

Tower chimes

Monthly newsletter of First Congregational UCC | Grand Junction, CO | September 2023



Paul's Epistle

Dear Friends,

I want to thank all of our church members who are supporting the poor in the struggle against poverty, hunger and thirst. Thank you for supporting our missions, our commitment to anti-poverty projects and issues in Mesa County, our gifts to UCC compassionate relief programs and fund raisers for across our streets and an African village in Kenya. Too often churches forget the radical rabbi Jesus' focus of compassion for neighbors in need. Megachurches often promote a selfish, greed-centered individualism where you give your soul to Jesus but could care less about those dying bodies that we could save. Salvation is more than a golden ticket to the golden gates: it's a love that connects us to every living being. We walk in the path of the Jewish prophets of justice and mercy and the healing path of Jesus' compassion.

My missionary sister, Mary, a few years ago gave me some books by a theologian in her Orthodox tradition, David Bentley Hart. I cannot recommend the books unless you are a Ph.D. level reader in philosophy and theology. But I did enjoy the interview with Dr. Hart in the most recent Christian Century magazine. One note his reference to "Mother of God" refers to Mary who at the Ecumenical Council of Ephesus in 431 was granted the Greek title "theotokos" which literally means God-bearer. Now, if you knew this already and have never been to seminary-bonus point for you and I will buy you an ice cream to find out where you learned this historical nugget. (I think Brad Montgomery-Anderson would know).

These are the highlights of the interview with David Bentley Hart...

When you look at the Magnificat, you just have to say, "My goodness, the mother of God was a Bolshevik." And Jesus was clearly a provocative and revolutionary figure.

We see this clearly in the Lord's Prayer. An accurate translation of the Lord's Prayer from the Sermon on the Mount reveals that it's actually a prayer for the impoverished to pray. It's really talking about being relieved from debt. Don't resist the evil man – who wants to cheat and enslave you - by force, Jesus says, because you'll lose. Don't

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

PAUL'S EPISTLE

go to court, because you'll lose. He's not recommending universal amity; he's saying you'll be robbed by a corrupt legal system. This is very practical counsel.

Jesus' whole ministry is soaked with political and social provocation, including absolute condemnations of personal wealth. What that literally means is that if you're rich, you have a camel's chance of getting through a needle's eye to be a proper citizen of the kingdom that's coming. Jesus is calling for an inversion of the social order – and he forbids lending to accrue interest. There's just no question that political and social remedies are being recommended.

Christianity has never really taken deep root in America; we've all been much more committed to Mammon. I'm not talking conservative and liberal in the American cultural sense. It's absurd to suggest that you can have any actual devotion to who Jesus of Nazareth was and embrace laissez-fair capitalism or the entrepreneurial principle or erecting a border wall and keeping out asylum seekers. National conservatives – the people who think Jesus would have loved the Second Amendment and hated Mexicans- are simply not Christians. There nothing about their vision of reality and their relations to their fellow human beings that bears the slightest resemblance to who and what Christ was and what he taught.

There's not even a meaningful debate to be held on this: the Christian right is a movement whose ultimate ends are to extinguish real Christian convictions in society.

As the UCC, we dare to teach and try to follow the teachings of a radical rabbi named Jesus. I thank Dr. Hart for the reminder that Christ's way is often the opposite of what is called Christianity.

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

JULY COUNCIL MEETING MINUTES MICHAEL PETRI, CLERK

July 16, 2023

The church council of First Congregational Church United Church of Christ met in the chapel on July 16, 2023 for the monthly stated meeting. Present were council members Karen Caton, Mary Endres, Kathy Goe, Cindy Haas, Carolyn Holmgren (moderator), Julie Krueger, Michael Petri, Ken Puhler, Ron Rucker, Rachel Seiff, Janis Woodley and the Rev. Paul Ashby.

A quorum was established. The meeting was opened with prayer by the pastor at 11:26 a.m. Minutes of the June 18, 2023 council meeting were approved as distributed.

Pastor's Report: Paul:

- ◇ Thanked the Property Team for all the repairs and property maintenance work.
- ◇ Asked how the council liked having greetings at the end of the service rather than passing

JULY COUNCIL MEETING MINUTES

MICHAEL PETRI, CLERK

the peace earlier the service. The council all liked it.

- ◇ Noted that guest speakers are lined up for the two Sundays of Paul's vacation (Aug 13 and 20). One will be Andi Tillman, who is working toward opening an equality center within the next few months. The other is someone from the Food Support Network.
- ◇ Suggested that something special be done those two Sundays to keep up attendance. This was handed to Fellowship & Hospitality for action.
- ◇ Reminded the committees that August is the time to start working on budgets for 2024.
- ◇ Julie suggested a "bring a friend to church" Sunday – suggested for September 17.

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

- ◇ Mission and Outreach/JAM, July 2023
- ◇ Fellowship & Hospitality, Did not meet in July
- ◇ Worship and Celebration, July 2023
- ◇ Property Team, July 2023
- ◇ Personnel Committee, no report
- ◇ Marketing Team, no written report
- ◇ Finance and Stewardship, meets July 19 – Michael mentioned the insurance claim for hail damage. Michael will send Julie the estimates from the insurance company and from the one skylight vendor he's contacted.

Finance Reports: Nothing to report.

Other Business/New Business: Thinking Out of the Box Ministry Visions – The council discussed some different ideas:

- ◇ Mary suggested that several churches could get together to provide some sort of cooling place for homeless people.
- ◇ It was suggested that a committee look into how the church could improve its environmental footprint. Suggested working to become a UCC "green church".
- ◇ Julie and Martha put together electricity usage information and have an appointment to discuss installation of solar cells.
- ◇ Barbara Eyler would like the church to commit to a once-a-month feed at Whitman Park. It was agreed this would require quite a commitment.
- ◇ When asked about reaching out to visitors, Paul said that he sends a letter and invitation to all visitors who provide contact information.
- ◇ Michael asked what we're doing with regard to those who stop attending services. It was agreed that the attendance should be reviewed every two weeks starting in September. Michael agreed to take the lead on entering and checking attendance in Breeze (with Beth's help), and the results will be handed off to staff for review. Office angels or others can then write notes or otherwise contact people as appropriate.

There being no other business, the meeting was closed at 12:15 p.m.

Michael Petri – Council Clerk

The next council meeting will be August 20 at 11:15 a.m.



“Did you know that a majority of the food that goes uneaten in the United States each year ends up in landfills, where it decomposes into the potent greenhouse gas methane? In fact, this rotting food accounts for a whopping 16 percent of US methane emissions and up to 10 percent of total global human-induced greenhouse gas emissions. Methane is a powerful heat-trapping gas, trapping about 100 times more heat per molecule than carbon dioxide. Curbing our methane emissions, produced predominately through agricultural activities, offers a powerful way to make progress toward reducing overall planetary warming.”

“In addition to reducing food waste, composting food and yard waste offers a way to make an impact at home. Compost is created when yard waste [e.g., grass clippings, leaves, etc.] food scraps [e.g. eggshells, coffee grounds, onion skins, etc.] and moisture are mixed together and allowed to decompose. Over time, under the right conditions, this waste can produce a rich brown-black humus that can be added to your garden,”

The Climate Action Handbook by Heidi A. Roop, PhD, page 67

“CAN I USE KITCHEN SCRAPS IN MY GARDEN WITHOUT COMPOSTING?”

“Composting kitchen scraps is a valuable way to repurpose old food. But what if you don’t have a composting bin? Try trench gardening. It gives you all the benefits of composting without the need to keep up a bin.”

“To create a trench, dig 12 inches into your garden bed and fill it halfway with fruit and veggie scraps. Avoid putting bread products, oils, meat, dairy, animal waste, rice and sawdust into the trench. Cover the channel back up with a soil, and let nature go to work breaking down the scraps and enriching it.”

“To keep the soil in your garden bed well-fed, relocate the scrap trench each year. You’ll need to divide your garden bed into three zones. Use one zone for the compost trench and two zones for planting. Rotate which zone you use for the trench each growing season.”

“You can also place trenches between row crops or along shrub borders and flower or vegetable plants.”

How To Grow Almost Everything, by FC&A, page 254

SUMMER SUNDAY MORNING CHILDREN'S PROGRAM MARIE KOONTZ

Sunday Morning Children's program in September:

- September 3: "We, the Community"
Led by Carolyn Holmgren
- September 10: "Who are Our Neighbors?"
Led by Karen Hildebrand
- September 17: "Growing Gardens"
Led by Allan Weinand
- September 24: "Preparing for Puppet Show"
Led by Marie Koontz

COMING IN SEPTEMBER – "ALL ABOUT NOAH"

Coming to you on September 24

"God Rules" puppet show

Presented by the Sunday morning volunteers and students

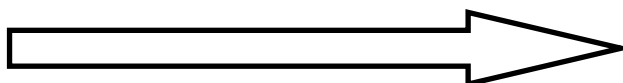
PRIDE 2023



Presents 2023 PrideFest

OUT: LOUD & PROUD

 <p>Sept 6 Queer Up City Council Pride Proclamation 250 N 5th Street 5:30 pm</p>	<p>Sept 7 GSA & Rainbow Closet Fashion Show TBD 6:30 pm <small>Donations Requested</small></p>	<p>Sept 8 Glow Party! Good Judy's 9 pm <small>\$15 online or \$20 at the door</small></p>	<p>Sept 9 Rainbow Party Mesa Theater Door: 8 pm / Show: 9 pm <small>\$15 online or \$20 at the door</small></p>
<p>Bands Wowzers and The Wrong Impressions!</p> <p>Music by KWSI</p>	<p>Sept 9 Festival: Pride in the Park and Community March Lincoln Park Noon to 6:30 pm</p> 	 <p>SAVE \$3 on pre-purchase of tickets with code: OUTANDPROUD</p>	



PRIDE 2023

Church members are encouraged to wear their peace T-shirts or pride apparel to enjoy Pride in the Park on Saturday, September 9, from 12:00 to 6:30. Admission is free and the event is designed to be family-friendly and fun for all ages, featuring food trucks, vendors and entertainment. The Community March will step-off from Lincoln Park at 2:00 pm and travel up to and through the intersection of 12th and North. More information about a possible meet-up location to be determined.

On Sunday, September 10, the folks at Good Judy's [formerly known as Charlie Dwellington's] are sponsoring a march from the Avalon Theatre to Good Judy's, followed by a block party. Gathering time is 11:30 at the Avalon, with a noon step-off.



Also on Sunday, September 10, Loving Beyond Understanding is hosting a "sneak-peek" Open House at its new facility, The Center, located at the corner of North and 9th! The open house begins at 1:00 pm and features tours of the location and an opportunity to meet some of the staff and volunteers. Come see what has bloomed from the seeds our congregation helped plant, water and grow!

CATHOLIC OUTREACH COLLECTION FOR SEPTEMBER 2023

By Sharyl Peterson, soon-to-be-published author of *I Can't Believe That's Poetry!*
 **With assistance by semi-grand-son Markus Hays

*We Start a new School-Year, We get Super-better weather!
 We Sur-vi-ved the Summer, yes, it's September altogether!
 Wow, all those words Starting with "S"! Yes, we're going to continue collecting **canned vegetables** this coming month (our Soup Kitchen Supervisor Says their Shelves are Sadly Empty, and they Seriously Seek Supplementals), but just for fun, let's make them canned veggies that begin with "S."*

*Think Spinach, Squash, and String (Green) Beans;
 Sauerkraut and Salsify (look that one up!) are Super-keen!
 Sweet corn, Sliced carrots are both very nice,
 Sweet peas and Shitakes taste good mixed with rice.
 Sweet potatoes, Savoy, and Salmon (okay, that's fish),
 Squash blossoms and Strawberries (nice in a dish).
 Steak starts with "S," and is really quite yummy,
 And oh, so are Snickers, 'though a little bit gummy ...
 But remember that chocolate is a veggie, it's true ...
 It grows on a plant just like other veggies do!
 (Oops, may have gotten a little carried away there ...)
 **From Sundrops to Sunchokes, from Shallots to Scallions,
 **Please bring what you can, from a drop to a gallon!*

Of course, they'll be thrilled at the Soup Kitchen to receive any canned veggies, even if they don't begin with "S." As we begin a new school-year, church-year, and program-year, let's remember who it is that calls us to feed our neighbors. (Hint: starts with "J".) Let's Shoot for Some dozens of cans this month. Super!

MISSION & OUTREACH NEWS

Third Quarter Mission & Outreach September Collection Community Food Bank

Mission & Outreach has selected Community Food Bank to be the recipient of our third quarter project. The Community Food Bank is a local non-profit that is helping feed our community. The Community Food Bank began operations in 1978 and throughout the last 40 plus years the mission has remained the same: To provide a short-term supply of nutritious food and access to available hunger relief resources to any Mesa County community member experiencing food insecurity. The Community Food Bank provides a client choice pantry program with volunteer greeters and shopping assistants, a home delivery program, community outreach and partner support, nutrition exploration, bilingual resource navigation, SNAP application assistance and daily food rescue operations. The Community Food Bank serves 6,000 individuals, 1,600 households with 40+tons of food and 60,000 meals on a monthly basis.

For the month of September, we will collect cookbooks(old or new) for the creation of a Little Free Library for the food bank clients.

~M & O Team

CATHOLIC OUTREACH AUGUST COLLECTION NUMBERS

49 cans of veggies
23 cans of fruit
14 miscellaneous items

UPDATED: SOLIDARITY NOT CHARITY ONGOING COLLECTIONS

In addition to these items:

- ◇ hotel and personal sized toiletries
- ◇ clean, empty plastic gallon milk or water jugs with their lids
- ◇ plastic shopping bags

we are also asking for nail clippers and tweezers.

NOTE: Please do NOT bring over-the-counter meds [aspirin, tylenol, etc] because SNC is not able to distribute them.

Please bring these items and put them on the collection shelves near the office in the appropriately marked bins. Thank you.

ZK SOUP MINISTRY AT UCCGJ QUE CHARLES



****BREAKING NEWS*****BREAKING NEWS*****BREAKING NEWS*****BREAKING NEWS****

UCCGJ Reporter: Hello everyone. We interrupt this Tower Chimes to bring you this public service announcement. I'm here talking with Que Charles, cook with ZK Soup Ministry. Que, will you tell us about ZK Soup Ministry.

Que: Sure, people often go visiting to check on friends and family who are not feeling well. Now, they can take along a pint of soup when they visit. Many people enjoy a bowl of warm soup while recuperating.

Reporter: That sounds nice. Is there just one basic soup you make?

Que: Oh, no. People come with different gifts, talents and tastes; so, our soup must match that. God gave us over 10,000 taste buds, we should use them. There are several varieties to choose from. All the soups are packaged in clear containers with a label.

Reporter: Some of my friends have special dietary needs. Do you accommodate them?

Que: Absolutely, we do our best to make sure there is a soup at the table for everyone. We have dairy-free, gluten free, vegetarian and vegan options. It will be listed on the label.

Reporter: That sounds great. Is there a lot of paperwork required?

Que: Nope! Soups are frozen and available in the freezers in the church kitchen. They can just grab and go. We might have a note pad up where they could list what soup they took to someone. That way, Ellie Mae won't get three pints of clam chowder—she could get a clam chowder, a beef noodle and a vegan minestrone.

Reporter: Wonderful. I have an uncle who is battling COVID right now. But he doesn't come to this church. Would I be able to take some soup to him?

Que: Yes, it would be our pleasure. Jesus said to feed the people. Jesus didn't say to feed just the people who attend your church regularly. You could take him a pint of beef vegetable with alphabet noodles and grab a chicken and stars soup for yourself and share a meal together. Just stay 4 feet away!

Reporter: That is fantastic. How did this come about?

Que: The pastor asked the congregation who would come to visit if they were not feeling well. There were several names mentioned and one amazing, remarkable young woman said a name and added that they might even bring soup. We are blessed to have her and the rest of her family at our church. That idea took flight and ZK Soup launched, the ministry's name honors her.

Reporter: Isn't it wonderful how God works? Thank you for sharing that story with us. A bowl of clam chowder sounds good.

ZK SOUP MINISTRY AT UCCGJ QUE CHARLES

Que: You are more than welcome to have some. New England style with cream or a tomato broth Manhattan style? Anyone is welcome to take some if they want a bowl of soup to pick their spirits up.

Reporter: We now return you to your regular Tower Chimes.

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MODERATOR'S MUSINGS CAROLYN HOLMGREN

September is a busy month at FCCUCC.

- ◇ On September 6th from 6:30 to 8:30 pm there us a fundraiser for the Oltome Maasai Village, a special project of Connie Pyle and the M&O team. Connie will share a short powerpoint presentation. Donations will be greatly appreciated.
- ◇ Pride weekend is September
- ◇ Bring a Friend Sunday is September 17. Do as the title suggests.
- ◇ Karen Caton will be regathering the choir and handbell folks. New members are always welcome. Come try either and/or both.

At their monthly meetings Church Council members have been challenged to think outside the box. What would a new project/program/innovation/etc. look like? All participants at FCCUCC are welcomed and encouraged to do the same. What is missing? What wold be exciting to try? Ideas can be taken to Pastor Paul or any council member: Carolyn Holmgren, Moderator; Ken Puhler, Vice-Moderator; Michael Petri, Clerk; Julie Krueger, Finance Chair; Karen Caton, lay delegate; Mary Endres, Kathy Goe, Cindy Haas, Ron Rucker, Rachel Seiff, Janis Woodley. What would you like to see happening at FCCUCC?

Happy fall!

Peace,
Carolyn

BRING A FRIEND TO CHURCH!

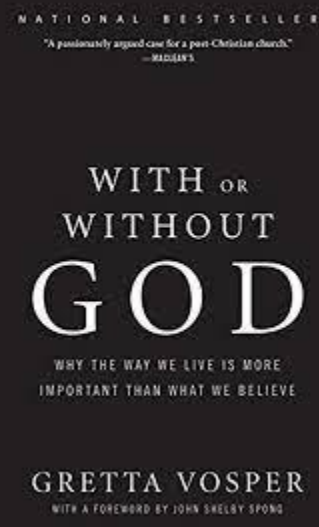
Sunday, September 17 is "Bring a Friend to Church" Sunday! We will be having a special fellowship hour afterwards and we encourage everyone to invite a friend, a neighbor, a family member, etc. and help us celebrate the beginning of Autumn and our new church program year!!!

BOOK STUDY: *WITH OR WITHOUT GOD*

Some of our members have read Gretta Vosper's book *With or Without God* and would like to discuss some of her ideas. We have proposed a meeting for Sunday, October 8th, after coffee hour, for anyone interested.

There is a copy of the book in the church library. Hopefully there is enough time for it to be passed among those who are interested.

For further information talk to Carolyn Holmgren.



FOG: FELLOWSHIP OF THE GRAPE



Fellowship of the Grape (FOG) will be held Saturday, September 23 at 6:00pm, place TBD. Since this is the week following Winefest, the theme of the night will be Colorado Wines. We are still looking for a host for the evening, so if anyone wishes to volunteer, please call or text Julie at 303-717-7727. Finally, we are populating our "FOG Email list", so if you would like to be on the list for future events, please email Beth at office@uccgj.org and ask to be added to the list.

SEPTEMBER BIRTHDAYS

9/1 Norma Roscoe
9/4 Marjorie Graham
9/5 Len Allen
9/6 JoAnn DeVergie
9/7 Joan Fifield
9/8 David Hoefler
9/13 Dan Ford
9/14 Kelly Gregory

9/14 Judy Jones
9/16 Jane Findlay
9/16 Betsy McLoughlin
9/21 Russell Day
9/24 Gesine Jones
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. Thanks!



SEPTEMBER 2023

SUNDAY	MONDAY	TUESDAY	WEDNESDAY	THURSDAY	FRIDAY	SATURDAY
Aug 27	Aug 28	Aug 29	Aug 30	Aug 31	1	2
10:00 Worship 11:00 Happy Hour/Max Appreciation Day 11:15 Get Out the Vote Postcards		10:00 Women's Coffee/Mens' Coffee			10:00 Zoom Coffee	
3	4	5	6	7	8	9
10:00 Worship 11:00 Happy Hour	5:00 Make Mondays Fun Again	10:00 Women's Coffee/Mens' Coffee	2:00 Mission & Outreach 5:30 Delightful Desserts for Living Water	1:00 Fellowship & Hospitality	10:00 Zoom Coffee	<i>Pride in the Park</i>
10	11	12	13	14	15	16
10:00 Worship 11:00 Happy Hour 11:15 Worship & Celebration	1:00 Property Team	10:00 Women's Coffee/Mens' Coffee	1:00 Fall Book Study		10:00 Zoom Coffee	
17	18	19	20	21	22	23
<i>Bring a Friend to Church Sunday</i> 10:00 Worship 11:00 Happy Hour 11:15 Church Council Meeting	5:00 Make Mondays Fun Again	10:00 Women's Coffee/Mens' Coffee		11:30 Berna B's	10:00 Zoom Coffee	<i>6:00 FOG, Fellowship of the Grape</i>
24	25	26	27	28	29	30
10:00 Worship 11:00 Happy Hour 11:00 Spiritual Journey through 2023 Book Study		10:00 Women's Coffee/Mens' Coffee	1:00 Fall Book Study		10:00 Zoom Coffee	



Go Green! Get your Tower
Chimes via email!



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UNITED CHURCH OF CHRIST