

Tower *chimes*

Monthly newsletter of First Congregational UCC | Grand Junction, CO | September 2025



Paul's Epistle

Dear Friends,

I enjoy hearing the stories and seeing the pictures of our church members travels. Pam and I have been saving for years for a 25th Anniversary trip that was planned and deposits made in 2023. The anniversary came and went on Valentine's Day 2024. What happened? Two family weddings last summer happened without a lot of advance planning so Uncle Paul had to change plans. So, our 25th Anniversary now 26 1/2 trip is now scheduled for September. This is a Globus tour I have been interested in for about 5 years because it visits the classic pilgrimage sites in Western Europe. These are the places I have read about for decades since seminary and wanted to experience firsthand. On September 11th we land in Lisbon with a return flight from Rome on October 2nd arriving home on the 3rd. In between the Globus bus is taking us to:

- ◇ The Lisbon Cathedral
- ◇ The Jeronimos Monastery
- ◇ Our Lady of Fatima Sanctuary
- ◇ Knights Templar Convent of Christ in Tomar
- ◇ Santiago de Compostela (The Way of St James the major walking pilgrimage for the last 1,200 years)
- ◇ Our Lady of Lourdes Shrine
- ◇ Basilica of St. Mary of Seo
- ◇ Monastery – Sanctuary of Montserrat
- ◇ Sagrada Familia in Barcelona
- ◇ Castel Gandolfo
- ◇ The Vatican and historical churches of Rome dating back to the 4th Century
- ◇ St. Francis Church in Langiano
- ◇ St Padre Pio's Friary and St. Padre Pio Pilgrimage Church
- ◇ Shrine of Monte Sant' Angelo
- ◇ St Francis' home and St Francis Basilica of Assisi

This will be 19 days on the Globus bus but I appreciate all the places they cover. By car it would take much longer to drive the distances involved and book the places requiring reservations. This is the first year I will ever use all 14 continuing education days. I encourage everyone to save up over a few years to plan trips to your places of pilgrimage or personal interest. Please do not wait until it happens as an item on a terminal illness bucket

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

PAUL'S EPISTLE

list. Often at that point one lacks the energy to travel. This life is a God-given, or if you prefer, a Life-given opportunity. Everyone's choices are different – many people would view a daily church pilgrimage as hell. They would like to chill on a beach on the West coast or Hawaii. I experience beach-sitting vacations as boring after a day. So, travel to a place that inspires you. If you cannot come up with anything, I have never heard anyone complain about travel to Ireland in the summer.

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

Editor's note: So, who's preaching on the three Sundays Paul and Pam are on pilgrimage? Our pulpit will be well cared for by Mark Long, Bp. Alan Morris and Beth Rakestraw. Ken Puhler is on stand by. The church has also contracted with Bp. Alan to provide pastoral care should the need arise while Paul is out of the country.

GOALS CINDY HAAS

I was reading the history of the church and the leaders bought four lots at 6th and Grand for a new location in 1945. Apparently, that did not work, so they sold those lots for a decent profit and then bought the property at our current location.

This was a group of leaders that reacted to meet the needs of the church.

We have decided to look forward as well. We want to look at what we need to do to ensure we have the right staffing, building maintenance and other organizational needs to make sure we survive. Another issue we need to address is growing our congregation.

Pastor Paul has a couple of ideas and we will work with him to market the church. He would like to see a more robust website. We are seeking individuals to help with that goal.

We must also realize our current staff is going to retire in the next five years. We have musicians, administrative staff and Sunday school teachers that need to be assessed for succession. Also have some volunteer staff knowledge that needs to be addressed.

Whether it is staffing or technology, this council will be open to changes to make sure this entity is vibrant for years to come.

We need your input for this project. We will be distributing surveys in September. It will be a short one and I encourage everyone to take it so we know how the congregation thinks.

Once we assess the survey results, we will use that data to determine our next steps.

Thank you in advance taking the survey.

NO JULY COUNCIL MEETING MINUTES BETH RAKESTRAW

The Council did not hold its regularly stated July meeting, but met for a work session in early August, and met for its regularly stated August meeting on Sunday the 17th. The minutes from that meeting will be available as usual in the October Tower Chimes after they have been approved by Council at its September meeting.

CHILDREN'S SUNDAY MORNING PROGRAM MARIE KOONTZ

WALKING THE PATH THROUGH THE OLD TESTAMENT

SEPTEMBER



September 7: "Are you making sense or are you just babbling" (Genesis 11:1-9) The story of Tower of Babel



September 14: "Sarah Did What and When?" (Genesis 18:1-15) The story Abraham and Sarah



September 21: "Whoops! Somebody Made a Bad Choice" (Genesis 4:1-25) The story of Sodom and Gomorrah



September 28: "Have Faith That You Will Be Okay" (Genesis 21:8-21) The story of Hagar and Ishmael being sent away



MISSION & OUTREACH NEWS

THIRD QUARTER MISSION FOCUS: LA PLAZA

Mission & Outreach will continue to focus on La Plaza for our third quarter giving project. We feel this is a particularly critical time to offer our support as a church, as immigrants are facing uncertainty and fear due to recent actions by the current administration in Washington D.C.

There is a continuing need to help fill their pantry shelves, which had become depleted a few months ago due to funding cuts and fear of going out to the grocery store. Our donations over the past month have been gratefully received, but there is a continuing need, so feel free to keep using the shopping list below. The M & O team has been blown away by the quantity of donations received over the past month. Thank you!

Note that I have bolded **eye drops**. This is an item you can consider donating, as the orchard workers are outside all day in this hot, dry climate (and unfortunately, smoky), and eye drops can go a long way towards keeping them more comfortable during harvest season.

Please read below for additional donations and/or volunteer opportunities you can pursue over the next couple of months.

Here is a list of the most needed items at this time:

Tortillas (wheat or corn)	Sugar
Pinto beans (fresh or canned)	Rice
Canned tomato sauce	Canned Corn
Wheat flour	Canned Mixed Veggies
Maseca	Oil (any kind)....and

Eye drops



In addition to (or instead of) the above items, you may want to consider **donating bicycle repair supplies**, as many people in the La Plaza community ride bikes for their major mode of transportation. Here is a list of those items:

Inner tubes
Hand grips
Patches

In addition to the above donations, there is also an opportunity to **volunteer** by helping with transportation for the orchard workers during the harvest season. (i.e., doctors, DMV, social security appointments) This would alleviate the staff's workload during the peak season. If this is something you'd like to do, here is the link to register as a volunteer, [Join | LA PLAZA](https://www.laplazapalisade.org/join) and in answer to the question, How would you like to help?, write: help with transportation. Someone from La Plaza will contact you to finish the application process and later on, when it is needed, they will call again to check on availability. You can also use the link provided below. You can also get in direct touch with the volunteer coordinator, Geri: geri@laplazapalisade.org.

THANK YOU so much for all you do to support our immigrant neighbors!

<https://www.laplazapalisade.org/join>

MORE MISSION & OUTREACH NEWS

THIRD QUARTER MISSION & OUTREACH: LAPLAZA BENEFIT CONCERT



Come join your friends from First Congregational, Saturday, September 6th for a concert benefiting La Plaza. The concert features iQuemando!, a lively and entertaining nine piece salsa band that will get you up and dancing.

Tickets \$25 online or \$30 at gate.

Get tickets at www.laplazapalisade.org

Hit Event button and scroll to bottom: "iQuemando! Concert 2025 buy tickets here!!"

Gates open at 6pm, concert starts at 7pm.

NEWS FROM THE BROADER CHURCH

WESTERN ASSOCIATION GATHERING

Hosted by
**Hayden Congregational &
First Congregational Craig**



Hayden Congregational Church
202 E. Jefferson Ave. Hayden, CO 81639
Carpenter Ranch Preserve
13250 US-40, Hayden, CO 81639

OCT | 3-4 | 2025

FRIDAY, OCT 3

Carpenter Ranch & Preserve

1:00 pm Clergy Cluster

1:00 pm Guided River Walk

(Carpooling with clergy? Love arriving early? Enjoy this nature conservancy site.)

Hayden Congregational Church

4:30 pm Check-in & Mingle

5:30 pm Dinner

6:30 pm Worship Together

SATURDAY, OCT 4

Carpenter Ranch and Preserve

8:00 am Breakfast

9:30 am Business Meeting

12:00 pm Lunch @ Carpenter Ranch.

(You are welcome to stay and eat together or make a to-go box and hit the road.)

Childcare happily provided upon request.



CALLING ALL CHOIR DEVOTEES

Just a reminder that Chancel Choir rehearsals will start up again on Sunday, September 7th at 9am in the Music Room. I will make sure I've pulled some easy music that we've done before and that won't require a lot of rehearsal time. That's the plan for all of September (hopefully!) so we can get back into the groove.

If you're a returning Choir member, you know the drill. If you're new to the church and interested in checking out the choir, PLEASE JUST SHOW UP! It's a pretty laid-back group and we have a lot of fun. We're always open to adding some additional voices!

Thanks and see you soon!
Karen

topcatkc@aol.com
970-270-5711

CANTABILE RINGERS (HANDBELL RINGERS)

Cantabile Ringers will resume rehearsals on Wednesday, September 10th at 3:30pm in the Music Room. If you recall, we agreed to move the regular rehearsal day from Tuesdays to Wednesdays this season to accommodate some other schedules.

If you've never rung bells before but would like to check it out, please just come to the rehearsal. We will all be getting "the rust" off our skills that accumulated over the summer break. We would be happy to take some time to show new folks "the ropes" so you can get a taste of bell ringing. Just let me know.

Thanks and see you soon!
Karen

topcatkc@aol.com
970-270-5711

ABC CLUB

Our September 21st "ABC" group (appetizers/beverages/conversation) will be held at Michael Petri's home, at 477 Escondido Cir on the Redlands from 6-8 pm. The theme is anything Colorado - wine, beer, peach sangria, peach pizza, peach salsa, apple cobbler, roasted green chilis, Olathe corn, etc. Weather permitting we can sit outside and enjoy the beautiful backyard, so bring a chair! If someone would like to come, but is uncomfortable driving at night, call or text Julie and Linda at 303-717-7727.

Save the date for October ABC - the 18th at Kathy Goe's home at 644 East Pagosa in Grand Junction. More details to follow.

SEPTEMBER BIRTHDAYS

9/1 Charlie Kodis
9/1 Norma Roscoe
9/5 Len Allen
9/14 Kelly Gregory
9/14 Judy Jones
9/16 Jane Findlay
9/16 Betsy McLoughlin
9/18 Kam Macar
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 2025

SUNDAY	MONDAY	TUESDAY	WEDNESDAY	THURSDAY	FRIDAY	SATURDAY
Aug 31	1	2	3	4	5	6
10:00 Hawaiian Shirt Sunday 11:00 Fifth Sunday Potluck —LUAU! 11:15 Spirituality Group	Church Office Closed for Labor Day	10:00 Women's/ Mens' Coffee	2:00 Mission & Outreach	2:00 Fellowship & Hospitality		7:00 Quemando
7	8	9	10	11	12	13
9:00 Choir 10:00 Worship 11:00 Happy Hour	1:00 Property Team	10:00 Women's/ Mens' Coffees	3:30 Handbell Choir Begins			
14	15	16	17	18	19	20
9:00 Choir 10:00 Worship 11:00 Happy Hour		10:00 Women's/ Men's Coffee		11:30 Berna B's		6:00 The ABC Club
21	22	23	24	25	26	27
9:00 Choir 10:00 Worship 11:00 Happy Hour 11:15 Council Meeting		10:00 Women's/ Mens' Coffee				
28	29	30	Oct 1	Oct 2	Oct 3	Oct 4
9:00 Choir 10:00 Worship 11:00 Happy Hour		10:00 Women's/ Mens' Coffee	2:00 Mission & Outreach	2:00 Fellowship & Hospitality		

LOOKING AHEAD

October 11 | Empty Bowls

October 14-18 | Friends of the Library Booksale

October 31 | Church Halloween Party at Krueger-Randolph home

“Carr has seen that [faster] speed and [bigger] scale lead to a loss of empathy and compassion, exactly the proper, primary work of the church. It follows that slow is the speed of neighborly church, slow enough to notice, slow enough to identify with, slow enough to interrupt our agenda for a neighbor in need.”



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CONTACT US!

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X104

Children's Ed:

Marie Koontz
She, hers, her
charley.koontz2009@gmail.com

Church Office Hours

Monday through Thursday
9am—3pm
Reach us at :
(970)-242-0298
www.uccgj.org

Church Administrator:

Beth Rakestraw
They, theirs, them
office@uccgj.org | X 105
[Monday through Thursday]

Organist/Pianist:

Ellen Bradley
She, hers, her
[Starting in September]

Director of Choirs

Karen Caton
topcatkc@aol.com

Part Time Custodian:

Matu Hedwall
He, his, him
custodian@uccgj.org

Pianist/Music Coordinator:

Martha Jones
She, her, hers

Volunteer Financial Clerk:

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