

# FIRST THINGS FIRST

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

FEBRUARY 2024



The Light of God surrounds us. The Love of God enfolds us.

## A MESSAGE FROM MICHELLE. . .

## *The Season of Lent*

This year for the season of Lent we'll be thinking about the ways that we **wander** from God and God's ways, and we'll listen for God's call to **return**.

I'll be connecting the Lectionary  
scripture readings with phrases  
from the hymn,  
*Come, Thou Fount of Every Blessing:*



*Come, thou Fount of every blessing;  
tune my heart to sing thy grace;  
streams of mercy, never ceasing,  
call for songs of loudest praise.  
Teach me some melodious sonnet,  
sung by flaming tongues above;  
praise the mount! I'm fixed upon it,  
mount of God's unchanging love!*

*Here I raise my Ebenezer\*;  
hither by thy help I'm come;  
and I hope, by thy good pleasure,  
safely to arrive at home.  
Jesus sought me when a stranger,  
wandering from the fold of God;  
he, to rescue me from danger,  
interposed his precious blood.*

*O to grace how great a debtor  
daily I'm constrained to be!  
Let that grace now, like a fetter,  
bind my wandering heart to thee.  
Prone to wander, Lord, I feel it,  
prone to leave the God I love;  
here's my heart; O take and seal it;  
seal it for thy courts above.*

Throughout the season of Epiphany, we've been on a journey of discovery. The journey continues in the season of Lent as we wind our way alongside Christ on his journey to the cross. As is often the case in life, our paths are not always straight or simple. The road curves, taking us up to mountain top moments, and down into dark valleys. But, no matter how far we wander, Christ is always with us, and God is always ready to rejoice and welcome us when we return.

Have you wandered? Maybe it's time to return. You can begin with the simplest prayer:

*Bind my wandering heart to thee...*

This Lent, give your wandering heart to God. They say, “not all who wander are lost,” and indeed with God, in the end none shall be lost (Luke 19:10; Isaiah 55:11).

\* “Ebenezer” (1 Samuel 7:12), Hebrew for  
“a stone of help” set up to give thanks for  
God’s assistance

Rev. Michelle



# Legend for the Journey through Lent



## **February 11 – Transfiguration – Praise the Mount**

*It's not Lent yet, but Transfiguration Sunday will serve as a bridge between our Epiphany season of Discover and the Lenten season. We go up to the mountain top with Jesus. (Mark 9:2-9)*



## **February 14 – Ash Wednesday – Tune my heart**

*The tuning fork icon reminds us to pause to tune our hearts at the start of the season. Joel 1:13 (rend your hearts); Psalm 51:10 (create in my a clean heart); Matt. 6:21 (where your treasure is there your heart will be also)*



## **February 18 – First Sunday in Lent – Prone to wander/Rescue me from danger**

*The waves on this week's map marker remind us of the covenant that God made with all creation after the flood and the way God refreshes us along our journey when we wander through the wilderness (Genesis 9:8-17; Mark 1:9-15)*



## **February 25 – Second Sunday in Lent – Prone to leave the God I love**

*The rooster icon reminds us of Peter's denial of Jesus on the night of his arrest. Jesus says: "let them deny themselves and take up their cross and follow me... those who lose their life for my sake, and for the sake of the gospel, will save it," but we are often unwilling to follow Christ in suffering. (Genesis 17:1-7, 15-16; Mark 8:31-38)*



## **March 3 – Third Sunday in Lent – Teach me**

*The tablets on this week's map marker remind us to give our time and attention to God's instruction. (Exodus 20:1-17; John 2:13-22)*



## **March 10 – Fourth Sunday in Lent – Jesus sought me**

*We need sustenance on the journey. The fish reminds us of God's abundant provision. (Psalm 107: 1-3, 17-22; Ephesians 2:1-10; John 3:14-21)*



## **March 17 – Fifth Sunday in Lent – Here's my heart**

*On the 5th Sunday we pause to remember that God has written the Law on our hearts. (Jeremiah 31:31-34; Psalm 51:1-12)*



## **March 24 – Palm Sunday – Songs of loudest praise**

*The map marker for us on Palm Sunday is a music note overlaid with a crescendo symbol, which in music means to get louder gradually, because on Palm Sunday we sing our praise. (Psalm 118: 1-2, 19-29; Mark 11:1-11)*



## **March 28 – Maundy Thursday – I'm fixed upon it**

*Seder Supper Service (6pm) The icon for Maundy Thursday is a fermata symbol which calls for a prolonged note or pause in music. On Maundy Thursday we pause to remember Jesus' last supper, and we fix our eyes with him on the cross. (John 13:34-35)*



## **March 31 – Easter Sunday – And I hope**

*Finally, the journey takes us to the sunrise of a new day when we celebrate the rising of the Son of God who gives us all new life.*

## UPCOMING EVENTS...

First Friday  
@ First Presbyterian

*Fran Moore*

Soprano + Violin

*Love & Hearts*

February 2 ~ 12:05pm



annual  
congregational  
meeting



February 11 during Fellowship Coffee





# COMMUNITY *Lenten Services*

**JOIN US ON WEDNESDAYS AT NOON FOR A WORSHIP SERVICE & LUNCH**

*service & lunch provided by:*

2/14: FPC   2/21: CHRIST UMC   2/28: PEACE LUTHERAN   3/6: FIRST ENGLISH LUTHERAN  
3/13: NAZARENE CHURCH   3/20: FIRST CHRISTIAN   3/27: FAITH CORNERSTONE

***Location: First Presbyterian Church***



## *Ash Wednesday*

**Join us for a special  
service & lunch:**

**February 14**

**12pm**

**celebrate vaLENTine's day with us!**



# THANK YOU...

## PER CAPITA

2024 Per Capita:  
\$56/member

*Per Capita envelopes and more information about per capita can be found on the table outside the church office.*



Per capita is crucial to the overall health of the PC(USA), because it binds presbyteries, synods, and congregations together in one church.

REV. DR. J. HERBERT NELSON, II, STATED  
CLERK OF THE GENERAL ASSEMBLY



**We are so close to our goal!**

**Estimate of Giving cards are available at church if you would like to turn one in for 2024.**



### Stewardship Update

Estimates of Giving for 2024

**55 EOGs — \$215,247**

2024 Goal: \$225,000

Your generosity makes mission & ministry possible... ***Thank you!***

# A MOMENT FOR MISSION...



The Church received a letter from Highlands Presbyterian Camp and Retreat Center in early December thanking us for our continued support and outlining both accomplishments and plans for next year.

Staff listed the following as major accomplishments during 2023:

Hosted a summer camp for youth of all ages as well as intergenerational.

Water conservation and environment: Replaced 1,000 feet of leaking pipelines, installed low flow devices in the Retreat Center; removed over 600 gallons of hazardous waste from the property; protected our water rights to Rock Creek water.

Structures and safety: Entirely rebuilt the Retreat Center decks, balconies and bridges; upgraded the walk-in refrigerator and freezer to maintain safe temperatures.

Stabilized the operations at Highlands to reduce the operating deficit so that donations and support can go to programming and capital projects.

There is much yet to do, and, according to the letter, our support will help accomplish this:

Focus on the ministry of Highlands and begin programming to live into the vision for Highlands.

Work on the structures for safety, environment and guest experience. This includes energy efficient heating, weather proofing, new roofs, additional gathering spaces and water treatment plant modernization.

Together with the Boulder Valley and Longmont Conservation Districts, implement a Forest Restoration Plan to return health to our forest and mitigate the danger from wildfire. As part of this the camp will be providing 200 cords of firewood to their neighbors in need.

Mike Doyle stated in the letter: “We are very grateful for the 75-year legacy of Highlands — not just the land and buildings but the impact of volunteers, donors, campers, Retreat Center guests and staff. We want to continue this legacy and can do so with your continued thoughts, prayers, and support.”



# YOUTH MINISTRY

## CHANGING THE WORLD CONFIRMATION FOR THE MISSIONAL CHURCH



**Families with Middle or High School Youth:** Let us know if your youth are interested in participating in a *new* confirmation program (even if they've already been through Confirmation!). We're excited about this new curriculum and we are looking into offering it as a course for *all* youth, either as their Confirmation course, or as a follow-up to Confirmation. Contact Rev. Michelle for more information.

High School Seniors and Continuing College/Graduate Students:

**Scholarship Applications** are due March 15.

Contact the church for more information about scholarships/applications.

**Youth Easter Egg Preparations** — Calling all youth!

Join us on **Sunday, March 24** after worship to help prep Easter Eggs for Easter Sunday. Then, help hide the eggs for the children on **Easter Sunday, March 31**.

## NEW! Help *Flower the Cross* for Easter Sunday...

The cross covered in flowers is a powerful symbol of resurrection!

We are going to *flower the cross* for Easter Sunday.

Last year, we commissioned lovely silk lily arrangements for Easter. This year, we are planning to provide silk flowers to cover the cross with color and signs of life.

We would welcome memorial donations to purchase these silk flowers.

The suggested donation is \$25, but donations in any amount are welcome.

Any extra funds raised will be used for additional silk arrangements for the sanctuary.

**Please complete the Easter (Silk ) Flower donation form below and return to the church office by Sunday, March 17 to have your donation listed in the Easter Sunday bulletin and worship slides.**

There will be no flowers to take home, so all donations are tax deductible.



### Easter (Silk) Flower Donation Form

*Please return form by Sunday, March 17*

*Memorial Donations will be acknowledged in the bulletin/slides on Easter Sunday.*

Donor's Name: \_\_\_\_\_

In memory of: \_\_\_\_\_

or

In honor of: \_\_\_\_\_

Amount (suggested donation \$25): \_\_\_\_\_

Please make checks out to First Presbyterian Church with a memo specifying "Silk Flowers"



### **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: February**

Instant Potatoes

### **NJC Food Pantry:**

Nuts, Dried Fruit, Trail Mix; Jerky;  
Tuna or Salmon (cans/packets);  
Protein Bars; Peanut Butter; Nut Butter;  
Crackers; Granola; Fruit/Nut Bars;  
Instant Oatmeal; Popcorn; Microwavable meals.

**THANK YOU!**



## *February* **BIRTHDAYS**

- 2 Phillip McKibbin
- 3 Kelley Jackson
- 4 Carson Guenzi
- 10 Rick Lock
- 11 Cindy Benson
- 14 Marcia Burnham
- 16 Karen Bargell  
Brandon Eaton  
Sam Rounph
- 17 Darrell Smith
- 18 Delinda Korrey  
McDowell  
Kevin Vollmer
- 20 Wade Guenzi
- 21 Jackie Reynolds  
Justin Cranwell
- 25 Dustin Kaan
- 27 Brian Witherspoon

*Happy Birthday...*

**May your day be blessed!**



# 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....

Florence Annan  
Grace Ann (Connie Clark's relative)  
David Balabanis Family  
Tye Bennett (Neblett's grandson)  
Brenda Boeff  
Gabe Chapin  
Cooperating Ministry  
Jeanne Crouch & Family  
Cierra Davis (friend of Becky Cranwell)  
Andrew DeSouza (Michelle Hawkins' son)  
Gary Espinosa (Arden Fennell's family)  
Family Resource Center  
Koehn Gertner (Mike's grandson)  
Meredith Goodwin (friend of Propsts)  
David Hashman, SCF Inmate  
Highlands Camp  
Sonja Holden (friend of Arden Fennell)  
Chris Jutz  
Josh Jutz & Kaylee  
Janae (Klindt) Kerr  
Kiel/Alva Family (friends of Weingardts)  
Robert Koehler (friend of Laura Guenzi)  
Debby Korrey (Delinda's & Darla's sister)  
Ann Leh and Family  
Delinda Korrey McDowell  
Aline Marquez (friend of Becky Cranwell)  
Montelle Martens  
Rev. Betsey & Eric Moe,  
    & the people of Guatemala  
Craig, Nancy & Jackie Moormeir (friends of Jomari Lechtman)  
Rose Neblett  
Jeni Porter (In-law of Blackburns)  
Frances Rhodes (Dave's mother)

Jerry Rich (Gary's brother)  
Agnes Rundus  
Betty Scharf  
John Seffens (friend of Mike Tyson)  
Steven Shinn (friend of Jim Leh)  
Darrell Smith  
AJ, Sara, & Baby Leo Sonnenberg  
    (friends of Weingardts)  
Becky Stieb, Justin & Torin  
    (friends of Michelle Hawkins)  
Charlie & Roseanne Thompson (friends of Nebletts)  
Mike Tyson  
Amy & Byron Uhrich (Jill Vollmer's parents)  
Under the Umbrella  
Robert Vance (Michelle White's dad)  
Norma Wagner (Jana Lock's mom)  
Derek Weingardt  
    (nephew of Rhodes and Weingardts)  
Violet Weingardt (Rick and Kim Weingardt's mom)  
Masi Wells (friend of Taylor Cranwell)  
Jeff Weskamp  
Jim & Jean Williamson

*A note from Janet Foos: "I want to thank everyone who kept Norman in their prayers these past years and for their love and support. He's finally at peace. God bless you all."*

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!**

*Condolences to...*  
the family of Hollis Jackson

# SESSION. . . Highlights from the December 5, 2023 Session Meeting

The Session of First Presbyterian Church (U.S.A.), Sterling, Colorado, held a regular meeting on Tuesday, December 5, 2023, at 5:30 p.m. in the conference room.

**IT WAS VOTED** to seat Deacon Sue Weingardt and give her voice.

Upon recommendation of the Deacons, **IT WAS VOTED** to approve \$5,690.00 from the ELSMT fund for medical expenses for a church member.

## PASTOR'S REPORT

A written report was received.

A thank you note was received for our donation to the Yucatan Peninsula Mission (YPM).

A note was received from Brandon (B.J.) Eaton.

## CLERK'S REPORT

**IT WAS VOTED** to receive the following members by reaffirmation of faith: Jackie Yvonne Barton, Phillip Douglas McKibbin, Kay Brigham Rich and Gary Rich.

Two Church policies, Sexual Misconduct and Code of Conduct with Youth and Vulnerable Adults, were reviewed.

A written report was received from ruling elder commissioner Jomari Lechtman for the October Presbytery meeting.

**FINANCE:** The Investment Policy and the Finance policy were reviewed.

**PROPERTY: IT WAS VOTED** to approve the building use request from Sarah Davis for voice lessons, ongoing (generally Thursdays 5pm-8pm), music/practice room.

**WORSHIP AND SACRAMENTS: IT WAS VOTED** to approve the following 2024 Communion Dates: First Sunday of the month, Easter Sunday, Christmas Eve, Blue Christmas, Ash Wednesday, Retreat.

**MEMBERSHIP/STEWARDSHIP** Positive responses from the congregation on turning in the EOGs for 2024.

**NOMINATING:** Connie Clark has volunteered to serve on the 2024 Nominating Committee. She will be elected at the Congregational Meeting in 2024.

## TREASURER'S REPORT

The church regularly receives notices of delinquent taxes for a mineral trust that we do not own. The finance committee recommends no action; the session agreed.

## OTHER BUSINESS

Recognition and Thanksgiving for Faithful Service for our outgoing Elders and Clerk.

**IT WAS VOTED** to elect Jackie Reynolds as Clerk of Session for 2024 and Robert Smith as Treasurer for 2024.

**IT WAS VOTED** to hold the Annual Congregational Meeting on February 11, 2024 after service.

## NEXT MEETINGS/IMPORTANT DATES

Ordination/Installation of Officers – January 14, 2024

In accordance with *Book of Order* G-2.0104, the session has assessed the calling, gifts, and ability of the officers-elect, and has determined that they are sufficient to fulfill the requirements as expressed in the constitutional questions for ordination and installation.

Session Meeting – January 16, 2024 at 5:30pm

Annual Congregational Meeting – February 11, 2024

There being no further business, Rev. Michelle Witherspoon closed the meeting with prayer.

# SERVING IN CHURCH — FEBRUARY

## USHERS

**February 4** Justin Cranwell  
Michelle Hawkins  
**February 11** Sue weingardt  
Liz Chaney  
**February 18** Ken McDowell  
Delinda Korrey McDowell  
**February 25** Alie Sheldon  
Shelby Harms

## FIRST RESPONSE/BULLETIN DELIVERY

**February** Michelle Hawkins

## FELLOWSHIP COFFEE

**February 4** Personnel Committee  
**February 11** Fellowship Committee  
**February 18** Board of Deacons  
**February 25** Chancel Choir

## COUNT OFFERING

**February 4** Bev Cumming  
**February 11** Linda Meisner  
**February 18** Bob Smith  
**February 25** Connie Ham

## LITURGISTS

**February 4** Linda Meisner  
**February 11** Bob Smith  
**February 18** Becky Cranwell  
**February 25** Kim Jackson

## AV TECHS

**February 4** Dean Boeff (sound)  
Callie Jackson (slides)  
**February 11** Jeff Christenson (sound)  
Jacob Paiz (slides)  
**February 18** Justin Cranwell (sound)  
Pam Trimble (slides)  
**February 25** Dean Boeff (sound)  
Myra Westfall (slides)

## PREPARING/SERVING COMMUNION

**February 4, 2024**

**Preparing:** Jomari Lechtman, Rose Neblett

**Serving:** Connie Ham, Tanna Prince, Dennis Kaan



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.**  
**[www.firstpressterling.org/servingschedules](http://www.firstpressterling.org/servingschedules)**



# February 2024

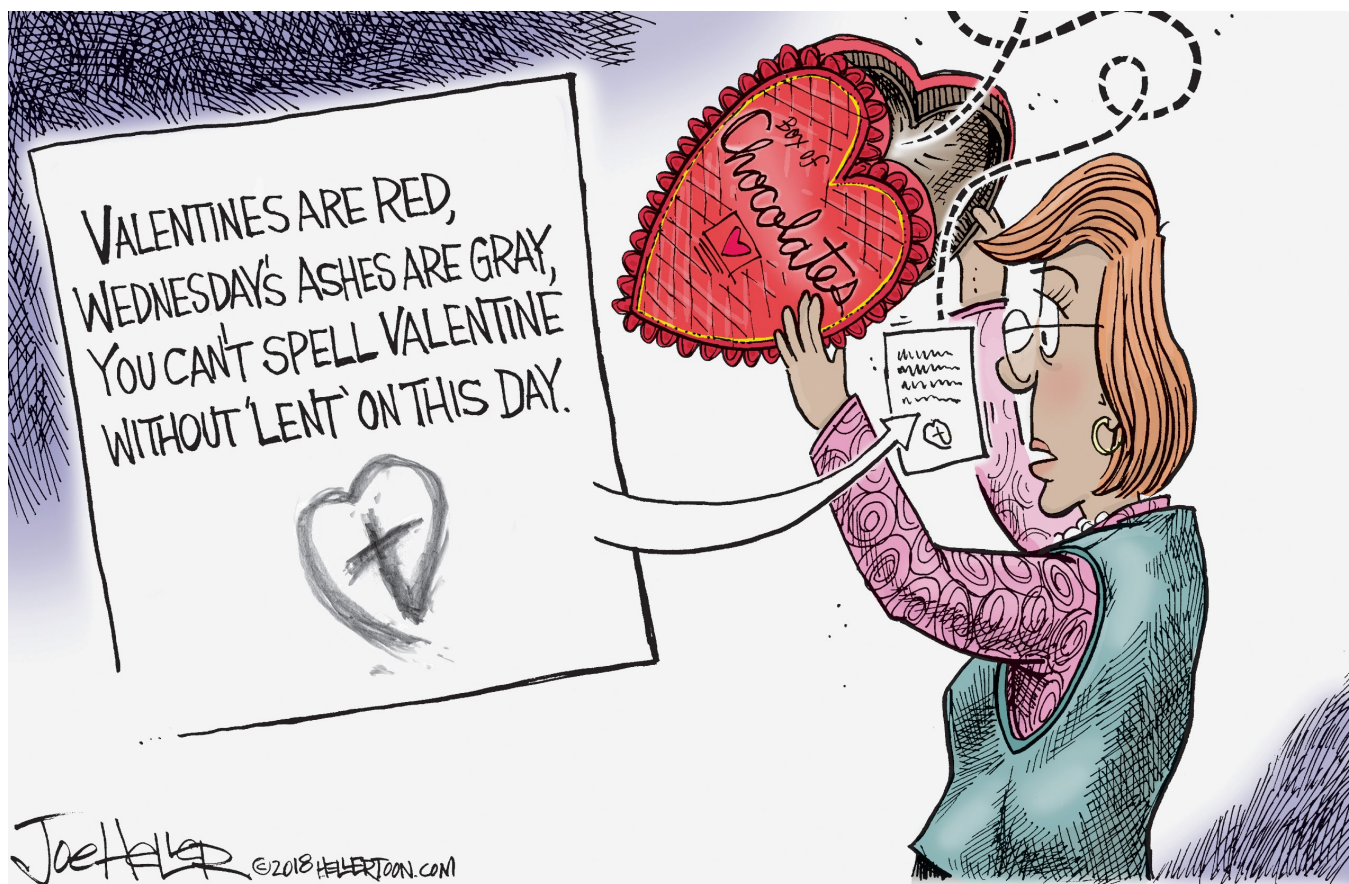
Sun	Mon	Tue	Wed	Thu	Fri	Sat
				1	2	3
				5:30 Bells 6:30 Choir	12:05pm First Friday Concert	10:00 Presbytery Meeting (St. Andrew — Boulder)
4	5	6	7	8	9	10
10:30 Worship/ Communion 11:30 Fellowship Coffee		5:15 Fellowship		5:30 Bells 6:30 Choir		
11	12	13	14	15	16	17
10:30 Worship 11:30 Fellowship Coffee & Congregational Meeting			12:00 Ash Wednesday Service/Lunch  5:15 Finance	Newsletter Deadline  1:30 Women's Bible Study  5:30 Bells 6:30 Choir		
18	19	20	21	22	23	24
10:30 Worship 11:30 Fellowship Coffee		1pm Membership & Stewardship  5:30pm Session	12:00 Lent Worship & Lunch	5:30 Bells 6:30 Choir		
25	26	27	28	29		
10:30 Worship 11:30 Fellowship Coffee			12:00 Lent Worship & Lunch	5:30 Bells 6:30 Choir		

January 2024 ... Our year is off to a great start!



Reaffirmation of Baptism & Ordination/Installation of Officers





## FIRST PRESBYTERIAN CHURCH

130 S. 4TH STREET ~ STERLING, CO 80751

### WORSHIP

Sunday, 10:30 a.m.

onsite ~ online ~ radio

[www.facebook.com/fpc.sterling](http://www.facebook.com/fpc.sterling)

### RADIO MINISTRY

Sunday, 10:30 a.m. On KSTC (AM 1230)

CHURCH PHONE 970.522.2708

Fax 970.522.1365

WEBSITE [www.firstpressterling.org](http://www.firstpressterling.org)

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

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