

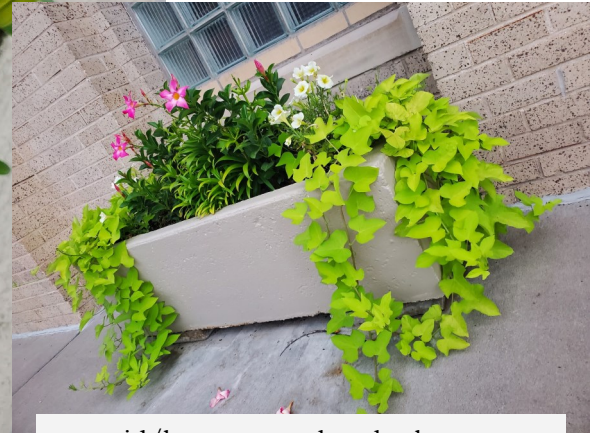
FIRST THINGS FIRST

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

MARCH 2024



before the new season's flowers were planted,
last year's lilies came up unexpectedly



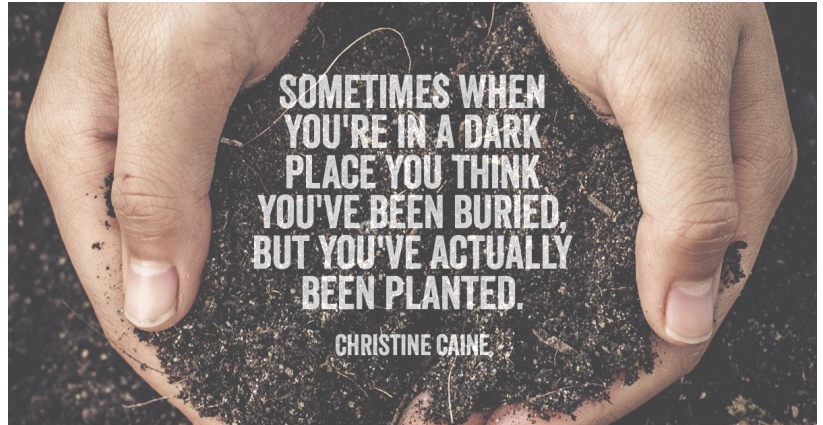
mid/late season church planters,
lovingly designed and cared for
by church members & staff

Spring is coming...

A MESSAGE FROM MICHELLE. . .

The Engine of Life

Author Rob Bell once said, “Death is the engine of life.” He was talking about his wife’s delicious salsa, which is made from fresh produce — ingredients that were once living things. Those living things had to die before they could be made into food, and in eating food, of course, we are able to stay alive. Thus: “Death is the engine of life.”



This is hardly new information. We understand cycles of life as they play out in nature, and we know that at the heart of the Christian story is the death and resurrection of Christ. Not only does Christ experience new life following his death, he offers us new life following his death (and ours).

We know this, and yet... We are so reluctant to let things die. We find it excruciating to be *planted* as the saying goes, when we just feel *buried*. Of course, we don’t like to see people die, but we also don’t like to see projects or plans or programs die. We have a hard time letting go of traditions (or habits). But: *Death is the engine of life*. Like it or not, we are part of the cycle of life.

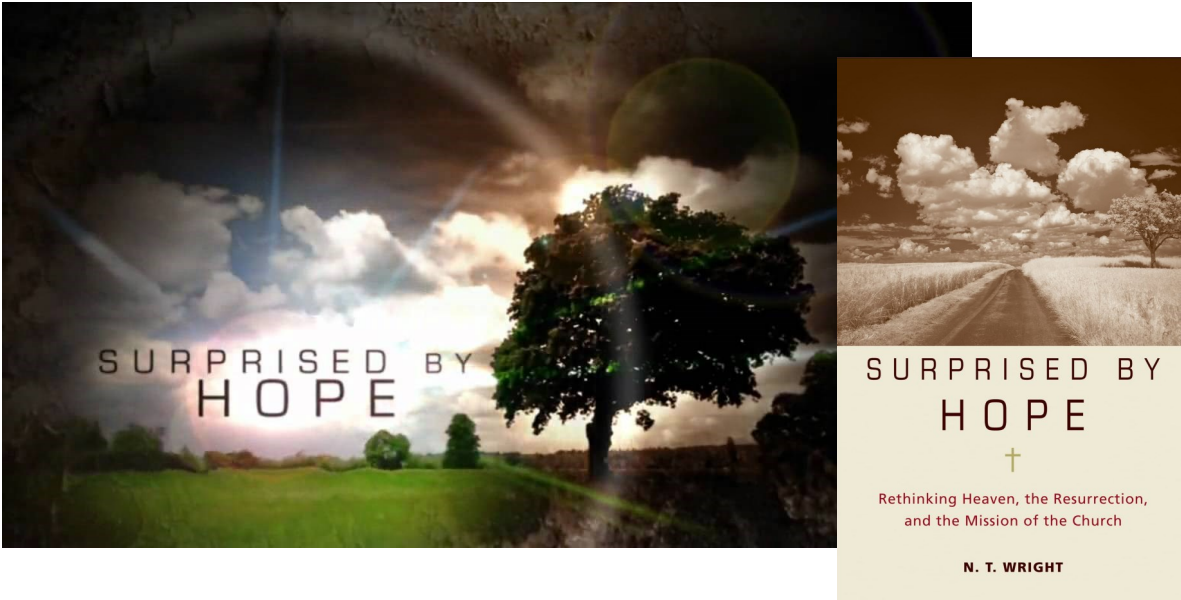
Maybe that’s the bad news, but there is good news, too. Death does not get the last word. Light and life are tenacious and persistent, and just like flowers surprise us, especially when they come up in unexpected places or seasons, new life pops up in our daily life, too.

As the season of Lent moves toward Good Friday, and then Easter Sunday, perhaps we should be paying attention to the darkness and the light, to death and life — in nature, in the story of our faith, and in our own experience.

May God give us eyes to see, and patience to wait for the new life that is on the way...

Rev. Michelle

ADULT EDUCATION



Several people have mentioned here and there over the years that they'd be interested in learning more about what the bible says about heaven. I've been looking into offering a study based on the book *Surprised by Hope: Rethinking Heaven, the Resurrection, and the Mission of the Church*. It delves into heaven, but it also addresses the hope we have in this life, and the way that we are called to live in light of our faith. I'd love to get your input to gauge interest, and if there is interest, to determine the best time for such a study.

.....
Please check the options that interest you for a study, and return to the church office:

- ☐ Daytime Weekday
- ☐ Evening Weekday
- ☐ Sunday Morning (9am)
- ☐ Sunday Morning (9am) — summer only (choir member)
- ☐ Sunday Afternoon
- ☐ I'm interested in this study, but none of the above times work for me.
(List days/times that work for you: _____)
- ☐ I'm not really interested in this particular study, but I'd like to see a
study on another topic (such as _____)

Name: _____

Thank you for your input!

Rev. Michelle

The Walking Circle

On February 11, 2024, the members of First Presbyterian Church met for its Annual Congregational Meeting to conduct official church business. During the meeting Reverend Michelle asked the congregation to share reflections and highlights of church life from the past year. The stories were inspiring and touching and spoke of care and love in our church.

Reverend Michelle also shared from an article by Rabbi Sharon Brous which told of an ancient Hebrew story of a somewhat obscure text, about 2,000 years old. *The text, Middot 2:2, describes a pilgrimage ritual from the time of the Second Temple. Several times a year, hundreds of thousands of Jews would travel to Jerusalem, the center of Jewish religious and political life. They would climb the steps of the Temple Mount and enter its enormous plaza, turning to the right en masse, circling counterclockwise. Meanwhile, the lonely and brokenhearted, the frightened and the sick, would make this same ritual walk but they would turn to the left and circle in the opposite direction — every step against the current.*

Rabbi Sharon Brous is a founding and senior rabbi of Ikar, a Jewish community based in Los Angeles, and the author of “The Amen Effect.” On January 19, 2024, she wrote a guest essay in the New York Times titled “Train Yourself to Always Show Up.” The following thoughts are from her article.

Each person who encountered someone in pain would look into that person’s eyes and inquire: “What happened to you? Why does your heart ache?” “My husband of many years recently died” a person might say. “I am so alone.” Or: “My child is sick. We’re awaiting the test results.” Those who walked from the right would offer a blessing: “May the Holy One comfort you,” they would say. “You are not alone.” And then they would continue to walk until the next person approached.

This timeless wisdom speaks to what it means to be human in a world of pain. This year, you walk the path of the anguished. Perhaps next year, it will be me. I hold your broken heart knowing that one day you will hold mine.

This ancient custom brings us together, encourages us to come to the Circle. Do not take your broken heart and go home. Don’t isolate. Step toward those whom you know will hold you tenderly. When you feel lost and alone and inclined to retreat, show up. Entrust your pain to the community.

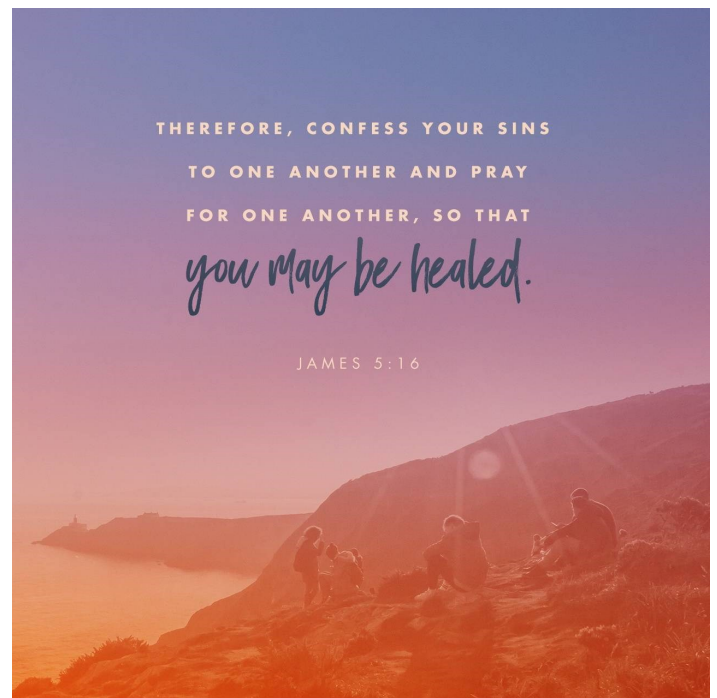
And on your good days — the days when you can breathe — show up then, too. Because the very fact of seeing those who are walking against the current, people who can barely hold on, and asking, with an open heart, “Tell me about your sorrow,” may be the deepest affirmation of our humanity. “I can’t take your pain away, but I can promise you won’t have to hold it alone.”

Showing up for one another doesn’t require heroic gestures. It means training ourselves to approach, even when our instinct tells us to withdraw. It means picking up the phone and calling our friend or colleague who is suffering. It means going to the funeral and to the house of mourning. It also means going to the wedding and to the birthday dinner. Reach out in your strength. Small, tender gestures remind us that we are not helpless, even in the face of grave human suffering.

The image of our Church holding this ancient ritual is lovely and powerful—and haunting. Today, when we are together, should I turn right or left? Is it okay that I share my sadness when I turn left? What can I say to him with those tearful eyes who turned left today? In the Circle we are all together as one and the Circle is never-ending.

Come to the Circle that is our Church.

—Jackie Reynolds



THANK YOU...

To the members of First Pres.

I am so grateful for the prayers and love that Bob and myself have received during this challenging journey, a spiritual journey and the physical one. God has blessed us because of the many prayers made by our friends and family.

Love in Christ —

Montelle Martens & Bob Smith



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
Jackie Barton & Family
Tye Bennett (Neblett's grandson)
Norm Blackburn
Brenda Boeff
Gabe Chapin
Cooperating Ministry
Jeanne Crouch & Family
Barbara Czapla (Rev. Michelle's aunt)
Cierra Davis (friend of Becky Cranwell)
Andrew DeSouza (Michelle Hawkins' son)
Gary Espinosa (Arden Fennell's family)
Family Resource Center
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
Jan Mari
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

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!

UPCOMING EVENTS...

Maundy Thursday Seder Supper



THIS IS THE LORD'S TABLE

March 28

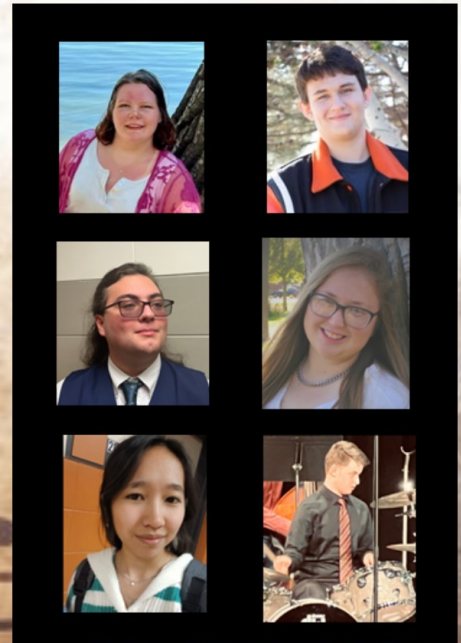
6:00 pm

This delicious meal and meaningful service is a favorite for many, so invite your friends.

All are welcome.

Please sign up at church or call the church to RSVP

First Friday
@ First Presbyterian
Orpheus Club
Young Artists
area high school students
March 1 ~ 12:05pm



COMMUNITY
Lenten Services

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

service & lunch provided by:

3/6: FIRST ENGLISH LUTHERAN 3/13: NAZARENE CHURCH
3/20: FIRST CHRISTIAN CHURCH 3/27: FAITH CORNERSTONE CHURCH

Location: First Presbyterian Church

UPCOMING EVENTS...

The little children sing...

HOSANNA!
HOSANNA!

Palm Sunday // March 24

Celebrate Easter
Sunday ~ March 31st

9am Breakfast & Egg Hunt + 10:30 Worship

**There will be no Fellowship Coffee following the service on Easter Sunday.*

Spring Forward

Set your clocks ahead!

Sunday, Mar 10



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**.

High School Seniors and Continuing College/Graduate Students:

Scholarship Applications are due March 15.

Contact the church for more information about scholarships/applications.

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: March

Canned Sloppy Joe's

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!

ABOVE ALL,
LOVE EACH
OTHER DEEPLY,
BECAUSE LOVE
COVERS OVER A
MULTITUDE
OF SINS.

1 Peter 4:8



March **BIRTHDAYS**

- 3 Tara Guenzi
Pieper Jackson
Cohen Guenzi
- 6 Lilly Guinn
- 7 Janet Klobberdanz
- 9 Jim Williamson
- 10 Milo White
- 11 Gene Miller
Jay Harris
Silvia Kalb
- 14 Cory Jackson
Amanda Steele
- 15 Arden Fennell
- 16 Joyce Lebsack
Jackson Guenzi
- 20 Jeff Reeves
- 23 Dana Harris
- 26 Ellen Miles
Larry Harris
Allie Miller
- 28 Neala Carmichael

Happy Birthday...

May your day be blessed!



Birthday Sunday: Sunday, March 10

Join us at
**Fellowship
Coffee**
on the
2nd Sunday
of each
month
to
celebrate
birthdays!

Legend for the Journey through Lent



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.

SESSION. . .

Highlights from the January 16, 2024 Session Meeting

The moderator led the session in officer education, devotions, and prayers of intercession.

PASTOR'S REPORT

- A written report was received.
- Rev. Michelle officiated funeral services for:
Stanley Herbert Kaufman
(Peace Lutheran Church);
Edith Evans (First Presbyterian Church);
Betty Carney (Riverside Cemetery)
- **IT WAS VOTED** to approve the following days for continuing education for the Relevance to Resonance Project:
February 5-8, 2024, (Scottsdale, AZ);
September 30-October 3, 2024, (Maine)

CLERK'S REPORT:

- **IT WAS VOTED** to elect Tanna Prince, Jomari Lechtman and Mike Tyson as ruling elder commissioners to presbytery for 2024.
- **IT WAS VOTED** to approve the 2023 Statistical Report.
- **IT WAS VOTED** to approve the following e-votes:
 - a) *The purchase of 6 lecterns and 6 bases for the bell choir using the Memorial Fund for approximately \$600.*
 - b) *To send the \$20 donation for the Peace and Global Witness Offering on to the denomination and make a \$100 donation from the session mission line of the budget to Under the Umbrella.*
- Committee Chairs
 - Christian Education – Becky Cranwell
 - Fellowship – Pat Borner
 - Finance – Linda Meisner
 - Membership/Stewardship – David Chrisp
 - Mission Contact – Jomari Lechtman
 - Nominating – Jomari Lechtman
 - Personnel – Dennis Kaan
 - Property – Linda Meisner
 - Worship – Tanna Prince

WORSHIP & SACRAMENTS

- **IT WAS VOTED** to approve the wedding of Kenzie Grauberger and Nathan Jump, on August 17, 2024, in the sanctuary, officiated by Rick Patterson of the Jesus Christ of Latter-Day Saints.
- **IT WAS VOTED** to use the AV Fund to have Ford AV make a site visit to improve the sound from the choir speakers.

NOMINATING

Connie Clark will join the committee as a member at large. One additional elder and one deacon will be needed to be on the committee this year. One member at large position is still vacant.

MISSION CONTACT

- **IT WAS VOTED** to contribute \$500 (from Session Mission) to the Community Churches Offering Assistance (CCOA) program run by the Sterling Faith Council.
- **IT WAS VOTED** to contribute \$500 (from Session Mission) to Trinity Presbyterian Church of Cherry Hill, NJ to provide assistance to families in the Holy Land who helped host the 2023 pilgrims, who are now suffering from the ongoing conflict and related lack of tourism income.
- **IT WAS VOTED** to schedule the Spring Rummage Sale for April 14-19, 2024.**
**[Note the dates have changed to April 21-26]

NEXT MEETINGS/IMPORTANT DATES

Session Meeting: February 20, 2024, 5:30 pm

Annual Congregational Meeting:

February 11, 2024, following Worship Service.

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

Profit & Loss Summary	Jan. 2024
Total Income	\$22,365.08
Total Expense	\$24,313.66
Net Ordinary Income (Loss)	(\$1,948.58)
Budgeted Transfers	\$0.00
Other Transfers	\$0.00
Net Ordinary Income (Loss) with Transfers	(\$1,948.58)

SERVING IN CHURCH — MARCH

USHERS

March 3	Dean Boeff Carrie Lovenburg
March 10	Kim Weingardt Michelle Hawkins
March 17	Justin Cranwell Liz Chaney
March 24	Delinda Korrey McDowell Ken McDowell
March 31	Sue Weingardt Shelby Harms

FIRST RESPONSE/BULLETIN DELIVERY

March	Sue Weingardt
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FELLOWSHIP COFFEE

March 3	Women's Bible Study
March 10	Nominating Committee
March 17	Christian Education Committee
March 24	Finance Committee
March 31	Fellowship Committee

COUNT OFFERING

March 3	Linda Meisner
March 10	Bev Cumming
March 17	Bob Smith
March 24	Connie Ham
March 31	Bev Cumming

LITURGISTS

March 3	Pam Trimble
March 10	Tara Guenzi
March 17	Rose Neblett
March 24	Connie Ham
March 31	Jackie Reynolds

AV TECHS

March 3	Tanna Prince & Rex Witherspoon (sound) Myra Westfall (slides)
March 10	Jeff Christenson (sound) Pam Trimble (slides)
March 17	Justin Cranwell (sound) Jacob Paiz (slides)
March 25	Dean Boeff (sound) Myra Westfall (slides)
March 31	Jeff Christenson (sound) Jacob Paiz (slides)

PREPARING/SERVING COMMUNION

March 3, 2024

Preparing: Mike Tyson, Jomari Lechtman

Serving: Becky Cranwell, Sue Weingardt
& Jackie Reynolds

March 31, 2024 (Easter)

Preparing: Tanna Prince, Jomari Lechtman

Serving: Linda Meisner, Bob Smith, Pam
Werner, Liz Chaney, Connie Ham, Tanna Prince,
Dennis Kaan, Becky Cranwell

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

March 2024

Sun	Mon	Tue	Wed	Thu	Fri	Sat
					1	2
					12:05pm First Friday Concert	
3	4	5	6	7	8	9
10:30 Worship/ Communion 11:30 Fellowship Coffee		5:15 Fellowship	10:30 Worship & Sacraments 12:00 Community Lenten Service/Lunch	5:30 Bells 6:30 Choir		
10	11	12	13	14	15	16
10:30 Worship 11:30 Fellowship Coffee with Birthday celebration			12:00 Community Lenten Service/Lunch	5:30 Bells 6:30 Choir	Newsletter Deadline	
17	18	19	20	21	22	23
10:30 Worship 11:30 Fellowship Coffee		5:30pm Session	12:00 Community Lenten Service/ Lunch 5:15 Finance	1:30 Women's Bible Study 5:30 Bells 6:30 Choir		
24	25	26	27	28	29	30
10:30 Worship 11:30 Fellowship Coffee			12:00 Community Lenten Service/ Lunch 6:30 Choir	6:00 Seder Dinner		
31						
9:30 Fellowship Breakfast & Easter Egg Hunt 10:30Worship/ Communion						

February 2024...



Ash Wednesday Service & Lunch

TITHES & OFFERINGS

Thank you...your support makes mission & ministry possible.

give now:
tinyurl.com/FPCPayPal



FIRST PRESBYTERIAN CHURCH

130 S. 4TH STREET ~ STERLING, CO 80751

WORSHIP

Sunday, 10:30 a.m.

onsite ~ online ~ radio

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

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

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BOOKKEEPER KARLEE MANUELLO
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MUSIC COORDINATOR/ORGANIST ELSIE FETZER

CHOIR DIRECTOR DARLA KORREY GERTNER

BELL CHOIR DIRECTOR LINDSEY JACKSON

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