

# Tower chimes

Monthly newsletter of First Congregational UCC | Grand Junction, CO | November 2022



## Paul's Epistle

Dear Friends,

November is often a month where gratitude can grow. It is the time of Thanksgiving even though stores are packed 9 feet high in Christmas. The gift of gratitude is simpler than we want to make it.

What is gratitude?

- ◇ It's a day we take a walk or sit outdoors before winter.
- ◇ Gratitude is having a refrigerator full when we open the door.
- ◇ Gratitude is simply connecting with those we love by any means or technology.
- ◇ Gratitude is the experience of music at CMU, the Mesa Theatre or Avalon.
- ◇ Gratitude is feeling delight while in the flow of sports or a good movie.
- ◇ Gratitude is knowing the bills are covered for this month rather than worry over what the Federal Reserve Board might do in 2023 or 2024.
- ◇ Gratitude is ice cream when the work for the day is done.
- ◇ Gratitude is the joy of helping other who can benefit from our strengths.
- ◇ Gratitude is not based on materialistic things but a place where you feel inner value.
- ◇ Gratitude has to be more than the new I-Phone.
- ◇ Gratitude is putting the good we know into action.
- ◇ Gratitude is playing fun games with pets and getting a face wash.
- ◇ Gratitude is a day when we welcome the sunlight.
- ◇ Just to go to our favorite cheap fast food hang out can bring a smile to a hard day. (My favorite fast-food joint is Popeye's in Clifton).
- ◇ Be good to yourself, be kind to others and you find gratitude is a blessing you can tune into easily and gently.

The experience of gratitude is a simple grace of being aware, alert, awake to the goodness of this journey called life.

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

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

## MODERATOR'S MUSINGS CAROLYN HOLMGREN

Around Thanksgiving, if you ask kids what they are thankful for, they will respond with "family, friends, pets, and favorite toys". This is probably what we would say as adults, perhaps adding "our church." For me, that is especially true if my church is one that repeats each Sunday "no matter who you are, or where you are on life's journey, you are welcome here."

But does that welcoming extend to High School kids who use our climbing bars in the play area as a sanctuary during lunch hour? If you have noticed them and questioned the appropriateness of their being there, ask yourself "why are they there?" Are they escaping uncomfortable situations in the HS building? Are they seeking comfort from their friends?

Beth is aware of their presence and has had communication with the HS principal on occasions. If you find yourself bothered by them, talk to Beth. She will determine what, if any, action needs to be taken. And open your heart to what it might be like to be a teenager these days; and give them a sanctuary for a few minutes of their day, even if they do leave some trash behind.

Peace, Carolyn

## FALL CLEAN UP/WORKDAY

**Saturday, November 12th, 9 am until 1 pm – lunch after**

We will be working on a variety of projects both outdoors and indoors to clean and winterize the grounds and spruce up some interior spaces.

Tasks for all abilities will be available.

Please sign-up ASAP in advance for your favorite chores before or after worship over the next couple of weeks. Sign up sheets are available on the table by the double doors just inside Pilgrim Hall.

Please indicate any tools and supplies you can bring to the event.

Remember to bring work gloves, hats, sunglasses, sunscreen and water if you are working outdoors.

Check in with your Teams in Pilgrim Hall upon arrival for reviewing assignments and obtaining needed supplies.

## THANKSGIVING DAY POTLUCK

FCC's annual Thanksgiving Potluck takes place Thursday, November 24 beginning at 2 pm. Turkeys will be provided, but a sign up sheet is available in Pilgrim Hall for people to sign up to bring side dishes and desserts, and/or help with clean up. Guests are welcome!

## SALLY SHELL MEMORIAL FUND UPDATE: OLTIME VILLAGE

The Sally Shell Memorial Fund was established to honor Sally's lifelong dedication to helping people in need. Recently, one of our own members, Connie Pyle, while on a trip to Africa, visited Oltome Village in Kenya, met with one of the village elders there, and saw firsthand the people of that village struggling to survive, due to a year-long severe drought. Not only is there a need for food for the people, but also for the cattle they depend on for their livelihood. Upon her return, Connie met with the M & O team, asking if there was some way our church could help. After meeting with Connie and obtaining more information from one of the leaders of the village, the team voted with confidence to use funds from the Sally Shell Memorial fund to help mitigate the life-threatening situation there.

**Thanks to your generosity, in the past month or so we have been able to wire A total of \$3000 to the village!**

The first installment was used to buy feed for the starving cattle:

The second installment will be used to buy much needed staples such as rice and flour for the people. Because the deadline for donating to this memorial fund is the end of this year, we will continue to accept donations until December 31, 2022; however, because

of the urgent need, we encourage you to make donations sooner rather than later if you haven't done so already. In the coming weeks, we will provide more information about the village and specific needs. Look for a poster of pictures and information during coffee hour and in the Church Chat, and if you have any questions, don't hesitate to contact a member of the M & O team.

If you are writing a check to support this project, please write Sally Shell Memorial Fund on the memo line. It is also possible to donate on our website. Thank you for your support!



~~Ellen Bradley

# CATHOLIC OUTREACH NEWS, SHARYL PETERSON

## Back to Basics!

Thanks to great generosity from the community, Catholic Outreach still has lots of the “big stuff” needed (e.g., stuffing, potatoes) to make generous cold-weather and Thanksgiving-season dinners for the hundreds of folks they serve. But ... what's the “big stuff” without the basics?

Try to imagine classic green bean casserole without cream of mushroom soup. Try to imagine anything without salt and pepper. So, for November, we're keeping it simple: let's try to collect 100 cans of cream of mushroom soup (almost everyone has it on sale right now), and a bunch (not sure how much that is numerically) of containers of salt and pepper. (Note: for ethical/moral reasons, please do not steal the little paper packets from your favorite fast-food restaurant!)

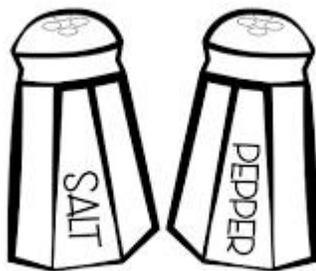
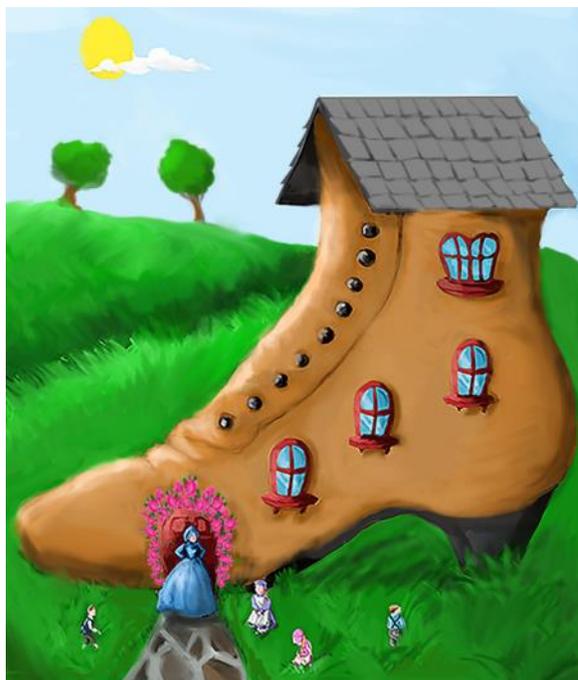
Remember that classic nursery-rhyme:

*There was an ~~old~~ elderly woman who lived in a ~~shoe~~ slipper sandal sneaker,  
She had so many children and friends,  
Thanksgiving meal was gonna be a squeaker;  
But with gifts of creamed soups, and some basic condiments,  
She fixed them a fine feast so all were content.*

## OCTOBER COLLECTIONS NUMBERS FOR CATHOLIC OUTREACH

60 dressings

15 miscellaneous food



# MISSION & OUTREACH NEWS

## FOURTH QUARTER MISSION & OUTREACH COLLECTION CONTINUES

For the month of November, the Mission and Outreach team will continue focusing on **Mutual Aid Partners**, a grassroots-oriented community-led nonprofit focused on providing resources and support to mutual aid efforts in Mesa County.

Born from an immediate need to support and connect our community during the 2020 pandemic, their work has become a deep-rooted commitment to nurturing sustainable projects that lower barriers and create positive change, maximizing their impact by focusing on collaboration among community organizations, specifically those working towards meaningful outreach through the lens of equity and accessibility. Learn more by going to their website and watching their video!

During the month of November, we will be collecting feminine hygiene products as well as adult diapers. As always, you can leave your donations in the designated bin across from the church office or in the gathering space on Sunday mornings. Thank you so much for your ongoing support.

### “SOLIDARITY, NOT CHARITY” REGULAR, ONGOING COLLECTIONS:

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

### **Please hold off on bringing grocery bags until we request them again!**

Please bring jugs and toiletries and put them on the collection shelves near the office or in the appropriately marked bins. Thank you.

## THANK YOU TO POSTCARD PROJECT PARTICIPANTS

A big THANK YOU to members of our congregation who recently participated in a post card writing effort to marginalized voters in Arizona and North Carolina. This was part of a larger effort by The Center for Common Ground's Reclaim Our Vote campaign, a national organization led by Black, Indigenous, Latinx, Asian, and other too-often-marginalized leaders with a proven track record of increasing the vote of infrequent voters.

Research has shown that reaching out to voters in this personalized way can have a greater impact than many other efforts, such as distributing flyers, knocking on doors, making phone calls, or even placing yard signs on our property.

In all, members of our congregation sent out 140 post cards, contributing to the total of 25,000 sent out nationally. Look for further opportunities in future elections!

## DIVINE DESSERTS AUCTION A DELICIOUS SUCCESS!

*The dessert makers were awesome  
The desserts were delicious and fancy  
The auctioneer and assistant were fun  
The money counters were busy  
The bidding was fierce ...*

*... and in the end,  
our community raised \$1000 seed money for this fund.*

## WHAT IS THE RAINBOW CLOSET?



Some congregants have recently been introduced to a mission that our church has actually housed for a number of years, The Rainbow Closet. It was founded by PFLAG, but fell into dormancy when the local PFLAG group experienced some leadership changes. This year, it has been revitalized under the auspices of the Grand Junction Queer and Ally Connection and now is a part of the work of Loving Beyond Understanding.

The Rainbow Closet is located upstairs in the CE building. It is open Saturdays from 3:30 to 7:30 pm for transgender and gender non-conforming folk to come "shop" [everything is free] for clothes that are more suited to their gender identity and expression, in a safe, non-judgmental environment. Besides managing the inventory, shopkeeper Marcela Ayon also offers fashion, make-up consultation and other advice needed by the clientele.

Marcela pops in from time to time to work on the inventory, maintain its boutique-like atmosphere and

make The Rainbow Closet a fun place to be.

Donations are received on Saturdays during the shop's open hours, or by appointment. Contact Beth for more information. Anything that can't be used is given to other local clothing banks.

# SUNDAY MORNING CHILDREN'S PROGRAM FOR NOVEMBER MARIE KOONTZ

## A TIME TO GIVE, A TIME TO SAY THANK YOU

### NOVEMBER 6 "Thank you" for the world we live in.

"O give thanks to the Lord, for he is good,  
for his steadfast love endures forever." Psalms 136:1

**Project:** We are going to make center piece for the goodie table in Pilgrim Hall



### NOVEMBER 13" We give thanks for what we have"

"Let them thank the Lord for his steadfast love,  
for his wonderful works to humankind.

For he satisfies the thirsty,  
and the hungry he fills with good things." Psalms 107:8-9

**Project:** We are going to make a Thank you head band



### NOVEMBER 20 "We are thankful that we can give to others"

"You will be enriched in every way for your great generosity, which will produce thanksgiving to God through us, for the rendering of this ministry not only supplies the needs of the saints but also overflows with many thanksgivings to God." 2 Corinthians 9:11-12

**Project:** We will be making special bags to give to children in need



### NOVEMBER 27: "The road to the Nativity"



"In those days, a decree went out from Caesar Augustus that all the world should be registered. This was the first registration when Quirinius was governor of Syria. And all went to be registered, each to his own town. And Joseph also went up from Galilee, from the town of Nazareth - to Judea, to the city of David, which is called Bethlehem, because he was of the house and lineage of David, to be registered with Mary, his betrothed, who was with child. " Luke 2:1-5

**Volunteers needed on Sunday mornings in  
November for the Sunday Morning children's program.  
Clipboard for sign-ups is in Pilgrim Hall. Thank you.**

# SEPTEMBER COUNCIL MEETING MINUTES MICHAEL PETRI, CLERK

**September 18, 2022**

The church council of First Congregational Church United Church of Christ met in the chapel on September 18, 2022 for the monthly stated meeting. Present were council members Cindy Haas, Carolyn Holmgren (moderator), Mark Long, Brad Montgomery-Anderson, Nancy Palubicki, Michael Petri, Ken Puhler and Rev. Paul Ashby. Karen Caton, Mary Endres and Julie Krueger were absent.

A quorum was established. The meeting was opened with an opening prayer by the moderator at 11:21 a.m.

Minutes of the August 21, 2022 council meeting were approved as distributed.

## **Pastor's Report:**

- ◇ asked for volunteers to speak about stewardship in the fall campaign
- ◇ expressed concern about inflation challenging church pledges
- ◇ noted that the fire drill on September 11 didn't go very quickly, but it did remind people that there are exit doors at the front of the church and that some of these exits have steps
- ◇ reminded the council to turn off the coolers, turn off lights and close windows after meetings and activities to save energy – and remind others to do so, too
- ◇ discussed the decision to devote the Sally Shell memorial fund to help an impoverished village in Kenya. An appropriate mechanism to handle the donations fairly in the village has been confirmed.

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

- ◇ Mission and Outreach/JAM, September 2022
- ◇ Fellowship & Hospitality Meeting, September 2022 minutes – it was noted that the team did a great job providing meals for the conference-wide Committee on Ministry and for Paul's Installation/Covenant service
- ◇ Worship and Celebration, no meeting due to Pride parade
- ◇ Property Team, September 2022 draft minutes.
- ◇ Spiritual Formation, no report
- ◇ Personnel Committee, no report
- ◇ Marketing Team, no meeting
- ◇ Finance & Stewardship – August 2022 draft minutes

## **Other Business/New Business:**

- ◇ Vote on Personnel Committee. Candidates: Carolyn Holmgren, Mod; Ken Puhler, Vice-Mod, Brad Montgomery-Anderson, Ellen Bradley and Joanne Drake. The committee members were approved, on motion.
- ◇ Pastor Relations Committee: The importance of forming a pastor relations committee was discussed, and is required by the bylaws and pastor's job description.
- ◇ The Property Committee report mentioned lots of deferred maintenance. Repairs may need to access endowment funds – if that is permitted by the endowment policy.

# SEPTEMBER COUNCIL MEETING MINUTES

MICHAEL PETRI, CLERK

Martha Jones will be asked to join the next council meeting to discuss the policy

There being no other business, the meeting was closed at 12:20 p.m.

Michael Petri – Council Clerk

The next council meeting will be October 16 at 11:30 a.m.

\*\*\*\*\*

Michael's additions to meeting minutes:

*FYI, here's the PRC stuff in the bylaws and job description (excerpts):*

## **From the bylaws:**

**Section 2** *The Senior Minister: Under the supervision of the Church Council, it shall be the duty of the Senior Minister to:*

....

*D. Perform other specific duties as outlined in Senior Minister Position Description and as requested by the Church Council.*

...

## **Section 3** *Operation of the Church Council*

...

*E. The Council shall approve the members of the Pastoral Relations Committee based on the recommendations of the Senior Minister. Depending on the size of the congregation, approving three to seven members is appropriate for this group. Pastoral Relations Committee (PRC) shall be a standing committee of the Congregation that seeks to support and maintain an open and healthy relationship between the pastor and members of the congregation. The goal of the PRC is to help promote a faithful, shared ministry between the pastor and the congregation. The PRC serves in two primary ways:*

- as an advisory group to the pastor, sharing ideas, dreams, expectations, and concerns of the congregation with the pastor;*
- as a support group for the pastor's leadership: interpreting roles, functions, boundaries, opportunities, and needs of the pastor to the congregation.*

*The Pastoral Relations Committee shall include neither any employees of the church nor any elected members of the Council.*

## **From the job description:**

*Provide accountability, administrative direction and support:*

*Engage the church Council in discussion and prioritization of pastoral activities. Provide monthly job activity reports to the Council*

*Meet regularly with the Pastoral Relations Committee to foster good communication and feedback between the pastor and congregation*

....

## TRANSGENDER DAY OF REMEMBRANCE | NOVEMBER 20

Transgender Day of Remembrance (TDOR) is an annual observance on November 20 that honors the memory of the transgender people whose lives were lost in acts of anti-transgender violence.

*"Transgender Day of Remembrance seeks to highlight the losses we face due to anti-transgender bigotry and violence. I am no stranger to the need to fight for our rights, and the right to simply exist is first and foremost. With so many seeking to erase transgender people -- sometimes in the most brutal ways possible -- it is vitally important that those we lose are remembered, and that we continue to fight for justice."* - Transgender Day of Remembrance founder Gwendolyn Ann Smith

FCC historically has provided a meeting space for TDOR as a part of our Open and Affirming ministry. This year's event takes place Sunday, November 20 in The Gathering Space, 6 to 8 pm, and is being planned/supported by the DEI team of Hilltop Community Resources.

In 2021, the Human Rights Campaign tracked a record number of violent fatal incidents against transgender and gender non-conforming people — with 50 fatalities tracked. Sadly, 2022 has already seen at least 32 transgender people fatally shot or killed by other violent means. We say “at least” because too often these stories go unreported — or misreported. In previous years, the majority of these people were Black and Latinx transgender women.

## LOOKING AHEAD

December 18 | Annual Congregational Budget Meeting

**Christmas Eve is on Saturday this year, Christmas Day on Sunday.**

February 22 | Ash Wednesday

April 9 | Easter

## NOVEMBER BIRTHDAYS

Kathy Viglianco 11/4

Beverly Fernsemer 11/5

Marie Koontz 11/09

Jane Wethington 11/11

Gail Gordon 11/12

Anna Dethmers 11/21

Marjorie Wilson 11/27

Jo Kissinger 11/30

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!

# NOVEMBER 2022

SUNDAY	MONDAY	TUESDAY	WEDNESDAY	THURSDAY	FRIDAY	SATURDAY
<b>October 30</b>	<b>Oct 31</b>	<b>1</b>	<b>2</b>	<b>3</b>	<b>4</b>	<b>5</b>
9:00 Choir Rehearses 10:00 Worship 11:00 Fifth Sunday Potluck 11:15 Book Study		10:00 Women's Coffee/Mens' Coffee 5:30 Cantabile Ringers	1:00 Through the New Testament 2:00 Mission & Outreach	12:15 Health & Wellness 1:00 Fellowship & Hospitality	10:00 Zoom Coffee	<b>Daylight Savings Ends; fall back one hour.</b>
<b>6</b>	<b>7</b>	<b>8</b>	<b>9</b>	<b>10</b>	<b>11</b>	<b>12</b>
9:00 Choir Rehearses 10:00 Worship w/ Communion 11:00 Happy Hour 11:15 Book Study		<b>Election Day</b> 10:00 Women's Coffee/Mens' Coffee 5:30 Cantabile Ringers	1:00 Through the New Testament	12:15 Health & Wellness	10:00 Zoom Coffee	<b>9:00 Fall Work Day</b>
<b>13</b>	<b>14</b>	<b>15</b>	<b>16</b>	<b>17</b>	<b>18</b>	<b>19</b>
9:00 Choir Rehearses 10:00 Worship 11:00 Happy Hour 11:15 Book Study	5:00 Make Mondays Fun Again	10:00 Women's Coffee/Mens' Coffee 5:30 Cantabile Ringers	1:00 Through the New Testament	12:15 Health & Wellness 11:30 Berna B's	10:00 Zoom Coffee	
<b>20</b>	<b>21</b>	<b>22</b>	<b>23</b>	<b>24</b>	<b>25</b>	<b>26</b>
9:00 Choir Rehearses 10:00 Worship 11:00 Happy Hour 11:15 Book Study 12:00 Council Meeting <b>6:00 Transgender Day of Remembrance</b>		10:00 Women's Coffee/Mens' Coffee 5:30 Cantabile Ringers	1:00 Through the New Testament	<b>FCC Thanksgiving Potluck</b>	10:00 Zoom Coffee	
<b>27</b>	<b>28</b>	<b>29</b>	<b>30</b>	<b>Dec 1</b>	<b>Dec 2</b>	<b>Dec 3</b>
9:00 Choir Rehearses 10:00 Worship 11:00 Happy Hour	5:00 Make Mondays Fun Again	10:00 Women's Coffee/Mens' Coffee 5:30 Cantabile Ringers	1:00 Through the New Testament	12:15 Health & Wellness	10:00 Zoom Coffee	



Go Green! Get your Tower  
Chimes via email!



## CONTACT US!

### **Pastor:**

Rev. Paul Ashby  
revpaulashby@yahoo.com  
X104

### **Part Time Custodian:**

Matu Hedwall  
custodian@uccgj.org

### **Church Office Hours**

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

### **Office Administrator:**

Beth Rakestraw  
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### **Volunteer Financial Clerks:**

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Martha Jones  
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### **Choir/Handbell Director**

Karen Caton  
topcatkc@aol.com



# UNITED CHURCH OF CHRIST