



*A Future with Hope by Salt Project*

## **A Future with Hope: Our 2026 Stewardship Journey**

As the spring sun begins to warm our sanctuary and the blossoms of April emerge, we find ourselves in the radiant light of Eastertide. This year, our hearts are focused on a singular, powerful vision: A Future with Hope. This theme is rooted in Ephesians 3:20: "Now to him who by the power at work within us is able to accomplish abundantly far more than all we can ask or imagine."

Starting April 12th and continuing through the month, Revs. Ben and Tamara will lead us through the profound stories of the Resurrection. We invite you to join us as we explore what it means to be a people of hope through our sacred stories:

- The Road to Emmaus: Recognizing the Divine in our midst, even when our eyes are heavy with grief or despair.
- Surprised by Abundance: Witnessing how God provides "immeasurably more" than our scarcity-minded world suggests.
- The Embodiment of Hope: Learning to live as the hands and feet of Christ in a world that deeply needs his light.

Stewardship is more than a financial transaction; it is a spiritual practice. It is our collective "Yes" to the mission God has placed before us. Our annual campaign is an invitation to look toward the horizon and ask: What can we achieve when we pool our resources for the glory of God through the work of the church?

We invite every member of our church family to prayerfully consider making a 12-month pledge to support the life and mission of First Congregational Church. Your commitment fuels our

community outreach, sustains our worship, and ensures we remain a beacon of hope in Greeley for Good!

How to Participate:

- Reflect: Read Ephesians 3 this week and ask how God is working within you.
- Attend: Join us each Sunday in April to hear the stories of the Road to Emmaus.
- Commit: Pledge cards will be available in the pews starting April 12th or you can make your pledge online now.

Let us move forward together, not with apprehension, but with the bold expectation that our future is held in the hands of a God who does wonders!

## Rooted in God's Love



### **An Ordination Celebration!**

After a season of discernment led by the FCC Cabinet and a Call Committee—special thanks to Sandy Magnuson, Maya Turn, Mary Hulac, Michelle Heiny, and Aron Flynn—along with ongoing conversation with our Personnel Committee and Board of Trustees, and affirmed by a congregational vote, we are thrilled to celebrate a joyful milestone.

Please join us for a service of ordination for Tammi VanDrunen and Brooklyn

### **Overwhelming Support & Gratitude**

Thank you to all who contributed to the Partners' Supply Drive for our unhoused neighbors and to the candy donation for Easter. The Partners and I were overwhelmed with the amount of supplies you all contributed and we are eager to deliver those this month. (We'll keep you posted!) We also received an amazing amount of candy that will surely make kids' mouths happy this Easter.

### **Did You Make a Gift from Your Charles Schwab IRA?**

If you made a gift from your Charles Schwab IRA distribution in late February or early March and have not yet received an acknowledgment



### **Pastor Emeritus for Rev. Nate Miller**

At the Annual Meeting on May 3, the congregation will vote on honoring Rev. Nate Miller with the title of Pastor Emeritus.

Pastor Emeritus is a distinction that is offered to a retired minister who has had a particularly significant impact on a congregation.

Through Rev. Nate's tenure as FCC's Senior Minister, his leadership guided our

McBride! This is a momentous occasion as we honor both their call to ordained ministry and their shared call to serve here at FCC. The service will take place on **Saturday, May 2nd at 1 PM**, followed by an outdoor garden party. We invite you to bring a garden party snack to share as we celebrate together.

### **Check Out a Ministry Group!**

FCC has four ministry groups that are responsible for carrying out the program of the church. Checking out a ministry group is an excellent way to get a feel for all that happens behind the scenes to make our very busy church life happen! We all meet the second Sunday of the month at **11:30 AM**. Please join one of our groups on **April 12th** and learn a bit more!

**Fellowship:** plans church-wide events like spring and fall picnics, Fellowship of the Grape gatherings, and more. Laura is the staff contact and they meet in the Library.

**Outreach:** coordinates our work with local partners like Greeley Interfaith Alliance, Weld Food Bank, and Heath Middle School. Ben is the staff contact for this group and they meet in Slighter Hall.

**Family Faith Formation:** coordinates programming and activities for our children,

from the church, it may have arrived without your name attached.

Please **reach out to Laura** in the church office and let us know the amount that you directed to the church so that we can be sure to update our records and thank you!

### **Rooted: Exploring Sacred Masculinity**

Many men who have crossed our paths express a need for a space where they can gather with other men to connect in an authentic and solid way, and as such all who identify as men are invited to explore our new Rooted: Exploring Sacred Masculinity group using Richard Rohr's book *From Wild Man to Wise Man*. We're living in a time of wildness, division, and aggression, and more than ever, we need wisdom, not wildness, to respond with grounded compassion, authentic action, and discerning judgment.

Rooted: Exploring Sacred Masculinity will meet on Tuesdays from **4 to 5 PM** in the Living Water Soul Care office at the church. Folks are welcome to join the group through **April 14th**, then the group will close through the completion of this book. Your RSVP by email, phone, or text to Sandy Varley is appreciated (970-405-4486 or svarley@comcast.net).

### **Stewarding Our Gifts Well**

congregation into a place of stability, joy, and faithfulness.

Please stay posted for more information about this process and about the continued importance of Rev. Nate's ministry for our faith community.

### **In Loving Memory**

#### **Celebrating the Lives of Bob and Betty Tointon**

Thursday, **April 23rd, 2026 at 1:30 PM** at the Union Colony Civic Center. A reception will immediately follow at the Double Tree across from Lincoln Park.

#### **Nancy Meilahn**

*June 26, 1943 - March 14, 2026*  
Services were held Friday, March 20th.

#### **William "Dick" Jamieson**

*March 1, 1935 - March 11, 2026*  
Services will be announced at a later date. **Read Dick's obituary here.**

#### **Betty "Peggy" Koplitz**

*March 20, 1928 - March 20, 2026*  
Services will be held in Carlisle, PA. **Read her obituary here.**

### **It's Recital Season at First Congregational Church!**

Through March and April (as well as in November and December) many UNC Music Students are giving their annual recitals. FCC is a popular venue for those

youth, and 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.

**Worship Music and Arts:** coordinates all of the pieces that bring worship together each week, as well as the special events of church seasons. The staff contact is Tamara and they meet in the Living Water Office in the staff hallway.

We know that you've been dying to read an excellent finance policy - and the Trustees have been hard at work to deliver for you this year! Over the past few months, the Trustees have developed a new **Gift Acceptance Policy** and an **Endowment Spending Policy**. We know they might not be the most riveting documents you've ever read, but we invite you to take a look at the ways we act as stewards of the gifts we receive.

recitals and it's always a delight to have students renting our space! If you're here while a recital is happening, please be sure to say hello; it's a great way to live into our welcome and hospitality beyond Sunday mornings!



Music Sunday 2025

## Nourished on Our Spiritual Journeys

### April 11: Greeley Philharmonic Youth Orchestra

The Greeley Philharmonic Youth Orchestra is presenting their spring concert, the first as a full symphony orchestra, on **April 11th at 2 PM** at First Congregational Church. Tickets are \$5, youth 12 and under are free.

### April 18: Historic Five Points Field Trip

Our next Denver Five Points adventure will be **Saturday, April 18th**. We will leave the church parking lot at **9:30 AM**, arriving at Blair Caldwell African American Research Library for an 11 AM. guided tour of the museum and

### April 11: PFLAG Invites You to Meet Author Nico Lang

Join PFLAG for a discussion and conversation on supporting Trans and Non-Binary Youth with award-winning author and journalist Nico Lang on **April 11th from 10 AM to 12 PM** at FCC. Nico Lang specializes in LGBTQ+ issues, particularly the lives of transgender and gender-nonconforming youth. Known for empathetic, on-the-ground reporting, they authored *American Teenager: How Trans Kids are Finding Joy in a Turbulent Era*, documenting the experiences of trans teens across the U.S. Lang is a GLAAD Media Award winner and frequent contributor to VICE, NBC News, and Them.

### April 12-19: Holocaust Memorial Observances

The week of April 12-19, Greeley is hosting the annual Voices from the Holocaust event, remembering those killed and wounded by one of the largest genocides in history. The robust schedule of events and all event details can be found [here](#) and all events are free and open to the public. We're excited to highlight a few key events for you:

**Sunday, April 12th at 7PM:** Interfaith Memorial Service (Beth Israel Congregation, 1625 Reservoir Rd)

**Monday, April 13th at 6PM:** Film Screening: Truth and Treason (Kress Cinema &

archival sections (including places to sit down).

Following our interesting and informative conversation with Shanti Zaid, Special Collections and Archives, we will drive a few blocks to have a quiche lunch at the welcoming and charming TeaLee's Tea House and Bookstore. We will return to the church no later than **4:30 PM**.

Please RSVP to Misti at [mistiaas1@gmail.com](mailto:mistiaas1@gmail.com) if you are planning to join, so we have a count for both the van and brunch. Feel free to email or call Misti at 970-396-4266 if you have questions. All ages are welcome!

### **April 19: Beethoven in the Rockies**

On Sunday, **April 19th at 2 PM**, Beethoven in the Rockies will host their final concert of the season at FCC. Piano Virtuoso Sandro Tsomaia returns to Beethoven in the Rockies by popular demand! [Click here](#) for more information, the full program, and to purchase tickets!

### **May 17: Spring Picnic!**

Save the date for our annual All-Church Spring Picnic on Sunday, **May 17th at 11:30 AM** at the church! There will be food, fun, fellowship, and, of course, a bounce house! Mark

### **April 19: Budget Town Hall**

On Sunday, **April 19th at 9:15 and 11:30 AM**, we will offer Budget Town Hall Meetings in Slighter Hall to present the proposed budget for the 2026-2027 year. Your questions and feedback are welcome! The draft budget will be published digitally and in print on April 12th as part of the Annual Report and its adoption will be voted on by the congregation at our May 3rd Annual Meeting. Please join us to talk about how we steward our resources well!

### **April 26: Spring Music Sunday**

Join us on **Sunday, April 26th at 10 AM** for the presentation of our Spring Music Sunday featuring our Chancel Choir and a string quintet. It will feature two new works by our own organist, Katie Hughes, and the regional premiere of Alex Berko's "Modern Oaths." The works take a look at personal responsibility in our oaths to ourselves, each other, and to everything around us, alongside our place and purpose in a sometimes difficult world.

### **May 3: Graduation Sunday!**

Lounge, 817 8th Ave). Seats may be reserved in advance.

**Wednesday, April 15th at 7PM:** Holocaust Survivor Sylvia Ruth Gutmann Keynote Address (Aims Community College Welcome Center Auditorium, 4901 W 20th St)

**Sunday, April 19th at noon:** Klez Dispensers Klezmer Concert (Unitarian Universalist Church, 929 15th St)

### **April 23: Special Meeting of the Rocky Mountain Conference**

FCC is part of a larger network of churches in our denomination that spans Colorado, Wyoming, and Utah, which is called the Rocky Mountain Conference of the United Church of Christ (or just RMC for short).

The RMC is 2 years into a 3-year transition process and the Board of Directors is excited to share updates in the transition process, as well as extend an invitation to imagining a very different staffing model for our Conference!

All are invited to join the Conference at a Special Meeting on **Thursday, April 23rd from 6:30 to 8:30 PM** as the Board shares new possibilities and invites you into conversation about our collective future. The agenda and registration link can be found [here](#).

your calendars and watch for more details soon!

If you have a graduate in your family that you would like to have recognized on Graduation Sunday, please send their name to Brooklyn by April 20th.

### **April 26: Celebration Brunch with Prizes!**

Please join us on **Sunday, April 26th at 11:30 AM** as we celebrate the outcome of our three-week stewardship campaign with a potluck brunch following our Music Sunday service! All who have turned in their 2026-2027 pledge card by 11:30 AM on the 26th will be entered to win one of our door prizes!

**Prizes include:**

- **2026-2027 Season Tickets to Beethoven in the Rockies for 4**, complements of Beethoven in the Rockies.
- **2026-2027 Season Tickets to The Greeley Chorale for 2**, complements of The Greeley Chorale.
- **A weekend of your choice in a downtown Denver condo**, complements of Bryan Ericson.
- **Pellegrini gift card**, complements of Lola Fehr.

## **Growing as an Inclusive Presence in Northern Colorado & Beyond**



### **Love to Host? Here's a Chance!**

Fellowship of the Grape (FOG) is a gathering of folks who simply want to get together and deepen connections over a snack and a glass of wine (or other beverage of choice)! A number of our previous hosts have retired from hosting duties, so we're welcoming new hosts this year!



### **Middle Schoolers Stepping Up!**

This semester, we are piloting our "Stepping Up" program – a dedicated space for middle schoolers to embrace their faith and explore the ways that our faith community embraces them. Last month, we had an initial gathering of our incoming middle

If you're interested in hosting, please reach out to **Laura** in the church office.

Here's how it works: you pick a date and time, we help you advertise, you borrow the church's wine glasses, attendees bring the wine and appetizers, and you host a fun, low-stakes gathering in your home, yard, a park, or other venue of your choice!

schoolers to start dreaming about what they want to do in this program.

Their creativity is fun and exciting. They got the most excited about how our church is so good at welcoming people, and they want the world to know how special we are. They are dreaming of some really special things we could do as a church to show the world around us our radical and extravagant welcome. Stay tuned!

## Welcome to FCC Spotlights!



### **Hannah, Flora, and Eleanor**

Hello! We are excited to become a part of this community and greatly appreciate how welcoming everyone has been. Our family has lived in Greeley for 15 years. Hannah is a dietitian at NCMC in the cardiopulmonary rehab and oncology program. As a family, we love to cook and spend time outdoors. We grow a robust garden and can often be found outside exploring the plants and critters in the yard. We are drawn to FCC because of the strong sense of community and openness to everyone, no matter where they may be on their faith journey. I appreciate a place where questions are welcomed and have appreciated the great communication on what the kids are being taught and the method behind the approach. We are thankful for a faith based community that values actively loving neighbors through volunteering and supporting causes for social justice.



### **Jan & Kevin Olsen**

Jan and Kevin have been married for 32 years, and they have nine grandchildren. They have traveled to Tahiti, Africa, Madagascar, France, England, Norway, Sweden, and Portugal. They lived in Madagascar for 9 months where Kevin taught in a Lutheran seminary. Jan spends her time being creative: painting and doing crafts. She also loves thrift stores. Kevin is a retired UCC minister. His favorite pastime is golf. He loves reading and teaching contemplative prayer practices, and he is an active Spiritual companion for individuals looking to deepen their relationship with God, others, and nature. Being a retired UCC minister who just moved to Greeley, it was natural for Kevin to find a UCC church, and FCC seemed a good fit. Jan and Kevin love the people, the music, the staff, and all the different ways to serve the church and the Greeley community.

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