

FIRST THINGS FIRST

NEWS FOR THE CHURCH FAMILY AT FIRST PRESBYTERIAN CHURCH STERLING, COLORADO

AUGUST 2026

WHATEVER IS TRUE,
whatever is honorable,
WHATEVER IS JUST,
whatever is lovely
WHATEVER IS COMMENDABLE,
if there is any excellence,
IF THERE IS ANYTHING
worthy of praise,
THINK ABOUT THESE THINGS

PHILIPPIANS 4:8

A MESSAGE FROM MICHELLE. . .

All, or Nothing?

I have a confession. The verse, “I can do all things through him who strengthens me,” bothers me. I should say, it’s really not the verse itself, but it’s the way it’s often used. The graphic images that really get to me are the ones that juxtapose this verse with some kind of athletic imagery. Maybe the worst offenders have a cross superimposed on the image — as if Jesus died on the cross so I could get a PR on bench press.



POV: that one guy who tried to bench 225 after taking Philippians 4:13 out of context



Our current worship series is focusing on Philippians 4:8, which is just a couple of verses before the offending verse (Philippians 4:13). When you just read scripture on apps (or from memes or graphic images with just one or two verses), it’s easy to lose a sense of context. But it’s interesting to string the verses back together to see how they fit in the bigger picture. Paul writes his letter to the Philippians from jail. So, when he says, “I can do all things,” he’s not talking about feats of physical strength, he’s talking about emotional and spiritual strength. In fact, since he is a prisoner, he’s really talking about how to endure **not** being able to do things.

In our culture, we’re all about doing all the things — we like that “can do” spirit. But... it’s harder sometimes to do nothing. To be still. To be quiet. To rest. To endure the discomfort of being unable to do all that we want to (or feel we should) be doing.

The truth is, instead of lifting and carrying heavier and heavier loads, sometimes we need the strength to set our burdens down. Like Paul in prison, we need God to strengthen us in the face of defeat and disappointment, even more than we need God to help us garner wins. It’s really in the greatest losses, in our moments of weakness, that we rely most on the strength of God’s sustaining presence.

God may not, in fact, strengthen you to accomplish every lofty goal or dream. But, God will strengthen you to endure every trial and every suffering that you face. And, God even promises to redeem all our pain and transform it into something good — perhaps not instantly, but reliably.

May God strengthen and uphold you in all circumstances.

Rev. Michelle

UPCOMING EVENTS...

The Presbytery of Plains and Peaks
and the Session of First Presbyterian Church of Sterling
joyfully invite you to
the service of
ORDINATION TO THE MINISTRY OF WORD AND SACRAMENT
for
Brandon Eaton

Sunday, August 9 ~ 3pm
First Presbyterian Church
Sterling, CO

A light reception will follow the service.

*Summer Gathering
with Rev. Michelle*

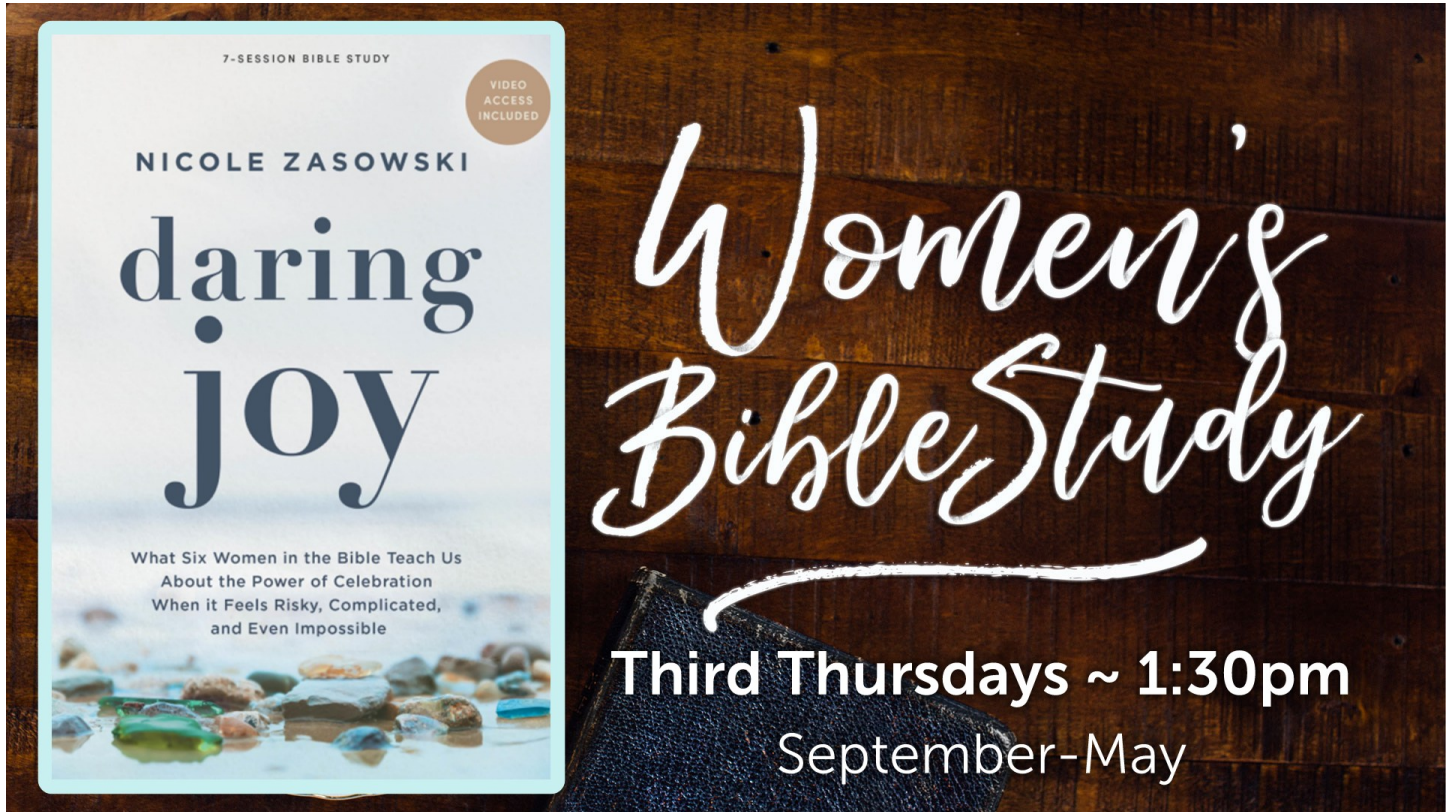
Mondays ~ 10:30am
through August 31

APPRECIATE
these
THINGS

EIGHT WAYS OF
CULTIVATING
COMPASSION

JILL J. DUFFIELD

LOOKING AHEAD....



Daring Joy by Nicole Zasowski is the Bible/Book Exploration for women beginning on **Thursday, Sept. 17 at 1:30 pm** in the fireside room of the church Fellowship Hall.

The *Daring Joy* Exploration consists of 8 sessions with meetings on the 3rd Thursday of each month, except December, through May, 2027. Ann Blackburn is the facilitator.

The Exploration will focus on 6 women of the Bible and how they experienced the fullness of God's joy. The goal is to train participants to more quickly recognize God's goodness and faithfulness in His Word and in their stories.

Nicole Zasowski is a licensed marriage and family therapist and an adjunct professor at Alliance Theological Seminary in New York.

LOOKING AHEAD....



BLESSING OF THE BACKPACKS

SUNDAY,
SEPTEMBER 14
10:30 A.M.

Save the Date... Sunday, September 14

Blessing of the Backpacks

Start off the school year (and fall season) with a blessing.
We'll have encouraging backpack tags (or luggage tags) for everyone.

Chancel Choir returns!

We appreciate the solos and special music in the summer,
but there's nothing like having the choir lead us in worship.

New series begins: **Tell Me Something Good**
Check out next month's newsletter for more details.

It's going to be a great kickoff Sunday!

MEMBER SPOTLIGHT...

Congratulations to our very own Karen Ramey Torres. Karen was recently honored as the founder and long-time director of the Family Resource Center here in Sterling (FRC).

Over 20 years ago, Karen was worried that families had few supportive services in our community to help them be more effective parents. At the time she was a caseworker/family treatment provider for Logan County Department of Human Services. One thing some struggling parents needed was a safe place to visit their children while the children were placed outside their home. And Karen had a vision.



Karen asked our church for help. As so often happens, our church stepped forward and provided a safe place for parents to visit their children. The nursery was perfect for parent visitations. One parent could come and go through the south door while the other would arrive and leave by the north door providing a separation of the parents and safety for the custodial parent and children.

But Karen's vision was bigger than just a visitation program. The idea of the Family Resource Center was born. With support from "so many people in the community", including our church, Karen worked to create such a center. She visited other such programs in the state and gradually developed a plan "in her red notebook!" for the Center. She said that so many people in the community "gave me so much grace" and support. The Family Resource Center was officially established in 2006, and Karen served as its first director until 2014.

Karen's philosophy for her work is profound. She believes that people do not simply need a handout, but they need to be equipped with skills to develop strong families. All people need to work hard to be proud of themselves and feel a strong sense of self-worth. All services should be provided with these goals in mind.

Often, a member of the community will come up to Karen and tell her that she "has had an impact on my life" or "you helped me." She hopes that her life's work has had

MEMBER SPOTLIGHT...

a positive and lasting impact on the community. “That’s why we are here, right,” she said pensively.

Karen has been a lifelong member of our church. She remembers it all fondly. Baptisms, Sunday School every Sunday morning, marriages, being a deacon and elder, special holidays. One of her fondest memories is Sunday School with Mrs. Rasmussen who would draw a Bible story on the blackboard with chalk while Mrs. Peterson would tell the story.

When asked what she is most proud of, Karen quickly said, “My children and grandchildren. They are happy, healthy and successful.”

Today the FRC provides a great variety of programs, including parenting classes, which provide ongoing support for families in Logan County. Thank you, Karen. Your legacy will live on.



The kingdom
of Heaven is like a
mustard seed which
a man took and sowed
in his field.

It is the smallest of all the
seeds, but when it has
grown it is the biggest
of shrubs and becomes a
tree, so that the birds of
the air can come and
shelter in its branches



Jesus, Matthew 13:23



THANK YOU...

THANK YOU
20 26

Dear Scholarship Committee,



Thank you for selecting me for your scholarship. It will definitely help me achieve my goals.

♥ Jaylyn Lynch

**YOU WILL BE ENRICHED
IN EVERY WAY SO THAT
YOU CAN BE GENEROUS
ON EVERY OCCASION
AND THROUGH US
YOUR GENEROSITY
WILL RESULT
IN THANKSGIVING
TO GOD.**

2 CORINTHIANS 9:11

UPCOMING EVENTS...



It's time to sign up for the annual fall retreat!

We'll stay at the YMCA of the Rockies in a nice lodge with motel style accommodations (each room has two queen beds and its own bathroom). The retreat begins with dinner on Thursday, October 22 and concludes with breakfast on Sunday, October 25. The schedule includes a balance of structured time together engaging in spiritual practices and free time to rest and enjoy the scenery.

Jesus was known to slip away in the mountains to pray. He invites us:

*Are you tired? Worn out? Come to me.
Get away with me and you'll recover your life.*

Registration forms are available at church. Contact Rev. Michelle for more information.

PRAY FOR OUR CHURCH FAMILY

Military Personnel

Luke Brigham (Randy & Terry's son) | Thomas Gage Snyder (Kim Schlup's son)
Cameron Venn (Doris Ramsel's grandson)

For those with special needs or concerns....

Grace Ann Albright Family
Joe Baran (in-law of Ted & Penny Propst)
Jackie Barton
John Neblett (Neblett's grandson)
Tye Bennett (Neblett's grandson)
Clark Bernhardt
Norm Blackburn
Brenda Boeff
Randy Brigham
Leah Burt (friend of Judy Rounph)
CEDEPCA (Protestant Ministry in Guatemala)
Cooperating Ministry
Sally Craig (friend of Jackie Reynolds)
Dylan Cranwell — Peace Corps
Taylor Cranwell
Jeanne Crouch & Family
Dave & Marsha Davis
Sarah Davis
Andrew DeSouza (Michelle Hawkins' son)
Gary Espinosa (Arden Fennell's family)
Family Resource Center
Carolee Goldsmith (mother of Brandon Eaton)
Meredith Goodwin (friend of Propsts)
Mike Hawkins (Michelle Hawkins' brother)
Highlands Camp
Sonja Holden (friend of Arden Fennell)
Dennis Kaan
Robert Koehler (friend of Laura Guenzi)
Debby Korrey (Delinda's & Darla's sister)
Delinda Korrey McDowell
Jim Leh
Rose Neblett
Dirk Nye and Regine Bendelow (Jackie Barton's
step-father & mother)

Jeni Porter (In-law of Blackburns)
David Prince (Tanna's brother)
Emma Rich (Granddaughter of Gary & Kay Rich)
Cadie, Hailey, and Austen Rose (Jason Rose
family)
Leslie Rudolph (sister of Mike Tyson)
Betty Scharf
Linda Schoyer (Sister of Connie Sue Clark)
John Seffens (friend of Mike Tyson)
Darrell Smith and family
Montelle Smith
Jim Stegman
Becky Stieb, Justin & Torin (friends of Michelle
Hawkins)
Sharon Treacy (mother of Laura Guenzi)
Amy & Byron Uhrich (Jill Vollmer's parents)
Under the Umbrella
Robert Vance (Michelle White's dad)
Laurie Weskamp Wagner (Jeff's sister)
Jeff Weskamp
Michelle Wilson (friend of David Chrisp)

Do you have an update on anyone listed
on our church prayer list?
We'd love to hear the good news of recovery,
healing and answered prayer.

If you have a joy to report, let us know!

SESSION. . .

Highlights of the May 19, 2026 Session Meeting

Beverly Cumming was appointed Acting Clerk.

Rev. Michelle officiated one funeral.

Thank you notes were received from Hope House.

A thank you note and gifts for the session were received from Darla Korrey Gertner.

Approved time away for Rev. Michelle: June 6-8; and June 29 through July 12.

The 2025 Minutes of the Session were approved by the Presbytery of the Plains and Peaks with no exceptions .

Approved the Blessing of the Animals service on May 31, 2026.

Approved a pot-luck picnic worship in the Fellowship Hall on July 5 with no communion.

Approved the following:

Fred Crawford, guest preacher on June 7;
Sacrament of communion on 6/28 instead of 6/7;

Jeff Underhill, guest preacher on June 28;
Hymn Sing on July 12.

Approved the April Transaction Detail.

Approved the following revised scholarship documents: FPC Guidelines and Application; Hastings Criteria and Application; Melvin Criteria and Application.

We were advised that the Brotherhood Mutual Insurance premiums will increase by \$1,927 on the June 15th Renewal.

The Tasty Favorites Auction raised almost \$2,500 for missions.

The Nominating Committee has a full slate of officers. They need members-at-large for the 2027 Nominating Committee.

Presbytery examination of Brandon Eaton will be June 13th at Family of Christ Church in Greeley



Held Together in Faith Since 1878

FIRST PRESBYTERIAN CHURCH

Sterling, Colorado

Your generosity makes
mission & ministry possible...

Thank you!

Profit & Loss Summary	Jan-June 2026
Total Income	\$136,931.56
Total Expense	169,180.23
Net Ordinary Income (Loss)	(32,248.67)
Budgeted Transfers	19,182.99
Other Transfers	0.00
Net Ordinary Income (Loss) with Transfers	(13,065.68)

Food Pantry

You may bring your donations to the church
and put them under
the table outside the church office,
or in the box in the elevator vestibule.

Cooperating Ministry: August
Chunky Soup (pop-top kind)
and Crackers

NJC Food Pantry:

*The NJC Food Pantry is closed for the summer.
We will resume collecting donations in August.*

THANK YOU!

August

BIRTHDAYS

- 1 Jomari Lechtman
Ryker Jackson
- 2 Marryn Sheldon
Jana Lock
- 3 Dennis Kaan
- 5 Connie Brown
- 9 Mike Tyson
- 10 Jenilee Spicer
- 12 Logan Guenzi
- 15 Cody Weingardt
- 16 Chad Borner
- 19 Emi Reeves
Kim Jackson
- 26 Dan Torres
- 27 Alex Hicks
- 30 Pat Borner
Jacob Paiz
Tammie Malone
- 31 Kay Rich
Beverly Fritzler

Happy Birthday...
May your day be blessed!



Birthday Sunday:

August 9

JUNE HIGHLIGHTS



JUNE HIGHLIGHTS: *Pride Picnic*



JULY HIGHLIGHTS



*Recognition & Thanksgiving
for Faithful Service*

HARRY PETERSON



If your role is Friend...
Your job is Kindness



SERVING IN CHURCH — AUGUST

USHERS

August 2	Carrie Lovenburg, Alex Hicks
August 9	Liz Chaney, Jackie Barton
August 16	Jill Vollmer, Lora Boren
August 23	Sue Weingardt, Leila Hutt
August 30	Brenda Christenson, Jane Robinson

FIRST RESPONSE/BULLETIN DELIVERY

August	Brenda Christenson
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FELLOWSHIP COFFEE

August 2	Women's Bible Study
August 9	Membership/Stewardship Committee
August 16	Fellowship Committee
August 23	Nominating Committee
August 30	Property Committee

COUNT OFFERING

August 2	Jerri Spear
August 9	Bev Cumming
August 16	Connie Ham
August 23	Linda Meisner
August 30	David Chrisp

CHILDREN'S MOMENT

August 9	David Chrisp
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ACOLYTES/BIBLE BEARER

August 2	Elsie Fetzer, Mike Tyson
August 9	Jeff & Brenda Christenson
August 16	Dennis & Cheryl Kaan
August 23	Jackie Reynolds, Pam Trimble
August 30	Jim & Rose Neblett



LITURGISTS

August 2	Bev Cumming
August 9	Sarah Davis
August 16	Isaac Diamond
August 23	Rex Witherspoon
August 30	Darla Korrey Gertner

AV TEAM

August 2	Jeff Christenson (sound) Pam Trimble (slides)
August 9 (10:30am)	Dean Boeff (sound) Chloe Hutt (slides)
(3pm— Ordination)	Rex Witherspoon (sound) Myra Westfall (slides)
August 16	Rex Witherspoon (sound) Callie Jackson (slides)
August 23	Alex Hicks (sound) Pam Trimble (slides)
August 30	Rex Witherspoon (sound) Chloe Hutt (slides)

PREPARE & SERVE COMMUNION—AUGUST 2

Prepare	Elsie Fetzer, Bev Cumming
Serve	Elsie Fetzer, Jomari Lechtman, Pat Borner

Remember to let the church office know if you trade serving dates with someone (522-2708).

Serving schedules subject to change. Check the website for most up-to-date schedules.

August 2026

Sun	Mon	Tue	Wed	Thu	Fri	Sat
						1
2	3	4	5	6	7	8
10:30 Worship/ Communion 11:30 Fellowship Coffee	10:30 Summer Gathering with Rev. Michelle	5:00 Zumba	10:00 Worship & Sacraments Meeting	4:30 Zumba		
9	10	11	12	13	14	15
10:30 Worship 11:30 Fellowship Coffee & Birthday Celebration 3pm Brandon Eaton ordination	10:30 Summer Gathering with Rev. Michelle 12:00 Finance	5:00 Zumba		4:30 Zumba		Newsletter Deadline
16	17	18	19	20	21	22
10:30 Worship 11:30 Fellowship Lunch	10:30 Summer Gathering with Rev. Michelle	5:00 Zumba 6:00 Session		4:30 Zumba		
23	24	25	26	27	28	29
10:30 Worship 11:30 Fellowship Coffee Nominating Committee Meeting	10:30 Summer Gathering with Rev. Michelle	5:00 Zumba		4:30 Zumba 5:30 Bells 6:30 Choir		
30	31					
10:30 Worship 11:30 Fellowship Coffee	10:30 Summer Gathering with Rev. Michelle					



FIRST PRESBYTERIAN CHURCH

130 S. 4TH STREET ~ STERLING, CO 80751

WORSHIP

Sunday, 10:30 a.m.

onsite ~ online

www.facebook.com/fpc.sterling

www.youtube.com/@FPC.Sterling

CHURCH PHONE 970.522.2708

Fax 970.522.1365

WEBSITE www.firstpressterling.org

OFFICE HOURS: M/W/F: 9-noon T/Th: 1-4
(or by appointment)

Staff:

PASTOR

E-mail pastor@fpcsterling.org

MICHELLE WITHERSPOON

OFFICE ADMINISTRATOR

E-mail office@fpcsterling.org

RASHELL FRITZLER

BOOKKEEPER

E-mail finance@fpcsterling.org

KARLEE MANUELLO

MUSIC COORDINATOR/ORGANIST

ELSIE FETZER

CHOIR DIRECTOR

DARLA KORREY GERTNER

BELL CHOIR DIRECTOR

LINDSEY JACKSON

PROPERTY MANAGER

JANET KLOBERDANZ

NEWSLETTER TEAM

BEV CUMMING
TAMMIE MALONE
JACKIE REYNOLDS