



# THE COMMUNICATOR

## JANUARY | FEBRUARY 2025



## Planned Giving: Endowments & Seven Pillars

by **Charles Kiskiras**, *Outgoing Church Council Treasurer*  
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As I leave the Council Treasurer position, I would like to say how important Planned Giving is to the future of the church. Planned Giving is a process that helps you, the donor, and First Congregational Church to simultaneously achieve philanthropic, financial, and spiritual goals while helping our church fulfill its mission to set the table for those who hunger and thirst and fund its ministries, both now and well into the future. A planned gift is a gift which the donor designates during their lifetime but is usually not received by the church until after their death. The most common type of gift is a bequest, or outright gift of cash or securities made from provisions in a will.

Planned gifts can also be made and received by the church during the donor's lifetime by setting up a specific trust for this purpose. Many donors prefer that their gift goes into an endowment fund. The church has established endowment funds for specific purposes such as being designated for capital needs, ongoing church operations, mission giving and outreach, or no designation are all options. New **Named Endowment** funds may be established with a contribution of \$50,000 or more. The funding may be pledged over a period of five years. In addition, the Church Council at its sole discretion may accept additional contributions of cash, securities, real or personal property to any new fund or to any of the named funds below:

- a. **Anderson Fund**
- b. **Dreffein Fund**
- c. **Vickers Fund**
- d. **J.C. Severn Fund**
- e. **Karol and Ben Finch Endowment Fund**
- f. **Seven Pillars Fellowship Fund**

All contributions are to be made in accordance with the current Endowment and Gift Acceptance Policies and Guidelines of the Church.



The **Seven-Pillars Fellowship Fund**: This foundation was started by **Ruth Roland**, our previous Financial Administrator, who had a vision to build an endowment fund with unrestricted bequests that would generate income for the church in perpetuity.

**Seven-Pillars** was established by the Church Council in 2018 with bequest money that came before. The Pikes Peak Community Foundation was chosen to hold and manage the fund along with its other non-profit assets. The fund is in the long-term and moderate-term investment pools; annually, we receive a grant payout that will always be between three and six percent of the fund value.

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During the past three years, I have seen the Fellowship Fund grow substantially from small and large bequests to the point where significant income is now brought forward to the following year church budget. This income helps to lower the amount of the church operating budget that needs to be raised by our Annual Appeal pledges. Joining the Seven-Pillars Fellowship Foundation is simply signing a form



*Members of Seven Pillars in October, 2024*

from the church stating your intention to give a specified amount from your estate. And one of the immediate benefits of membership is that you will receive a very cool Seven-Pillars pin for your nametag along with a special yearly luncheon invite!

When your bequest comes to the church, one half is added to the Fellowship Fund with your name connected to the deposit in perpetuity; the second half is deposited into the General Fund Reserves that can pay for capital projects and the upkeep of our beautiful historic church building.

So please help FCUCC continue to grow this wonderful endowment with your bequests and thank you again for the financial legacy that you leave to our church community.

Our Director of Finance and Technology, **Rachel Rumble** is available to assist you with further information. You can reach her via email or telephone ([rachel@fcucc.org](mailto:rachel@fcucc.org) / 719.635.3549).

## **SAVE THE DATE: SUNDAY, JANUARY 26, 2025 Annual Meeting of the Congregation**

The Annual Meeting of the Congregation will take place on Sunday, January 26, 2025, beginning at 10am. A quorum must be met! All are invited to join and participate. We will be reviewing the past year, reviewing the proposed budget for 2025, voting on the budget, and voting on the new slate of Council and LCC Members.

**Let us gather for Worshipful Work.**



# This Year's Nominations!

by **Kisti Felps**, *Leadership Cultivation Committee Chair*

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The Leadership Cultivation Committee (LCC) is established in the church's Constitution and Bylaws. It has two stated duties:

**1** TO present candidates for vacancies on the Church Council and on the LCC to the membership for a vote at each annual meeting. The committee is to "use its best efforts to assure that the candidates reflect the diversity, strengths and needs of the church."

**2** TO "work to encourage, cultivate, and enhance leadership within the church, including the involvement of church members in leadership roles, activities, training and opportunities deemed appropriate by the Committee to create a culture of leaders and leadership within the church."

Over the past several months the LCC has publicized the upcoming openings on Council and on the LCC and encouraged members to submit Statement of Interest forms themselves, or to recommend others whom we should contact about serving. Clergy and staff also gave recommendations. Subsequently, a few members submitted interest forms for the Council positions and LCC. After carefully considering each application, the LCC then conducted interviews with each candidate. The two open positions starting in 2025 are Council Vice Moderator (formerly **Sid Shelton**) and Council Treasurer (formerly **Charles Kiskiras**) as well as four LCC positions.

You will be able to meet the nominees on Sunday, January 19 at 9:00 a.m. in the Founders' Room, during a casual *Coffee Meet and Greet*. Each will give a brief statement and you will have an opportunity to ask questions. These positions will be voted upon at the Annual Meeting of the Congregation on Sunday, January 26. As always, nominations from the floor will be accepted.

After much time, thought and prayer, the Leadership Cultivation Committee submits the following nominees for Church Council and LCC Candidates:

## **ERIC RIDINGS**

### **COUNCIL TREASURER**

Eric Ridings is a retired physician whose specialty is Physical Medicine and Rehabilitation (PM&R). He served on the medical school faculty of the University of Michigan before moving to Colorado Springs. Here he was in private practice until retiring in 2019. Eric and Jane joined FCC in 1997. He has been Council Secretary, chaired the (then) Nominating Committee, served on the LCC, the Re-Opening (Covid) Committee, two capital campaigns, the Advancement Team, and for 19 years the Human Resources Committee, the past five as chair. He also managed his medical practice, and was president of his HOA. He has been a member of the University of Michigan Medical School Admissions Committee for many years. Eric loves FCC, often referring to it as a family. He is motivated to serve as treasurer by a desire to help ensure our continued upward momentum through careful stewardship of our financial resources, transparently reported to



Council and the congregation, and by prudent decision-making on Council that reflects the congregation's values.

## **DAVE MORGAN**

### **VICE MODERATOR**

Dave started attending FCC in 2008, attracted by the preaching and worship experiences. Dave has an undergraduate degree from Western Illinois University (music) and a master's degree from the Air Force Institute of Technology (IT). After his Air Force career (music followed by IT), he worked for Dell Technologies leading multiple business units for fifteen years. Dave still actively composes/arranges and publishes his music. He is a home construction volunteer with Habitat for Humanity and serves on the FCC A/V Team. You may know Dave better as "Alyce's husband" and their work with IHN. Alyce and Dave have two children and two grandchildren who live in Colorado.



**LAURA PFENDER - LCC**

As a member of First Congregational Church since 2007 (started attending in 2003), Laura has been an integral part of Mission Giving and Outreach (MG&O), Children's Ministry Team, Sunday School Teacher, KC Worship, Multi-Faith Camp, FCC hosting of Family Promise, had a role in a capital campaign, JWW Lectureship Team, Ye Olde Madrigal kitchen staff, and a co-facilitator for Creation Justice and JWW Lectureship book groups. Laura was also Council Member for Education, September 2019 – February 2023. Laura retired from the Air Force after a 20-year intelligence career, was a consultant with Booz Allen Hamilton for seven years, and a Criminal Investigator with Colorado Springs Police Department Crimes Against Children Unit for two years. Most recently (2024), Laura was a temporary election judge for El Paso County. Laura is married and has a teenager in middle school. When not volunteering with church, various other organizations, or North Middle School and District 11 activities, she likes to travel, walk her dogs, read, and cook.

**TERESA LATIMER - LCC**

Teresa Latimer joined FCUCC in 2004 along with her husband, Bruce. She was impressed with the Open and Affirming Designation and the warm reception received on this first visit. Teresa attended California State University, Fullerton, where she studied music, specializing in the clarinet. Her working years began as a clarinetist with the Band of Mid America at Scott Air Force base. After three years, she left to start raising a family, and has since worked at several businesses as an administrative assistant. She retired from Colorado College four years ago. Teresa has done volunteer work with Fostering Hope, the cub scouts, and the Rampart Band Boosters. After a 30-year hiatus from playing the clarinet, she began playing again, ten years ago. Teresa is the principal clarinetist of the Colorado College Chamber Orchestra, an active substitute clarinetist for the Little London Winds and a former member of the New Horizons Band. Teresa and Bruce have been married for 48 years and are the proud parents of three sons, and even prouder grandparents of two beautiful granddaughters.

**SARA QUALLS - LCC**

Sara Qualls began attending FCC in 2007 and became a member in 2008. She was drawn to the progressive approach to Christianity, the Open and Affirming Designation, and the general openness to seeking one's truth. She found the atmosphere renewing, which helped foster healing from burnout from her previous church experience. Sara has recently retired from a thirty-nine year career at UCCS as a professor of Psychology and now has a small private practice specializing in work with older adults and their families. She has three children, two of whom live here in town, and is thrilled to get regular cuddles from her baby grandson. At FCC, Sara led the OWL Team a few years ago, and when it became available, she trained to co-facilitate the older adult OWL class which has been offered now twice. She has passion for helping people develop into their deeper potential for growth, presence, and kindness so is very pleased to join the work with the Leadership Cultivation Committee.

**NICOLE SEGURA - LCC**

Nicole Segura and her husband, Josh, and son, Hal, began attending FCC on Christmas Eve, 2022 and officially joined as members in December, 2023. They were drawn to the welcoming, multigenerational community at FCC, and love watching their son grow up in such an inclusive and fun church environment. With a bachelor's degree in English Education from Winthrop University and an Executive MBA from Auburn University, Nicole brings a strong background in leadership, program development, and community building. Her professional experience includes designing innovative programs and create impactful connections within diverse communities, and she has worked in education, athlete development, and non-profit leadership. As a member of the BE-Coming Team since summer 2024, she has been dedicated to fostering meaningful relationships and providing reflective spaces for FCUCC members to grow in their spiritual journeys. Outside of FCUCC, Nicole enjoys creative pursuits such as writing and photography, as well as traveling, and game nights with friends and family.





# Your Gifts in Action

by **Susan Ashley**, Mission Giving & Outreach Member  
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## REPORT FROM THE MISSION GIVING AND OUTREACH COMMITTEE (MG&O)

Each year, the Mission, Giving, and Outreach (MG&O) Committee allocates a portion of the church budget to support organizations that align with our values and make a positive impact in the community. This year, the committee received sixteen grant applications and awarded funding to the following eleven organizations, chosen in accordance with the priorities identified by the congregation in the most recent survey.

It's easy to feel that, as individuals, we may not be able to make a significant difference. However, as members of this church family, we are collectively supporting our community through these organizations. As you read through the list, please take a moment to reflect on the ways we are making a meaningful impact together. Click on the underscored names of the organizations to visit their websites and learn more about their work, as well as volunteer opportunities.

## 2024 MG&O GRANTS

ORGANIZATION	GRANTED	FOCUS
Fostering Hope Foundation	\$2,500	Abuse and Neglect
Depression and Bipolar Alliance	\$3,500	Mental Health
Project Angel Heart	\$2,500	Hunger
The Place	\$5,000	Homelessness
We Fortify	\$5,000	Homelessness
Finding Our Voices	\$3,000	Abuse and Neglect
Accompaniment & Sanctuary Coalition	\$5,000	Refugee Community
Interfaith Hospitality Network - Family Promise ***	\$3,300	Homelessness and Mental Health
Homeward Pikes Peak	\$5,000	Mental Health
Tri-Lakes Cares	\$1,000	Hunger
Safe Passage	\$4,000	Abuse and Neglect
La Puente	\$4,000	Homelessness
Westside Cares ***	\$3,000	Hunger
<b>TOTAL</b>	<b>\$46,800</b>	

\*\*\* Also receives monthly support from FCUCC

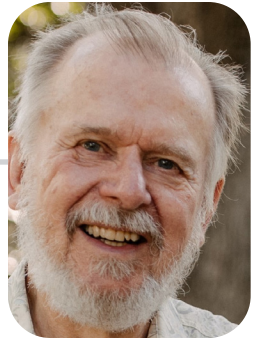


# Peek in the Past: At The Mystery's Origin

by **Chris Steenbergen**, Church Historian

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In November 1898, **Dr. Alfred Atwater Blackman** and his wife **Louise Reed Blackman** became members of FCC, arriving from Waterbury, Connecticut for Louise's health. A year later they transferred their membership to Denver, but after Louise died of tuberculosis in 1901, Dr. Blackman and his two children, **Carl** and **Ida**, rejoined our church. He took up a medical practice with **Dr. Wilbur F. Martin** on North Tejon Street, where the Colorado Springs directory of that time listed him as Physician and Surgeon.



*Dr. Alfred A. Blackman  
(courtesy Suellen McAndrews)*

His wife's death appears to have made him restless and the next year he traveled to Japan for two months. In 1903 he met and started courting **Gratia Russell**, who visited Colorado Springs from Englewood, a Chicago neighborhood. After their Chicago marriage in 1905, they lived on Wood Avenue. Gratia joined FCC that same year. Alfred had a wide range of interests, including psychotherapy, art, music, and biology. According to a report in *The Gazette*, he was witness to his "monkey house" burning in 1907, which killed a parrot, two squirrels, a guinea pig, and a monkey. Besides their honeymoon in Europe, Dr. Blackman continued to travel, partially for professional reasons, and in 1912, while he was in Europe studying novel medical treatments such as hypnosis, the Titanic sank and he assisted in the effort to financially support the victims' families. At that time, he extended

his visit to Italy and likely obtained the **Bambino** and **censer** for First Congregational's Mystery Pageant.

The Blackmans were very involved in the church and knew **Pastor Ranney** and his wife **Helen**, who conceived The Mystery, quite well, so they became involved with it from its inception. Alfred had a wooden box, meant to house Manitou



*The Bambino*

Springs spring water bottles, retrofitted to house both Bambino and censer, allowing safe storage in their attic. A family tradition of participation ensued and one of Alfred and Gratia's daughters, **Gratia Belle** born in 1910, the later Mrs. Don Haney, would for many years until 1984 direct the pageant. Of course, she had been an angel in her time and also, in 1944, Mary.

Dr. Blackman, who in 1918 published a book *Living* on holistic health, remained a well-respected physician in Colorado Springs until his death in 1928. Gratia Belle married **J. Donald Haney** in 1936. They were long-time active members of our church and had six children. Gratia Belle died in 1990.



*Gratia Belle Haney in her mother's dress at History Sunday in 1979 (FCUCC archives)*



# Are You Worrying About Your Memory?

by **Nancy Lippincott RN BSN, FCN**, Congregational Nurse  
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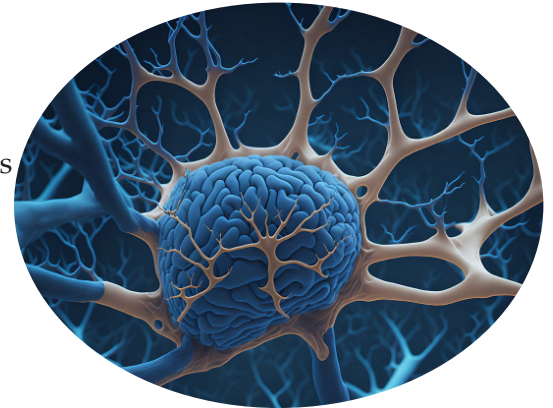
As we grow older, our memory isn't as sharp as we want it to be. It can cause a lot of stress in daily activities. It is normal to experience overall slowness or occasional forgetfulness.

It might help you to know that in your brain some of the **neurons** wear down as they are aging. Neurons - cells that send what you learn and keep them in your memory - can grow slower to keep you sharper. For example, maybe you can remember special events or where you parked your car today. But, as you try to retrieve a special address or phone number, or someone's name, or how to check the oil in your car, or where you got a certain jacket at the store, things might seem a little more tricky.

Since your brain is surprisingly pliant and accepts different strategies, you can practice good lifestyle behaviors to support your health and take a look at the areas which are difficult for you such as attention, organization, anticipation of upcoming work, and continuing to read a lot, engaging in new pastimes, and engaging in doing puzzles or learning new skills and connecting with friends. Use a daily calendar by writing appointments, letters/cards to write, calling friends and family, and buying groceries.

Here are other ideas:

- FIRST:** Make sure you get routine physical exams with your primary doctor. He/She can guide you to better health, including exercise, checking your blood pressure and pulse, and listening to your heart, and other symptoms you might have. A doctor can order a baseline test of your memory if you need it.
- SECOND:** Eat healthy foods, try to avoid foods that are too sweet or have too much fat in them, and drink at least four or more glasses of water each day. Limit any intake of excessive alcohol and if you are a smoker, find a way to quit. Create a good sleep hygiene: allow for 7 – 8 hours of sleep in a dark and quiet bedroom.
- THIRD:** Connect with family and friends regularly, because your activities with them can help your happiness, learning, laughter, and warm connections. Share your stressors with your friends and family and ask for support when troubles pop up. A positive attitude is a wonderful gift. Your brain needs lots of stimulation and rest as well.



## Who Are You? Let's Get to Know Each Other.

The Safety Team kindly asks all Members to wear their name tags on Sundays. It's a simple way to help us recognize each other and ensure everyone feels at home and secure.

No longer have a name tag? No problem! Just let **Emily Bond** know ([emily@fcucc.org](mailto:emily@fcucc.org)), and she will order one for you. Thank you for helping us create a welcoming and safe space for all!





# What a Year!

by **Connie Raub**, 150th Annuversary Team Chair

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What a year of celebrations we have had! As 2024 draws to a close, I hope you felt included in some, if not all, of the Sesquicentennial events. That was part of the plan ~ to involve as many people as possible and offer opportunities to participate. Isn't

that what our logo suggested? *UCC Rooted in Unity, Community, Continuity*. Isn't that what we, hopefully have always been about?



**AN ENORMOUS AND EXTRAVAGANT THANK YOU** to ALL who had any part in our Sesquicentennial (150th) Historic Celebrations. I can't name everyone, but I'll try to point out a host of special people and groups who made it a successful anniversary. Countless people volunteered to create fun and magical moments throughout our 150th year.

We began the preparations in January 2023 with Council appointing me as chair and collaborating with **Rev. Lee Ann** and **Tiffany Schmid** to create our 150th logo. In February we held three brainstorming meetings via Zoom and in-person open to all in the congregation to gather ideas. All suggestions, and MORE were implemented!

The History Book writing team composed of **Chris Steenbergen**, **Lynne Stefonik**, **Pete Hokanson**, and **Dave Seyfert** began researching and working. **Kathryn Eastburn** retyped the original 125 years for computer use. **Pam Shockley-Zelabak** and I met with **Matt Mayberry** and **Leah Witherow** to secure plans for a Pioneers Museum presentation. Meetings were held with Colorado College to be sure we were not in conflict in their 150th event scheduling.

A fabulous Steering Committee was formed, and monthly meetings began. **Dave Seyfert**, **Cynthia Riley**, **Laura Pfender**, **Del Hokanson**, **Lee Lehemkuhl**, **Emily Bond**, **Rachel Rumble**, **Pam Shockley-Zalabak**, and **Connie Raub** enlisted volunteers, planned and carried out the following events.

- The creation of "Our Story" by **Sky Foerster** was used as a foundation for the City Proclamation.
- During the summer of 2023 over forty interviews of long-time and important church members were video recorded by our Audio/Visual team: **Paul Schwotzer**, **Bob Jones**, **Royce Field**, and **Rachel Rumble**. Scheduling and interview teams made possible the sharing of a different interview each week in 2024.
- Our 2024 celebrations began at the Annual Meeting with the Reading of the City Proclamation by **Nancy Henjum** followed by Dinner on the Grounds headed by **Alyce Morgan**.
- **Emily Bond** created a 150th bulletin Board in the Founders' Room.
- Factoids collected by **Gail Rutherford** appeared weekly and around the facility.
- "Church Merch" went on sale - mugs, water bottles, tee shirts, vests, and shirts ordered by **Rachel Rumble** and distributed with help from many volunteers.
- A Hymn Writing Project was conducted, coordinated by **Mindy Lavender**.
- The Silver Threads Luncheon featured a fashion show and music through the decades, beginning with the 1880s.
- Music Appreciation Sunday presented "Jubilate Deo." **David Acton** highlighted hymns and music used in past celebrations throughout 2024.
- Colorado College Summer Music Festival gave a concert at FCUCC.
- Folk and Jazz Sundays.
- **Sue Prendinger** and her Team oversaw the 150th Block Party on a Sunday in June.
- "The Show To Let You Know" - with its cast of eighty - was a huge success in July.
- An All Church Picnic at La Foret was coordinated by **Laura Pfender's** Team.
- Street Banners sporting our 150th logo went up in Colorado Springs in September given by our generous "Bannerfactors."
- The Ice Cream Social (a real delicious hit!) was headed up by **Casey Scott** and her Team.



- Many people participated in the McAllister House's Harvest Festival.
- The Pioneer's Museum was the venue for the presentation "*FCC in the City: 150 Years of Community and Congregation.*"
- Sesquicentennial Organ Recital and reception featuring award-winning organist **Caroline Robinson**.
- The Forum presented numerous historic-themed presentations, organized by **Rob Lund** and The Forum Team.
- *The Gazette* featured an extensive article about our 150 years.
- A beautiful timeline was created and displayed by **Mindy Lavender**.
- The History Book of FCC 150 Years was gifted to every Congregant family by **Lynne Stefonik**.
- Our Historical Weekend (in October) was attended by about 200 people (see below).
- Three nights of The Madrigal with a feast by **Patti White** and many participants was organized by a great team and lead by **Katy Crumpton, Mindy Lavender, and Victoria Hansen**.
- Advent, The Mystery and Christmas Eve rounded out the year.

At the end of October, we began our Historical Weekend on Friday, October 25 with two separate tours of our church building led by **Sid Shelton, Rachel Johnson, Karol Finch, and Connie Raub**, augmented by **Jeanie Tate, Charles Barber, and Susan Ashley's** video.

At the same time, a creative Banquet Team was hard at work decorating and setting up for a 150th Anniversary Cocktail Party and Banquet. Thanks to: **Jill Robinson, Jane Ridings, Tiffany Schmid, Liz Arnold, Patti White, Del Hokanson, Jacque Franklin, Lynn Young, Rebecca Hibbard, Lois Benson, Jane Gazel, Kathy Lindeman, and Hannah Yeomans**. That Saturday evening was all-a-buzz with last minute details and anticipation for the evening events. Naturally, **Emily Bond** and **Rachel Rumble** were involved, even though they are not supposed to be working on Saturdays! We welcomed our **Mayor Yemi Mobolade** and his advisor **Thomas Thompson** to the cocktail hour where Mr. Mayor gave brief remarks of



congratulations and gratitude for FCUCC. **Patti White, Hannah Yeomans** and their Crew treated the gathering to an "Over the Top" event with a delicious *Amuse-bouche* bringing beauty to all our senses and smiles to our mouths. We were captivated by the sight of lovely glassware and the variety of cocktails, including wine, Coors' special 150th celebration beer and VERY special cocktail "Spirit of Saint Ger-Vrain." **Casey Scott** and **Drew Robinson** generously donated the wine and beer along with a neon sign. Needless to say, "*A good time was had by all!*"

Guests traversed to our neighboring church, First United Methodist, a short block on St. Vrain to be met by an ensemble of welcoming "Greeters" ready and willing to assist our sojourners in finding the Fellowship Hall and locating their assigned seats.

Music and joyous conversation filled the room. Each table was "named" after an important FCC person and decorated with a twinkling-lit bottle, scarves belonging to members of our congregation, a printed program with menu and fresh flowers. Overhead hung banners sporting our 150th logo. We were entertained by many of our talented musicians, **Kevin Marvin, Lynn Barber, John Michael Johnson-Tirres, Lynn Young** and **David Acton** offering "dinner music" as well as a chance to have photos taken at the Photo Booth with a backdrop of our beloved 1889 FCC building created by **Tiffany Schmid**.



Dinner was served buffet style with groups of tables invited by hostess, **Jill Robinson**. And then the program began! What a joy to be entranced by the talented and long-time quartet re-named *The Sesquicentennial Singers* consisting of **Dave Seyfert, Paul Schwotzer, Luke Cammack, David Nath, and Brian Hofflander**. They offered a heartfelt memorial to **Georg Gearing**, one of the original "Velvet Voices" from the past. This group's voices were enhanced by our sound technicians, **Carolyn Dickerson** and **Paul Schwotzer**.

I was honored to be the Emcee and happily invited **Nancy Henjum** to read the City of Colorado Springs' Proclamation. Next came a rousing toast to all of us by Church Council Moderator **Rich Law**. **Charles Kiskiras**, Council Treasurer, recognized members



of **The Seven Pillars Community**, followed by **Ben and Lynn Young** speaking passionately about their dedication to the future of FCUCC and voicing many of our reasons for including this church community in our wills. The evening would not have been complete without hearing words from our beloved former ministers who contributed to the reason for our celebration. Not surprisingly, **Jacque Franklin, Benjamin Broadbent, Jim White and Jerry Jordan** all spoke from the heart and echoed what we wanted to hear. Fittingly, we ended with our fabulous current staff **Lee Ann Bryce, Josh Rumble, Emily, Bond, David Acton, Rachel Rumble and Sarah Lund** performing "One Voice."

Before the benediction by **Rev. Lee Ann**, but equally fitting as a blessing, a dedicated group of volunteers "The Illuminators" were dismissed to "Light our Way" to the parking lots and into our future using "modern" LED lights.

But, the MAIN reason for ALL the celebration events this year was our Historic Sunday Morning Worship Service on October 27, 2024! Oh my! The Sanctuary was alive with energetic love, gratitude and thanksgiving. Congregants and visitors were greeted with triumphal brass and organ, followed by a procession of clergy and Chancel Choir presenting "To You, O God, All Creatures Sing." The service was certainly centered around the Glory of God with all of our ministers participating in very personal ways ~ **Sarah Lund and Jerry Jordan** presenting the children's message and reinventing The Brown Bag tradition; **Benjamin Broadbent** lending his warm and familiar voice to **Jenny George's** original song, "On Earth as in Heaven;" **Jacque Franklin** articulating the pleas and gratitude of "the people" in beseeching a prayer she expressed by seemingly drawn from our collective hearts: **Lee Ann Bryce's** thoughtful and empowering preaching; **Josh Rumble's** iconic invitation to give of ourselves as well as our money; **Jim White's** invitation to look at our Rose window and bless us with a special and reassuring benediction.



Of course, the music, under the direction of **David Acton** was beautiful and uplifting! We showed off our historic Hook and Hastings Organ, our amazing **Bells of St. Vrain** and **Chancel Choir** accompanied by **Sandi Shroads** and exceptional brass players.

We even had a cake and sang "Happy Birthday to us" as part of our service. Thanks to **Chris Hall** and a team of cake-cutters and servers for the reception: Speaking of cake, we absolutely must thank our faithful custodians, **Robert Schaefer** and **Doris Fletcher** who set up and took down and cleaned up over and over throughout the year.



But wait. . . there's more! We had a fabulous presentation of The Forum, an educational series started by our own **Dave Seyfert** many years ago and now led and orchestrated by **Rob Lund**. What an amazing, educational, and fun time featuring another part in a series of historical reflections on FCUCC. This Sunday featured a short history of all our ministers presented by Church Historian extraordinaire **Chris Steenbergen**, with added insights by **Jim Matson**. Then, cherished memories were shared by our much-loved former ministers: **Jacque Franklin, Benjamin Broadbent, Jim White, and Jerry Jordan**.

What more can I say, except **Thank You!** Look at the fact that over seventy people were MAJOR players in just creating our Historical Weekend! What started out as a fragile but hopeful vision by a few in the late 1800s has continued to inspire us today. As the Advancement Team reminds us in the 2025 Annual Appeal theme "Grateful for 150 Years... Now the Church for Today," we have WORK TO DO! Time, talent, and treasure are all needed to make the next 150 years of commitment and action to doing God's Will in the world a reality.



# ROOT for Justice

by **Siri Everett**, *Creation Justice Team Member*

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The Creation Justice Team is awestruck by the generosity of individuals and foundations who have contributed \$18,000 to our newest project: **Root for Justice**. Members and Friends of First Congregational Church have collectively given \$3,000; The Caruthers Philanthropy of Austin, Texas gifted \$5,000; The Santa Fe Community Foundation is sending a check for \$10,000. The members of Root for Justice have chosen three projects to be partially funded by these donations.

**1** The Murray Grove of six deciduous trees will be planted on the 1300 block of Wood Avenue in April 2025. Each tree is a symbol of hope and care for our planet, and the grove will be a place of gathering and commemoration for our community. The spring planting date, TBD, will celebrate the trees' arrival with hot coffee and warm cardamom bread.

**2** Concomitantly, Root for Justice is working with city foresters to select sites in low-canopy areas of our city that could benefit from trees. The success of our project is not based on the number of trees planted. Rather, the survival rate of those trees is of primary importance, so adequate irrigation, soil health, and maintenance are key considerations for site selection. We want First Congregational's groves to serve and thrive!

**3** The third Root for Justice project is to assist in the "sprucing up" of our church property. The church grounds were cleaned just before Christmas: bushes were shaped, trash was removed, and last year's plant stalks trimmed. The next steps are being creatively considered.

Root for Justice members hope that our projects are **FOR** the community, and **BY** the community. As we put down roots, watch for invitations for ways everyone can participate. Dig in!



*You too can still make a contribution to The Murray Grove!*

*Simply scan the QR code and follow the prompts.*



**SAVE THE DATE**

**FREE CONCERT AT FCUCC!**

**Saturday, February 22, 2025**

**7:00 P.M.**

**"Upward Bound"**

**featuring**

**USAF Academy Cadet Chorale**

**FCUCC Chancel Choir**

**Wings of Gold Bluegrass**





# Creation Justice Creativity Festival

by **Ani Rose Whaleswan**, *Creation Justice Team Member*  
[livinstonesunlimited@gmail.com](mailto:livinstonesunlimited@gmail.com)



## Call for Creatives!

If you attend First Congregational Church and are a creative, you are asked and encouraged to share your gifts and talent, while also expressing your care of, love for, and concern for the earth and all her beings.

3D work of all kind will be considered:

- Clay work
- Sculpture
- Soap
- Carved Gourds
- Small Paintings
- Sustainability Items
- Found work
- Can foods... what else?



This work will be shown and available for sale (if artist chooses to sell) on Friday, March 14 during the evening, and throughout the day on Saturday, March 15. Fifty percent of proceeds will go towards the Creation Justice mission, and Root for Justice.

We are also looking for artistic abilities:

- Youth and Family Activities
- Presentations
- People to offer dance performance
- People to offer poetry
- People to offer musical performance
- ... what else?

These will be interspersed throughout the day on Saturday March 15.

**The deadline for your idea and information is January 20, 2025.** This will ensure planning and space availability.

If you are interested, please contact **Ani Rose Whaleswan** ([livinstonesunlimited@gmail.com](mailto:livinstonesunlimited@gmail.com) / 719.895.0926), or you can find her in the FCUCC Kitchen on Sunday mornings. There will also be a place to sign-up on the Creation Justice table each Sunday.

**Get creative and share your nature connection with others.  
Be part of our celebration of Earth!**





# Loving and Healing Creation

by **Becky Weiss**, Creation Justice Team Member

[rebasing@icloud.com](mailto:rebasing@icloud.com)

## Artist Call for Works from the Creation Justice Team

*"We cannot protect something we do not love, we cannot love what we do not know, we cannot know what we do not see, or hear, or sense."*

Richard Louv from *Last Child in the Woods*

If you attend First Congregational Church and practice a form of graphic art that reflects your love for, connection to, and the healing of our planet, the Creation Justice team invites you to submit one piece of work to be hung in the Atrium for our upcoming show entitled **"Loving and Healing Creation"**.

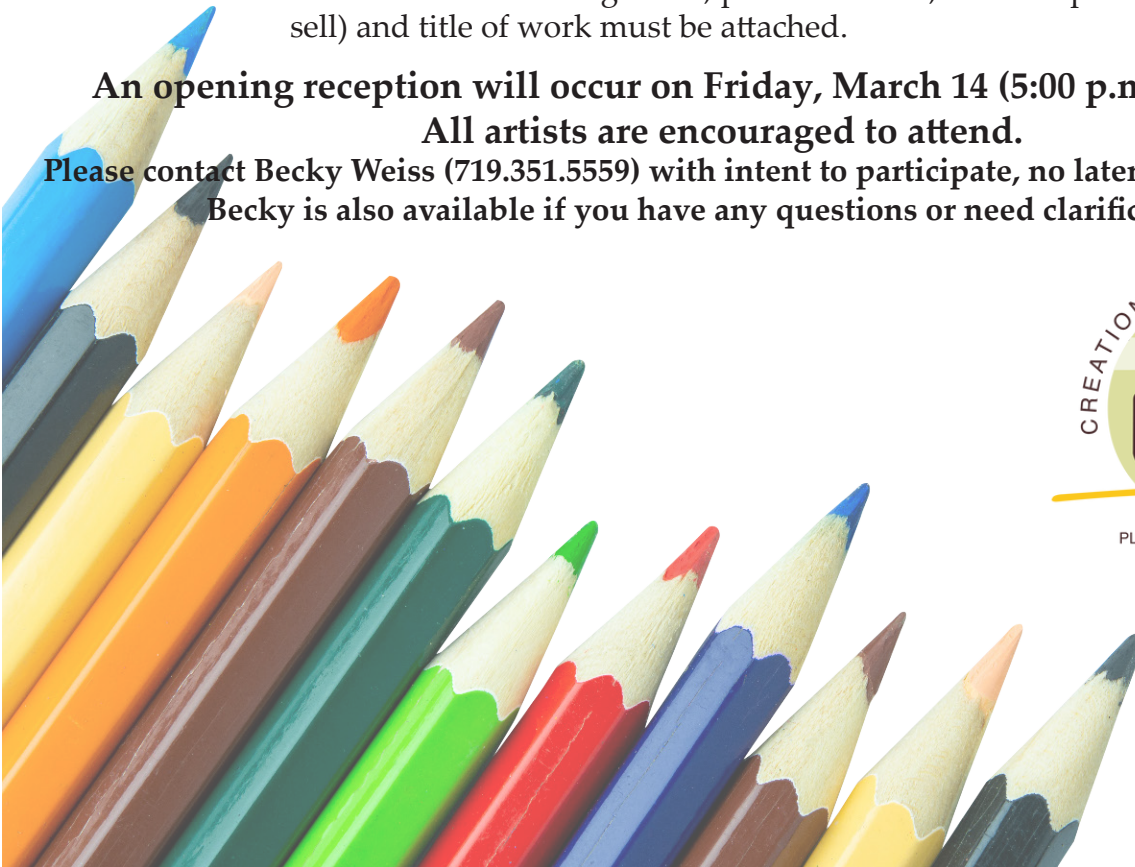
- All two-dimensional forms including oil, water color, photography, collage, and mixed media are encouraged.
- Works must be signed, framed, wired, and ready to hang.
- Studio canvas boxes 1 1/2 inches deep, wired, and ready to hang are also acceptable.
- Dimensions no smaller than 11" x 14" will be accepted.
- Works will be received on Thursday, March 6 (10:00 a.m. - 11:00 a.m.) in the Atrium.
- This event will be lightly juried to ensure continuity and quality.
- Direct sales are permitted between artist and buyer on the weekend of the opening provided that 50% of proceeds are donated to the Creation Justice mission.
- Artist's information including name, phone number, and sale price (if artist chooses to sell) and title of work must be attached.

**An opening reception will occur on Friday, March 14 (5:00 p.m. - 6:00 p.m.)**

**All artists are encouraged to attend.**

**Please contact Becky Weiss (719.351.5559) with intent to participate, no later than February 28.**

**Becky is also available if you have any questions or need clarifications.**





# The Forum in Jan/Feb!

by **Rob Lund**, *The Forum Team Chair*  
[robflund@gmail.com](mailto:robflund@gmail.com)



What a fabulous year was our 150th Anniversary! I hope you all had a chance to take in some of The Forum historical presentations. If not, be sure to check out our YouTube page for some of the recordings: [https://youtube.com/playlist?list=PLptwzkpRTxgZRMqhCvBDESdZ59Ye\\_0f5&si=P9TgJLChjk2pfIS9](https://youtube.com/playlist?list=PLptwzkpRTxgZRMqhCvBDESdZ59Ye_0f5&si=P9TgJLChjk2pfIS9)



2025 will start with some passionate and prescient voices. Don't miss them!

January 5 **Eli Hauber**  
 January 12 **Yana Malyk and Ed Ward**

January 19 **James Foucher**  
 February 2 **Emily & Kayla Bond**

Our Eternal Imprint  
 Ukraine Power presents:  
 "Helping The Displaced In Ukraine"  
 UCC anti-racism work titled "Join the Movement"  
 Porch de Salomon - Service Trip to Guatemala

As always, I love to hear your feedback and suggestions!



Scenes from this year's Multi-Generational Christmas Pageant, performed during the first service on December 24, at 4:00 p.m.





# JWW Lectureship Series Book Study

by **Dave Seyfert**, JWW Lectureship Series Team Member

[daveseyfert1@msn.com](mailto:daveseyfert1@msn.com)

To help us begin thinking about **Chris Hedges'** visit to deliver our 2025 JWW Lectureship Series (April 25-27, 2025), we will be conducting a book study on Monday mornings in February and reading *Losing Moses on the Freeway: The Ten Commandments in America* (2005). We are excited that the UCCS Center for Religious Diversity and Public Life is co-sponsoring the 2025 JWW lectures.



## When and where are the book study sessions?

**DATES:** February 3, 10, 17, 24

**TIMES:** 9:30 a.m. - 11:00 a.m.

**LOCATION:** Gregg Library at First Congregational Church

## Who should attend?

All who wish to explore Chris Hedges' ideas and prepare for his lectures in April. The discussions will be facilitated by the JWW Lectureship Series Team.

## About Chris Hedges:

**Christopher Hedges** graduated from Colgate University with a BA in English Literature and went on to receive a Master of Divinity (MDiv) from Harvard University. He was awarded an honorary doctorate in 2009 from Starr King School for the Ministry in Berkeley, California. Hedges was ordained in 2014 as a Presbyterian minister to work in prison ministry.

Throughout the 1980s-90s, Hedges worked as a journalist for *NPR*, *The Washington Post*, *The Dallas Morning News* and *The New York Times*, reporting on the Falkland War from Buenos Aires, the wars in El Salvador, Nicaragua and Guatemala, the first Gulf War, and conflicts in Sarajevo, Kosovo, and the Middle East. He has taught at Columbia University, New York University, Princeton University, and The University of Toronto and in the Rutgers University degree program for men and women in the New Jersey prisons system; he has authored twelve books.

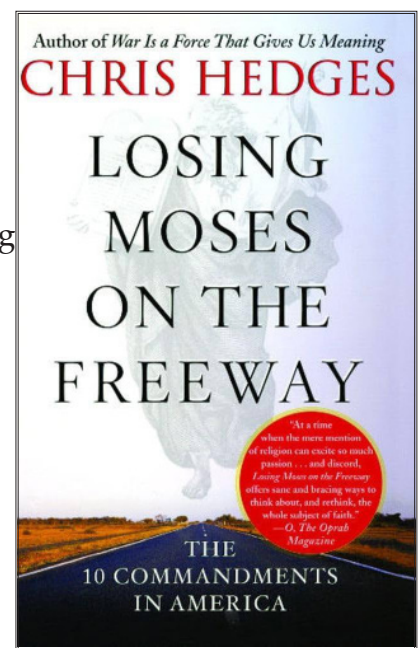


Chris Hedges

## About the Book:

This is a powerful book and not the typical theological treatise. Reading it will cause you to consider the Ten Commandments in an entirely new and visceral context. It urges the reader to re-interpret our understanding of the commandments in terms of real-life challenges and human frailties, particularly in the experiences of those living at the margins of society.

Books are available on Sunday mornings in the Founders' Room in January for a suggested \$10 donation.



# Are Immigrants Our Neighbors?

by **Connie Kreider**, *Immigrant Advocacy Team*

[edu\\_connie@yahoo.com](mailto:edu_connie@yahoo.com)

We are familiar with Bible passages in Leviticus 19: 33–34 and Hebrews 13: 1–2 that direct us to love the immigrant among us as we love ourselves and to show hospitality to strangers. The United Church of Christ (UCC) follows these teachings, and in 1917 passed a resolution to become an immigrant welcoming denomination. The UCC has always stood with those who suffer and are told, “There’s no room for you.” Some of the scripture we read during the recent holiday season applies to today.



**We are concerned.** Much of what President-elect Trump is proposing goes against current laws and will be challenged in court. For example, ending DACA (Deferred Action for Childhood Arrivals), which protects those who were brought here as children from deportation, would require a constitutional amendment. However, “Trump’s team’s daunting array of tactics will be a blitz designed to overwhelm immigrant rights lawyers.”<sup>i</sup> His team plans to use “Expedited removal, a process by which low-level immigration officers can summarily remove certain noncitizens without a hearing. The officer is permitted to serve both as prosecutor (charged with enforcing the law) and judge (rendering a final decision on the case). There is little or no opportunity to consult with an attorney or to gather any evidence that might prevent deportation.”<sup>ii</sup> Trump plans to use the National Guard and local law enforcement to implement this. Vice-President-elect J.D. Vance compared deportation to eating a sandwich. With the first bite, you start deporting criminals, for the second and third bites, change focus; keep at it until eleven million are gone.



In **Colorado**, CIRC (Colorado Immigrant Rights Coalition) has prepared wallet-sized cards teaching immigrants their rights to remain silent, to have an attorney, and to know they do not need to open their door or consent to a search, what an authentic arrest warrant looks like, and why they are arrested. These rights might not be respected. CIRC also has packets to help families ensure that legal documents (bank access, Power of Attorney, car titles, etc.) are in place in case of arrest or deportation so that remaining family members can function.

In **Colorado Springs**, the Accompaniment and Sanctuary Coalition, of which FCUCC is a member, supplies apartments for families to live in rent-free up to three months. This gives immigrants time to find jobs and save money for housing. FCUCC members have helped with furniture, cultural mentoring, transportation, and friendship. During Trump’s first term, we supported immigrants in sanctuary at All Soul’s Unitarian Church with food, grocery cards, meals, and visits. At present, we do not know if churches will still be safe places for housing immigrants, but we will distribute CIRC materials and help as we can. Uncertainty lies ahead.

As we listen to the Christmas story, let’s be mindful and support those who are looking for refuge and a new life.

i “Trump’s Agenda: Deportation” by Robert Farley, [FactCheck.org](https://factcheck.org) November 22, 2024

ii “Expedited Removal Explainer” American Immigration Council Fact Sheet, December 12, 2023

**CHURCH PROGRAM & OFFICE STAFF**

**Rev. Lee Ann Bryce**  
- Lead Minister  
**Rev. Josh Rumble**  
- Associate Minister  
**David Acton**  
- Director of Music Ministry  
**Emily Bond**  
- Director of Administration & Communications  
**Rachel Rumble**  
- Director of Finance & Technology  
**Sarah Lund**  
- Director of Children's & Family Ministry

**CHURCH COUNCIL**

**Rich Law**  
- Moderator  
**Sid Shelton (retiring)**  
- Vice Moderator  
**Charles Kiskiras (retiring)**  
- Treasurer  
**Jean Hagerman**  
- Secretary  
**Cathy White**  
- Care & Fellowship  
**Jill Robinson**  
- Outreach  
**Minette Church**  
- Worship & Spiritual Life  
**Alysa Webb**  
- Education

**AD HOC STAFF**

**Sarah Groh**  
- Wedding Coordinator  
**Ani Rose Whaleswan, Sarah Groh**  
- Memorial Services Coordinators  
**Patti White, Ani Rose Whaleswan**  
- Receptions Coordinator

**CHURCH STAFF**

**Ani Rose Whaleswan, Curt Daniel**  
- Sunday Sextons  
**Doris Fletcher, Robert Scheafer**  
- Custodians  
**Kayla Bond-Tetzlaff, Lucy Cavin, Doris Fletcher, Katelynn Hoyle, Sarah Sampson**  
- Nursery Attendants

**PASTORS EMERITI**

**Rev. Dr. Jerry Jordan**  
(1973-1988)  
**Rev. Dr. James White**  
(1989-2005)

**APPOINTED OFFICERS**

**Lois Benson**  
- Membership Clerk  
**Chris Steenbergen**  
- Historian

**LEADERSHIP CULTIVATION COMMITTEE**

**Kisti Felps**  
- Chair  
**Tom Healy**  
**Rebecca Hibbard**  
**Pauli Hubbard**  
**Jill Robinson**

**VOLUNTEER POSITIONS**

**Ceil Malek**  
- Communion Coordinator  
**Nancy Lippincott**  
- Congregational Nurse  
**Marsha Garrett**  
- Liturgist Coordinator  
**Tom Healy, Judy Cunningham**  
- Head Ushers  
**Phyllis White**  
- Flute Choir Director  
**Chris Cunningham, Judy Cunningham, Curt Daniel, Agnes Kehoe, David Montgomery, Chris Newman, Sue Prendinger, Phyllis White**  
- Office Volunteers  
**Pete Hokanson**  
- *The Communicator* Proof-Reader  
**OPEN**  
- Flowers Coordinator

**ASSOCIATED IN MINISTRY**

**Rev. Lyn Boudreau**  
**Rev. Patty Walker**  
- 4-Way Covenant

**Liz Brahler**  
**Samantha Garrett**  
**Ani Rose Whaleswan**  
- Members in Discernment

**VOLUNTEER CHAIRS**

**Lynne Stefoniak**  
- Advancement Team  
**Carolyn Dickerson**  
- Audio/Visual  
**Cynthia Franklin**  
- Book Discussion Group  
**Mindy Lavender**  
- Children's and Family Ministry  
**Marsha Garrett**  
- Clergy Congregation Relations  
**Jan Erickson**  
- Creation Justice  
**Sid Shelton**  
- Facility Improvement  
**Charles Kiskiras**  
- Financial Advisory  
**Jeanie Tate**  
- Gregg Library  
**Steve Getty**  
- Grounds  
**Karol Finch**  
- Historical  
**Eric Ridings**  
- Human Resources  
**Connie Kreider**  
- Immigrant Advocacy  
**Agnes Kehoe**  
- Intercessory Prayer Network  
**OPEN**  
- Just Peace  
**Lynne Stefoniak**  
- JWW Lectureship Series  
**Patti White**  
- Kitchen Witches  
**Sid Shelton**  
- Maintenance  
**Andrew Claxton**  
- Mission Giving & Outreach  
**Kathy Lindeman**  
- Music & Arts Ministry  
**Lori Goodwin, Lee Lehmkuhl**  
- The Mystery  
**David Montgomery**  
- Playground Duty  
**Jane Gazal**  
- Prayer Shawl Ministry  
**John Stefoniak**  
- Risk Reduction & Response  
**Tom Healy**  
- Safety Team  
**Jill Cameron**  
- Sanctuary Arts Ministry  
**Cynthia Franklin**  
- Simply Social Group  
**Judy Kort**  
- Stephen Ministry  
**Rob Lund**  
- The Forum  
**Marsha Garrett**  
- Visitation Ministry



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COLORADO SPRINGS | CO | 80903



RETURN SERVICE REQUESTED

First Congregational UCC is an Open and Affirming Congregation. We invite people of every age, race, marital status, sexual orientation, gender expression, means, ability and spiritual tradition to join us in the love of God and neighbor through Christian worship, dedication to education and commitment to service.



UNITED CHURCH  
OF CHRIST

**THE COMMUNICATOR** is usually published bi-monthly, and takes a break during the summer. The next issue will be March / April, 2025.

*The Communicator* includes information about the life of First Congregational Church and the people of the church. Instead, The FCC Weekly (our weekly eblast) will be more of an informational notice of upcoming events and worship. You can sign-up to receive this weekly notice via our website: [www.fcucc.org](http://www.fcucc.org).

If you have something you would like to contribute to The Communicator, please make a note of the deadline to submit an article. Articles should be 500 words or less. We invite you to submit articles relevant to the life of our congregation.

Accepted submissions may be edited for length, clarity, and correctness. Opinions expressed by writers do not necessarily reflect official FCC policy.

**The DEADLINE for the next issue  
(March / April issue) is February 15.**

Please send your materials to **Emily Bond** - [emily@fcucc.org](mailto:emily@fcucc.org).

**REQUIREMENTS:**

- Include author's name, church role, contact email, and contact telephone number.
- Include a title suggestion and, if desired, photos, etc.
- If articles include photos or graphics, please submit a shorter article.