

# Tower chimes

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



## Paul's Epistle

Dear Friends,

Pam and I have been living in the land of stacked boxes and are looking forward to being in Grand Junction. Mostly we look forward to sharing together in the spiritual gifts at First Congregational. The greatest gifts in life are not things we can wrap in a box. Our great gifts flow through God's Spirit to shape a life that is worth living. The blessings that give meaning to our life are realizations of heart, soul and body. By listening to church members who have lived a life long in years and long in love, you can benefit from their wisdom. Through listening one discovers the greatest gifts in life are:

Joy	Acceptance	Hope
Friendship	Compassion	Faith
Forgiveness	Wisdom	Fellowship
Peace	Community	Gratitude
Love	Generosity	Happiness

All of these gifts can be experienced in our faith community. These are the blessings we can share. These are the gifts we can offer to all who engage with our church. What sustains us through difficult days? What inspires our courage to work for mercy and justice? What transforms our future with the energy of grace? The gifts of life on the above list. The gifts we share on this spiritual journey called life.

I have received so much as a pastor from simply listening to people in their seventies, eighties and nineties talk about what made their journey meaningful. Some would even say delightful. Starting in September call me if you would like to drop in and bring a Brown bag lunch on a Monday, Wednesday or Friday at noon. I often just pack a sandwich and it would be fun to share lunch. The only ground rule is no topic if off the table. I have had lunch conversations about issues of great suffering, reflections on the beautiful places in an area,

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

## PAUL'S EPISTLE REV. PAUL ASHBY

stories of travel, church committee business, ongoing cancer treatments, and what team has the best chance for the Super Bowl, Stanley Cup or the WNBA title (a hint on the last one, it is Seattle). Call me at the office and pick a Monday, Wednesday or Friday.

Peace, Shalom, Salaam

Rev Paul

## MODERATOR MOMENT KEN PUHLER

Buckskin and I traveled a lot. It seems we were attending meetings or trainings in Denver or on the front range, at least once a month. We would always stop at the summit of Wolf Creek Pass. We would get out and admire the beauty a moment. Buckskin would scrape a little hole at the edge of the graveled lot and make an offering of tobacco. While he covered it up, he would ask Grandfather Creator and the ancestors to keep our families safe while we were away.

Buckskin signed every memo or letter with "All my relations". This was to pay tribute and honor all the family members living or dead and to recognize that his actions reflected all of them. "He acts like he has no family." is an admonishment of silly or shameful behavior.

I was anxious to learn all I could from Buckskin. I was not the only one. We employed Augie who worked for a data, research, and evaluation firm in Denver. Augie grew up in New York City. Augie was a brilliant young man but knew nothing about country living nor the many varied American Indian cultures. I learned a lot listening to their conversation during walks and meals together.

We were attending a four-day training at Crested Butte. In the summer, rooms are inexpensive, wildflowers bloom and cows graze the slopes. We were walking from the conference center to the small grocery store to get some snacks for our room. Augie was asking Buckskin more questions about Indian life. We completed our shopping and as we were walking out, we passed another Indian man. "Mike-to-Goovin", the man said to Buckskin. "Lak-Toya", Buckskin replied. "Wow!" exclaimed Augie, "Did you know that guy?" "No", Buckskin replied. "But you talked???" "We just said hello." Augie pondered that in silence.

We went for a walk on the slope after dinner that evening. The questioning continued about plants, flowers and bushes. Buckskin would answer and then talk of any

## MODERATOR MOMENT KEN PUHLER

traditional uses of that plant.

“What are all these flat rocks?” Augie asked, “They have green stuff that oozes out underneath.”

“Stomp on it.” Buckskin said. He did and his Birkenstock sandals were engulfed by the only-dry-on-top cow patty. Buckskin had a great sense of humor.

Buckskin invited Augie to attend a sweat lodge. That more than made up for the cow patty incident. Sweat lodges are sacred events held to atone or purify oneself, to honor or to pray for someone who is struggling. Individual tribes have different ways of performing and different rules for attending sweats. Buckskin was an outspoken critic of cultural appropriation. Non-Indian people were charging people to attend sweats. Several people had died at one in Sedona a couple months earlier.

The lodge frame is built to represent the rib cage of a giant buffalo. This is covered with hides, blankets and tarps. There is a fire pit to heat the lava stones with a trench dug to connect it to the pit inside the lodge. Lodges have flags or pennants of the four colors of the medicine wheel. Red, Yellow, Blue/Black and White to represent the colors of the people at the sweat, among other things. The red flag is always above the stone pit in the center. You enter the lodge a special way, moving clockwise along the wall.

The fire-tender places stones in the pit at the direction of the leader. The door is closed. Water is poured on the rocks to create steam. Songs are sung and more water is poured on the red glowing rocks until the end of a round. The door opens and cool air comes in, more rocks are added and this is repeated for four rounds. Augie made it through two of the four rounds.

I felt very honored to be invited to attend one several months later. Buckskin only asked that I never attend one hosted by a non-Indian. There were six of us total. I was third to enter. I crawled to my spot and looked above the stone pit and saw a bright white flag next to the red one. This was to welcome and honor me!

I made it through round two, skipped the third and went back for round four. I have honored my promise to Buckskin. The only other sweat I have attended was by an Indian man at Peaceful Spirit in Ignacio. He led Buckskin's last sweat, having to carry him into the lodge. I attended to honor my friend. I made it through all four rounds.

I will always remember the feeling of welcome I felt when I saw that white pennant inside the lodge. What do people see when they enter our church to make them feel welcome?

# THANK YOU FROM DAVID AND ANNA REV. DAVID DETHMERS

Dear friends at First Congregational,

Anna and I just returned from our 3,500 mile road trip of the Midwest. We saw friends in Missouri, Kentucky, Michigan (LOTS of them there, since we lived there for many years), and Chicago. We had lots of people time as we visited and lots of down time in the car to just enjoy our favorite people: each other!

Before any more time passes, I want to say thank you for the very lovely reception you held for Anna and me on the 8th. It was great to be able to say goodbye or "until we meet again" to so many people. Your kind words I will treasure as I begin building a new life here in Grand Junction. The fitbit the congregation gave me will come in handy, making sure I get in my daily steps, monitoring my health, and helping me find my way home when I get lost. (It has a built-in GPS!)

Anna and I also received several gifts that were given anonymously (wine and chocolate were common themes). So if you were one of those anonymous givers, thanks so much for your thoughtfulness and generosity!

Continued blessings to all of you on the journey!

David and Anna

## SPECIAL OFFERINGS FOR SEPTEMBER & OCTOBER

### NEIGHBORS IN NEED SPECIAL OFFERING

What do a Houston teen community organizer working to increase the minimum wage, a migrant seeking sanctuary on the Mexican-Arizona border, and a houseless member of the LGBTQ community have in common? They are all being supported financially by grants from Neighbors in Need (NIN). These are just a few of the ways that your offering to NIN provides real, tangible support to church programs and projects.

-With a background in community organizing, Pastor Darnell Fennell of Just Love Church in Houston, Texas knows people don't have to sit still for economic injustice. He knows the wider UCC feels the same, as seen in statements such as a 2017 General Synod resolution, "A More Just Economy: \$15 Minimum Wage, Living Wages and Job Creation." So, he sought the NIN grant to introduce a couple dozen young people to local activists in the national Fight for \$15 wage campaign and involve them in learning by doing.

-The Shadow Rock UCC Sanctuary Action Team and the Rev. Ken Heintzelman, in an extension of the spirit and intent of their ministry of sanctuary in Phoenix, are in

## SPECIAL OFFERINGS FOR SEPTEMBER & OCTOBER

the process of establishing Hope Station Nogales, in Sonora, Mexico. Hope Station, which is funded in part by a \$10,000 grant from Neighbors in Need, is a place where people in transition who are deported from, but have family in, the U.S. can find a meal, safe lodging, and assistance.

-Peace Congregational United Church of Christ in Clemson, North Carolina is working side-by-side with other community members in the design and construction of a tiny house, a mobile residency for a person in the LGBTQ community who is no longer welcome at home. The \$20,000 project is possible with a \$10,000 grant from NIN.

Neighbors in Need (NIN) is a special mission offering of the United Church of Christ that supports ministries of justice and compassion like the ones above throughout the United States. To find out more about the on-the-ground impact of your Neighbors in Need dollars, visit <https://www.ucc.org/giving>.

You may make your donation at any time during the month of September, using the special envelopes which will be made available to those who are worshipping in person. You can also make your donation online by visiting our website.

Thank you for your support of this important mission!

Ellen Bradley

### ACCESS SUNDAY

On Sunday, January 29, 2017, FCUCC voted to become an Accessible To All (A2A) church. We voted to adopt a Covenant to recognize and embrace our human differences and the various gifts that everyone brings to our church family. This Covenant expressed our intention to extend God's extravagant welcome to all persons, seeking to understand, include, and empower people with differing abilities and disabilities, apparent or unapparent.

Another part of this Covenant is to continue to work with the UCC Disabilities Ministry (UCCDM) and the UCC Mental Illness network. We can do that by sharing some of our financial gifts with the UCCDM. ACCESS SUNDAY is Sunday, October 10th this year. We realize that we all get hit with many "asks" though out the year. This is one more way that we try to live into our belief that "ALL ARE WELCOME HERE".

Please consider giving a little extra (on top of your regular offering) on Sunday, October 10th and affirm that we are always working toward becoming ever more accessible and inclusive of all God's people.

Blessings!

Karen Caton

# JULY COUNCIL MEETING MINUTES

MICHAEL PETRI, CLERK

July 11, 2021

The church council of First Congregational Church United Church of Christ met in the chapel on July 11, 2021 for the monthly stated meeting. Present were council members Karen Caton, Cindy Haas, Martha Jones, Nancy Palubicki, Michael Petri, Ken Puhler, Sally Shell, Carolyn Holmgren, and intentional interim pastor David Dethmers. Mark Long was absent.

A quorum was established. The meeting was opened at 11:24 a.m. with prayer by David.

Minutes of the June 20, 2021 meeting were approved as distributed, on motion.

**Interim Minister Report:** A written report was distributed prior to the meeting. David noted that most of the goals from the council planning retreat last year have been accomplished except for the work of the Buildings Team. Members of that team have been very busy with other concerns.

The report also provided a summary of the congregational discussion about displaying the US flag on the building. A small number of members (five) expressed a preference for displaying the flag, while many more preferred not to display the flag or seemed ambivalent. As such, David feels that the congregation supports the status quo and recommended that the council reaffirm the current practice. He also recommended that the council settle this matter prior to the arrival of the new pastor.

**US Flag Display:** The council then discussed the flag issue again. All members were polled, with many expressing that our ministry goals, including actions supporting justice for all, are our message to the community. After this, a motion was made: The council reaffirms the church's practice of not displaying the United States flag. During discussion of the motion, it was clarified that this applies to the entire church property (interior and exterior). The motion passed unanimously. David then offered to prepare a write-up about this decision for the weekly church chat e-mail, sending it out to the council for comment prior to publication.

**Council Membership:** During the flag discussion, some confusion came to light about Karen Caton's status on the church council. She was elected as a lay delegate to the conference. A review of the bylaws showed that lay delegates are indeed members of the council – so Karen was welcomed to the council. Michael was asked to forward the current bylaws to the council.

# JULY COUNCIL MEETING MINUTES

MICHAEL PETRI, CLERK

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

- ◇ Mission & Outreach, June 2021 minutes
- ◇ Congregational Life, July 2021 report
- ◇ Worship and Celebration, meets later in July
- ◇ Spiritual Formation, no report
- ◇ Property and Finance, meets later in July
- ◇ Personnel Committee, no report
- ◇ Strategic Opening Team, no report
- ◇ Marketing Team, meets later in July

The Building Use Team plans to meet on Wednesday and prepare a report for the Finance & Property Committee. It was clarified that the Building Use Team (as opposed to the Buildings Team) is not involved with the disposition or potential sale of church property – just space usage within the main building.

**Treasurer's Report:** Martha reported that she continues to pay the bills and balance the books, and there's been no need to access any of the reserves thus far. A quarterly report will be available at the next meeting.

## **Other Business/New Business**

Martha suggested naming a lay delegate to the association meeting since Mark, elected as a lay delegate by the congregation, is already a voting member of the association and conference by virtue of his leadership. She volunteered, and was named as a lay delegate on motion.

There being no other business, the meeting was closed at 12:02 p.m.

Immediately following this, there was discussion of planning for pastoral care in the time between David's departure (on August 8) and Paul's arrival (September 1). It was agreed to ask Andrea Bartlett if she'd be willing to do this, possibly with help from Sharyl Peterson.

The next council meeting will be August 15.

Michael Petri – Council Clerk

# MISSION & OUTREACH NEWS SALLY SHELL

## SEPTEMBER FOOD COLLECTION FOR CATHOLIC OUTREACH AND THE HOUSE

*Ode to PBJs (with apologies to Joyce Kilmer)*

*I think that I shall never utter  
More beautiful words than (wait for it.....) "peanut butter!"*

*From biology professors to Dr. Oz  
They all say it's the best, because...*

*It's gooey, soft, and tasty too  
Perhaps our favorite sandwich goo...*

*When paired with jelly or with jam,  
It's the bestest taste in all the land.*

*Think PBJ ... think PBJ  
Pick up some jars of each today.*

Yes, in September we will be collecting peanut butter — both for Catholic Outreach and for The House. And for Outreach, we're collecting jelly (or jam) to go with the PB as well.



Think of all the hungry kids beginning a new school year. Lovingly remember the children (and perhaps grandchildren) of your own for whom you've made at least a thousand PBJs over the years. And share that love ... How about a special goal of 200 jars of PB and 100 jars of jelly or jam for the coming month? (And savings hint: City Market has PB on sale right now for \$1/jar; you can't find it any cheaper than that!)

### "JUGS FOR JESUS?"

Mission & Outreach is collecting clean, empty plastic gallon milk or water jugs for Solidarity, Not Charity. Please bring your thoroughly rinsed jugs and put them on the collection shelves near the office. Thank you.



### AUGUST COLLECTIONS NUMBERS

As of this writing:

188 Packages of Macaroni & Cheese for The House  
10,630 pairs of food handling gloves for Catholic Outreach

## THE LEAN GREEN BURRITO MAKING MACHINE ELLEN BRADLEY

### BURRITOS FOR THE HOUSE



The Mission and Outreach team is planning once again to make approximately 250 burritos for The House, our local shelter for homeless teens. We will be making and assembling the burritos in our church kitchen on Saturday morning, September 18, 2021.

We will need lots of help to make this project a success, and there will be a variety of opportunities for members of our congregation to be involved. We will need help with preparation and cooking starting at 8:00 that morning, a team to help assemble the burritos starting at about 11:00 a.m., and then a couple of volunteers to deliver the burritos to The House with vehicles large enough to accommodate that many burritos. Delivery time will be at approximately 1:00 p.m.

Sign-up sheets will be available following church services on September 5th and 12th, or you can call or email Ellen Bradley to volunteer. (970-640-6981, meb712002@yahoo.com) If you have any questions, feel free to reach out to either Ellen or Sally Shell (shell-sally@hotmail.com, 303-913-6399).

We are requiring anyone volunteering for this project to be fully vaccinated against Covid-19. We will have food handling gloves available for those working in the kitchen and/or handling the food.

Thanks in advance for helping with this project!

Mission and Outreach Team

## CATHOLIC OUTREACH NEEDS VOLUNTEER DISHWASHERS

A dishwasher volunteer works a 10 AM to 2 PM shift on a week-day. Interested? Contact Angela Walsh at Catholic Outreach, (970) 243-0091, or show up down there between 10 AM and 2 PM and talk with her. Folks should be sure to tell her they're from our church.

Thanks, Sharyl Peterson



# MUSIC PROGRAM UPDATES KAREN CATON

## CANTABILE RINGERS

Welcome back bell peeps!! Just a reminder for those who attended the meeting on 8/24, we are going to **RESUME REGULAR BELL CHOIR REHEARSALS BEGINNING ON TUESDAY, SEPT. 14, 2021, 5:30 – 6:30** in the Music Room. Don't worry, we'll go easy at first as we will all be a little rusty! Mask or not - whatever you're comfortable with. Just come ready to start ringing again!! We'll figure out who's ringing what when we get there!! If you might be interested but haven't rung before, you're welcome to come check it out!!

## VOCALISTS & POTENTIAL SONG LEADERS

If you've been a song leader before or might be interested in being part of a duo or trio to help lead congregational singing during worship, **we're going to have a short organizational meeting on Sunday, Sept. 12th at 9:00am in the Music Room.** This will be an opportunity to "feel out" who wants to do what, when you might want to help, what you may want to do, etc. This is basically so we are all on the same page as far as what's expected, potential special music opportunities, etc. We won't plan on any rehearsing anything that day. Just a chance to sit down and get a plan for the coming weeks and months! See you on the 12th!

Karen

## GODSPELL AT CMU



Plans are in the works to gather a group to have dinner together at The Ale House then attend the CMU Arts and Theatre production of "Godspell" on Saturday, September 25. Watch Church Chat for more information.

## LOOKING AHEAD

Reception Welcoming Paul and Pam	October 3
Access Sunday	October 10
Thanksgiving Day	November 25
First Sunday of Advent, Year C	November 28
Ash Wednesday	March 22, 2022
Palm/Passion Sunday	April 10, 2022
Easter	April 17, 2022

# SEPTEMBER 2021

SUNDAY	MONDAY	TUESDAY	WEDNESDAY	THURSDAY	FRIDAY	SATURDAY
<b>August 29</b>	<b>Aug 30</b>	<b>August 31</b>	<b>1</b>	<b>2</b>	<b>3</b>	<b>4</b>
10:00 Worship 11:00 Happy Hour			1:00 Congregational Life		10:00 Women's Coffee, Zoom	
<b>5</b>	<b>6</b>	<b>7</b>	<b>8</b>	<b>9</b>	<b>10</b>	<b>11</b>
10:00 Worship w/ Communion 11:00 Happy Hour	<b>Church Office Closed for Labor Day</b>	4:30 Mission & Outreach	6:30 Marketing Team, Zoom		10:00 Women's Coffee, Zoom	Pride Booth, 2:00- 7:00 pm
<b>12</b>	<b>13</b>	<b>14</b>	<b>15</b>	<b>16</b>	<b>17</b>	<b>18</b>
9:00 Choir Meeting 10:00 Worship 11:00 Happy Hour 12:00 Pride March		5:30 Cantabile Ringers			10:00 Women's Coffee, Zoom	<b>8:00 am M &amp; O Burrito Making Machine</b>
<b>19</b>	<b>20</b>	<b>21</b>	<b>22</b>	<b>23</b>	<b>24</b>	<b>25</b>
10:00 Worship 11:00 Happy Hour		5:30 Cantabile Ringers			10:00 Women's Coffee, Zoom	<b>Godspell, CMU</b>
<b>26</b>	<b>27</b>	<b>28</b>	<b>29</b>	<b>30</b>	<b>Oct 1</b>	<b>Oct 2</b>
10:00 Worship 11:00 Happy Hour 11:15 Church Council Meeting Animal Blessing, Time TBA		5:30 Cantabile Ringers			10:00 Women's Coffee, Zoom <b>Western Association Fall Meeting</b>	<b>Western Association Fall Meeting</b>

## SEPTEMBER BIRTHDAYS

9/1 Norma Roscoe  
9/3 Katelynn Marth  
9/4 Marjorie Graham  
9/5 Len Allen  
9/6 JoAnn DeVergie  
9/7 Joan Fifield  
9/8 David Hofer  
9/14 Kelly Gregory

9/14 Judy Jones  
9/16 Jane Findlay  
9/16 Betsy McLoughlin  
9/21 Helena Clark  
9/21 Russell Day  
9/27 Susan Hartman  
9/28 Lee Allen  
9/30 Andrea Bartlett

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](mailto:office@uccgj.org). Thanks!



Go Green! Get your Tower  
Chimes via email!



## CONTACT US!

### **Pastor:**

Rev. Paul Ashby  
revpaulashby@yahoo.com  
X104

### **Part Time Custodian:**

Anna Driggs

### **Church Office Hours During Corona Time:**

Monday through  
Thursday 9-3<sub>pm</sub>  
Reach us at :  
(970)-242-0298  
[www.uccgj.org](http://www.uccgj.org)

### **Office Administrator:**

Beth Rakestraw  
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### **Volunteer Financial Clerk:**

Martha Jones  
finance@uccgj.org | X 103

### **Choir/Handbell Director**

Karen Caton  
topcatkc@aol.com



# UNITED CHURCH OF CHRIST