinner is offered from 5:30-6pm (we ask for a small fee to cover food if you can afford it). You can register [here](#). (Registration is vital if you're coming to dinner or need childcare - we want to make sure we're well-equipped to welcome you!)

### **In Loving Memory**

*Please hold the loved ones of the following in your prayers as they celebrate and remember a life well lived:*

**Frank Ottesen**

**November 25, 1930 - December 28, 2024**

*A celebration of Frank's life will be announced at a later date, to be held in the summer of 2025*

**Rev. Richard "Rick" Irl Mawson II**

**September 20, 1935 - December 16, 2024**

*Services are scheduled for Saturday, February 22, 2025, at 2 pm in the sanctuary. A live stream will be available. (Please note that we printed the date incorrectly last month.)*

**Marc David Richardson**

**April 28, 1954 - January 15, 2025**

*Services will be announced at a later date.*

### **Guest Preacher John Smith on Feb. 9**

We are excited to welcome Pastor John Smith as our guest preacher on **Sunday, February 9**. John is the founding pastor and pastor emeritus at Crossroads Church in Loveland. Crossroads is firmly committed to LGBTQ+ inclusion and is in the process of joining the United Church of Christ. Pastor John has been joining us regularly for worship for over a year, and we are delighted that he has agreed to move from the pew to the pulpit on a Sunday!

### **California Wildlife Relief**

As the fires in Southern California continue, UCC Disaster Ministries is already responding. If you'd like to support their response and relief efforts, you may make a contribution by marking an offering envelope or check "Fires" or donate online by selecting the Fire Relief fund in the dropdown. Because their overhead is covered by the denomination, 100% of monies given to UCC Disaster Ministries is used for relief efforts.



## Ministry Group Meetings

Did you know that we have four core ministry groups who meet monthly to oversee the life and mission of the church? We'd love to have you check out one of our meetings. All groups meet on the **second Sunday of each month at 11:15am**. Each group is open - we'd love to have you check one out!

- Family Faith Formation Ministry Group: Creates and supports robust programming and events for our children and youth. Meets in the Maker's Sack; led by Tammi Van Drunen
- Fellowship Ministry Group: Plans and oversees events and activities that foster connection and community among the congregation. Meets in the library; led by Jenny Sterba and supported by Laura Gurney
- Outreach Ministry Group: Fosters connection with our wider community and tends to relationships with our mission partners. Meets in the main office; led by Nicole Passineau and supported by Rev. Ben
- Worship, Music & the Arts Ministry Group: Tends to the many details of our worship services, music program, and art collections throughout the church. Meets in the Living Soul office; led by Lynn Waltman and supported by Rev. Tamara

## Dorothy Elder's Carols and Contemplation Organ Concert



## John Mills Orchestra Christmas Concert



## Update on Capital Campaign

For the last few months, we have announced that we are *very* close to completing our interior renovation. We are pleased to announce this month that we are *even* closer to having our renovations completed!

While most of the work is finished, we are in the final stages of wrapping up the final punch list items with our contractor. In the meantime, work has already begun in the new Youth Room and Adult Library (previously Faith and Hope Rooms). Much of this work will be completed in-house, so please stay posted for opportunities to help.

Thank you again for your generosity in supporting our “In Greeley for Good” Capital Campaign. Our work together will be a source of life and vitality for our congregation for years to come!



## Help us Fill Our New Living Wall in the Columbarium

We are excited to announce the installation of a Florafelt Living Wall in our Columbarium. This beautiful addition will serve as a living tribute to those resting within our church and an opportunity for all to honor the memory of their loved ones with vibrant, growing plants. The wall is equipped with a self-watering system and grow lights to ensure the plants thrive, while requiring minimal maintenance.

### How you can participate:

We invite you to donate a plant in memory of your loved one at any time. To ensure the plants thrive together and remain easy to care for, we have created a list of approved plants. **We ask that you do not provide plants that are not on the list, as these plants were chosen for their compatibility, beauty, and low-maintenance needs.** Plants should be delivered in 4-inch nursery pots to facilitate easy installation. If you'd like, include a small note or card with your plant sharing your loved one's name and a brief memory or message.

### Approved Plants for the Living Wall:

#### Foliage Plants (for texture and greenery)

- Pothos (*Epipremnum aureum*): Trailing vines with heart-shaped leaves in green, yellow, or variegated patterns. Recommended varieties include Golden Pothos, Marble Queen, Neon Pothos.
- Spider Plant (*Chlorophytum comosum*): Graceful, arching leaves, often striped green and white.
- Syngonium Batik: Arrowhead-shaped foliage that loves to climb or trail.

#### Ferns:

- Boston Fern: Soft, feathery fronds add lushness.
- Maidenhair Fern: Delicate leaves on slender black stems.
- Bird's Nest Fern: Glossy, upright leaves create a striking visual.

#### Other Greenery:

- Ficus pumila (Creeping Fig): Small, rounded leaves that create a cascading effect and fill spaces beautifully.
- Snake Plant (*Sansevieria trifasciata*): Upright, sturdy leaves with variegated edges.

#### Colorful and Unique Plants (for vibrancy):

- Calathea spp.: Known for bold patterns in green, pink, or purple. Recommended varieties include Pinstripe Calathea, Rattlesnake Calathea.
- Tradescantia (Wandering Jew): Adds a touch of color with purple or variegated leaves. Recommended varieties include: Purple Heart, Zebrina.
- Peperomia spp.: Compact plants with unique shapes and shades. Recommended varieties include: Watermelon Peperomia, Red Ripple.
- Fittonia (Nerve Plant): Brightly veined leaves in pink, white, or red add delicate accents.
- Begonia Rex: Striking foliage with dramatic colors in silver, red, and purple tones.

#### Flowering Plants (for blooms):

- African Violet (*Saintpaulia*): Compact plants with vibrant blooms in purple, pink, or white.
- Lipstick Plant (*Aeschynanthus radicans*): Cascading stems with tubular red flowers.
- Peace Lily (*Spathiphyllum*): Elegant white flowers and lush green leaves.

You may contribute plants at any time. We hope this living wall will bring comfort, peace, and a sense of connection as it grows and thrives in our columbarium. For questions or further information, please contact the church office. Thank you for your contribution to this meaningful project.

### **Dollars & Donuts**

Please join us on **Sunday, February 23 after either service** for a brief update on our financial position after the first half of our fiscal year. You will find updated information on our financial position in the February Bell published February 18. Please bring your questions; Lola Fehr (Treasurer) and Judy Kron (Chair of Trustees) will answer them!

### **Thank You From Heath Middle School**

The Heath Middle School staff members express their gratitude for our support over the Holidays. Through the Heath Middle School Giving Tree, we donated over \$2000 in gift cards to help make the holidays a little brighter for fifteen Heath families.

### **Winter Closure Schedule**

As we enter the winter months, we are attentive to the safety of our staff during inclement weather. Generally, we follow D6's delay and closure schedule with staff working remotely on inclement weather days. You can always check our social media for the most up-to-date late start or closure information.

### **Upcoming Office Closures**

The church office will be closed **Monday and Tuesday, February 3 and 4** while staff is away on retreat. Thank you for allowing us this time to gather and plan for the coming program year!

Additionally, the church office will be closed **Monday, February 17** in observance of Presidents' Day.

### **Annual Meeting Moved to Spring**

Due to the recent change to our fiscal year (now July-June), we will have our annual congregational meeting in the spring. Please stay tuned for an announcement about our congregation's 155th Annual Meeting, to be held in April or May.

### **Love of Children Cohort - from Tammi VanDrunen, Children's Minister**

I'm delighted to report that I've been accepted into a learning cohort called "The Love of Children." This small group of UCC ministers from across the country will learn and dream together about how to better include children in the worshiping life of the Church. Throughout 2025, we will have several online gatherings and two in-person gatherings. All of this ongoing learning will benefit the life of First Congregational and its cost is covered in full by a generous grant from the Lilly Foundation! You can learn more about this project at [ucc.org/loveofchildren](http://ucc.org/loveofchildren).

### **Wednesday Night Live Resumes - And Your Help is Needed!**

Mark your calendars! Wednesday Night Live will resume on February 5th. Dinner will be from 5:15-6:00, followed by Adult Education programming and supervised gym time for children from 6:00-7:00.

Many hands make light work - and currently, we don't have enough hands! If you would be willing to help contribute to a WNL meal, please contact Rev. Tamara.

### **Celebration Gifts**

We invite you to celebrate, honor, or remember life milestones with celebration gifts to the church. These can be indicated using offering envelopes at the church, or using the comments section when making an [online gift](#). This month, we received the following gifts:

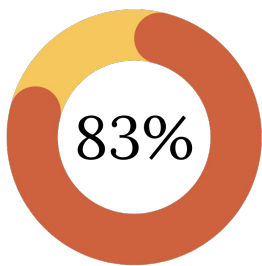
- In celebration of Dorothy Elder's 80th Birthday
- In memory of Rick Mawson with gratitude for all his service to the church
- In memory of Jan McKay
- In memory of Rex King
- In memory of Sharon Williams



## Member in Discernment Update from Whitney Janzen-Pankratz

As I continue my journey as a Member in Discernment for Ordination in the care of First Congregational Greeley, I'm excited to share that I am a final candidate for the Director of Community Faith Formation role at First Congregational Church Longmont UCC. I will join them for a candidating weekend on January 25 and 26, followed by a congregational vote on my candidacy. If the congregation confirms me, I will work part-time until graduating at the end of April and transition into the full capacity of the role as Minister of Community Faith Formation starting in May.

In your care, I continue to move toward the goal of an Ecclesiastical Council with the Rocky Mountain Conference, followed by Ordination as a Minister in the United Church of Christ in May or June. (You all are welcome to participate in both of these!) I am deeply grateful for how you, as our beloved community, have walked with our family through my seminary journey, and I look forward to celebrating with you all this Spring!



## Campaign Results

Thank you for your continued generosity in supporting the life and mission of First Congregational Church! In November, we launched our Abound! Stewardship campaign to raise \$650,000 in 162 pledges for the January 2025-June 2026 pledge period. To date, we have 152 pledges totaling \$543,370.00. Thank you for your faithfulness to FCC!

## Worship Online!

We hear regularly how important it is to many in our community to have the opportunity to worship online. A huge “thanks” to our amazing AV volunteers who make this possible!

We are grateful for the following church members who join us weekly online:

- Opal Jesen
- Jean Ward
- Jean Woolley
- Patsy Zick

If you are joining online, please let Rev. Ben or Rev. Tamara know or check in by text, as we would love to acknowledge the gift of your presence with us!

## Trivia: The Musical

The Labyrinth presents: *Trivia: The Musical*. Premiering on **Saturday, February 15th at 7pm** at FCC! Tickets are \$20 each. Join us for an evening of music, trivia and prizes! Tickets available [online](#) and at the door.

## New Staff Members

Please join us in welcoming the newest members of the FCC Staff Team:

- **Communications Assistant - Alex Noe:** Alex will help manage our internal communications and our web presence. Alex has extensive experience managing social media for organizations and is also a gifted writer and visual artist.
- **Sunday Morning Kitchen Steward - Cole Jesnen:** If you've stopped by a fellowship hour in the last few weeks, you have likely seen Cole hard at work washing dishes and keeping Chadwick Hall looking immaculate. Cole and his family have been a part of our faith community for over a year, and we are excited that Cole now serves as a member of our staff team.
- **Nursery Team - Angie Pierot:** During the week, Angie is a Little Learners Instructor at the Immigrant and Refugee Center. We are thrilled that Angie will spend Sunday mornings with our little ones in the nursery.