

Tower chimes

Monthly newsletter of First Congregational UCC | Grand Junction, CO | November 2024

Paul's Epistle



Dear Friends,

November brings the day I dread each year – the day we lose an hour of light in the evening when we turn our clock back. This year it is the night of November 2nd or for those who prefer rising early on Sunday for the official change on November 3rd. I have always loved the long summer light in the evening. The clock change is an alert that winter is coming. The days will have less light. Winter jackets will need to come out of the back of the closet. I find it a little depressing and am grateful for Thanksgiving and Christmas to lift the heart and spirit.

When I get winter blues, I turn to the notes from a theology seminar that was on “The Misuse of Time.” That seminar covered a lot of bases with various types of wasting time. The list included:

- ◇ Grumbling about things we cannot change
- ◇ Racing against the clock (rushing from place to place).
- ◇ Brooding over things that break and the reality of impermanence.
- ◇ Noticing what you lack rather than your abundance of resources.
- ◇ Feeling fearful about things that may not happen.
- ◇ Going over and over regrets from the past.
- ◇ Complaining about gas prices (Note: When I attended this seminar 12 years ago in 2012 gas prices were averaging \$3.70 a gallon).
- ◇ Beating yourself up with “What if... questions. Such questions can never be answered because every choice involves a multitude of possible outcomes.

When clocks change in the Fall, I feel like hours of light are taken from me but there are still 24 hours in a day. And less light in the winter makes the reality of long summer days astronomically possible.

A resource available to all in our Spirituality Sharing Group after church on the second Sunday (November 10th this month). We share our ongoing journey and reflect on readings from Beverly Lanzetta's book *Emerging Heart*. As a church we have wonderful role models for those who never stop growing their hearts with love, compassion and ongoing support for their neighbors in need. Beverly was one of my professors when I was trained as Spiritual Director. She is also the answer to the question “Beyond family and friends, if you could pick a person to be on an island with you who would that be?”

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

PAUL'S EPISTLE

Also coming in November, we dedicate our pledges on the 10th. It is a way to share in the generations of generous people who make this progressive, compassionate church an ongoing heart in our community.

Peace, Shalom, Salaam,
Rev. Dr. Paul Ashby

MODERATOR'S MINUTE KEN PUHLER

One of my favorite Gary Larson Far Side comics features people staring at a glass filled mid-way. It purports to illustrate four personality types.



The first proclaims, “The glass is half full.” The second declares, “The glass is half empty.” A third mutters, “Half full...No, wait...half empty....No, half....What was the question?” Finally, the fourth exclaims, “Hey! I ordered a cheeseburger!”

The analogy of a glass representing you going through your day is very popular and is easy to relate. I have used them in many workshops. Just like the Far Side cartoon, there is one where the day starts out with your glass full. Things happen and people come by with spoons and dip out of your glass during the day. Sometimes your glass becomes empty before the day ends. Someone or something comes along, spoon in hand---but there is nothing left to give.

Another is that your glass starts out empty. Things happen as the day progresses, your glass fills and sometimes—it just overflows. I liked to illustrate this with a glass in the middle of tray and a big bag of M&M candies. The glass would fill and overflow, then the tray was passed around and people could grab a handful of candy.

Holidays bring many memories—and emotions. Some people are eager to see family and friends—others are apprehensive. Loved ones that are now absent and tearfully missed. There might be eager anticipation, or looming dread. Joyful reunions, bitter rivalries, old feuds, joy and laughter or tearful grief may all occur.

The holidays are here. Time to get your best glasses out.

Who dips out of your glass is up to you. You don't have to provide for everyone. Find out what refills your glass and make sure you are including it in your holiday schedule. I use holiday movies and music to replenish my glass. I enjoy cooking -it fills my glass and belly. I will be doing a lot of cooking---and eating, too. I don't have as many people dipping out anymore, so my glass doesn't empty very often. Those that do dip out.... have small spoons. I tend to avoid the ones with ladles, if I can.

MODERATOR'S MINUTE KEN PUHLER

Most mornings, if I slept well, my glass is empty and can handle whatever gets dumped in. I can empty a little throughout the day pretty easily. I have also learned how to cover my glass around certain people and when facing certain tasks. If things start to overflow, I have other people I can rely on to catch the extra.

The political climate is affecting all of us and our glasses. Both sides have strong feelings. This election is challenging for me and my glasses. I am covering my glass by not watching a lot of news and avoiding some family members. I am refilling by making Christmas gifts, inviting some friends for dinner and watching my old favorite movies. Driving with the radio on helps me recharge. I listen to Air1 and KLOVE—contemporary Christian music. I take the long route, driving the back roads and side streets and listen to the message in the music.

I know this election is going to keep everyone's attention through Thanksgiving, Christmas and New Year's Day. Inauguration Day is January 20th and hopefully everything will be settled by then. Until then, all our glasses will be getting quite the workout.

I hope you will think of some ways to refill your glass, so you have plenty to give. Refill often. Remember to save some for yourself. Identify friends who can catch some of the overflow. Offer to collect the overflow of others who may need a little help.

In a few short months, we can put those holiday glasses back on the shelf until we need them again.

FRIENDSGIVING/FAMILY OF CHOICE POTLUCK

Sunday, November 10, 5:00 to 7:00 pm, Pilgrim Hall.

Turkeys and some side dishes will be provided, but plan on bringing a side dish or dessert to share!

This event is Loving Beyond Understanding/The Center's annual event to celebrate the holiday with all LGBTQIA + friends and family ... please join us!

The organizers specifically requested that Beth share this invitation with our congregation.

FELLOWSHIP OF THE GRAPE AND GRAIN {FOGG}

Saturday, November 16 | 6:00 pm

Hosted by Glenna Stark and Kathy Goe, watch Church Chat and worship bulletins for more details.

December 21 FOGG, Hosted by Linda Randolph and Julie Krueger.

Clearly, Jesus was here



SEPTEMBER COUNCIL MEETING MINUTES MICHAEL PETRI, CLERK

September 15, 2024

The church council of First Congregational Church United Church of Christ met in the chapel on September 15, 2024 for the monthly stated meeting. Present were council members Kathy Goe, Cindy Haas, Martha Jones, Michael Petri, Ken Puhler (moderator), Ron Rucker, Rachel Seiff, Janis Woodley and pastor Paul Ashby.

Karen Caton, Julie Krueger and Connie Pyle were absent.

A quorum was established. The meeting was opened with prayer by Paul at 11:49 a.m.

Minutes of the August 18 meeting were approved as distributed.

Pastor's Report:

- ◇ Paul requested that committees submit 2025 budget figures by the end of October.
- ◇ Following up on Pride Sunday, there was discussion that the church should get a new banner to carry in the parade since the banner used this year didn't include the name of the church. It was also suggested that participation should be coordinated with the Rainbow Closet since they use some of our building space. This was handed off the M&O committee, Paul and Beth for action.
- ◇ He encouraged everyone to attend a Christian Nationalist on-line seminar on Thursday.
- ◇ Proposed a church welcome celebration for Keri Rusthoi (the new choir director) at the coffee hour on September 29. This was proposed as a "cookie potluck" since the usual 5th Friday potluck dinner was moved forward two weeks for "back to church Sunday".

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

- ◇ Mission and Outreach/JAM, September 2024
- ◇ Fellowship & Hospitality, September 2024
- ◇ Worship and Celebration, September 2024
- ◇ Property Team, September 2024 – It was noted that there have been some complaints that the pergola for the columbarium area outside of the Chapel was removed. The structure was removed because it was in poor shape and in danger of collapsing. The Property Team is in the process of buying shade sails to replace the pergola, with installation expected in the spring. It was also noted that some updates to more sun-loving plants are needed for that area. Paul commented that the Property Team has already gone way over budget this year with many repairs.
- ◇ Finance and Stewardship, July 2024

Finance Reports: 2nd Quarter report, budget and balance sheet.

Other Business/New Business:

Library – Kathy looked up information on managing small libraries. It will probably fall on Paul and Beth to come up with a simple check-out system.

Pews – Discussion about adding/moving pews was assigned to the Worship Committee.

There being no other business, the meeting was closed at 12:27 p.m.

Michael Petri – Council Clerk

Next council meeting: October 20 sometime after the worship service

SUNDAY MORNING CHILDREN'S PROGRAM MARIE KOONTZ

KIDS ON A MISSION November Sunday Morning Program

Jesus said, "I was hungry and you gave me food, I was thirsty and you gave me something to drink, I was a stranger and you welcomed me, ³⁶I was naked and you gave me clothing, I was sick and you took care of me, I was in prison and you visited me.

- ❖ **November 3 – What can we do to help?
Bible look-up and banner**
- ❖ **November 10 – About Catholic Outreach and what they do:
Scott Montgomery – special guest**
- ❖ **November 17 – Fundraiser: Nut cups for Thanksgiving dinner tables**
- ❖ **November 24 – fill and prepare nut cups during Fellowship hour.**

PLEDGE DEDICATION SUNDAY IS NOVEMBER 10



Pledge cards were handed out last Sunday or mailed out earlier this past week. Pledge cards are also available in the church office or you may make your pledge online at www.uccgj.org/pledge. Please prayerfully consider your pledge for 2025.

MISSION & OUTREACH

FOURTH QUARTER MISSION & OUTREACH NOVEMBER COLLECTION: LA PLAZA

Mission and Outreach has chosen La Plaza (formerly known as Child and Migrant Services) to be the recipient of our fourth quarter giving project. For the month of October, we would like to collect food items which La Plaza does not normally receive from other sources such as food banks and which are culturally sensitive. Some of these products can be found at local grocery stores in the Hispanic food aisle.

Please feel free to select from the following list:

Cooking oil, corn meal for making tortillas, pre-cooked corn meal for making arepas for our Venezuelan neighbors, dried chili pods of all varieties, hominy for soups, bouillons of all flavors, sazón Goya, cooking spices such as cumin, black pepper, cinnamon, garlic salt or dehydrated garlic and onion, and bay leaves

Also dry pastas for soups (for example, small packets of vermicelli or other small shaped pastas), canned tomato puree/sauce, canned vegetables, and pinto or black beans (dried or canned).

Some non-food items are also needed, such as lubricated eye drops, foot powder, gloves worn while harvesting (garden and nitrile coated gloves you can find at a hardware store) and neck gaiters.

As always, you can place your donations in the marked bin on the Mission & Outreach shelf opposite the church office. Thank you so much!

CATHOLIC OUTREACH COLLECTION

Watch Church Chat for October collection details.

SOLIDARITY NOT CHARITY

We continue to collect empty plastic jugs, personal size toiletries and other personal hygiene items for SNC.

NEWSPAPER BAGS | Carolyn Van Matre is collecting newspaper bags to use at Mutual Aid to fill with dog and cat food to give to our unhoused friends for their furry companions. There will be a bin in the collections area outside the main office.

NOVEMBER BIRTHDAYS

11/2 Mike Avery
11/4 Kathy Viglianco
11/5 Beverly Fernsemer
11/9 Marie Koontz
11/11 Jane Wethington
11/12 Gail Gordon
11/19 Nancy Ford
11/21 Anna Dethmers
11/27 Marjorie Wilson
11/30 Jo Kissinger



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!

NOVEMBER 2024

SUNDAY	MONDAY	TUESDAY	WEDNESDAY	THURSDAY	FRIDAY	SATURDAY
Oct 27	Oct 28	Oct 29	Oct 30	Oct 31	1	2
9:15 Choir Warmup 10:00 Worship 11:00 Happy Hour 11:30 Ballot Talk		10:00 Women's/ Mens' Coffees 2:30 Handbell Rehearsal	4:00 Choir Rehearsal		10:00 Zoom Coffee	Daylight Savings Ends, Fall Back One Hour
3	4	5	6	7	8	9
9:15 Choir Warmup 10:00 Worship 11:00 Happy Hour 11:15 Worship & Celebration 11:30 Sermon Talk	5:00 Make Mondays Fun Again	Election Day 10:00 Women's/ Mens' Coffees 2:30 Handbell Rehearsal	2:00 Mission & Outreach 4:00 Choir Rehearsal		10:00 Zoom Coffee	
10	11	12	13	14	15	16
9:15 Choir Warmup 10:00 Worship 11:00 Happy Hour 11:15 Emerging Heart Discussion 11:30 Sermon Talk 5:00 Friendsgiving	1:00 Property Team	10:00 Women's/ Men's Coffee 2:30 Handbell Rehearsal	1:00 Book Study 4:00 Choir Rehearsal		10:00 Zoom Coffee	9:00 Fall Clean Up Day 6:00 [FOGG] Fellowship of the Grape & Grain
17	18	19	20	21	22	23
9:15 Choir Warmup 10:00 Worship 11:00 Happy Hour 11:15 Council Meeting 11:30 Sermon Talk	5:00 Make Mondays Fun Again	10:00 Women's/ Mens' Coffee 2:30 Handbell Rehearsal	4:00 Choir Rehearsal	11:30 Berna B's	10:00 Zoom Coffee	
24	25	26	27	28	29	30
9:15 Choir Warmup 10:00 Worship 11:00 Happy Hour 11:30 Sermon Talk		10:00 Women's/ Mens' Coffee 2:30 Handbell Rehearsal	1:00 Book Study 4:00 Choir Rehearsal		10:00 Zoom Coffee	

LOOKING AHEAD

December 1 | First Sunday of Advent
 December 7 | Womens' Christmas Luncheon
 December 15 | Annual Budget Meeting
 January 26 | FCC We Shelter Start Date
 February 23 | FCC We Shelter End Date
 March 5 | Ash Wednesday
 April 20 | Easter





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CONTACT US!

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Church Office Hours

Monday through Thursday
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