



Next Issue: March 18, 2025

Submission Deadline for Next Issue: March 13, 2025

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

Volume 80, Issue 2

The Church Bell

Grand Opening: February 8, 2025

Thank you to all who came, brought cookies, and celebrated our new space with us. We're grateful that over 15 of our community partner organizations came to celebrate with us, too! We're grateful for this new space and look forward to all the ways it will serve our church community and the greater Greeley community in the years to come.



Circles of Belonging

A while back I heard someone talk about their desire for their church to move from a friendly church to a church of friends. This slight difference in word order felt monumental to me!

We likely have a number of spaces where friendly interactions happen in our lives. We likely don't have as many spaces where we are experiencing a deepening of relationship with others.

Ever since I heard the distinction made between a friendly church and a church of friends, I have desired for that transformation to happen at FCC. This is not to say, of course, that FCC is devoid of friendships! It's simply an acknowledgement that it's easy for our interactions with others to never move much beyond a friendliness.

To help encourage this continued movement towards a church of friends, we are introducing the idea of "Circles of Belonging." Circles of Belonging are not new groups in the church, but a way of thinking about all of the smaller gatherings that are already happening outside of Sunday morning - things like ministry groups, scripture seminar, women's group, choirs, kids' ministry volunteers, GIA clothing bank volunteers, etc.

Our hope is that thinking of small group gatherings already happening at the church as "Circles of Belonging" will encourage us to seek deeper friendship with those who are already there, and will inspire us to invite more people into the "Circles of Belonging" that we are a part of.

- Rev. Ben

UNC Women's Basketball Game

Join us **Saturday, March 1 at 6pm** to cheer on the UNC Women's Basketball Team! We have been delighted to have two players, Ella and Olivia, regularly attend worship at FCC. Please contact Rev. Ben for more details about attending the game, revben@firstconggreeley.org.

Save the Date!

- *Ash Wednesday dinner and service:* March 5, 5:00-7:00 pm
- *Holy Week service:* Wednesday, April 18, 5:00-7:00 pm
- *155th Annual Meeting:* May 4, 11:30 am
- *Rosebud All-Ages trip:* June 1-5
- *2025 High School Pilgrimage:* June 7-12

Welcome Lunch

There will be a Welcome Lunch on March 30th from 11:30 am-1:00 pm. Welcome Lunches are an opportunity for those newer to the community to learn more about FCC from staff and lay leaders and to meet others who have recently started attending FCC. Please contact Rev. Ben if you are interested in attending at Revben@firstconggreeley.org.

Welcome, New Members!

We welcome these new members into our First Congregational Community.
We're glad you're here!



Jess, Ryan, Lily, Jonah, and Zoe Paul

The Paul family loves to sing, travel, dance, ski, backpack, and camp. They have two loving cats, Lulu and Goose. The Pauls appreciate the environment and genuineness of the people they've met at FCC and love that children are front and center at the church. They have felt extremely welcome at the church and are excited to be part of the community!

Susan and Rodger Good

Susan and Rodger grew up in Nebraska. They have two sons, Benjamin and Bryan, and ten grandchildren. Benjamin lives in Firestone and Bryan lives in Windham, Maine. Rodger felt a call to ministry later in life making him a second career pastor. Rodger has served congregations in the Maine, Nebraska, Michigan, and Iowa conferences. He retired December 31, 2023.

Susan has been the exemplary pastor's spouse and has also been a large part of ministry as well. Susan has worked at a variety of occupations through the years. Her hobbies include stained glass, sewing and crocheting. They both love time away in their RV, reading, watching college football and doing jigsaw puzzles. They are enjoying retirement immensely!

Rodger and Susan have enjoyed inspiring worship services, Rev. Ben and Rev. Tamara's messages, and all the wonderful music during worship.



Frank Scales

Frank was born in SE Texas, grew up in Bridge City, and went to College in Lake Charles, LA where he majored in music (piano) and minored in percussion and theory and composition. Frank began a radio career in Lake Charles. He has lived in Dallas, Beaumont, Austin, Houston, and Lincoln, CA.

Frank likes the spirit of inclusion at FCC, has found people to be kind and friendly, and appreciates all the missions the church is involved with - especially the music and musical talent that gets to shine week after week. Frank joins his wife Jan as a member of FCC.

Hello to our Online Worshipers!

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:

- Jody Lininger & Russ Doty
- John Houtchens
- Bob and Marietta Shreve
- Dick & Jean Hoffman
- Trystan Cline

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!

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. We will have updated information on our financial position ready as a handout at the event. We encourage questions!

King Soopers Rewards

Have you assigned your King Soopers Rewards to an organization yet? If not, please consider making FCC the recipient! It supports the church and doesn't cost you anything or require you to do anything other than signing up. To sign up, please call the office for assistance or follow the steps below:

1. Login to your King Soopers account online.
2. Click on your name on the top right corner of the screen.
3. Click on Community Rewards on the left hand side of your screen.
4. Look up First Congregational Church of Greeley
5. Click Enroll

Spiritual Direction Offerings

Sandy Varley is a spiritual director who attends FCC and has her office in our building. She is offering these gatherings in the coming weeks. For questions and to register, contact Sandy at 970-405-4486, svarley@comcast.net or sign up on her website, <https://livingwatersoulcare.net>

Breathe: Create Your Calm in the Midst of Anxiety

Saturday, March 8, 9:00 am - noon, Slighter Hall. On demand online after Monday, March 10.

Are you one of the nearly 40 million Americans who are currently experiencing higher levels of anxiety?

If so, join us for this three-hour workshop as we use the principles of Christian mindfulness to strengthen inner calm in the face of anxiety by learning and practicing several key strategies. No matter how anxious you're feeling, this time will help you grow your roots of Spiritual Grounding to nurture your well-being in any storm. Pay as you are able (\$0-\$75).

Being Mindful, Being Christian

Saturdays, March 15 - April 19, 10-11:30 am, Living Water office at FCC

During this Lenten Season, join us for a 6-week group focusing in Christian mindfulness. We'll soak into the deep roots of our contemplative Christian tradition, while sharing our individual journeys together. We'll be following the themes in the book *Being Mindful, Being Christian* by Episcopal priest and psychologist Dr. Joanna Collicutt. Reading is optional, not expected. We'll have a time of guided meditation, sharing, and creating life-practices for mindfulness each week.

Open to FCC members and the Greeley community. Pay as you are able (\$0-\$20 per week).