



The Church Bell

First Congregational Church, UCC
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First Congregational Church

ADVENT & CHRISTMAS EVENTS



Advent 1, Advent Workshop - Dec. 3 after 10:00 am service. Worship, Luke 1:5-25.

Advent 2, Music Sunday - Dec. 10 during 10:00 am service, No 8:00 am Chapel service.

Advent 3, Christmas Pageant - Dec. 17 during 10:00 am service. Traditional worship at 8:00 am in the Chapel, Luke 1:26-38.

Blue Christmas Service - Wed, Dec. 20 from 6 pm - 7 pm in the chapel. Meditative Christmas service for those who are grieving this holiday season.

Advent 4, Christmas Eve, Sunday, Dec. 24

- No 8:00 am chapel service
- 10:00 am Worship in sanctuary, nursery care available, Luke 1:26-38.
- 4:00 pm Candlelight Worship in sanctuary, livestream and nursery care available, Luke 1:39-56.
- 8:00 pm Candlelight Worship in sanctuary, no livestream. Luke 1: 39-56.

Christmas Gathering - fellowship, food, and carols - Dec. 25, 10:00 am in Chadwick Hall.

Holiday Office Schedule

The church office is closed December 25-29 to allow staff to spend holidays with their families. Rev. Tamara and Laura will be available by appointment during this time; please reach out to the church office to schedule.

Capital Campaign Update

Patience pays off! After waiting over a year due to supply chain issues, we are thrilled to announce that our new sound equipment has been installed in the sanctuary. The new equipment includes a digital sound board, new microphones, and two new speakers. We are excited for how this new equipment will amplify our worship experience! And you may have noticed that the church van is no longer in our parking lot. Have no fear, it has not disappeared! The capital campaign team considered a number of different options

Pews Find A Second Life

A year ago, as we completed our sanctuary updates, we removed seven pews from the sanctuary to accommodate better accessibility in our pews. Those excess pews have since lived in our library for temporary storage. Following a devastating fire at Holy Innocents Church, one of the churches we have spent significant time at on the Rosebud Reservation, we reached out to see if pews could be of any help as they rebuild. We will soon be sending them off to their new home on the Rosebud where they will be used immediately as the 133-year-old congregation gathers in their Guild Hall to worship.

Inclement Weather Closures

As we enter the winter weather season, we have made the decision to utilize the District 6 snow day decisions as a guide to our snow closures. If D6 calls a snow day we will cancel all in-person activities and close the office at the church. On these days our staff will still work remotely and are available by phone or email. On days when D6 is not open, we will send an email to communicate any decisions we make affecting regularly-scheduled activities.

Silver Circle Seniors (60+) Event

Change of Date

This month the Silver Circle gathering will take place **Thursday, December 14**. We will gather at FCC at 1:30 to carpool to The Showcase Art Center (located at 1335 Eighth Avenue, Greeley, CO). There we will paint holiday ornaments with Colette Pitcher. The class costs \$10 and light refreshments will be provided. We have only 18 spaces available for this event, so please RSVP to Rev. Tamara at revtamara@firstconggreeley.com.

Pageant Sunday

One of our favorite Advent traditions returns on Sunday, December 17 at 10 am as our children moo, baa, and shine their way down the aisles during our annual Christmas pageant! All children & youth are invited; rehearsal will be Saturday, December 16 from 10am - noon. No RSVP is required; just show up! If you can't make the rehearsal but still want to join the pageant, please reach out to Laura Gurney in the office.

A Wonderful Welcome Lunch

In November the Fellowship Ministry Group hosted a Welcome Lunch for people who are newer to our community. We were overjoyed to have 18 people attend this lunch!

In Loving Memory

Please hold the families of the following in your prayers as they celebrate the life of their loved one:

Bobbie Menefee

August 26, 1938- November 7, 2023
Services were held Tuesday, November 14th.

Patricia "Pat" Ann Best

January 6, 1943 - November 1, 2023
Services will be held Friday, December 15 at 2pm in the Sanctuary.

Mary Behling

December 29, 1929 - November 7, 2023
Services will be held Thursday, December 7 at 2pm in the Sanctuary. A livestream is available.

December WNL Offerings

Dec. 6th: The Art of the Church pt2 with Dorothy Elder

Dec. 13th: Rev. Tamara will share insights & highlights from her recent trip to Rome.

Dec. 20th: Blue Christmas Contemplative Service in the Chapel at 6:00pm. No meal, youth group or children's activities this week.

Jan. 10th: WNL resumes.

THANK YOU!

The Board of Trustees would like to thank our congregation for its strong support of this year's Stewardship Campaign. It was inspiring, fun, and most importantly productive. To date we have 113 pledging units totaling \$300,085 pledged for 2024. The trustees are in the process of making follow-up calls to those of you who have not yet pledged. Please think about making your pledge in the next several weeks. Each pledge no matter the size will help us toward a balanced budget for 2024. Also, if you have not completed your 2023 pledge, we hope you will do so before the end of year. We hope you will help us continue the important work of First Congregational Church.

Year-End Gifts

All year-end gifts must be received in the church office no later than 11:30am on Sunday, December 31 to be reflected on your 2023 Giving Statement. To make an appointment to drop off your year-end gifts outside of office hours, please reach out to Laura Gurney, Lola Fehr, or Rev. Ben. You may also give online at firstconggreeley.com/give.

Heath Giving Tree

We are once again collecting donations to help support Health Middle School families this Christmas. Donations can be dropped off via cash or check in the church office or in the offering on Sunday morning through December 10th. Donations will be used to buy gift cards that will be delivered to families through Health Middle School counselors.

Advent Workshop

Thank you to all those who volunteered, participated and made the tradition of Advent Workshop beautiful for yet another year.

UPAVIM Sale Thank You

A note from Alisa Woofert, US Director of Sales for UPAVIM Crafts:

On behalf of UPAVIM, I want to express our sincere gratitude for the opportunity to host a fair trade sale at your church. The event was very successful with a total of \$4,000 in sales over the two days. These proceeds not only contribute to the well-being of UPAVIM's K-6 school but also play a crucial role in providing income generation for the women in UPAVIM's cooperative. We were very happy with all aspects of the sale and would love to organize another one next year.

FCC Food Pantry

We are committed to providing food bags to anyone who comes through our doors requesting support. For December, you are invited to contribute peanut butter, canned veggies (peas, green beans, corn) and canned fruits. All donations can be placed in the basket outside of the Sanctuary. Pull tab-tops are always appreciated.

WNL Meal Team Volunteers

Our Wednesday Night Live Meals are coordinated and prepared for us by three teams of volunteers. Each volunteer brings a portion of the meal once a month. Thank you to those of you who have been making these meals possible! If you would like to be a part of one of these teams January-May reach out to Whitney (whitney@firstconggreeley.com) to learn more.

Directories Available

Printed church directories are available in the church office. The church directory is available on-line on our church management system called Realm. If you need help logging on to Realm, please contact Laura Gurney.

Support the UCC's Special Offerings

Every year the UCC collects five special offerings: Our Church's Wider Mission, One Great Hour of Sharing, Strengthen The Church, Neighbors In Need and The Christmas Fund. This year we will collective one end of the year offering to support these mission initiatives. Contributions to our 5 for 5 offering can be made through the end of the year in the church office or Sunday morning offering.

Bible Sunday

Thank you for celebrating our Bible recipients this fall! We had an action-packed learning time in our Bible Discovery class after we left the service.



Campfire under the Stars Youth Outing

AV Team Volunteer Opportunity

Our AV Team makes it possible for over one hundred people to join us each week in worship, and for folks to share in celebrating the lives of their loved ones from afar when we host funerals. Are you comfortable learning new computer skills? Would you like a behind the scenes way to serve our community? Consider joining our AV Team! Training is provided, and this role contains some paid opportunities. To learn more reach out to Whitney (whitney@firstconggreeley.com).

ADVENT CONCERT SERIES

December 3, 3:00 pm: UNC Choirs Advent Concert.

December 11, 6:30pm: Greeley Harmonix Advent Concert.

December 15, 6:00 pm: Organ Concert with Dr. Keenan Boswell.

December 17, 4:00 pm: John Mills Orchestra Advent Concert.

All concerts are free and open to the public.

New Members

Join us in welcoming these new members to our First Congregational Church community!

Jerry and Sherri McCallson

Jerry and Sherri moved to Greeley from Minnesota in September of 2022. The accepting welcomeness they have felt at FCC has made our community a good fit for them. Reflecting on this Sherri shared, "Everyone comes up to talk to you. No one is pretending to be something different. They are themselves." In Minnesota they were a part of a Methodist congregation for over 40 years as they raised their three children. Their daughter lives in Loveland, and their other children live in Phoenix and Canada. Jerry and Sherri have one grandchild and a second on the way. Jerry is a published author and continues to enjoy writing in his free time. Sherri enjoys crafting and routinely volunteers at the Humane Society. Together, the couple enjoys participating in Sons of Norway gatherings and social events.



Sherri & Jerry, left.



Lisa & Johnny, right.

Johnny and Lisa Thompson

Johnny and Lisa were invited to First Congregational by Lisa's mom, Karen Gullickson-Lee. They have stayed for the loving and amazing community that they describe as "like a family." They have attended many different churches throughout their lives. As kids Lisa participated in plays and bell choirs at church and Johnny was in a church drama group. In her free time Lisa loves to cross stitch, read books, watch movies and play with her cat Simba. Johnny enjoys making jewelry, survival bracelets and keychains.

History of Christianity Class Recordings

Rev. Dr. Mark Lee recently led a fascinating journey through 2000 years of Christian history over the course of seven Wednesday evening classes. If you would like to view recordings of these classes, please contact Rev. Ben!