

Tower chimes

MONTHLY NEWSLETTER OF FIRST CONGREGATIONAL UCC | GRAND JUNCTION, CO | JULY 2021



TRANSITIONS

The month of June has been an exciting time for our church family. On June 5th and 6th Pastor Paul Ashby and his wife, Pam, spent time with you: socializing, getting to know you, proclaiming and sharing the word of God with you. At the end of that weekend, our church family voted unanimously to call Paul Ashby to be our next settled pastor. Paul, of course, has accepted that invitation and even now is making plans for beginning his ministry here.

I can't tell you how happy I am for First Congregational UCC. I met with Paul when he was here in Grand Junction in May. He's a warm and gracious person with an obvious love for people and relationships. He's comfortable to be around. He also has a very solid track record in ministry. He will bring strong skills and lots of experience to his work as your pastor and leader. And he and Pam are very excited about moving to Grand Junction and becoming a part of you.

Ultimate credit for this marvelous match goes, of course, to the spirit of God who has been working in and through this entire process over the past couple of years. But I also want to acknowledge and affirm the great work our Pastoral Search Team has done under the Spirit's guidance over the past year. They have been disciplined and organized. They didn't take any short cuts, but they worked intentionally toward their goal. They each gave literally hundreds of hours to this task. And their efforts have paid dividends. If you have not thanked each one of them personally, I hope you'll take the time to do that.

Pastor Paul has indicated to our church's leadership that he will begin his work here at First Congregational UCC on September 1st. So now it's time to plan for my departure.

The United Church of Christ (and most mainline denominations) strongly encourage at least a couple of weeks of separation between the time the Intentional Interim completes their work and the new settled pastor begins. This gives the congregation the opportunity to close one chapter and then look intentionally toward a new relationship and a new future.

Whoever you are, wherever you are on life's journey, you are welcome here!

TRANSITIONS DAVID DETHMERS

At our June Council meeting I recommended to Council and Council agreed that my last day of employment be Sunday, August 8th. That day I will complete my current sermon series: Power Packed Parables of Jesus. That will also give the church three weeks to transition and prepare for Pastor Paul's arrival. August is also typically a slow time in the life of most churches, so this also represents good stewardship of the church's resources.

With you on the journey...for just a bit longer,

Pastor David

MODERATOR MOMENT KEN PUHLER

I told you last month about my friend and mentor, Buckskin. We worked together for the substance abuse prevention program hosted by the hospital district in Durango. One of La Plata Prevention Partners' goals was to create diverse groups of stakeholders in communities to address substance abuse issues.

Ignacio is home to the Southern Ute tribal headquarters and proudly announces that it is a Tri-Ethnic community. We had been meeting with tribal elders, community leaders and members of human services groups separately for several weeks. I was grateful to have Buckskin with me when meeting with American Indian people. (Buckskin hated the term Native American- the treaties are all written with the name "American Indian"- when they cease to exist, so do the terms of the treaty.) For decades there were groups that had promised to provide services to the tribe in return for grant money. The tribe was never consulted, they never endorsed these programs and never received services.

Luckily, our program was approved by the tribal council with three appointed members to our group.

Buckskin's Indian name -at the time- meant Medicine Fire. Phonetically it would be close to: Yah-Owlks Low-Lox. This was his name because he ran sweat lodges. They are an important part of Indian spirituality- something the tribe was working hard to reclaim after being forced into Christianity by the infamous Indian schools. The three women in our group worshiped Grandfather Creator and all the elders who have passed.

Another member was DeeDee- who was "Everyone's Abuela." A title she deserved not just because of the grands and great-grands- but because she treated everyone like her family. Her brown eyes sparkled as she smiled and held out tiny hands to greet you with an enthusiastic but gentle voice. She was a very active and devout member of the St. Ignatius church.

Buckskin and I met DeeDee in the parking lot and walked into the meeting together. We immediately sensed the somber mood and saw that the three women seated at the north end of the table had been crying. Deedee joined them and Buckskin and I found seats on the south end. One of people explained that the night before a younger tribal member had been killed. He had been drinking, it was very dark, and he was walking in the middle of the country road. A car came around a corner and struck him. This was

MODERATOR MOMENT KEN PUHLER

happening far too often. Discussion turned to the distraught driver and then back to the family left behind.

At some point, DeeDee said, "It should give you great comfort to know that he is with Jesus now. His pain is over, he is with Jesus."

I gulped. I watched the veins pop out along the neck and forehead of Shelley, the younger woman across the table. Through tight lips she excused herself and left towards the restrooms. The other two women just nodded silently. My mind was racing—should I say something? What was going to happen next. The younger woman came back and somehow-someone- started the meeting. I don't remember much of what was discussed.

The meeting ended, most of the people left. Buckskin, I and the two elder women were left. I started to try to offer an apology for upsetting Shelley. Buckskin held up a hand to stop me. "Shelley hasn't learned to listen yet.", he said. The women nodded and one said, "We listened to her spirit. Her spirit is --good." Buckskin further explained, "Indian people listen to the spirit and the intent of what is being said. If the spirit is to be kind and the intent is to be helpful- then it is --good." They heard what was in her heart and it was --good.

Our church is undergoing change. As we emerge, submerge and reemerge from our Covid isolation, as we welcome a new pastor and as we seek ways to grow better—I know there will be some conflicting views. I pray we remember to speak gently, to be kind and helpful. I pray we, too, will listen for the spirit and for the intent of what is being said. For when we do, our church will be --good.

Peace be with you. Ken!

FOLLOW UP ON THE FLAG FORUM DAVID DETHMERS

This past Sunday thirty or so members of the church family joined us in the sanctuary after worship to address the question of whether or not to fly the US flag alongside the Black Lives Matter and Gay Pride flags. Another seven or eight joined us and participated via Zoom.

I would like to thank those who attended and specifically those who spoke for the quality and clarity of your remarks and even more so for keeping our conversation courteous, caring, and constructive. I think everyone who attended learned something from the other individuals who spoke, especially those coming from a perspective different from their own.

When everyone who wanted to speak had done so, I took a straw poll of the participants. Of those who chose to participate in the poll, 20% (five people) were in favor of flying the US flag alongside the other two and 80% (20 people) were not.

Having received this input from the congregation, the matter will now return to the Council for additional consideration and ultimately a decision. We, the Council, commit to keeping the congregation informed as we move forward.

MAY CONGREGATIONAL MEETING MINUTES MICHAEL PETRI, CLERK

May 23, 2021

The Congregation of First Congregational United Church of Christ met on May 23, 2021 in the sanctuary following the morning worship service for the annual meeting to elect officers. The meeting was opened by moderator Mark Long at 10:57 a.m. and a quorum confirmed. Interim Pastor David Dethmers gave an opening prayer, then thanked Mark for his three years of continuous leadership during times of change.

The minutes of the May 21, 2019 congregational meeting were distributed prior to the meeting. The minutes were approved, on motion. (No annual meeting was held in 2020 due to the pandemic.)

Mark thanked the outgoing council members for their service to the church:

Term ended in 2020:

Dana Brosig

Carl Jones

Carolyn Ramsey

Term ended in 2021:

Joan Levy

The proposed council slate for 2021-2022 was presented:

Moderator – Ken Puhler

Vice Moderator – Carolyn Holmgren

Past Moderator/Lay Delegate – Mark Long

Clerk – Michael Petri

Treasurer – Martha Jones

Property & Finance Chair – Cindy Haas

At Large – Nancy Palubicki

At Large – Sally Shell

Lay Delegate – Karen Caton

The floor was opened for other nominees. There being none, the slate of candidates was elected to office, on motion.

The annual report (including reports for the last two years) was distributed prior to the meeting. The floor was opened for questions about the annual report. There were no questions.

After some closing remarks, Mark thanked David for his leadership. There being no further business, the meeting was closed with prayer at 11:10 a.m.

JUNE CONGREGATIONAL MEETING MINUTES MICHAEL PETRI, CLERK

June 6, 2021

The Congregation of First Congregational United Church of Christ met for a special meeting on June 6, 2021 in the sanctuary following the morning worship service. The meeting was called for the purpose of acting on the recommendation of the Pastor Search Committee to call the Rev. Paul Manson Ashby as the Senior Pastor of the church.

The meeting was opened by moderator Ken Puhler at 10:56 a.m. and a quorum confirmed. Ken thanked the search committee for all their work and expressed his excitement with the candidate, then turned the meeting over to search committee chair Michael

JUNE CONGREGATIONAL MEETING MINUTES

MICHAEL PETRI, CLERK

Petri. Michael presented this report to the congregation:

As members of the Search Committee, we want to express our gratitude for the trust you have placed in us. As you know by now, the committee concluded our process of reviewing profiles and interviewing candidates, ultimately reaching a unanimous decision to recommend to you our final candidate for the position of Senior Minister, the Reverend Paul Manson Ashby.

We are grateful to our Conference Minister, the Rev. Erin Gilmore, who worked with us in the Search and Call process. To quickly review our steps that led us to this point of confidence in the Spirit's leading:

- 1. Our intentional interim pastor and the council sought your perspectives on our church's ministry through a questionnaire and a series of small group meetings. Your insights and ideas were incorporated into the Local Church Profile that candidates read.*
- 2. Our vacancy was listed in UCC Ministry Opportunities where ministerial candidates saw it. Those interested in the position responded via our the conference office.*
- 3. Those interested persons authorized to complete a UCC Ministerial Profile submitted their profiles through the conference office for our committee. These profiles had information about the candidates' sense of calling, formation for ministry, faith and leadership experience, references, an ethical self-disclosure form, and a criminal background check.*
- 4. We received profiles and read them with our own Local Church Profile in mind. We arranged initial and follow-up interviews with those candidates the seemed the best fit for us. Thanks to the pandemic, we were easily able to watch on-line sermons and church services led by the candidates. We called references and completed due diligence through the conference before arranging an in-person visit/interview with our top candidate.*
- 5. As the visit/interview weekend closed, we felt confident that this candidate was being called to share our ministry in Grand Junction. We were glad when our top candidate responded enthusiastically and immediately to our invitation for a candidating weekend. The council was advised of the search committee's decision. Terms of call, as previously agreed by our council and as included in our annual budget, were agreed by the candidate.*
- 6. We provided the congregation with a short report on our search process and the candidate's biography. We conducted meet and greet sessions yesterday both in the church and by Zoom for those unable to attend in-person. This morning you've joined in worship led by the candidate.*
- 7. Confidentiality has been essential to the entire process of profile review and interviews, so we kept you in necessary suspense. It was important to honor the integrity of our committee's discernment and to respect candidates' current ministry setting. We have asked*

JUNE CONGREGATIONAL MEETING MINUTES

MICHAEL PETRI, CLERK

you to keep in close confidence the candidate's name until such time as the congregational vote is affirmative and we have the candidate's consent to publish the news of their new call to ministry with us.

We have been grateful during this search process for the help and excellent interim leadership of Rev. David Dethmers.

We are blessed with a wonderful church community. With hard work and God's guidance, we will be blessed with a wonderful pastor to guide us as we minister in the name of Jesus Christ.

Following the report, the motion from the search committee that we, First Congregational Church United Church of Christ, call the Rev. Paul Ashby to the position of Senior Minister was presented. The floor was opened for questions from the congregation. Following this, the congregation voted unanimously in favor of the motion.

There being no further business, Ken closed the meeting at 11:07 a.m.

Michael Petri
Council Clerk

MAY COUNCIL MEETING MINUTES

MICHAEL PETRI, CLERK

May 16, 2021

The church council of First Congregational Church United Church of Christ met on May 16, 2021 for the monthly stated meeting. The meeting was conducted on-line. Present were council members Cindy Haas, Martha Jones, Mark Long, Michael Petri, Ken Puhler and Sally Shell, council nominee Carolyn Holmgren, and intentional interim pastor David Dethmers. Joan Levy and Nancy Palubicki were absent.

A quorum was established. The meeting was opened at 12:33 p.m. with prayer.

Minutes of the April 18, 2021 meeting were approved as distributed, on motion.

Interim Minister Report: A written report was distributed prior to the meeting. The new A/V system has been installed in the sanctuary and Beth expects to live stream the worship service next Sunday. David proposed Joan Levy, Beth Rakestraw and David form a search team for the A/V position, and name Beth as supervisor for the position. Joan may not be available, so David also proposed that he be permitted to name another lay person for the search team if needed. The council agreed with these proposals.

David proposed scheduling the previously-postponed discussion about installing an American flag on the building for June 27. The council was in general agreement.

Ministry Team Reports/Minutes: Available reports were distributed prior to the meeting, as noted:

- ◇ Mission & Outreach, May 2021 minutes
- ◇ Congregational Life, May 2021 report

MAY COUNCIL MEETING MINUTES

MICHAEL PETRI, CLERK

- ◇ Worship and Celebration, April and May 2021 minutes
- ◇ Spiritual Formation, no report
- ◇ Property and Finance, draft May 2021 minutes
- ◇ Personnel Committee, no report
- ◇ Strategic Opening Team, no report
- ◇ Marketing Team, May 2021 report
- ◇ A/V Update report

Treasurer's Report: Martha reported that she continues to pay the bills and balance the books.

Pastor Search Committee: The PSC reached a tentative agreement with a candidate for the Senior Minister position. Michael sent a report that included a short description of the process in choosing the candidate, a short biography, as well as the agreed job description and compensation (both of which had already been reviewed by the council). A motion was made for the council to affirm the work of the PSC and present the PSC recommendation for congregational action at a congregational meeting on June 6. The motion was approved.

Annual Meeting: The annual congregational meeting is next Sunday (May 23rd) after the in-person worship service. Members may also attend via Zoom. Annual reports have been prepared for the last two years (since there was no annual meeting in 2020) and distributed to the congregation electronically. The slate of nominations has been filled.

David thanked Mark for all his work as moderator for the last three years.

Other Business/New Business

RMC Conflict Training reminder: May 22

RMC Annual Celebration, June 7-13

There being no other business, the meeting was closed with prayer by David at 12:57 p.m.

Michael Petri – Council Clerk

The next meeting was not discussed, but I'll assume it will be on June 20 at 12:30 via Zoom unless we hear otherwise.



MISSION & OUTREACH NEWS SALLY SHELL

June Collections Numbers

As of this writing, for Homeward Bound, we collected:

- ◇ 62 Pillows
- ◇ 40 pillowcases

For Catholic Outreach, we have collected:

- ◇ 102 packages of spaghetti
- ◇ 94 containers of sauce
- ◇ 96 other



Third Quarter Mission & Outreach Project: The House

During the Summer quarter, Mission & Outreach will focus on The House. For the month of July, we are collecting two all-important items for any household: toilet paper and paper towels!

July Food Collection for Catholic Outreach

♪ Oh, we ain't got a barrel of money,
We won't let that stop us, now, honey ...
We'll go to the store, looking for more
sides and sides.

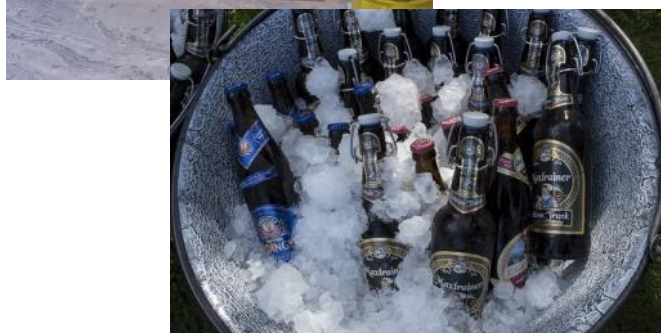
♪ Maybe it's broccoli and rice,
Canned veggies are very nice,
We'll gather a bunch ... for dinner or lunch, of
sides and sides.

Think about a delicious meal you've had lately. Didn't those side dishes of vegetables and pasta salad just make the meal complete? Well, Catholic Outreach needs our help in supplying those side dishes. For the month of July we are collecting canned vegetables and pasta side dishes (prepackaged pasta pkgs). Let's see if we can collect at least 100 of each so that many more people in the valley can have a delicious and complete meal.

THE FOG HAS LIFTED DAVID DETHMERS



After being grounded for almost eighteen months, Fellowship of the Grape rose from the ashes last Friday night. After such a lengthy hiatus, we threw all caution to the wind and even welcomed some beer drinkers and soda pop consumers into our time of fellowship. The weather cooperated beautifully and a good time was had by all!



“YOU SCREAM, I SCREAM, WE ALL SCREAM FOR...” DAVID DETHMERS

**WEDNESDAY, JULY 28TH
6:30 PM at Graff's Dairy**

What's sweeter...and cooler...than ice cream in July, right? Maybe enjoying that ice cream with some of your friends.

On July 28th you're invited to meet up at Graff's Dairy (581 29 Road—just south of Patterson on 29 Road) at 6:30 PM. Graff's has outside/picnic seating. You can come for one of their “gourmet meals” if you like or just come after your dinner at home and have an outrageously delicious dessert!

This is another opportunity to hang out with your church friends, build deeper relationships, and perhaps introduce a friend to our FCC community! Questions? Contact Kathy Viglianco or Dana Brosig.

HUMOROUS PROOFREADING FAILURES BETH RAKESTRAW

I collect these to remind myself why proofreading is impotent.



Let's hope this is just a typo and not the season finale of 2020



Donner Pass snack bar?

The two on the bottom are kind of subtle. Did you spot the problems?



Math geeks, there is help out there for you ...

LOOKING AHEAD

Church Camping at Island Lake
Church Office Closed for Labor Day
Colorado West Pride Fest
Thanksgiving Day
First Sunday of Advent, Year C

August 27-29
September 6
September 7—12
November 25
November 28

JULY 2021

SUNDAY	MONDAY	TUESDAY	WEDNESDAY	THURSDAY	FRIDAY	SATURDAY
June 27	June 28	June 29	June 30	1	2	3
10:00 Worship					10:00 Women's Coffee, Zoom	
4	5	6	7	8	9	10
10:00 Worship w/ Communion	Church Closed for Independence Day	4:30 Mission & Outreach	1:00 Congregational Life		10:00 Women's Coffee, Zoom	
11	12	13	14	15	16	17
10:00 Worship 11:30 Church Council Meeting UCC General Synod Begins			6:30 Marketing Team, Zoom		10:00 Women's Coffee, Zoom	
18	19	20	21	22	23	24
10:00 Worship UCC General Synod Ends		1:00 Property & Finance			10:00 Women's Coffee, Zoom	
25	26	27	28	29	30	31
10:00 Worship		2:00 Worship & Celebration	6:30 Ice Cream Social, Graff Farm Dairy		10:00 Women's Coffee, Zoom	

JULY BIRTHDAYS

7/4 Carolyn Ramsey
 7/6 Lila Woodward
 7/7 Charlie Dahl
 7/9 Mary Endres
 7/10 Chris Coolidge

7/22 Tom Jenkins
 7/23 Mike Spangler
 7/28 Gail Mosher
 7/29 Joanne Drake
 7/29 Martha Jones

If we are missing a birthday from our lists, or our list is incorrect, please call the church office at 970-242-0298 or email office@uccgj.org. Thanks!



Go Green! Get your Tower
Chimes via email!



CONTACT US!

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Part Time Custodian:

Anna Driggs

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