

A Message from the Membership Chair

Here's a note from the Editorial Director of *The Upper Room* daily devotional. This relates my thoughts better than I could:

"When a new year arrives, I find myself impatient for a fresh start. Some years, the fresh start I anticipate is dramatic--starting a new job or forming a new habit. Other years, the fresh start is simply a return to a more predictable pattern of life after the bustle of the Christmas season. Regardless of the shape a new start takes, I want immediate results. But any meaningful change requires time and patience." Lindsay L. Gray

How true that is during this pandemic. My hope for our FCC membership is that we can be patient and give God time to show us how to move forward. In His time, He will guide us to new paths.

Happy New Year!

Hazel Gibson,

Membership Chair



Youth News

Hello FCC Greeley! My family and I miss seeing everyone from church. I hope we can worship together soon.

Our Region and ECOY put on a youth retreat each February called Mid-Winter, but this year it has been canceled due to Covid. There is just no way we could all worship, eat and be in the cabins 6 feet apart. It truly breaks my heart to be the bearer of this news.

Sue Evans and I made Christmas gift baskets for the church's children and youth. Thank you to FCC for providing the funds! It was wonderful to see our youth getting taller and laughing as they socially-distance-decorated "ugly sweater" Christmas cookies. It was also fun seeing all the different and creative face masks! You may have already seen the pictures we took.

Praying everyone is staying mentally and physically healthy. I will continue to pray for our youth and all of the wonderful people of our congregation. Looking forward to 2021 with open eyes.

"And the God of all grace, who called you to his eternal glory in Christ, after you have suffered a little while, himself will restore you and make you strong, firm and steadfast." 1 Peter 5:10

Peace, Todd



The Christian Caller Newsletter

January 2021

Message from Mark

"Behold, I am doing a new thing; now it springs forth, do you not perceive it?"

I will make a way in the wilderness and rivers in the desert".

Isaiah 43:19

Well, 2020 is finally in our rear view mirror. And 2021 stretches out in front of us, a brand new "tabula rasa" (clean slate). As I write this, I am aware that we are right in the middle of a very difficult and challenging episode in all of our lives. If you are a high school senior getting ready to graduate, you are asking yourself, "Will there even be a prom, a graduation? What happened to my year?" If you are like most of us in this congregation, you are wondering, "When might we come, not just to the sanctuary, but also the fellowship hall?" "Will there be camp?" "What might Easter look like this year?" "Will we be wearing masks in the summer???" I do not know.

Now let me tell what I **am** certain of. We are thriving in the midst of this most challenging "plague." God is making a way through this desert and we will never again take for granted those tender moments of worship, fellowship, service, celebrations, and rites of passage. By this time next year, we will be looking back with gratitude and looking forward with hope and excitement. Holding all of that in our hearts, we will see the desert bloom again, and music will be more than listening, but will be pouring from our hearts and souls.

Love,

Pastor Mark

For the health & safety of our congregation, families, and community, First Christian Church Greeley will **not** hold worship services in the sanctuary until further notice. Pastor Mark and staff will maintain office hours. Call or email us with questions or any needs. Find more information and worship videos at

www.fccgreeley.com

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January Scriptures & Sermons

- 1/03**—"Taking a Different Road"
—Matthew 2:1-12
- 1/11**—"Beginning Again"
—Mark 1:4-11
- 1/17**—"Listening is Believing"
—Samuel 3:1-20
- 1/24**—"Do the Next Right Thing"
—Jonah 3:1-10
- 1/31**—"Spiritual Geiger Counter"
—Mark 1:21-28

Squabbit Chatter

(Children's Sunday School)

—Alicia Loschen

Luke 10:25-37 tells the story of the Good Samaritan. We have talked about this story before in Sunday School. Remember that so many people passed by who did not help the man in need. It was someone from Samaria (the Samaritan) who stopped to help.

How can we be more like the Samaritan? Be on the lookout for opportunities to be helpful to others at home and in school. In-person or on-line, take opportunities to be kind to others, offer to help. An encouraging word can go a long way. Even though we are physically distant from others and our smiles are behind masks, our eyes smile too. Maybe your smiling eyes are just what someone else needs to know they are not alone!

"...Love your neighbor as you love yourself."—*Leviticus 19:18*

"God's people should not speak evil things against anyone.... They must consider the needs of others. They must be kind and gentle toward all people."—*Titus 3:2*

Based on *Heavens Inspirations Children and Youth Devotionals*

Elder's Message

~ Bill Rusher

In times like these we find ourselves feeling disconnected and uncertain of what we can or should do as a Christian and a member of First Christian Church. As we meet this very real threat that is COVID 19, we have had to make many changes to our church and our services to protect our membership.

As a congregation, we have made the choice that to safely function as a viable and active church body, it was prudent to return to our on-line services and meetings. We did this knowing full well that in times of trauma, it is the personal touch of friends and family that helps us cope. But the threat from the novel COVID 19 is that it is so contagious that it can infect and possibly wipe out the vulnerable, at-risk members of our church. There are a large number of our membership who are at risk. So how do we find our way as Christian neighbors and friends and still meet our responsibility to minister to each other and those in need in the community?

I have found solace, comfort, and direction for my faith journey in realizing that this is not the first threat to our society or the church communities' survival. From the very beginning of the church, and throughout history, through persecution, wars, plagues, and even death, we can be comforted by Jesus's promise that he will be with us and grant us the strength of purpose, the comfort, and peace that we all need in our lives.

Facebook Evangelism?

Do you have a Facebook account? If so, have you "Liked" the FCC Greeley page? If not, go to the link and "Like" the page to get ongoing updates on what is happening in our congregation and community. Then, to help spread the news from FCC Greeley to those you know, "Like" the posts or forward them to your timeline. There are many in our community who want to find a church, but are overwhelmed by going to a place they don't know. Letting your Facebook friends know that you go to our church may be just the low pressure invite that someone is looking for.

David Haining, FCC Technology

FCC Financial Update (as of 11/30/2020)

Income Year to Date:
\$217,405.42

Expenses Year to Date:
\$216,475.80

Need Financial Help Due to COVID-19?

If you have been impacted financially by COVID-19, Cares Act Funding is available for assistance with rent/mortgage and other basic living expenses.

Contact Weld County Human Services at 970-400-6600 or HS-Outreach@weldgov.com.

Book Club



The Evening Book Club chose *A Christmas Carol* by Charles Dickens to read during the holiday season. They will meet via Zoom on Monday, January 4, at 6:00 p.m. to discuss this classic Christmas story.

The **Morning Book Club** continues on hiatus.

January Birthdays

- 1 John Hartmann
- 4 Geneva Clark
- 12 Mary Kay Pumphrey
- 15 Colleen Heitman
- 15 Copie Summerson
- 19 Bayne Berg
- 23 Michael Beiser
- 23 Sue Campbell

Mission Matters

"God is our refuge and strength, an ever-present help in times of trouble."

Psalm 46:1

Help Northern Colorado Wildfire Victims

Larimer County is home to the state's largest wildfires, the Cameron Peak Fire and East Troublesome Fire. **The Larimer County Fire Recovery Fund**, sponsored by United Way of Larimer County, provides help to those most affected by the fires. If you would like to contribute to this fund, write a check to First Christian Church with "wildfires" in the memo line, and your donation will go where it can do the most good.

Stay Connected! Project

First Christian Church is extremely grateful to the National Benevolent Association and the Weld County Area Agency on Aging for grants we received to support our Stay Connected! project. The Mission Team created this project to help seniors within our congregation connect virtually to church during this pandemic. We were able to provide tablets and/or Internet service to 10 households so they could participate in virtual activities our church is currently providing. We already see some of these folks in Zoom meetings and hear that they are enjoying our online worship services!

Week of Compassion Grant for Weld Food Bank

First Christian Church received a COVID-19 Relief Ministry Support Grant from Week of Compassion for \$1,500 that went to our Kids Helping Kids Backpack Project. The Sunday School children at First Christian Church pioneered this project seven years ago to support the Weld Food Bank Backpack Program. Since the pandemic hit, the budgetary needs of the program tripled due to a 69% increase in children served and the added cost of delivery to homes during virtual schooling and summer. Our donations to the Backpack Project are greatly appreciated by the Weld Food Bank, including this extra boost from the Disciples of Christ Week of Compassion ministry.

Thank You from the Mission Team

The Mission Team would like to thank the congregation for your faithful support of the mission work of our church throughout 2020. Despite the many challenges of the pandemic, First Christian Church continues to be "an ever-present help in times of trouble" to many in our community and elsewhere. Look for a summary of our 2020 mission giving in the February newsletter.

Join the Mission Team!

If you have a heart for mission and would like to join the Mission Team, please talk to Carla Ikenouye or Gerre Tjardes, or leave a message with fccadmin@comcast.net