



The Church Bell

Volume 81, Issue 1

Next Issue: February 3, 2026

Submission Deadline for Next Issue: January 28, 2026

Submit articles using the announcement request form at
firstconggreeley.org/announcements

Live “Life Illuminated” with First Congregational Church!

At Christmas, we celebrate the “Light that breaks into the darkness.” Throughout scripture, there are references to the transformative power of God’s light for individuals and for the world as a whole. Through January and February, Rev. Tamara and Rev. Ben will preach a sermon series called “Life Illuminated.” We hope you will join us as we seek to be people whose lives are changed by the “Light that breaks into the darkness” and who believe it is possible for this Light that changes us to change the world as well.



Seekers and Believers

Rooted in God's Love

Office Closure

Please note that the church office will be closed Monday, January 19 in observance of Martin Luther King, Jr. Day.

Giving Statements

For those who receive a printed copy of your giving statement, statements will be available to pick up before or after church January 11, 18, or 25 in the Narthex. Any remaining statements will be mailed on January 25. For those who receive digital statements, watch for an email with your statement on January 11. You may need to check your spam folder.

Heath Giving Tree

Through your generous support, we were able to give \$2,500 in gift cards to 14 Heath Middle School families to help make their holidays a little more cheerful! Thank you!

Food Drive Thank You from Lutheran Family Services

Dear First Congregational Church,

Thank you for your incredible generosity through both your monetary donation for food support and the food items you provided for our clients. Your compassion directly strengthens families in our community and helps ensure that no one goes without the essentials they need.

We are sincerely grateful for your continued care for the people we serve!

-LFSRM Evans Staff

In Loving Memory

Please hold the families of the following people in your prayers as they grieve the loss of their loved ones:

Cynthia "Cindy" Sue Dalpra

March 8, 1948 - December 3, 2025

Services will be held Saturday, January 10, 2026 at 10 a.m. in the sanctuary.

Betty Drew

Died December 10, 2025

Services will be held Saturday, February 21, 2026 at 10:30 a.m. in the chapel.

Bob Tointon

May 19, 1933 – December 27, 2025

Services will be announced at a later date.



FCC at the Nutcracker!

Last month, a few of our own performed at the Nutcracker Ballet! We want to highlight these hard-working dancers (from left: Zoe, Lily, Charlotte, and Ruby). Well done, girls!

Financial Gifts

In honor of Dorothy Elder and the many individuals who made "The Holly and the Ivories" such a success, a gift of Lola Fehr. If you would like to make a financial gift to honor an event, accomplishment, or cause for celebration, please use the offering envelopes in the pews.



Pageant Fun!

Our pageant was joyful and fun - thanks for joining us! [Check out the photo album.](#)

Photos from Advent Workshop

Over 120 participated & over 30 people volunteered to make Advent Workshop a success! [See the album!](#)

A Note from your Church Moderator

Happy New Year to you all! I am hoping 2026 finds you all in a season of hope, joy, and support as we continue our journeys together. I am so grateful we have each other in both the church and Greeley communities.

Through the past months as your Moderator, I have asked myself many times, "Who are we?" "What is our purpose?" "How do we reach our goals?" This has been a point of discussion in the cabinet as many of you have had conversations with us with some of these same questions in mind. Together, our cabinet leadership has revisited the history First Congregational Church has had with a number of different mission/identity statements intending to articulate the church's central purpose. We have also realized that these statements have often been neither widely known or easily remembered. The FCC Cabinet has recognized the need for a shared way to speak about our church that is both clear and concise. Our discussions have helped us discover that we already have such a statement in the words we use at the beginning of worship:

We are a church community that is rooted in God's love; Where we are each nourished on our spiritual journeys; And where we are growing as an inclusive Christian presence in Greeley and beyond. Seekers and believers, people of faith, people of no faith at all, no matter who you are or where you are on life's journey, you are welcome here!

It's increasingly apparent that this statement goes beyond just setting the tone for our worship services. We frequently hear from both long-time members and those newer to our community that these opening lines of worship articulate who God calls us to be. The cabinet agrees! Therefore, I am pleased to share with you that the cabinet has proposed these familiar lines to serve as our church's statement of identity. We feel that this recognition is largely an acknowledgement of the place these words have long held for our community. As we look forward to the year ahead, may we continue to be guided and inspired by our calling to be a welcoming community that is rooted, nourished and growing as a place where all are truly welcome.

Kendra Villarreal

First Congregational Church Moderator*

*The Church Moderator is the head lay position for our church. The Church Moderator chairs our Church Cabinet, which is the primary decision making board for our church. The Moderator is elected for a one-year term at the annual meeting of our church held in the spring.

No Matter Who You Are or Where You Are

Nourished on Our Spiritual Journeys

January 8: Weld Food Bank!

As a way of living into our commitment of carrying out Jesus' call to feed our hungry neighbors, FCC fills two standing volunteer shifts with the Weld Food Bank. Join us the second Thursday of each month from 5 to 7 p.m. as we work hard and have a bit of fun while we support the work of the Weld Food Bank in our community! Children are invited to participate with an adult. Registration is required. Please sign up at gqr.sh/5a3a.

January 10: Christmas Un-Decorating

On Saturday, January 10th at 1 p.m., come lend a hand in taking down our Christmas decor, a task that goes much quicker than putting them up!

January 12: New Adult Ed Meeting Time

Rev. Ben's adult ed gathering is moving to Monday afternoons on Zoom from 4 to 5 p.m. Currently, the class is doing a survey of early Christian theologians. [Click here to join on Zoom.](#)

January 14: Wednesday Night Live!

On January 14, Abby Keeler from the Immigrant and Refugee Center will be with us from 6-7 p.m. to help prepare us to begin hosting English classes on January 28. All are invited to join for our community meal starting at 5:15 p.m. Activities for kids kindergarten-5th run from 6-7 p.m.

January 17-18: Youth Midwinter Retreat

We will be having a youth retreat at the church on January 17-18, 2026!

WHO: All 6th through 12th graders are invited!

WHEN: We will meet at the church at 2 PM on Saturday, January 17. Plan to stay all the way through church and Youth Choir/our Youth Parent Meeting on Sunday, January 18 until 1 PM.

WHAT YOU NEED: Come wearing warm layers. We plan to be outside for a good amount of time. Gloves, long underwear, etc. may be a good idea. Also bring a bedroll (camping mattresses, sleeping bags, etc.). And bring church clothes for Sunday!

[Click here to register now!](#)

January 18: Youth Parent Meeting

On Sunday, January 18 at 11:30 a.m., all parents of youth are invited to a town hall lunch meeting for us to dream, discover, and discern what is possible for youth ministry at FCC. To get your ideas flowing, feel free to [fill out this brief parent survey ahead of time!](#)

January 18: Tammi's Ecclesiastical Council

You're invited to join us as we celebrate Tammi's final steps towards ordination with her Ecclesiastical Council (EC). An EC is an official meeting, final interview, and vote of our regional body for Tammi to be an ordained minister in the United Church of Christ. Tammi's EC will be on Sunday, January 18 at 4 p.m. on Zoom. This is a celebratory step and we'd love to have you join! You can join via Zoom or come to the church for the watch party and celebrate with a group of FCC people. Zoom registration is [here](#). Tammi's Marks portfolio (a big project that shows the different ways she is fit to become a minister) is [here](#).

January 20: Calling All Knitters & Crocheters!

Do you knit or crochet? Do you have a heart for loving those in our community in the midst of a hard time? Then you're highly qualified to join our Prayer Shawl team! The Prayer Shawl team creates cozy, warm shawls that the staff can then gift to those in our church community experiencing a time of hardship. Some folks simply complete the shawls at home and drop them off and others gather to knit together on the third Tuesday of each month at 1 p.m. We provide yarn and a pattern, or invite you to use your own; we just need your time and needles or hooks! If you're interested in joining this quiet, but highly impactful ministry, please come to our January 20th session or reach out to Sue Norris - skn562003@yahoo.com.

You Are Welcome Here

Growing as an Inclusive Presence in Northern Colorado & Beyond

New Member Welcome: Frankie Perdue



I grew up in Shreveport, Louisiana, and graduated from Booker T. Washington High School in Shreveport. I attended and graduated with a BA degree in Social Work from Chadron State College in Chadron, Nebraska. I worked as a Social Worker for 33 years in Weld County and in Fort Collins. My husband, Johnny (deceased Sept. 2025) and I have traveled extensively. I have visited all 7 continents. We have two children, Carmen Francis in Georgetown, TX and John Derrick in San Antonio, and 4 grandchildren. At FCC, I enjoy the services, the members are friendly and helpful, and the ministers Rev. Ben and Rev. Tamara have been very helpful and encouraging.

New Member Welcome: Michael Krommendyk



My wife Aimee and I, along with our 4 kids (teens and older) have been in CO since 2012. Our family started in Missouri, made a detour in Northern California before landing here. We have a tight knit little family and I love it when we are together. I also love meaningful conversation with friends, music and stories that stir my soul, mystical poetry, theology, and wonderings, and baseball... boy do I love baseball. I work as a Storywork Coach and also for a non-profit - both which are based in Fort Collins. Read Michael's full bio on the Happenings Wall!

New Member Welcome: Madelyn & Macey Wampler



We are sisters who were born and raised in Greeley! We are both hoping to engage more in intergenerational community & possibly music! Madelyn is additionally interested in connecting with other LGBTQ identifying Christians. Macey has a mini Aussie named Nyliah, Madelyn lives with our other sister and her cat, Ophelia. Madelyn moved back to Colorado last year after spending seven years in Arizona after attending ASU. She now works doing community based public health education in Northern Colorado. Macey works as a para in a preschool here in District 6! We both enjoy the Hunger Games series & the tv show The Rookie. Read Madelyn & Macey's full bio the Happenings Wall!

New Member Welcome: David Haining



I am married to Caren and am a father to my two adult children, Scott and Amy. I have lived in Colorado all my life with the exception of living in Germany for work for 3.5 years. I have traveled to 40+ countries for work and pleasure. I have 2 degrees from Colorado State University. I am retired from HP, Inc. after 30 years and then taught high school business for 3 years. I am now a posture educator helping people learn how to carry themselves to have a pain-free life. I love to go to performing arts, movies, and sports events. Read David's full bio on the Happenings Wall!

The Children's Room is Expanding!

We are delighted to report that our children's worship room has a growing population of children! In fact, we have outgrown the one-room schoolhouse model that we've used since returning to in-person services in 2021. Starting in January, we will invite our preschool-2nd grade students to continue to worship in our large room. Our older kids (3rd-5th grade) will split to worship in their own worship room, which is still in our children's ministry wing. A huge thanks to Revs. Ben & Tamara, who will each be stepping in once a month to teach the older kids as we continue to expand our teaching team!



Katie Hughes Rhapsody in Blue

Our beloved resident organist, Katie Hughes, is a multi-talented musician who performed "Rhapsody in Blue" with the Flatirons Community Orchestra. She's incredible, and we wanted to share it with you! [Click here to watch.](#)



Church Library Book Review

Radical Forgiveness by Brian Zahnd
This book poses questions regarding forgiveness in our Christian beliefs. Questions like "should we always forgive?" or "is forgiveness always possible?" and "does forgiveness sacrifice justice?" Brian Zahnd, who was brought up in the Pentecostal faith, challenges us to look at those who differ from us and offer generous and forgiving grace. This is a call to update western Christianity by learning to live by following the messages of Jesus. The basic experience and emphasis of Christianity revolves around the theme of forgiveness. This forgiveness is a reconciliation and restoration in our relationship with God and humanity. This is unconditional love. Interested in what else Brian Zahnd has to say? Check out his book in the adult library.

Beethoven in the Rockies

Join us in the sanctuary on Sunday, January 26 at 2 p.m. as Beethoven in the Rockies presents *Colorado Piano Trio*. The Colorado Piano Trio is an award-winning international chamber music ensemble. American violinist Jubal Fulks, Polish pianist Adam Piotr Żukiewicz, and Slovenian cellist Gal Faganel began their artistic collaboration in 2016 as faculty members at the University of Northern Colorado. The trio was recently featured as concerto soloists in Beethoven's Triple Concerto and Mozart's Sinfonia Concertante. Find details & tickets [here](#).



Nicholas on the Future of Faith Podcast!

Our very own Nicholas Gilmore was recently a guest on the Future of Faith Podcast hosted by Josh Packard. [Click here to listen to the full podcast.](#)

We Want You to Be a Part of a Ministry Group!

Did you know that FCC has four primary Ministry Groups that are responsible for carrying out the life and programs of the church? Each is responsible for a particular area of our ministry. We invite you to check one out! All groups meet the second Sunday of each month at 11:30 a.m.

- The Fellowship Ministry Group plans and coordinates church-wide events like spring and fall picnics, Fellowship of the Grape gatherings, movie nights, and more. Laura is the staff contact for this group and they meet in the Library.
- The Outreach Ministry Group coordinates our support and partnership with our local community partners like Greeley Interfaith Alliance, Weld Food Bank, and Heath Middle School. Ben is the staff contact for this group and they meet in the church office.



- The Family Faith Formation Ministry Group coordinates programming and activities for our children and youth like Sunday mornings and Partners, as well as intergenerational opportunities like Advent Workshop and our Advent and Lent devotionals. Tammi is the staff contact for this group and they meet in the Children's Worship Room.
- The Worship Music and the Arts Ministry Group coordinates all of the pieces that bring worship together each week, as well as the special events of church seasons. They schedule greeters and readers, make sure the church is decorated at Christmas, and support the entire music program of the church. The staff contact is Tamara and they meet in the Living Water Office in the staff hallway.

Uplift the Stories of our Immigrant Neighbors

On Saturday, January 17, the Colorado Rapid Response Network (CORRN) will host a Docuteam Training from 10 a.m. to 3 p.m. at FCC. The Docuteam is a group of trained volunteers who respond to calls to the documentation hotline reporting ICE activity. Members support impacted families by documenting their testimonies and helping connect them with community resources. CORRN will provide all training, tools, and support – including role-playing – and time for questions.

Participation does not require a full commitment; this is a safe space to learn and discern. Bilingual English/Spanish fluency is strongly encouraged, with emphasis on Spanish.

Registration for the training is required [here](#).

Life, Legacy, and A Little Laughter

Did you know the church has a drawer called "Funeral Files?" That we can help you to record your wishes long before the end of your life? That a bit of planning now can significantly ease the burden on your family after your death? It's true! Join us Sunday, February 15 from 11:30 a.m. to 12:30 p.m. in Slighter Hall as we share a bit about the memorial service planning process at FCC, some of the decisions that will have to be made at the time of your death, those decisions you can make now, columbarium and memorial garden options, and more! We'll talk about ways that your life and legacy can shape a meaningful service, walk through some logistics, and have a laugh along the way. Please [RSVP here](#), so we can be sure to have plenty of materials available!