



MESSAGE FROM MELANIE

Playwright George Bernard Shaw attended a banquet in his honor. Following the meal and many tributes, a reporter asked: “Mr. Shaw, you have known many of the greatest people of your generation. They all aspire to be more like you. If you could live your life again as another famous person, who would it be?” Shaw thought for a moment and said, “If I could live my life over as any person I desired, I would want to be the man George Bernard Shaw should have been the first time around, but wasn’t.”

This month we will enter the season of Lent, a sacred time in the Christian calendar which beckons us to go deeper into ourselves and consider what sort of people we are called to be. How is God calling us to grow, change, and develop? In what areas of our lives do we need forgiveness, healing, and a fresh start? Any change must begin with us, and whether or not we have the courage to honestly assess our failures, weaknesses and shortcomings. Twelve-step programs offer this guideline: “Make a searching and fearless moral inventory of ourselves.” That is precisely what the followers of Jesus are invited to do during the season of Lent. We will begin the season together on Wednesday, February 14 with Ash Wednesday worship at noon and 7 p.m. in the Chapel.

In the early church, the 40 days preceding Easter Sunday were historically a time when new converts to Christianity prepared for baptism with prayer, fasting, and self-denial. From that time to this, Lent has been a season of inner soul-searching and serious reflection. It is a time to ask ourselves: “How have I lost my way? How do I need to change in order to become the person God created me to be?”

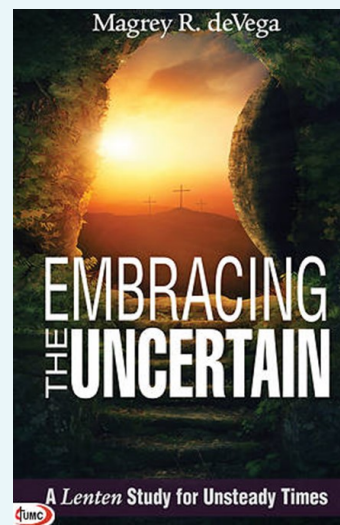
I do not want to reach the end of my life having missed out on the person God created me to be. All of us are all called to be a blessing in this world and to improve the lives of others. That is what we are about as the body of Christ that is First Church. Please join us as we go deeper into ourselves during this sacred season of reflection and introspection.

Dr. Melanie Rosa

Book Study for Lent

Rev. Melanie and Rev. Cynthia will be offering a class during Lent this year based upon the book *Embracing the Uncertain: A Lenten Study for Unsteady Times*.

The class will be offered Wednesdays at 2:00 p.m. starting February 14 and Thursdays at 6 p.m. starting February 22. The books cost \$10, and you may sign up in Fellowship Hall or contact Director of Adult Faith Formation David Reid at davidreid24@gmail.com. Please join us!



The annual used book and puzzle sale is scheduled for Feb. 23–25 in the Northern Colorado Faith Library and the Parlor. Hours are 9 a.m.–1 p.m. February 23, 9 a.m.–noon February 24; 8 a.m.–noon on February 25. All funds raised through the sale will buy new books, audio books, DVDs, and equipment.

Donations of used books, puzzles, DVDs and CDs may be dropped off at the library until two days before the sale. To schedule a pickup, call David Reid at (970) 581-2707. Popular fiction, mysteries westerns, and cookbooks are among the best sellers. No encyclopedias, textbooks, or magazines, please.

We Welcome Scott Grantland as Our New Wesley Foundation Director

Scott comes to us from Pensacola, Florida. He started as the Wesley Foundation Director (or Director of College Ministries) on January 14, 2018. Scott is an Ordained Elder with the Alabama-West Florida Conference. He graduated with an M.Div. from Duke Divinity School in 2011.



(Photo taken from The Alabama-West Florida Conference website)

Scott's first appointment was to the First United Methodist Church of Pensacola. After five years in that capacity, Scott sought extension ministries. Scott spent one year as Chaplain Resident at Baptist Hospital in Pensacola before accepting the position of Wesley Director. As Wesley Director, Scott will be working with students at Colorado State University and potentially with students from Front Range Community College. Much of Scott's time will be spent on campus getting to know students, building relationships, leading Bible and book studies, and guiding students spiritually. However, you will also find Scott at church, specifically on Sundays. One of Scott's hobbies is hiking, which he hopes to enjoy here in Colorado. Welcome, Scott!

Combatants for Peace: First Church will host a Peace Café beginning with light refreshments at 1 p.m. and the first presentation at 1:45 February 25 in Fellowship Hall. The program, which is sponsored by J-Street Fort Collins, will feature a former Israeli soldier and a Palestinian freedom fighter, who share their transformation from a path of armed confrontation to a path of nonviolent resistance.

How to Receive and Extend God's Welcome: A Church-wide Team Effort

by Rev. Cynthia Paquette

Whether or not you are new to First Church, I welcome you and know that God welcomes you always not just to First Church but God welcomes you back into God's open and most loving arms.

I invite you to think of where in the past has God opened up your life. How has God welcomed you? What is your story of God's welcome. . .

- into new life, reconciliation
- mercy, grace, forgiveness
- letting go, dying, transitions
- healing, renewing, restoring

How is God calling you to welcome others to receive God's welcome?



As you journey through and reflect on the past, present, and ponder on the future, I invite you to a study on God's welcome. It is a five-session study using the book *God's Welcome: Hospitality for a Gospel-Hungry World* by Amy Oden. These classes will be offered as a part of the Recharge Wednesday night program starting on February 21 at 6 p.m.

Whether or not you have experienced God's welcome in the past, are now experiencing God's welcome or believe God is welcoming you and God is inviting you to welcome others with God's welcome, you are invited to the study.

Please sign up and purchase your book on Sunday mornings in the Fellowship Hall at the Adult Faith Formation table. **Welcome and see you at class!**



Welcoming Affirming Reconciling Methodists

present

Continue the Journey

Wednesday Evenings

February 7, 14, 21, 28, and March 7

6:45 to 8:15 p.m. in Fellowship Hall

Session #1: February 7, Documentary Film, *An Act of Love*, The story of Methodist Minister, Rev. Frank Schaefer who was defrocked for performing the wedding of his gay son and his son's partner. Film is 86 minutes. Please arrive early.

Session #2: February 14, Q & A on *An Act of Love* and Update on the UMC Commission on A Way Forward.

Session #3: February 21, Intro to book *Changing Our Mind*, by D. P. Gushee, and sharing stories.

Session #4: February 28, Getting to Know PFLAG, a national organization for parents and families of LGBTQ+ loved ones.

Session #5: March 7, "What Does the Bible Say?" Facilitator- Dr. Melanie Rosa

First Church became a Reconciling Congregation in 2015. Prior to that several small faith communities within our church declared themselves as reconciling groups. We, with God's help and love in our hearts, are on a journey together to welcome, affirm, reconcile, and exemplify.

OPEN HEARTS, OPEN MINDS, OPEN DOORS.



Christmas Mission to Pine Ridge Reservation (December 13–16)

Jim Collinson, Theresa Holbrook, Rich Fisher, Margaret Janson, and Harry Mueller, traveled to Pine Ridge, South Dakota to prepare 100 turkey dinners for Lakota families at the Pine Ridge Retreat Center. Diana Burkholder, Bonny Thomas, Elaine Andersen, Rich, and Jim shopped and cooked turkeys. Yvonne Knight donated a turkey. We also provided diapers and Christmas gift cards for Lakota children. Members of the Prayer Shawl group and others knitted hats and mittens that were distributed in the Pine Ridge and Wounded Knee communities.

We were also able to supervise activities of approximately 30 children. After an hour of playtime, we shared a supper followed by stories and prayers. That evening artist Kevin Poor Bear, a paraplegic, described how his life had been rescued from alcohol dependency by his Christian belief as he created a pastel picture with Christian and Lakota symbols. We also admired several of his colorful paintings.

Thursday morning we visited Red Cloud Indian School, a Jesuit-sponsored K-12 school for Lakota children that serves 800 families. The school has been very successful in placing students in leading colleges and universities. We met Kelly and Susie Looking Horse at the Wounded Knee massacre site, which is now a cemetery that includes a mass grave for the more than 150 Lakota. Kelly related stories from his grandfather who witnessed this atrocity early on December 29, 1890. We returned to the Retreat Center in time to supervise activities for the children again.

Friday we prepared and distributed turkey dinners with all the trimmings. Several families were served from a buffet and food boxes as well as given knitted hats and gloves. That evening artist Valery Brown Eyes related how she had changed her life from alcohol dependency to creating bracelets, earrings, necklaces and other colorful art from porcupine quills.

Saturday we returned home, visiting Fort Robinson and Agate Fossil Beds National Monument in Nebraska. We look forward to sponsoring another mission to Pine Ridge next summer (August 4–11) for individuals and families from our church. Funds to help support this and other Pine Ridge missions were donated by several members of our church. Thank you for being the hands of Christ to our neighbors in need!

The background of the entire page is a dark, textured surface with a pattern of musical staves and notes. The staves are black and curve across the page, with various musical notes and a treble clef visible. The texture is somewhat mottled and organic, resembling a close-up of a rock surface or a similar natural material.

The New Year is Well Underway

by Karen Stoody

As 2018 moves ahead at a rapid pace, I want to look back to the end of 2017 for a few seconds and express my appreciation to all the musicians who helped make the month of December outstanding! Members of the Alleluia Handbell Ensemble played chimes during the Advent Wreath ritual all month, Andrew Hudson played handbell solos during communion, the Carillon Handbell Choir played difficult and beautiful music for worship December 17, five of our Choral Scholars sang for the Lessons and Carols 8:00 worship on December 10, a mixed group of bell choir folk rehearsed extra and gave their talent for a special contribution to Christmas Eve services, and Keilani McConnell added her flutist talent several times. Thank you so much to each of you!!

The Carillon Handbell Choir will be back in worship services on February 11, sharing a special request number before Lent begins. We are preparing Leroy Anderson's "Sleigh Ride" for a Postlude piece for that Sunday, and maybe the weather will include some February snow for the occasion. Alleluia Handbells are also preparing their next numbers and will be ringing in worship as soon as we are ready and everyone is in town.

Two of our Choral Scholar singers, Pablo Romero and Kristen Smith, are going to give a **free** concert to the church. The concert will be Sunday, February 18, at 3:00 p.m., in the Sanctuary. I will be accompanying them, and the music presented will be all about "Seasons of Love," including some operatic duets and some of Pablo's beloved South American music.

On Friday, February 9, Keilani McConnell and I will give the program for the first Double Nickel luncheon of 2018. We will play Claude Bolling's "Suite for Flute and Jazz Piano" and will have you smiling and tapping your feet!

Watch for future articles about exciting music events at First Church in the spring. In the music department, we love sharing our time and talent with the church!



World Wisdoms Project

Exploring Universal Truths.
Discovering Spiritual Transformation.

Contemplative Art Workshop

World Wisdoms Project will sponsor a contemplative art workshop 8:30 a.m. to noon Feb. 10 at Artworks Loveland, 310 N. Railroad Ave., in Loveland. The workshop leaders are Jennifer Davey and Christine Dianni. Both workshop leaders said that the study of spiritual ideas spurred their contemplative work.

Contemplative art trains the individual to suspend judgment, cultivate openness, seek compassion, improve listening, and dwell in understanding with ourselves. The workshop will be a mix of instruction, meditation, reflection and opportunities for discussion. Cost is \$30 per attendee. Mail payments to World Wisdoms Project, PO Box 522, Fort Collins CO 80522.

Exploring Raimon Panikkar

The thinking of Roman Catholic theologian Raimon Panikkar will be the subject of a presentation by Michael Abdo, former abbot of St. Benedict's Abbey in Snowmass, Colorado, and Jim Reid, longtime religious educator and therapist from Fort Collins, at 6:30 March 6 at First Church. Pannikar promoted religious dialog and an integration of Eastern and Western thought.



United
Methodist
Women

FAITH • HOPE • LOVE IN ACTION

On February 8, United Methodist Women will have our unit meeting including lunch at 11:30 a.m. in the parlor, followed by a program and video on mass incarceration. This is one topic of focus for United Methodist Women. You are invited to learn more about the dramatic increase over the past 40 years in those who have been imprisoned in our country. From 1970 to 2005 the growth was 700 percent. 1.6 million people (1 in 200) are currently serving time, and a disproportionate number of those are people of color.

- 1 in 15 African-American men
- 1 in 36 Hispanic men
- 1 in 106 white men

Though the term "mass incarceration" is used in the media, we must not forget the individuals who are impacted.

Our unit meetings are on the second Thursday of each month during the school year and are open always to every woman in the church. You will be genuinely welcomed.

The overall theme for programs this year is "Sacred Spaces: Encounters with God and Neighbor." In 2018 may we be challenged to be more aware of what surrounds us so that we can experience and create sacred spaces for ourselves and others.

Faith Family Hospitality

by Martha Conant

Thanks to many dedicated volunteers, our church has served as a host church in FFH's overnight shelter program for several years. Beginning late this spring, FFH will open its new transitional housing for families that have been demonstrating continuous progress in the overnight program to give them the extra time and support they need to ensure long-term self-sufficiency. For more information and to support this new way FFH is helping families experiencing homelessness, check out www.faithfamilyhospitality.org.

Some families, however, are able to stabilize themselves enough to move directly from the overnight program into permanent housing. As you can imagine, these families are grateful to have their own housing, but are in great need of gently used furniture, especially dressers and nightstands. If you have furniture you no longer need, contact Jodi Loecke with the Donation Task Force at (970) 371-5345. Jodi will even arrange to have your donation picked up.



SHROVE TUESDAY

Fastnachtsdien (German), Terça-feira Gorda (Portuguese), Vastenavond (Dutch), and Shrove Tuesday (English) all refer to the day before lent begins and are traditionally celebrated. Come, help us celebrate with a pancake supper on Tuesday, February 13, 5:30–7:30 p.m. in Fellowship Hall. All ages welcome. We'll have the Stover Street Stompers, a cake walk and other games for the youngsters and young at heart, as well as LOTS of pancakes. Suggested donation is \$5 per person with a maximum of \$15 per family.

Deacons in the UMC and at First Church

by Dr. Melanie Rosa

Deacons are ordained clergy called to servant leadership in the world, helping connect the people of God to service in the world. Deacons serve in the church in a variety of ways including worship, teaching, ministries of love, service and justice, and assisting with the Sacraments. They help to connect the congregation with the world through missional leadership. "It is the deacons, in both person and function, whose distinctive ministry is to embody, articulate and lead the whole people of God in its servant ministry." *Book of Discipline*, 328

First Church is fortunate to have two Deacons relating to our church for a secondary appointment. This means that their primary salaried appointment is elsewhere, and they serve our church as well. Kaitlin Elmore serves in Spiritual Care at Suncrest Hospice and is a newly commissioned Deacon, to be ordained in 2019. Kaitlin speaks at retreats, classes, and assists with worship, funerals and communion. Sue Harmon serves as a Chaplain at Poudre Valley Hospital. Sue offers pastoral visits and care, teaches, sings in the choir, assists with worship, funerals and communion, and conducts a worship service at Columbine West monthly. We are fortunate to have these two dedicated women offering ministry to us beyond their primary salaried appointments helping lead us to missional service in the world.

Let them know you appreciate their ministries!

Address Service Requested



We remember with sympathy the families of ...

December 17 – Nancy Campbell

December 19 – Barbara McLean

Ash Wednesday Worship

Wednesday, February 14 is not just Valentine's Day but the beginning of Lent, the season of introspection and repentance which mirrors the 40 days that Jesus spent in the wilderness. Please join us for a service of reflection and imposition of ashes at either 12 noon or 7:00 p.m., both in the Chapel. May this be a truly meaningful and sacred season for us.

Recharge Upcoming Classes

Rev. Cynthia Paquette will lead a 5-week study of ***God's Welcome: Hospitality for a God-Hungry World*** by Amy Oden starting at 6 p.m. Feb. 21. For a full description, see page three. Beginning at 7 p.m. the same day, David Reid will lead a 5-week study of ***This Child of Faith*** by Sophronia Scott and Tain Gregory. This extraordinary new book tells the story of how a child's desire to go to Sunday School helped prepare his family to heal after the mass shootings in their hometown of Sandy Hook, Conn. *This Child of Faith* will also be offered at noon Wednesdays.