

Tower chimes

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

Paul's Epistle



Dear Friends,

I cannot believe schools are starting often in the second week of August across the nation. I was conditioned to schools starting after Labor Day in September. I think of August as the last fun month of summer with outdoor concerts, grilled hot dogs, trips to visit friends or family, a time to relax before the rush of Fall. With September on the horizon, I want to let you know in advance the books we will use for the Fall Book Study, and the Fall Spirituality Sharing Group. Please order them in August.

Given the political situation we are going to do the Fall Book Study on *The Flag + The Cross* by Philip Gorski and Samuel Perry. The sub-title warns of the truth we face in November and beyond – “White Christian Nationalism and the Threat to American Democracy.” Philip Gorski is a professor of Sociology at Yale University whose focus has been on democracy and the erosion of civil rights. Samuel Perry is a professor of Sociology at the University of Oklahoma. His specialization has been on evangelicals and the takeover of the Republican party. The Fall Book Study will meet on the 2nd and 4th Wednesdays 1 pm on September 11, September 25th, October 9th, October 23rd and then November 6th for an election party or grief sharing support group (it's the day after Election Day). I am selecting this book to enable church members to be informed about the worst threats to democracy since the McCarthy era. It was also a shock to hear that other traditional mainline Protestant churches in Grand Junction have made the choice to remain completely neutral when a Trump election could have brutal consequences to the middle class (with tariffs), the Dreamers, the poor, and immigrant families. It could also “drill baby drill” the earth into a global desert with dead oceans.

To balance out the heat and anxiety about the upcoming election we will be starting a Fall Spirituality Sharing Group on the second Sundays after church on September 8th, October 13th, November 10th, and December 8th. The book *Emerging Heart* by Beverly Lanzetta is a classic from 2007 you can buy new or used. Try bookfinder.com for the best price. The chapters are entitled:

- The Days of Awe
- Open Secrets to True Feeling, True Loving
- One Without Name
- In Search of Common Ground
- Communion that Surpasses Words
- Emerging Heart

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

PAUL'S EPISTLE

We need the strength of being spiritually centered particularly in a time of political conflict and division. Kevin Roberts, the head of the Heritage Foundation that designed Project 2025 for Trump, proclaimed "We are in the process of the Second American Revolution, which will remain bloodless if the left allows it to be." Reflect on the word "If" in that proclamation. And yet some churches that once were active in the Civil Rights movement have nothing to say? "If" they remain neutral they turn away from compassion, justice, mercy and Jesus' Beatitudes. Both social justice and spirituality are our mission.

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

PASTOR PAUL AND PAM ON VACATION



Pastor Paul and Pam are on vacation beginning August 5 and ending August 9. They will be in Santa Fe, New Mexico where they enjoy attending the Santa Fe Opera. However, if you have an urgent pastoral care need, feel free to call:

- ◇ His cell phone, 970-793-8638. [Paul prefers calls over texts]
- ◇ or Pam's cell phone, which is sometimes more reliable, 970-286-8169.

ORGAN RECITAL SHANNON JONES

An organ recital celebrating the 55th wedding anniversary of Shannon McMahon and Alan Jones will take place at First Congregational United Church of Christ on August 10 at 3:00 pm.

Church organist Shannon McMahon Jones will perform a program beginning and ending with arrangements of "Now Thank We All Our God" by J.S. Bach and Karl Elert. Handel's "Suite for Musical Clock" and pieces representing the couple's ethnic heritage and lives in Minnesota will also be featured. A reception featuring light refreshments follows in the church social hall.



They moved back to Grand Junction a year ago after spending most of their careers in Minnesota, Shannon as a music teacher and church musician, Alan as a forester.

Come celebrate Alan and Shannon's anniversary with a delightful time of music and sharing!

MAY CONGREGATIONAL MEETING MINUTES MICHAEL PETRI, CLERK

May 19, 2024

The Congregation of First Congregational United Church of Christ met on May 19, 2024 in the sanctuary following the morning worship service for the annual meeting to elect officers. The meeting was called to order by moderator Carolyn Holmgren at 11:06 a.m. and a quorum confirmed (well more than 15% of active members present). Pastor Paul Ashby gave an opening prayer.

Presentation of Outgoing Council Member: Mary Endres was thanked for her service on the church council, and it was noted that she started the Green Team to look into ways for the church to conserve energy.

Presentation of the Proposed Church Council Slate for 2024-2025:

Moderator - Ken Puhler

Vice Moderator - Cindy Haas

Clerk - Michael Petri

Treasurer/Finance & Stewardship Chair - Julie Kruger

At Large - Kathy Goe

At Large - Connie Pyle

At Large - Ron Rucker

At Large - Rachel Seiff

At Large - Janis Woodley

Lay Delegate - Karen Caton

Lay Delegate - Martha Jones

On motion, the slate was elected. Following the vote, Ken moderated the remainder of the meeting. Paul thanked Carolyn for her work as the moderator.

The Annual Report was distributed electronically Sunday, May 12 via e-mail and Thursday, May 16 in Church Chat. Copies were available by email request in the church office. Ken asked if there were any questions or comments about the report. There being none, the meeting was adjourned on motion at 11:12 a.m.

Michael Petri
Council Clerk



JUNE COUNCIL MEETING MINUTES MICHAEL PETRI, CLERK

June 16, 2024

The church council of First Congregational Church United Church of Christ met in the chapel on June 16, 2024 for the monthly stated meeting. Present were council members Karen Caton, Kathy Goe, Cindy Haas, Martha Jones, Michael Petri, Ken Puhler (moderator), Ron Rucker, Janis Woodley and pastor Paul Ashby. Julie Krueger, Connie Pyle and Rachel Seiff were absent. Visitor: Beth Rakestraw (church administrator).

A quorum was established. The meeting was opened with prayer by Paul at 11:31 a.m.

Minutes of the April 21, 2024 council meeting were previously approved via e-mail. Minutes of the May 19 congregational meeting were read aloud by the clerk and approved..

Pastor's Report:

- ◇ Paul thanked Beth for all the extra work she took on while he was on vacation.
- ◇ Paul will be doing a sermon series on “questions you dared to ask” this summer. He suggested that he hold follow-up discussions after the worship services – and that was agreed by the council.
- ◇ He's planning to focus on book studies and films on the threat of Christian nationalism.
- ◇ The pastor of First Christian Church (DOC) asked if we'd be interested in working on a joint mission project. The council approved of the concept of a joint project.
- ◇ It was agreed by all that Sherri Cole was well received as one of the guest speakers while Paul was on vacation.

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

- ◇ Mission and Outreach/JAM, May 2024, no June meeting
- ◇ Fellowship & Hospitality Meeting, June 2024 met this past Thursday, notes not yet available
- ◇ Worship and Celebration, May 2024
- ◇ Property Team, no May meeting, June 2024 met this past Monday, notes not yet available. Beth noted that Duane has done a lot of work to get the coolers working – saving the church a lot of money. A problem with a leak in the irrigation system is being addressed. In response to the increase in bugs around the church, an exterminator is scheduled to come this week.
- ◇ Finance and Stewardship, May 2024

Delegate Report: Martha and Karen attended the RM conference meeting. They reported that there are a lot of new faces and a more positive outlook.

Other Business/New Business:

La Foret request for Capital Funds Donation – It was agreed to send the request to the Finance & Stewardship Committee for discussion and recommendation.

There being no other business, the meeting was closed at 12:34 p.m.

Michael Petri – Council Clerk

Next council meeting: July 21 at 11:30

RMC GRANT WRITING WORKSHOP

Karen Caton, one of our congregation's lay delegates, has already signed up for this training and Pastor Paul and the Church Council is encouraging other congregants to join her.

Dreams To Reality: Grant Writing for Congregations August 13th-14th via Zoom

Dreams to Reality is a webinar workshop from the RMC Board of Directors New Ministries Mentorship designed for congregations of all sizes and in all settings both rural and urban. This two-session workshop will provide participants with the basic skills and resources for effective grant writing, including finding appropriate grants, creating effective proposals, and building relationships with funders. Participants will be mailed a book on grant writing for congregations after the completion of this event. This is a virtual workshop and will be conducted via Zoom.

Please note that registration closes on August 7th. Questions? Please contact Eleanor Downey, New Ministries Mentorship at epdowney@live.com. Thank you!

Workshop Schedule

Tuesday, August 13, 6:00-8:30 PM

- ◇ Locating funding sources including public and private sources.
- ◇ Initial contacts with funders – building a relationship and asking the right questions.
- ◇ Determining if the funding source is appropriate.
- ◇ Exercise: Finding grants on-line.

Wednesday, August 14, 6:00-8:30 PM

- ◇ Writing an effective grant
- ◇ Common mistakes
- ◇ Budgets
- ◇ Exercise: Developing a grant plan

Cost: \$20 per individual, \$30 for 2-3 members of same congregation – Due at time of registration. All participants will be mailed a grant writing resource guide after the completion of the webinar. Limited to 25 participants.

Registration closes: Wednesday, August 7 at 5:00 p.m.

Workshop Moderator: Eleanor Pepi Downey, MSW, PhD, retired professor of social work, has written numerous grants in her role as a social worker and social work educator. She has also assisted non-profits in Colorado, Idaho, and Wyoming in writing effective grants as well as reviewing grants for federal agencies and foundations. Eleanor is a member of Longmont UCC and serves on the RMC Board of Directors in the role of New Ministries Mentorship. Questions can be directed to Eleanor at: epdowney@live.com

MODERATOR'S MINUTE KEN PUHLER

As we enter the month of August it reminds me of my days as a clown. Yes, a clown as in makeup, big red nose, funny clothing and balloon animals. Like most things in my life, I had never thought about me dressing up as a clown. Back in my working days as the regional prevention specialist for southwest Colorado, the state agency that funded me assigned a lot of special projects to me. That is how I learned about clowns and making balloon animals.

There was a prevention program in West Virginia that was producing excellent results in reducing alcohol, tobacco and other drug use among their youth. The program involved teaching high school students to become clowns, learn skits, and perform those in the middle school. Then the middle school students were trained, and they performed in the elementary schools. The program received national recognition for their success. This was before the evil Pennywise - Stephen King character, Killer Klowns and Insane Clown Posse.

Colorado ADAD – (Alcohol Drug Abuse Division) brought two of the program leaders to Snowmass for the Summer School on Addictive Behaviors. I was asked to be sure to attend their three-day class. My good friend Linda and my program monitor also took the class. During the class, I learned that there was an actual school of clowning, Ringling Brothers and Barnum & Bailey Clown College, in Florida. I learned about the makeup and costume suppliers along the East Coast that provided supplies around the world. The class started out teaching you a little bit about the history of clowning.

There are three types of clowns. First is the White Face clown. They are the straight man characters as they perform. They are at the top of the hierarchy. They are smart and crafty. Famous ones are Bozo and of course, Ronald McDonald—first played by TV Weatherman Willard Scott. Second is the Auguste, they are the fall guys, clumsy and bumbling. Auguste is the name of the month in German, it also means foolish and clumsy one. Cone heads and cone shaped hats are common. Coco the Clown-and his cartoon version are famous Auguste. Third is the Tramp/Hobo—the sad faced, a down on his/her luck character. Think of Red Skelton, Freddy the Freeloader and beloved Emmett Kelly's Weary Willie.

Our instructors told us that there is a natural clown residing in each of us. To discover that, we would apply each style of make-up and then determine what our natural clown style was. I was a Tramp/Hobo named Peephole- a twist on the Teeny-Weeny Yellow Polka Dot Bikini lyric. The style of clothing for this clown includes a lot of patches. I purchased the pack of iron-on multicolored ones at our local Kmart. These were applied to my 54-inch waist Levi jeans, the largest size available at the Factory Outlet. The jeans were held up by rainbow-colored suspenders, set lop-sided to expose my white boxer shorts that were adorned with red and black ants. I had a pair of hand painted tennis shoes, as my size 14 feet are naturally clown-size. I wore a red flannel shirt that had ample patches ironed on. An orange, curly wig adorned with a holey bowler topped off the costume.

The last afternoon was devoted to making balloon sculptures. We were encouraged to develop the lung power to blow those long, skinny balloons up in one breath, I opted for a handy-dandy plastic hand pump. After mastering simple dachshunds and poodles, we attempted multi-colored flowers and larger sculpts. It was a lot of fun and we got to keep our make-up palate.

A couple months later, I was contacted by my program monitor. The powers that be decided that this program might be successful in Colorado. They wanted to know if I was

MODERATOR'S MINUTE KEN PUHLER

interested in teaching others how to do the make-up and hand out the resource materials. I was, of course. They had some funds to buy supplies and I had the resource lists from the class—I ordered make-up palates, simple sponge noses, balloons of every color and shape, ballon pumps and magic supplies for some of the skits. So began my journey as a clown.

I did a training on the west slope and my daughter, Cassandra went in and Penelope, an Auguste clown, came out. Turns out, she had a knack for making balloon animals. Flowers were easy for her, she made elaborate teddy bears and life-size Pink Panthers. She had her own yellow wig and blue dress with frills and zig-zag stitching. We went to fund-raisers in the parks and every fall, we were at the Back-to-School event at the local mall. We entertained the crowd with balloon animals as they waited in line for the local police departments Kids ID program.

My good friend, Linda, was an Auguste clown. We did several trainings on the east slope together. She also had a very elaborate costume she pieced together from the many thrift stores in the Denver area. She had some great prank items to share during the training, squirting flowers, hand buzzers and an electronic flatulence sound machine. (Nothing gets kids laughing faster than a fart.)

We did a training at the High School in Conifer and that clown troupe soared and came a year later to present at an annual conference in Denver. One of the other troupes that took off was for Southern Ute Community Action Program. They explained that in their culture and that of several other tribes, clowns were an important part of tribal life. The clowns appeared during times of discord among the leaders or if someone thought themselves more important than others.

Linda and I did other trainings together for suicide prevention, storytelling for change and family sculpting. She helped me get the funding to do the special populations program to help rural schools become more inclusive and to create a safe space for LGBTQ+ students. We had a lot of fun together. She died in December of 2013; I miss her very much. Her husband, Dick, died last Saturday. I am leaving tomorrow to be with their daughter.

Clowns remind us to laugh. To laugh at ourselves and to not take ourselves so seriously.

Clowns remind us to laugh with others and to feel empathy for those who just can't seem to catch a break.

Clowns also remind us to spend time in laughter with those we love. Laughter helps temper the tears when they leave us.



SUNDAY MORNING CHILDREN'S PROGRAM MARIE KOONTZ

AUGUST CHILDREN'S PROGRAM

"Around the World in 13 Weeks"



August 4 – Kenya & Tanzania

Tour Guide – Connie Pyle

August 11 – Egypt

Tour Guide – Mike and Nancy Spangler



August 18– Germany

Tour Guide – Marty Arnold

August 25 – Poland

Tour Guide - Brian Mahoney



We will be continuing our theme of world travel during the month of September. Anyone that is interested in sharing your experiences in another country please let me know either in person or my phone # is 970-270-2579



SPEAKING WITH PRIDE ... BETH RAKESTRAW



This year, thanks to a Pride microgrant we received from Juniper Formation, a Denver-based UCC ministry that shared funds they received from CDPHE among several UCC congregations, we are able to boost our presence at this year's Colorado West Pride! We will be seeking multiple volunteers to staff our church's booth, give away some really cool Pride swag —temporary tattoos, stickers and the like— as well as information about our church. It's a wonderful opportunity for us to tell God's queer children that our congregation knows that God loves them just as they are, just as much as God loves everyone else! So put September 7 on your calendar and prepare to have a gay time!

**Save the Date:
Colorado West
Pride
Celebration!**

- PRIDE Proclamation: Wednesday 9.4.24
- Rainbows & Revolutions: Friday 9.6.24
- Glow Party: Friday 9.6.24
- PRIDE Festival: Saturday 9.7.24 @ Los Colonias
- Rainbow Party: Saturday 9.7.24

MISSION & OUTREACH

THIRD QUARTER MISSION & OUTREACH JUNE COLLECTION: COMMUNITY FOOD BANK



Throughout the third quarter, we will collect food items on their most needed list: whole grain cereal, peanut butter, canned fruit, canned tuna, cooking oil or condiments. Feel free to donate any item(s) from the list. Please place your donations in the CFB bin located on the M&O shelving by the office.

CATHOLIC OUTREACH AUGUST COLLECTION

We are continuing to collect canned vegetables. Why??? Because evidently we are very good at it! See below.

SOLIDARITY NOT CHARITY

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

**Catholic Outreach
May/June/July
Collection Numbers:
319 Canned Vegetables
9 Jars Peanut Butter
7 Cans Infant Formula
5 Boxes Rice
4 Cans Tuna
2 Can Lemonade
1 Cake Mix**

FELLOWSHIP OF THE GRAPE AND GRAIN

FOGG – newly labelled as Fellowship of the Grape and Grain— takes place August 17 from 6:00 to 8:00 pm at the home of Kathy Viglianco and Stephanie Killingsworth, 2297 South Arriba Circle. Italian wines and beers. Bring an appetizer to share. Be sure to bring lawn chairs, since FOGG will be outside.

AUGUST 2024

SUNDAY	MONDAY	TUESDAY	WEDNESDAY	THURSDAY	FRIDAY	SATURDAY
July 28	July 29	July 30	July 31	1	2	3
10:00 Worship 11:00 Happy Hour		10:00 Women's/ Mens' Coffees		11:00 Fellowship & Hospitality	10:00 Zoom Coffee	
4	5	6	7	8	9	10
10:00 Worship 11:00 Happy Hour	5:00 Make Mondays Fun Again	10:00 Women's/ Mens' Coffees	2:00 Mission & Outreach		10:00 Zoom Coffee	3:00 Organ Recital
11	12	13	14	15	16	17
10:00 Worship 11:00 Happy Hour	1:00 Property Team	10:00 Women's/ Men's Coffee		11:30 Berna B's	10:00 Zoom Coffee	6:00 [FOG] Fellowship of the Grape
18	19	20	21	22	23	24
10:00 Worship 11:00 Happy Hour 11:15 Council Meeting	5:00 Make Mondays Fun Again	10:00 Women's/ Mens' Coffee			10:00 Zoom Coffee	
25	26	27	28	29	30	31
10:00 Worship 11:00 Happy Hour		10:00 Women's/ Mens' Coffee			10:00 Zoom Coffee	

LOOKING AHEAD

September 8 | Fall Spirituality Sharing Group begins
 September 11 | Fall Book Study: *The Flag + The Cross* begins
 September 15 | Welcome Back to Church Homecoming Sunday
 October 4, 5 | Western Association Meeting

AUGUST BIRTHDAYS

8/1 Sandy Fox
 8/2 Knute Knudson
 8/8 Larry Woodley
 8/10 Shirley Kodis
 8/17 Brian Mahoney
 8/18 Janet Spomer
 8/22 Linda Mahoney
 8/22 Betty Hall
 8/25 Ellen Bradley
 8/26 Jean Yale



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!



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CONTACT US!

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