

FIRST THINGS FIRST

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

FEBRUARY 2026



*Is not this the fast that I choose: to loose the bonds of injustice,
to undo the straps of the yoke,
to let the oppressed go free, and to break every yoke?*

~ Isaiah 58:6

A MESSAGE FROM MICHELLE. . .

- LENT - UNBOUND FINDING FREEDOM IN CHRIST

In the gospel of John, we read that Jesus raises a man named Lazarus from the dead. Lazarus had been dead in the tomb for four days when Jesus came and cried out, “Lazarus, come out!” Lazarus emerges from the tomb, alive, **but still bound by his graveclothes**. Jesus says, “Unbind him, and let him go.” This image of a person revived, but still bound, is striking. I wonder if we are sometimes like that. We are called to new life, to forgiveness, to align our actions with God’s values and justice, but... we still feel stuck in realities that have a hold on us. We still struggle with bad habits, short tempers, and a short-sightedness that makes wholeness (and maybe even goodness) seem beyond our reach. We carry anxiety about a world that feels increasingly precarious, and we feel bound by systems within which we feel powerless.

This Lent, we’ll explore some of the things that bind us and make us feel stuck (struggles both personal and communal, individual and systemic). As we acknowledge these challenges, we’ll turn to scripture for direction so we may begin finding freedom in Christ. We’ll see Jesus meeting people bound by fear, by certainty, by death itself, and calling them toward freedom.

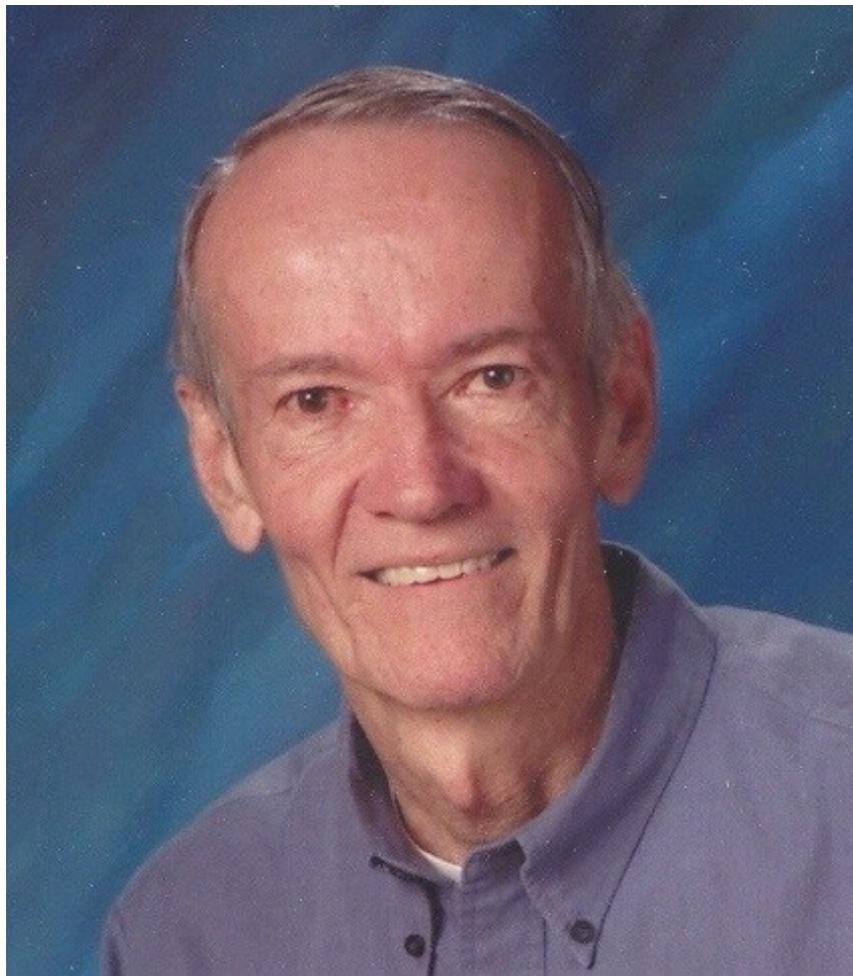
May we enter the Lenten season together, trusting that Christ meets us right where we feel stuck and calls us, again and again, toward freedom.

Rev. Michelle

UPCOMING EVENTS...

First Friday @ First Presbyterian

Sam Edgar
Violin



February 6, 2026

12:05 to 12:35

onsite, or online: www.youtube.com/@FPC.Sterling

UPCOMING EVENTS . . .

Ash Wednesday

FEBRUARY 18

5:15 supper

6pm service with imposition of ashes



annual
congregational
meeting

February 22 during Fellowship Lunch



COMMUNITY
Lenten Services

**JOIN US EVERY WEDNESDAY NOON FOR A
 LENTEN WORSHIP SERVICE AND LUNCH.
 SERVICE BEGINS AT 12:05 AND CONCLUDES AT 12:35
 LUNCH FROM 12:35 - 1:00**

**LUNCHESES WILL BE AVAILABLE TO EAT AT THE CHURCH
 OR TAKE WITH YOU. FREE WILL OFFERING GIVEN TO
 COOPERATING MINISTRIES OF LOGAN COUNTY.**

**SERVICES ARE AT
 FAITH CORNERSTONE CHURCH
 230 WILLIAMS PLACE... 522-0140**

**Feb 18
 Jodie Harless
 Faith Cornerstone**

**March 11
 Michelle Witherspoon
 First Presbyterian**

**April 1st
 Spencer Green
 Willard & Christ Church**

**February 25
 Lew Champ
 First Christian**

**March 18
 Kristie Firme
 Retired**

**March 4
 Richard vonSteinman
 First English Church**

**March 25
 Terry Krayenhagen
 Peetz Community**



OUR HISTORY...

Our Second Church Building 1883-1898

By 1883 the congregation of the First Presbyterian Church had outgrown the soddy church that had been built 3 miles northeast of Sterling. Also, by then several families had moved from the “Old Sterling” area to the up-and-coming new Sterling village which had been platted during this period of time. Under the leadership of Rev. Nicholson, the congregation began to plan for a new church in the village.



Interestingly, nothing appears in the Church Register concerning the congregation’s move from the soddy church to its new building in 1883, nor of the building of this structure. But we do know that the Presbyterian Church was the second oldest congregation in the Sterling community and the first to erect a church building in the village of Sterling. It predated the establishment of the county by nearly a decade and the founding of the town by 3 years. M.C. King donated a building site at the northwest corner of Main Street and Fourth Street where Bill’s Motor Company building (now the Parts and Labor Brewery) stands. Construction probably began in 1882.

The construction of the church must have been somewhat of a group building effort by several congregations in the village. Members of the Methodist Church apparently assisted in the project, sharing the building until building their own church. In 1883, the Baptists also used the building for services. At one time the Presbyterian congregation refused to change the time of their church services because it would prevent the Baptists from being able to hold services in the church.

Early in 1883, the congregation moved into their new church building. It was not elaborate or luxurious but was comfortably large for those days. Rectangular in form, on the front end was a low, square bell tower with a bell, and it was lit with kerosene lamps.

At first, the congregation held services twice a month. In 1885, the Session voted to increase the salary of the new pastor, Rev. Robert Williams, from \$500 to \$600 a year, and he conducted services every Sunday morning and evening. The manse was erected around 1885 at the rear of the church facing North 4th Street.

On February 24, 1892, the first women's organization in Sterling was organized in the Presbyterian Church. This was the Madame Willard Women's Christian Temperance Union. Of the original 33 members, at least 11 were Presbyterians.

It is interesting to note that in 1892, twelve little streetlights were installed in downtown Sterling. They were flaring four-sided glass boxes set on four by fours, and one of them stood at the corner of the Presbyterian Church. A young church member, A.D. Jackson, carrying his ladder around, was the first official lamplighter. During this period of Sterling development board walks were laid in the business district. The members of First Presbyterian Church were worshipping in the very heart of the new community of Sterling.

This then was the beginning of the First Presbyterian Church in Sterling.



God's faithfulness continues through the generations.

~Psalm 119:90

THANK YOU...

I'd like to share my heartfelt thanks to the congregation and to Pastor Michelle for all your support and prayers while I went through treatment for breast cancer. The meals were especially helpful and eased my burden greatly while I recovered from surgery. I am officially cancer free! I have a prevention plan to keep up with now, but am feeling relieved and grateful.

Thank you again!

- Sarah Davis



February BIRTHDAYS

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
Chunky Soup (with pop tops if possible)

NJC Food Pantry:
Nutritious Non-Perishable
Prepared Foods

THANK YOU!

- 2 Jonelle Parker
- 3 Kelley Jackson
- 4 Carson Guenzi
- 8 Laurie McKenzie
- 10 Rick Lock
- 11 Cindy Benson
- 16 Brandon Eaton
Karen Bargell
Sam Rounph
- 17 Darrell Smith
- 18 Delinda Korrey
McDowell
Kevin Vollmer
- 20 Wade Guenzi
- 21 Justin Cranwell
Jackie Reynolds
- 24 Dustin Kaan
- 27 Brian Witherspoon

Birthday Sunday:

February 8

Happy Birthday...
May your day be blessed!

SESSION. . .

Highlights of the December 16, 2025 Session Meeting

The following deacons and officers-elect: Delinda Korry-McDowell, Sue Weingardt, Liz Chaney, Brenda Christenson, Rex Witherspoon, and Jerri Spear were seated and given voice.

Approved the sacrament of communion at this meeting.

Approved the following 2026 communion dates: first Sunday of each month, Maundy Thursday (Seder Supper), Easter Sunday, Ash Wednesday, Blue Christmas, Christmas Eve, Retreat.

Approved the ordination/installation of officers on January 11, 2026.

Approved removing 8 people from the active member roll.

Examination of new elders and deacons and officer education took place during the meeting.

Rev. Michelle officiated at a memorial service for Sharon Dickenson November 22, 2025.

Jacalyn Reynolds was elected Clerk of Session for 2026.

David Chrisp was elected Treasurer for 2026.

Approved taking up to \$11,700 from the ELMST Fund to assist with cash flow in December 2025. (This would be approximately the amount of a 4% annual distribution.)

Approved the wedding of Scott Guenzi and Jayden Bechdel.

A request to use the kitchen was considered. Concerns were raised regarding food safety regulations and liability. No action was taken.

2026 Stewardship Update: \$232,040 (58 Estimates of Giving)



Held Together in Faith Since 1878

FIRST PRESBYTERIAN CHURCH

Sterling, Colorado

Your generosity makes
mission & ministry possible...

Thank you!

Profit & Loss Summary	Jan—Dec, 2025
Total Income	\$287,688.89
Total Expense	347,409.77
Net Ordinary Income (Loss)	(59,720.88)
Budgeted Transfers	25,411.14
Other Transfers	11,700.00
Net Ordinary Income (Loss) with Transfers	(22,609.74)

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 (Connie Clark's relative)
David Balabanis Family
Joe Baran (in-law of Ted & Penny Propst)
Sharon Bennett (Neblett's son-in-law's mother)
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)
Jeanne Crouch & Family
Dave and 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)
Chris Jutz
Josh Jutz & Kaylee
Robert Koehler (friend of Laura Guenzi)
Debby Korrey (Delinda's & Darla's sister)
Jim Leh and family
Delinda Korrey McDowell
Rose Neblett

Dirk Nye and Regine Bendelow (Jackie Barton's step-father & mother)
Mari Paradise (Jim Neblett's sister)
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 and Gary Rudolph (sister and brother-in-law of
Mike Tyson)
Betty Scharf
Linda Schoyer (Sister of Connie Sue Clark)
John Seffens (friend of Mike Tyson)
Steven Shinn (friend of Jim Leh)
Darrell Smith and family
Montelle Smith
Becky Stieb, Justin & Torin (friends of Michelle Hawkins)
Charlie & Roseanne Thompson (friends of Nebletts)
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
Jean Williamson
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!

HIGHLIGHTS: *December*

Christmas Eve



HIGHLIGHTS: *January*

**Birthday Sunday // Baptism of the Lord Sunday
Ordination & Installation of Officers**



SERVING IN CHURCH — FEBRUARY

USHERS

February 1	Liz Chaney, Lora Boren
February 8	Sue Weingardt, Brenda Christenson
February 15	Ken McDowell, Delinda Korrey McDowell
February 22	Alie Sheldon, Jill Vollmer



FIRST RESPONSE/BULLETIN DELIVERY

February	Jill Vollmer
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FELLOWSHIP COFFEE

February 1	Worship & Sacraments Committee
February 8	Membership/Stewardship
February 15	Deacons
February 22	Fellowship Committee

COUNT OFFERING

February 1	David Chrisp
February 8	Bev Cumming
February 15	Connie Ham
February 22	Linda Meisner

CHILDREN'S MOMENT

February 8	Delinda Korrey McDowell
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ACOLYTES/BIBLE BEARER

February 1	Harry Peterson & LeRoy Morrissey
February 8	Chuck & Ashlee Glaser
February 15	Connie Ham & Linda Meisner
February 22	Tanna Prince & Lora Boren

LITURGISTS

February 1	Penny Propst
February 8	Linda Meisner
February 15	Tara Guenzi
February 22	Rose Neblett

AV TEAM

February 1	Jeff Christenson (sound) Callie Jackson (slides)
February 8	Justin Cranwell (sound) Myra Westfall (slides)
February 15	Dean Boeff (sound) Callie Jackson (slides)
February 22	Jeff Christenson (sound) Pam Trimble (slides)

COMMUNION—FEBRUARY 1, 2026

Prepare—	Bev Cumming, Jomari Lechtman
Serve—	Linda Meisner, Sue Weingardt, Rick Weingardt

February 18, 2026 (Ash Wednesday)

Prepare—	Tanna Prince
Serve—	Connie Ham, Liz Chaney

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.

February 2026

Sun	Mon	Tue	Wed	Thu	Fri	Sat
1	2	3	4	5	6	7
10:30 Worship/ Communion 11:30 Fellowship Coffee		5:00 Zumba	10:00 Worship & Sacraments	4:30 Zumba 5:30 Bells 6:30 Chancel Choir	12:05 First Friday Concert	
8	9	10	11	12	13	14
10:30 Worship 11:30 Fellowship Coffee with Birthday Celebration		5:00 Zumba		4:30 Zumba 5:30 Bells 6:30 Chancel Choir		
15	16	17	18	19	20	21
10:30 Worship 11:30 Fellowship Coffee Newsletter Deadline		5:00 Zumba 6:00 Session	9:00 Meal Prep 4:00 Meal Prep 5:15 Supper 6:00 Ash Wednesday Service	1:30 Women's Bible Study 4:30 Zumba 5:30 Bells 6:30 Chancel Choir		
22	23	24	25	26	27	28
10:30 Worship 11:30 Fellowship Lunch and Annual Meeting		5:00 Zumba		4:30 Zumba 5:30 Bells 6:30 Chancel Choir		



January 11 ~ Ordination & Installation of Officers

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	MICHELLE WITHERSPOON
E-mail pastor@fpcsterling.org	
OFFICE ADMINISTRATOR	RASHELL FRITZLER
E-mail office@fpcsterling.org	
BOOKKEEPER	KARLEE MANUELLO
E-mail finance@fpcsterling.org	
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