

Tower *chimes*

Monthly newsletter of First Congregational UCC | Grand Junction, CO | January 2025

Paul's Epistle



Dear Friends,

I have had some requests for the pastoral prayer from November 10th. It fits with the reality of change on January 20th. I am happy to offer it as a way to affirm our commitment to the way of Christ's compassion.

*Holy One, remind us of our spiritual strengths-
No one can take our compassion from us.*

No power can erase our practice of mercy for the poor or weak.

No politician can cancel out the love that we share with family, friends and neighbors.

No election ends our church work to Love, to Listen, to Help.

We pray for those who feel stress and even distress amid political change.

We pray for those entrusted with leadership positions – may they represent the needs of our nation and not simply the prejudices of the one who appoints them.

We pray for those whose future will be more difficult if leaders pretend there is not global environmental crisis.

We pray for those who are targets of retribution from campaign threats.

We pray for women whose rights have been taken by courts and states.

We pray for all our neighbors who depend on Obamacare just to afford medical care.

We pray for journalist who practice reality-based truthful journalism.

We pray for GLBTQ persons who are targets of a culture war.

We pray for the poor and middle class who will feel the burden of increased tariffs.

We pray for doctors and health care workers when medical science and lifesaving vaccinations are under attack.

We pray for immigrants who have become the scapegoats for everything perceived to be wrong in our country.

We pray for our church and other churches to be loud and clear voices for help and support for the widows, the orphans, the needy of our lands and our earth.

AMEN.

Peace, Shalom, Salaam
Rev. Dr. Paul Ashby

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

MODERATOR'S MINUTE KEN PUHLER

The holidays of 2024 are memories now. I hope you have some pleasant memories of this year's holidays. Life always seems to create a balance—there are some very good times and some we wish we didn't have to go through. The stresses of holiday planning and getting together with lots of people add to the seasonal anxiety. It helps me to have some humor during these times.

I was in college when Saturday Night Live premiered in 1975. All my friends watched it, we even planned parties around watching the weeks latest installment. The original cast are still my favorites. Their sketches live on in classic television and YouTube. The Land Shark that delivered CandyGrams, the Greek brothers cafe that only served, “cheeseboiger, cheeseboiger, cheep, cheep, and Pepsi, Pepsi”, John Belushi as a bumblebee or the Samurai chef and Chevy Chase's pratfalls and intro, “I'm Chevy Chase and you're not.” Garrett Morris, Bill Murray and Dan Akroyd all created memorable skits that NBC gifts us with each holiday season with a special to remind us to laugh.

The ladies of the original season created memorable characters—Laraine Newman as a Conehead, Jane Curtain hosting Weekend Update News with Gilda Radner as Emily Litella or Roseanne Roseannadanna. My favorite skit is Roseanne as a health correspondent commenting on quitting smoking. She reads a letter from a man who complains of all kinds of ailments after quitting. Roseanne replies that she tried quitting once. During that time, she went into a sauna and saw popular TV personality Dr. Joyce Brothers. Dr. Brothers had a ball of sweat on her nose that would not fall off that Roseanne launches into a tirade about. Weekend Update anchor Jane Curtain interrupts her, wondering how things are connected.

Roseanne explains, “It just goes to show you, it's always something! If it's not one thing, it's another.” Then has Jane bow head and shares the prayer they always sing at the Thanksgiving table. It is to the tune of an old Dutch hymn that is still popular today. You have heard it at our church---

No matter how hard I try---I cannot follow along with the traditional words. My mind always goes to Roseanne Roseannadanna's family's prayer. I don't think I'll ever outgrow it. I will just accept it and be grateful I can use humor to get through a stressful time.

This coming year will provide stressful times without a doubt. Please use the humor in your memory to help you through it.



What are you trying to do? Make me sick?

OCTOBER COUNCIL MEETING MINUTES CINDY HAAS, SCRIBE

October 20, 2024

The church council of First Congregational Church United Church of Christ met in the chapel on October 20, 2024 for the monthly stated meeting. Present were council members Cindy Haas, Martha Jones, Ken Puhler (moderator), Ron Rucker, Connie Pyle, Janis Woodley and pastor Paul Ashby.

Karen Caton, Julie Krueger, Kathy Goe, Michael Petri and Rachel Seiff were absent.

A quorum was established. The meeting was opened with prayer by Paul at 11.25 am.

Minutes of the September 15, 2024 meeting were approved as distributed.

Pastor's Report:

- ◇ Paul requested/needs volunteers to speak about stewardship.
- ◇ FCCUCC will be on the church sponsors to enable a "Bad Faith" showing at the library.
- ◇ Paul has met with the First Christian Church about using the church in the future. Their building has structural problems and they are investigating demolition and replacing with another multi-purpose structure. This is probably two years out.
- ◇ Budgets for Mission and Outreach, Property, and Worship and Celebration will be enhanced for the next year.

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

- ◇ Mission and Outreach/JAM, September 2024
- ◇ Fellowship & Hospitality, not available.
- ◇ Property Team, October 2024

Finance Reports: 3rd Quarter report, budget and balance sheet.

Other Business/New Business:

There being no other business, the meeting was closed at 11:45 am.

A NOTE ABOUT COUNCIL MEETING MINUTES

The minutes from November's and December's Council Meetings and the minutes from the Annual Budget Meeting will be published in the February edition of Tower Chimes after they have been approved by Council.

MISSION & OUTREACH NEWS

FIRST QUARTER MISSION & OUTREACH JANUARY COLLECTION: SLEEP IN HEAVENLY PEACE

For our first quarter 2025 giving project, the Mission and Outreach team has chosen Sleep in Heavenly Peace, a local organization that provides beds for children who would otherwise be sleeping on the floor. Sleep in Heavenly Peace (SLP) was founded in 2012 in Twin Falls, ID. Child bedlessness is a national problem, and as a national non-profit with chapters all over the U.S., SHP has found a solution. Our local chapter was formed in 2022 with students at Central High School in the Geometry in Construction class building beds. It has since become a volunteer community-wide organization that builds, assembles and delivers beds to children aged 3-17 who are sleeping on the floor. The goal is that “no kid sleeps on the floor in our town.”

During the month of January, we would like to invite members to select a donation from the following list of needs: twin-sized mattress pads, twin-sized comforters, or throw blankets (especially needed during the colder winter months). Unfortunately, SHP cannot accept used items. At this time, there is no need for sheets.

There may also be an opportunity to help build and deliver beds. If you are interested in doing this, please contact Ellen Bradley, whose contact information is in the church directory. As soon as we know the dates that construction and delivery will take place, we will publish the information in the Church Chat and Tower Chimes or contact you directly. This activity usually takes place on a Saturday.

Thank you for supporting this project!

UPDATED FOR JANUARY: CATHOLIC OUTREACH COLLECTION

Canned tomato products of any kind: diced, stewed, sauce, paste ...

NEW COLLECTION ITEM: EGG CARTONS

The Community Food Bank is looking for egg cartons. They want clean, dozen-sized ones. Please bring them to church, and one of the many food bank volunteers from our church will see they get to the food bank.

SOLIDARITY NOT CHARITY

We continue to collect personal size toiletries and other personal hygiene items for SNC. Hold off on the plastic jugs for the time being. Thank you.

NEWSPAPER BAGS

Carolyn Van Matre is collecting newspaper bags to use at Mutual Aid to fill with dog and cat food to give to our unhoused friends for their furry companions. There will be a bin in the collections area outside the main office.

CHILDREN'S SUNDAY SCHOOL PROGRAM MARIE KOONTZ

Sunday morning children's program in January "Being part of the Church"

January 5: Finding love, generosity and support

January 12: Being grateful

January 19: Our church, in the past

January 26: Our church today



"Kids on a Mission"

Invite all to join them

for lunch featuring a variety of soups.

It is a way we can say thank you for your support and generosity that you gave us during the last few months.

When: Sunday, January 12, following worship service.

It may be cold outside, but the people inside have warm hearts. Hopefully, the soup will warm up the rest of the body.

FELLOWSHIP OF THE GRAPE & GRAIN [FOGG]

Join us for FOGG at Michael Petri's place, 477 Escondido Circle at 6:00 pm. Saturday, January 18.

Although it is counter-intuitive to our purpose, we will celebrate "dry January" with non-alcoholic drinks. So if you have a favorite non-alcoholic beer, wine or mocktail, bring some to share with the group! Also bring your favorite "comfort food" to help celebrate Martin Luther King weekend!

GIVING STATEMENT REMINDERS

Thank you for your generosity in 2024! Some details about end of year giving that you'll want to be aware of for tax purposes. The following contributions will be on your giving statement for the 2024 tax year:

- ◇ Received in the office or in the offering plate by 12/31
- ◇ Post marked by 12/31
- ◇ Online payment initiated by 12/31
- ◇ Check mailed directly from your bank dated on or before 12/31.

If you have made a donation in 2024, you will receive a year-end statement by the end of January. You should not file your taxes until you have this statement in hand. We will distribute them by email if the church has your email address. We will also distribute printed copies on Sunday mornings around the middle of January and will mail those not picked up.

MESA COUNTY PEOPLE'S MARCH

Starts: Saturday, January 18, 2025 at 1:00 PM MST
Ends: Saturday, January 18, 2025 at 3:00 PM MST

Mesa County Old Courthouse
544 Rood Ave
Grand Junction, CO, 81501

If you believe that decisions about your body should remain yours; that books belong in libraries, not on bonfires; that health care is a right, not a privilege for the wealthy; if you believe in the power of free speech and protest to sustain democracy; or if you want an economy that works for the people who power it --then this march is for you.

The people's march is a bold demonstration of resilience of resistance:

- ◇ We march to unite the people who have been the backbone of resistance for generations - and to welcome even more
- ◇ We march to remind civil servants they answer to us
- ◇ We march to inspire, energize, and drive change long after the day is done.

**LOOKING
AHEAD**

February 23 | FCC We Shelter End Date
 March 5 | Ash Wednesday
 April 20 | Easter



JANUARY 2025

SUNDAY	MONDAY	TUESDAY	WEDNESDAY	THURSDAY	FRIDAY	SATURDAY
Dec 29	Dec 30	Dec 31	1	2	3	4
10:00 Worship 11:00 Happy Hour	Church Office Closed	Church Office Closed 10:00 Women's/ Mens' Coffees	Church Office Closed 2:00 New Year's Day Board Games	Church Office Closed		
5	6	7	8	9	10	11
9:00 Choir 10:00 Worship 11:00 Unhanging the Greens 11:00 Happy Hour 11:15 New Members Class 11:30 Sermon Talk	5:00 Make Mondays Fun Again	10:00 Women's/ Mens' Coffees 11:00 Remembering Sandy Fox 3:30 Handbells	2:00 Mission & Outreach	1:00 Fellowship & Hospitality		
12	13	14	15	16	17	18
9:00 Choir 10:00 Worship 11:00 Happy Hour 11:15 Spirituality Group 11:30 Sermon Talk	1:00 Property Team	10:00 Women's/ Men's Coffee 3:30 Handbells		11:30 Berna B's		6:00 [FOGG] Fellowship of the Grape & Grain
19	20	21	22	23	24	25
9:00 Choir 10:00 Worship 11:00 Happy Hour 11:15 Council Meeting 11:30 Sermon Talk	Church Office Closed for MLK 5:00 Make Mondays Fun Again	10:00 Women's/ Mens' Coffee 3:30 Handbells				
26	27	28	29	30	31	1
10:00 Worship 11:00 Happy Hour 11:30 Sermon Talk WeShelter Begins at FCC		10:00 Women's/ Mens' Coffee				

JANUARY BIRTHDAYS

1/8 Linda Randolph
1/9 Cindy Haas
1/9 Janis Woodley
1/12 Sveto Djokic
1/12 Vicki Brickey
1/19 Tristan Koontz

1/19 Carol Oglesby
1/22 Jeanette Ford
1/23 Barbara Endres
1/25 Pam Ashby
1/26 Allan Weinand

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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Church Office Hours

Monday through Thursday
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Volunteer Financial Clerk:

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 She, hers, her
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Pianist/Music Coordinator:

Martha Jones
 She, her, hers