

FCC Board News

We have decided to have Church Board meeting every other month so the next meeting will be the 3rd Thursday of March at 5:30 pm. If needed before this schedule, we will call for a special meeting.

If you are Chair of a ministries, please send your updates to fccadmin@comcast.net to put in the newsletter each month. If you have an item to discuss at the Church Board meeting, please send me what you want on the agenda by the Sunday before the board meeting so I can get on an agenda.

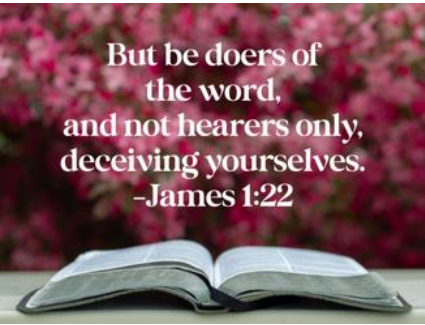
Please talk to me or Vince with any issues you would like to discuss.

We appreciate everyone's commitment to our Church.

-Church Board Chair, Debbie Berg

Who Ya Gonna call?
Doers of the Word!

We have a terrific Doers of the Word crew who have volunteered to lend a hand to church members who need help with relatively small projects around the house. Need some furniture moved or a car battery charged? How about a picture window cleaned or a screen replaced? If you have a particular need, share your request with the church office, and the Mission Team will work to match your request with a Doer.



First Christian Church Governance
CWF Board, 9:30 am: Jan 11
General Board, 5:30 pm: March 21

Calling all Youth!

We are excited to be going to La Foret once again! This month, FCC youth will be attending the Central Rocky Mountain Region Youth Midwinter Retreat from February 16-19. We'll be singing, praying, studying, and just enjoying fellowship with people from congregations all over Colorado and Wyoming, plus Utah and New Mexico. Our group includes two 8th graders, one 9th grader, four sophomores, one junior, and one senior. Youth leader Todd Loschen will also be there.

We are now looking for volunteer drivers, two to help us get there and one for the way back. Contact Todd or the church office if you can help.

Mission Ministry Team 2024

We want to share some of the thoughts and goals that drove the January Mission team meeting. A huge ‘thank you’ to Carla for years of chairing this committee (and being the heartbeat of its work!). She’s not leaving the team but passed the duties of organization to Bill Rusher and Diana Laws as co-chairs, welcoming valued ‘seasoned’ members & a couple new faces. We see these changes & the new year ahead starting with a time for reflection: where has Mission Team focus been and which parts of that focus have been most effective, & which may need re-evaluation? Sounds simple. But, since the decisions will affect budget and projects coordinated on the church’s behalf, it will require investigation/understanding of past and proposed projects.

Immediate goals:

- 1) Mission statement – succinct, appropriate, workable
- 2) Budget – 2023 budget vs expenditures – what are implications for project planning for 2024
- 3) Focus – Regional vs local project support in budget; are local project support projects currently viable; add Missionary project support; nurturing church/member project support



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The Christian Caller Newsletter

February 2024

A Message from Vince

In chapter 4 of the gospel of Mark, Jesus tells his first parable. What happens next has shocked readers of this gospel ever since:

“Then Jesus said, “Whoever has ears to hear, let them hear.” ¹⁰ When he was alone, the Twelve and the others around him asked him about the parables. ¹¹ He told them, “The secret of the kingdom of God has been given to you. But to those on the outside everything is said in parables ¹² so that, ““they may be ever seeing but never perceiving, and ever hearing but never understanding; otherwise they might turn and be forgiven!””

To many, if not all, commentators on the gospel of Mark, these have been the hardest verses to approach. Jesus here seems to be saying that he speaks in parables, not to encourage people to repent, but to keep them from it. However, it is most likely, as many commentators have concluded, that these words should be seen as a poetic way to say, not that God is going to MAKE people misunderstand, but that that is what is going to happen. While the exact meaning of these verses is difficult to grasp, what is obvious is that Jesus’ words are not meant for the crowd, but for his followers.

In verse 11, Jesus divides his listeners into two types of people – those on the inside who follow him, and those on the outside who do not. Many times today, Christians assume that “the gospel message” is for those who are on the outside, telling them how they can get to “the inside.” Often, this manifests itself as a desire to “preach sin.” The gospel is narrowed down to telling non-Christians that they are sinners, getting them to agree, and then having them pray to Jesus to save them from their sins.

Contrary to this view, Jesus’ teachings, as we see from these verses, were mostly directly toward those on the “inside,” telling them how to follow God and serve others better. To be sure, to Jesus, the gospel message is for both outsiders (“Repent!”), and insiders, (“and live for the kingdom of God!”). However, the risk we encounter when we understand the gospel message as being directed mainly toward others is that we become unable to hear Jesus’ message to us. As Jesus says in verse 9, “Let the person who has ears hear!”

First Christian Church Greeley (Disciples of Christ) holds Sunday worship services in the sanctuary at 10: 00 am.

Childcare is provided during the service.

Find more information at www.fccgreeley.com



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Christian Women’s Fellowship

The next CWF Board meeting will be February 8, 2024, at 9:30 am at the church. CWF groups meet Thursday, February 22.

All daughters are invited to our Daughters’ Dessert on May 1 at 1:30 p.m.! Details will be coming soon. All women of the church and their friends are welcome at CWF activities. Hope to see you there. Sandy Beiser and LaVonne Rogakis, Co-chairs, CWF

Weld Food Bank Volunteer Day – Feb. 8

FCC has a volunteer day scheduled at the Weld Food Bank on Thursday, February 8. Our shift will be from 1:00-3:00 p.m., and we will pack food boxes. Please register online for our group or add your name to the FCC sign-up sheet at the church.

Evening Book Club

The FCC Book Club chose *The Extraordinary Life of Sam Hell* by Robert Dugoni as their January read. They will meet on Monday, February 5, at 6:00 p.m. in the church parlor to discuss the novel.

Bible Study with Pastor Vince!

Starting Tuesday, Feb 6

10:00 am

in the Fellowship Hall

February Birthdays

- 04 Rich Davis
- 05 Tom Gray
- 05 Betty Lund
- 06 Kevin King
- 06 Lena Morris
- 06 Sharon Murphy
- 10 Judi Ring
- 11 Steve Hummel
- 11 Shirley Miller
- 12 Beverley Martin
- 13 Dora Beiser
- 15 Shannon King
- 21 Hazel Gibson
- 23 Helen Stolte
- 24 Rain Evans

February 2024 Elder’s Message

One thing we know for sure about spring is that April showers will bring May flowers. But there are some important questions, like when exactly those flowers will bloom. Even *The 2024 Farmers Almanac* will not provide us with this information. Then there are questions like when Easter is and on what date Lent will begin. With all the festive family gatherings, Easter egg hunts, and Sunday feasts, each household finds its own way to commemorate the Resurrection of Jesus Christ during the Easter holiday. Before the celebration of Easter though, it’s crucial to acknowledge another significant date: Ash Wednesday. This sacred day marks the initiation of Lent and always occurs 46 days before Easter Sunday. Since the date varies each year, it's essential to be aware of its exact occurrence. So, when does Ash Wednesday fall this year?

Here's what we need to know about the first day of Lent in 2024. Lent is a 40-day period of reflection and prayer leading up to Easter Sunday. It includes a 40-day fast with Sundays excluded (because they're already considered feast days). Ash Wednesday is the first day of Lent and this year, **Ash Wednesday falls on February 14, 2024.**

Early Christians would begin a period of public penance for their sins on the first day of Lent. The practice originated with the ancient Jewish custom of penance and fasting. Writings from the 2nd-century church refer to ashes as a sign of penance and grief for sins committed. Penitents would wear ashes symbolizing the dust from which God created humankind. This belief is represented in many Biblical passages such as Genesis 2:7, Genesis 3:19, Ecclesiastes 3:20. Ashes also remind Christians that God is merciful to those who ask forgiveness.

Here at First Christian Church, we attend a religious service on Ash Wednesday to receive ashes on our forehead. Our pastor applies the ashes, often in the sign of the cross or could be a heart, and usually says, "Remember that you are dust, and to dust you shall return." The ashes often are made from the palm branches from the previous year's Palm Sunday celebration (if these are available) and typically are worn for the remainder of the day as a reminder of the importance and solemnity of the occasion.

Unlike holidays like Christmas, Ash Wednesday's date varies annually. Easter is a movable feast, observed on the first Sunday following the first full moon after the spring equinox. Consequently, Easter consistently occurs between March 22 and April 25. According to Christian tradition, Lent commences 46 days before Easter Sunday. To determine the beginning of Lent, which starts with Ash Wednesday, we count back six weeks from Easter Sunday.

In closing, we must always remember the importance of practicing Love and Forgiveness in our daily lives and being thankful to Christ for his willingness to share our burdens...

Mission Matters

“Do to others as you would have them do to you.”
Luke 6:31

World Interfaith Harmony Week – Feb. 1-7

In 2010, the United Nations designated the first week of February as World Interfaith Harmony Week. It is hoped that this initiative will help people recognize that the common values they hold far outweigh the differences they have, and thus provide a strong dosage of peace and harmony to our communities and to our world.

You are invited to celebrate this special week by spending time with the Golden Rule. Download this Golden Rule Poster that illustrates how 13 different religions express the concept of the Golden Rule. Then allocate five minutes each day of this special week to contemplate the Golden Rule by engaging in a spiritual practice of your choice (e.g., meditation, reading, praying).

National Random Acts of Kindness Week – Feb. 14-20

The goal of Random Acts of Kindness Week is to change our community through kindness. Showing kindness is good for your soul and good for your heart. So exercise this fifth fruit of the Spirit and embrace sharing the love of Jesus, not just one week of the year, but all year! Here are six suggestions for spreading the love:

- Make and deliver a meal or care package to someone who is staying at home right now.
- Give a genuine compliment to someone.
- Call someone to check in or just to say “Hi.”
- Send someone a card or a positive text message or funny video.
- Be kind to yourself by practicing self-care—take a break, go on a walk, or treat yourself to something special.
- Volunteer in the community (see below!).

Weld County Volunteer Connection

United Way of Weld County coordinates with organizations in our community to find volunteers. [Check out their page](#) to see if you would be a good fit for any of the volunteer needs the organizations have posted. You will find a wide variety of opportunities. Both Banner Health and UCHealth are looking for volunteers. Other agencies needing help are Immigrant & Refugee Center of Northern Colorado, A Woman’s Place, Weld County Area Agency on Aging, School District 6, Greeley Active Adult Center, 60+ Ride, United Way, and many others. Postings are updated regularly.



Week of Compassion – Feb. 18 & 25

Our gifts to this relief, refugee, and development mission fund of the Christian Church (Disciples of Christ) bring hope, shelter, and comfort to those in need. To contribute, please write a check to FCC with “Week of Compassion” in the memo line.



Special Offerings

-Right Here, Right Now Benevolence Fund –Feb 4, March 3

All \$1 bills and checks written to FCC with “RH/RN” in the memo line go toward meeting immediate needs within our church family and community. (Donations to RHRN are also accepted throughout the month).



Join the Mission Ministry Team!!

If you have a heart for mission and would like to join the Mission Ministry Team, please talk to Diana Laws or Bill Rusher.