

Tower Chimes

Monthly newsletter of First Congregational UCC | Grand Junction, CO | January 2026



Paul's Epistle

Dear Friends,

A New Year is often an opportunity to reflect on the larger issues. I invite you to do more than open a new calendar and plan for what 2026 brings in tax laws or health insurance deductibles. Take time to reflect on this gift called life. I have collected over many decades sayings that are perfect meditations for New Year reflections. I invite you to read one quote a day and work with it. Does it create a new hope or just old wisdom to remind you of a common-sense reality? Does the quote move you to change anything? Does the quote open a door to explore your past, present and future?

These are my favorite quotes for a new year of reflection:

Teach us to number our days, that we may gain a heart of wisdom. Psalm 90:12 NIV

Live for today; plan for tomorrow; remember yesterday. Aesop

Beware the barrenness of a busy life. Socrates

How many things served us yesterday for articles of faith, which today are fables for us?

Michel De Montaigne, *The Complete Essays*

Time, like an ever-rolling stream bears all its sons away; they fly forgotten, as a dream dies at the opening day. Isaac Watts, "O God Our Help in Ages Past"

Time is what we want most, but what we use worst. William Penn, "Letter to the Lenape Nation"

The cost of a thing is the amount of what I will call life which is required to be exchanged for it, immediately or in the long run. Henry David Thoreau, *Walden*

Life can only be understood backwards, but it has to be lived forwards. Soren Kierkegaard, *Journal 1843*

Enjoy life. There's plenty of time to be dead. Hans Christian Andersen

Until you value yourself, you won't value your time. Until you value your time, you will not do anything with it. Scott Peck, *A Road Less Traveled*

Yesterday has gone. Tomorrow has not yet come. We have only today. Let us begin. Mother Teresa

The older we get, the better we used to be. John McEnroe

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

PAUL'S EPISTLE

You can live to be 100 if you give up all the things that make you want to live to be 100.

Woody Allen

The future starts today, not tomorrow. Pope John Paul II

The past is no good to us. The future is full of anxiety. Only the present is real- the here and now. Seize the day...Grasp the hour, the moment, the instant. Saul Bellow, *Seize the Day*

The past is never dead. It's not even past. William Faulkner, *Requiem for a Nun*

What a wonderful life I've had! I only wish I'd realized it earlier. Sidonie-Gabrielle Colette

There is more to life than simply increasing its speed. Mahatma Gandhi

Wishing you a happy and healthy 2026.

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

HAPPY NEW YEAR 2026 CINDY HAAS

Not only is earth another year older but I am as well. I have never made resolutions but tend to reevaluate issues during the entire year. But I have made four major changes in my life that occurred in January.

The first three were getting dogs in January. The first was a 6 week old Golden Retriever named Watson (for Bronco wide receiver Steve Watson) in January of 1985. I adopted a 2 year old lab-chow mix named Cyrus in January of 2010. In January of 2023 on my birthday I brought home a 10 week old Golden Retriever puppy named Griffin. Cyrus was well trained as he came from the Colorado Prison program. But the other two had to be house trained in January. Apparently, I didn't learn from the first one. Griffin is a joy now that he is not a puppy, but January is not the best time to housetrain a dog. Good thing he was a fast learner and it only took two weeks. Still standing out in the cold several times a day telling him to "make busy" was not well thought out on my part.

The other big change in my life was January 12 years ago when I moved to Grand Junction. It was not an easy decision to make. The thought of moving to a community where I only knew cousins and my brother and his wife was daunting. It took almost a year to make the decision. I am thankful I moved here from the front range. I joined this church because my cousin Marie invited me and I found a sense of community. I joined a bowling league and found a volunteer job that makes me think. Thank you all for validating my life decision.

January is a good time to make changes for me, but perhaps no more puppies. It may not be the time for you to make changes. You will know when the time comes to make life changes as we go forward.

MISSION & OUTREACH NEWS

WESHELTER WINTER EMERGENCY SHELTER 2026

FCUCC and LDS volunteers will host WESHELTER from Sunday, Jan 25 to Sunday, Feb 22, 2025. We will be providing warm, safe shelter, and light meals for up to 16 men who cannot be accommodated at local shelters. Our congregation will cover Feb 12-Feb 22 for overnight and meal volunteers.

There are opportunities for everyone in our congregation to be involved:

- ◊ Overnight volunteers to supervise the facility from 5:30pm to 8:00am each night. We need a minimum of 2 volunteers each night.
- ◊ Volunteers to provide a hot meal item and sides for each evening.
- ◊ Donations of toiletries (oral care/shaving/grooming) and socks appreciated.

Sign-up posters for overnight and meal volunteers are located in the Gathering Space. There is a bin marked "WESHELTER" on the M&O shelves for other donations.

If you have any questions or need additional information, please contact Kathy Viglianco at 970-201-9122 or kviglianco@yahoo.com.

FIRST QUARTER 2026 MISSION FOCUS: MUTUAL AID PARTNERS

First Quarter 2026 Mission & Outreach Project | International Mission Partnerships | We will sponsor our student Guadalupes's scholarship for her second year of high school through The Foundation for Cultural Exchange and we will be paying Oltome Village teacher salaries.

ONGOING COLLECTIONS

New Collection for Mutual Aid Partners | Watch future publications for details about the return of the Handbag Project!

January Catholic Outreach Item | They want pasta again –assume no spaghetti until we hear more.

Stop Bringing Jugs for Solidarity Not Charity | SNC is requesting blankets –used is fine. We continue to collect 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.

CHILDREN'S SUNDAY MORNING PROGRAM MARIE KOONTZ

January: How Jesus's life influences us even in today's world!

Each Sunday will include a scripture reading, discussion and an activity.

- ◊ January 4: (Luke 2:41-52) Jesus in the temple at age 12
- ◊ January 11: (Matthew 4:1-11) Jesus is tempted
- ◊ January 18: (Matthew 4:19) Jesus calls the first person to be a disciple
- ◊ January 25: (Matthew 5:1-3) Part One – The Sermon on the Mount

WHILE BETH RAKESTRAW IS AWAY BETH RAKESTRAW

As many of you know, I will be out of the office December 31 through January 19 recovering from a hysterectomy. Here is some helpful information for you to keep handy for any church business you may have. If all goes well, I will return to the office Tuesday, January 20.

- ◊ **For January, the church's business hours will change to 9:00 am to 1:00 pm.** This is to make it easier on the people who will be covering the church office in my absence. They are Beth Avery, Martha Jones, and Janis Woodley, and anyone else upon whom they may call. Be gentle with them!
- ◊ **For submissions to Church Chat**, contact Beth Avery, averyb@otherwhen.com, 940-312-2776.
- ◊ **For bulletin announcements**, contact Martha Jones, finance@uccgj.org, 970-250-7960.
- ◊ **For building use questions**, contact Martha Jones, who will also be checking my office email while I am gone. Martha will have access to the church calendar.
- ◊ **For website, A/V and Worship recordings**, contact Ron and Annie Rucker, ronandannie@gmail.com.
- ◊ **For issues with thermostats and room temperatures**, contact Michael Petri.
- ◊ **For things around the building requiring repair**, contact Kelly Gregory.

NEW YEAR'S GAME DAY

Thursday, January 1, 2026 | 12:00pm | Pilgrim Hall | Ring in the New Year with your favorite game. The more the merrier - bring a friend! Annie & Ron will provide elk sloppy joes. Bring your favorite games, a snack, and a beverage or your holiday leftovers to share.

NEW YEAR'S WORSHIP

Sunday, January 4 | 10:00 am | Enjoy our festive décor one more time as we consider and reflect upon a new year.

And After Worship | What Goes Up Must Come Down: help take down, organize and put away our Christmas Décor. Many hands make work's burden light.

PUT YOUR CONTRIBUTION ON AUTO PILOT!

- ◊ Use your bank's BillPay service to automatically send a check to the church every month. Most banks have this as a free service.
- ◊ Or set up a repeating payment using our online payment system – either a transfer from your bank (ACH) or by credit card. A transfer from your bank results in smaller fees to the church than using your credit card. Go to <https://ucc.org/donate> and click on DONATE.

Persons who have a Required Minimum Distribution (RMD) from their retirement investments should consult with their advisor about making charitable contributions from these distributions. There may be significant tax advantages to doing so.

As usual, please contact Martha Jones, volunteer finance clerk, if you have questions at finance@uccgj.org.

JANUARY 2026

SUNDAY	MONDAY	TUESDAY	WEDNESDAY	THURSDAY	FRIDAY	SATURDAY
Dec 28	Dec 29	Dec 30	Dec 31	1	2	3
10:00 Worship 11:00 Happy Hour		10:00 Women's/ Men's Coffee		Noon, New Year's Day Games		
4	5	6	7	8	9	10
9:00 Choir 10:00 Worship 11:00 Happy Hour 11:00 Dismantling the Greens		10:00 Women's/ Mens' Coffees	2:00 Mission & Outreach 3:30 Handbells	2:00 Fellowship & Hospitality		
11	12	13	14	15	16	17
9:00 Choir 10:00 Worship 11:05 Happy Hour 11:15 Spirituality Group	1:00 Property Team	10:00 Women's/ Men's Coffee	3:30 Handbells	11:30 Berna B's		6:00 ABC Social
18	19	20	21	22	23	24
9:00 Choir 10:00 Worship 11:00 Happy Hour 11:15 Council Meeting	Church Office Closed for MLK Day	10:00 Women's/ Mens' Coffee	3:30 Handbells			
25	26	27	28	29	30	31
WE Shelter	Begins at	FCC	Hosted by	LDS		
10:00 Worship 11:00 Happy Hour		10:00 Women's/ Mens' Coffee	3:30 Handbells			

JANUARY BIRTHDAYS

1/8 Linda Randolph
 1/9 Cindy Haas
 1/9 Janis Woodley
 1/12 Sveti Djokic
 1/12 Vicki Brickey
 1/19 Tristan Koontz
 1/19 Carol Oglesby
 1/22 Jeanette Ford
 1/23 Barbara Endres
 1/25 Pam Ashby
 1/26 Allan Weinand

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 of-



LOOKING AHEAD

February 18 | Ash Wednesday
 February 22 | WE Shelter ends at FCC
 March 8 | Daylight Savings Time begins
 April 5 | Easter



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CONTACT US!

Pastor:

Rev. Dr. Paul Ashby

He, his, him

revpaulashby@yahoo.com

X104

Church Administrator:

Beth Rakestraw

They, theirs, them

office@uccgj.org | X 105

[Monday through Thursday]

Director of Choirs

Karen Caton

topcatkc@aol.com

Pianist/Music Coordinator:

Martha Jones

She, her, hers

Children's Ed:

Marie Koontz

She, hers, her

charley.koontz2009@gmail.com

Organist/Pianist:

Ellen Bradley

She, hers, her

Part Time Custodian:

Matu Hedwall

He, his, him

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Volunteer Financial Clerk:

Martha Jones

She, hers, her

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Church Office Hours

Monday through Thursday

9am—3pm

Reach us at :

(970)-242-0298

www.uccgj.org