



## Message from Melanie

One of my most important mentors in ministry died last month. Margaret Rush Hankins was a true pioneer—fearless, brave, and bold. She served many churches in our Conference and served as a District Superintendent in the same District that I served. Margaret had a rough road in ministry as a woman in the early years, just like my mother. She was attacked, ostracized, and held to a different standard because of her gender. She was told, “women should keep silent in church.” She was dismissed and demonized. Her persistence was stunning. She believed in the capacity of the church to change the world, to bring about a more just, loving, and inclusive society, and she never backed down from her vision of a radically relevant and inclusive church.

What matters most to me is that Margaret invested in me personally and professionally. She spent time with me and cared about my life. She believed in me when I did not believe in myself. She saw something in me that I will never understand. I’m not sure what it was about me that she loved so deeply or believed in so strongly, but she helped me advance, grow, and develop in ways that have led me to this place at this time. I will dearly miss her presence, her courage, her determination. I will speak at her funeral later this month with humility, gratitude, and a sense of irreplaceable loss.

Who are you investing in and loving into new life? Your investment in another human being could change their entire life trajectory and therefore change the world. You never know the impact you might have upon another human being. I pray that our church is a place where we are committed to building life-changing relationships.

Thanks be to God for my mentor Margaret Rush Hankins and for all of those who invest the time and energy to love others into new life.

*Dr. Melanie Rosa*

Lead Pastor

# First Church Survey Results



by Martha Conant, Visioning Team Member

Since January, the Visioning Team has been engaged in research, thoughtful conversations, and prayerful discernment about who we are as a church and how do we move into a new reality. The recent congregational survey has provided quantitative information that helps define who we are today. The 168 responses were analyzed based on how often people attend: 100 responses from people who attend most every week, 45 from those who attend 2 or 3 times per month, 12 from those who attend once per month, 5 from people who attend less than once per month, and 6 from those who hardly ever attend.

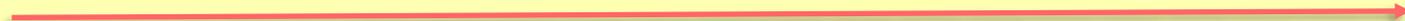
Here are some of the results:

Regardless of how often they attend, the majority of respondents feel that our church has a clear mission and purpose, that it is spiritually alive, and that we are a “moral beacon” in the community. The church is seen as theologically liberal or middle-of-the road, rather than conservative.

Respondents find our worship to be joyful, inspirational, and thought-provoking. The more frequently people attend, the more likely they are to feel that worship helps them feel connected. Similarly, those who attend most frequently find their participation has helped them become kinder and more compassionate.

Respondents that attend at least once a month feel that the most important aspects of the church are worship and/or music, sermons, ministry for children, youth, and college students, and caring for one another. Respondents who attend less than once per month rated outreach to the community and openness to diversity and social justice as most important.

Please note the infographics regarding results on the facing page



## Visioning Update

from Dr. Melanie Rosa

Since January 2018 a team of church leaders and staff have been meeting monthly to seek God’s direction for our church. We have been asking many questions, such as: Who are we now? Who is our neighbor now? Who is God calling us to serve now? What is our clear purpose arising from our core values? What is essential about this church and must be preserved? What is not working? What can be created to help us reach new people?

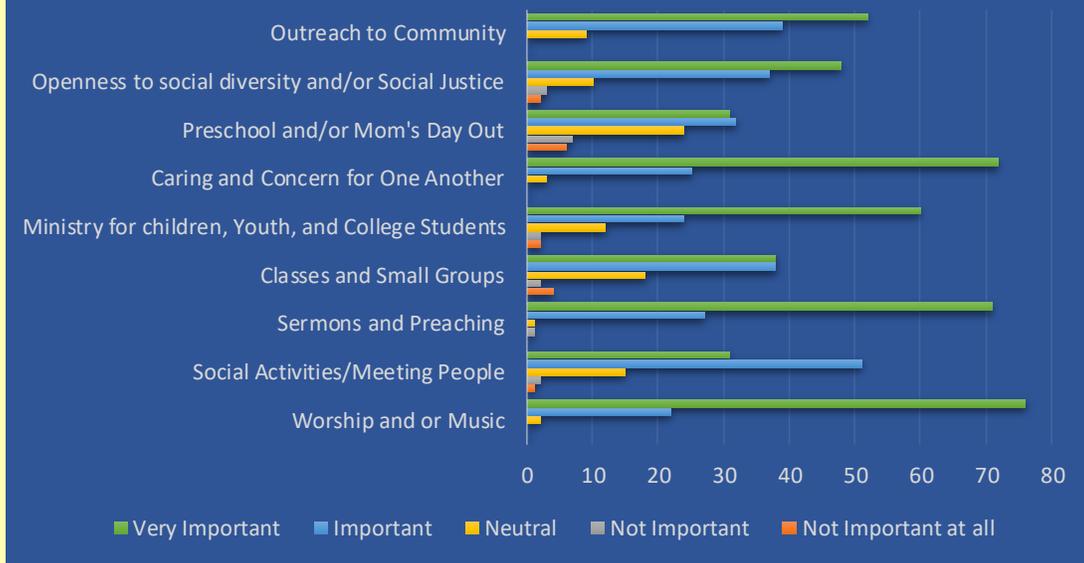
We have learned much from reading two books: *Doing the Math of Mission* by Gil Rendle and *Canoeing the Mountains* by Tod Bolsinger, the all church survey, demographic data (the average age in our neighborhood is 36), and conversations with neighbors, other churches, non-profits, members and friends. We continue to ask questions, listen and learn as we move toward a Mission and Vision which will clarify our priorities for the future. Please continue to pray for our church and our leaders as we move into the future by faith.

Members of the Visioning Team: Melanie Rosa, Cynthia Paquette, Heidi Priebe, Deborah Kohler, Gerry Sampson, Janet Krech, Martha Conant, Kate Norton, David Reid, Rebecca Dunagan, David Adkins, Joe Settle.

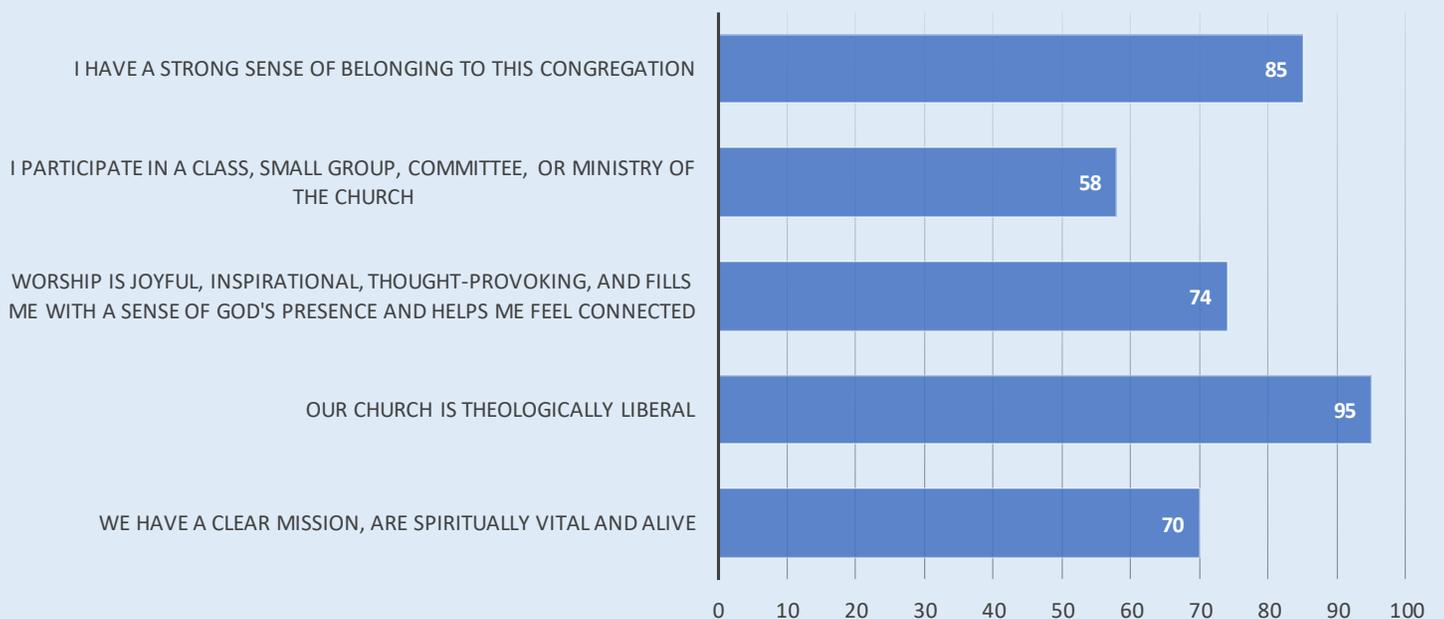
# FIRST CHURCH SURVEY

CONDUCTED MARCH/APRIL 2018

## First Church Values from Church Survey



## Results from Major Categories of First Church Survey



Music at First Church in conjunction with Colorado State University  
present

## Joel Bacon, *organ* & Caleb Hudson, *trumpet*

Wednesday, June 6, 2018 • 7:30 p.m.

First United Methodist Church

1005 Stover Street • Fort Collins, CO 80524 • [www.fcfumc.net](http://www.fcfumc.net)

FREE - Donations will be accepted to help underwrite the expense of the concert.



Caleb Hudson is the newest member of the Canadian Brass, having graduated from the Juilliard School with both a Bachelor and Master of Music degree. Acclaimed by the New York Times as "brilliantly stylish," Caleb made his solo debut with the Chamber Music Society of Lincoln Center,

performing Bach's *Brandenburg Concerto No. 2*.

Caleb has performed as a soloist around the world, most recently with the Israel Philharmonic in Tel Aviv. Possessing a wide range of musical styles, his experience ranges from soloing in Carnegie Hall to appearing with rock band Vampire Weekend on Jimmy Kimmel Live. Other recent solo engagements include the Santa Fe Chamber Music Festival, Yellow Barn Festival, University of Georgia Wind Ensemble, University of Scranton, and a solo recital at the University of Georgia that was broadcast nationally on NPR's *Performance Today*.

Caleb won first place at the National Trumpet Competition multiple times, and performed with pianist Vladimir Feltsman at the Aspen Music Festival, as well as the New York City Ballet, New World Symphony, Jupiter Symphony Chamber Players, and New York Trumpet Ensemble. An avid baroque musician, Caleb also performs with notable early music ensembles including Philharmonia Baroque, American Bach Soloists, The American Classical Orchestra, Concert Royal, and the Trinity Baroque Orchestra. He is an alumnus of Interlochen Arts Academy and Ensemble ACJW, a fellowship program of Carnegie Hall that promotes arts advocacy, community outreach, and music education.

As part of an exclusive agreement between the Conn-Selmer Corporation and Canadian Brass, Caleb performs on 24-karat gold-plated Bach trumpets.

A native of N.J., Dr. Joel Bacon holds degrees in mathematics and organ performance from Baylor University in Waco, Texas, where he was a student of Joyce Jones, and an artist diploma in organ from the Konservatorium der Stadt Wien (Vienna, Austria), where he studied with Michael Gailit. With a

dissertation on the use of organ in selected orchestral works, he earned his PhD in historical musicology through a joint degree program of Vienna's University of Music and Performing Arts and the University of Vienna.

Joel Bacon has a growing reputation as a performer, teacher and scholar in North America and Europe. He has been heard in recital in Germany, Austria, France, Switzerland, Canada, and the US, and live performances have been broadcast on Austrian Radio (1) and Public Radio International. He has taught at the prestigious Oundle International Festival (Cambridge, UK), at several Pipe Organ Encounters of the American Guild of Organists, and at other courses in the US and Canada. With the principal violist of the Munich Philharmonic, Albrecht Rohde, he has recorded a CD of music for viola and organ.

Joel Bacon currently holds the Stewart and Sheron Golden Chair in Organ and Liturgical Studies, the first endowed chair in the College of Liberal Arts. Before coming to CSU, he was assistant organist of St. Thomas Lutheran Church, Munich-Grunwald, and served as frequent guest organist at the former Hapsburg imperial church, St. Augustine, Vienna.



  
Music at First Church

  
Colorado State University  
SCHOOL OF MUSIC, THEATRE AND DANCE

# FIRST YOUTH NEWS

## MISSION TRIPS

Middle School Mission Trip

July 29-August 3

"Urban Plunge" with St. Francis

Center, Denver

High School Mission Trip

July 13-21

"Micah Mission" with the Perkins

Foundation, Jackson, MS

Sunday Mornings  
First Sunday of the  
month

9:30-10:30 Serve  
Sunday

All other Sundays

9:30-10:30 Coffee  
Talk in Youth Wing

CHECK US OUT ON INSTAGRAM  
@FIRSTYOUTHFC

fume} youth

# Summer Lawn Events

Nights for our community

by David Reid, Director of Adult Faith Formation

A series of four Community Nights on First Church Lawn will be offered this summer for members, friends and neighbors. This will be a great opportunity to introduce people to First Church.

The formula for dinner is simple: bring something to put on the grill (steak, hot dog, veggie burger, fish); something to share (salad, vegetable, dessert); and something to sit on (lawn chair, blanket). The church will provide the grill, drinks (lemonade, iced tea and water), condiments, chips, and eating utensils.

All dates are Thursdays. In case of rain, we'll move to Fellowship Hall. The lineup of presenters includes several people who are well known in Fort Collins:

## June 21 – Community-supported agriculture and organic gardening with Katie Slota

Katie and her husband Nic co-own and operate Native Hill Farm, a seven-acre, diverse vegetable farm in Northwest Fort Collins. They have been operating their farm organically and sustainably for 10 seasons and sell their food year-round through a community-supported agriculture program (CSA), at farmers markets and to local restaurants. Katie has a background in environmental health and microbiology and is a self-proclaimed soil geek. Her main goal is to steward healthy soils in order to grow healthy food for her community. **Dinner 5:30-6:30. Program 6:30-7:30.**



## July 12 – Know your beautiful Colorado hiking trails with Stephen Meyers

A journalist, hiker, trail runner and Colorado native, Stephen Meyers is the former Xplore editor at the *Coloradoan*. Through his writing, Stephen took readers on journeys across Northern Colorado and beyond,



from alpine lake hikes in Rocky Mountain National Park, quick escapes up the Poudre Canyon and weekend-long adventures to the Great Sand Dunes and Black Canyon. Follow Stephen on Twitter @stemeyer. **Dinner 5:30-6:30. Program 6:30-7:30.** Because Stephen will show slides of spectacular Colorado scenery, the presentation will be in Fellowship Hall.



Photo: Austin Ban on unsplash.com



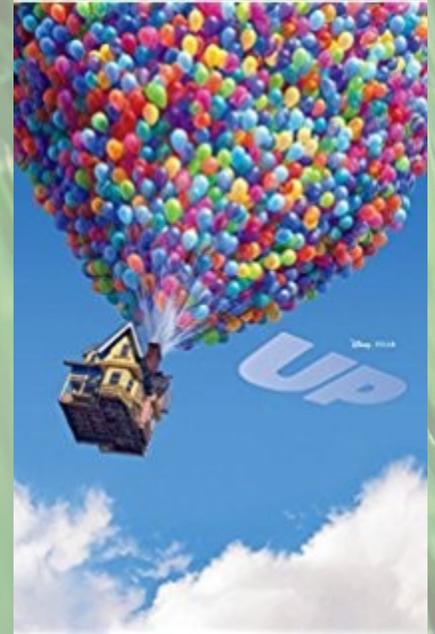
## July 26 – Yoga for everyone with Ann Lundeen

A veteran yoga teacher who combines Christian perspectives and fun with her instruction, Ann Lundeen has been teaching at Plymouth Congregational Church (UCC) for many years. She has taught children as young as 3 and seniors who participate while seated. She will present a program in which everyone can participate. Be sure to bring a beach towel unless you happen to own a yoga mat. **Dinner 5:30-6:30. Program 6:30-7:30.**



## August 16 – *Up*, a Pixar feature film

We'll watch a movie together. Here's Disney's description: Retired balloon salesman Carl Fredricksen is ready for his last chance at high-flying excitement. Tying thousands of balloons to his house, Carl sets off to the lost world of his childhood dreams. Unbeknownst to Carl, an overeager 8-year-old Wilderness Explorer Russell is on Carl's front porch! The world's most unlikely duo meet fantastic friends like Dug, a dog with a special collar that allows him to speak, and Kevin, a rare 13-foot tall flightless bird. Stuck together in the wilds of the jungle, Carl realizes that sometimes life's biggest adventures aren't the ones you set out looking for. **This program starts after sunset. Dinner: 6:30-8:00. Movie at 8.**



## Senior Wise

by Joe Winsett for Senior Council

Double Nickel luncheon in July will be on the 20th in Fellowship Hall at 12 noon.

Come for the best lunch in town, \$4, no reservations required.

and join in for a patriotic celebration with the Stompers and participation by our Boy and Cub Scouts. Reservations not required and all are welcome.

Photo: Jakob Owens on unsplash.com





## Congratulations Rebecca Dunagan

Rebecca graduated from United Theological Seminary with a Master of Divinity degree on May 19. This is a huge accomplishment, particularly while working full time to build a vital and growing youth ministry here at First Church. As of June 1, Rebecca will be our Youth and Family Minister, working across generations alongside Barb Grauberger our Children’s Ministry Director. Rebecca has extensive experience in children’s ministry as Director of Children’s Ministries and Associate Pastor of Children and Family Ministries before she became our Youth Director last year. She will be working on Youth Ministry ¾ time and Children’s Ministry ¼ time. We are all blessed by her ministry among us. Please congratulate Rebecca next time you see her for the successful completion of this major milestone.

## Congratulations Rev. Cynthia Paquette

At our Annual Conference this year (June 7-10 in Ogden, Utah) Cynthia will be Ordained an Elder in the United Methodist Church. This comes after many years of study, interviews, retreats, psychological testing, and an exhaustive examination of her gifts and graces for ministry. Cynthia has those gifts in abundance, most of all a deep commitment to God and God’s people. How blessed we have been to have her involvement and leadership in our church for a decade. How blessed we will be to have her appointed as our Executive Pastor for another year. Please congratulate Cynthia next time you see her for this impressive accomplishment.



# The Habitat Stone Soup—Thrivent Build April 14

by Jim Collinson, Community and World Mission



The following church members participated in the Stone Soup-Thrivent build at the Harmony Cottages on the corner of Harmony and Taft Hill roads: Tom Andersen, Jim Collinson, Rich Fisher, Molly Huff, Theresa Holbrook, Keith Metcalf, David McCowen, Rick Norton, Cynthia Paquette, Bob Pawlikowski, Marilyn Pullin, and Richard Skaggs. Jan Beyer, Diana Burkholder, Kate Norton, Janet Shupe, and Mickie Watt provided a delicious lunch. The group completed the floor of this duplex house. Robin Hause and Keith Metcalf represented First Church at the wall-raising on the following Saturday.

The next First Church Stone Soup build on Saturday is August 11. Habitat now has eight homes at Harmony Cottages in various stages of progress--truly God at work and thanks to many of you. If you wish to volunteer for any Tuesdays and Thursdays, instructions are available in the Mission Corner. Otherwise, please contact Keith Metcalf at [keith-joyce-met@comcast.net](mailto:keith-joyce-met@comcast.net) or Jim Collinson at [jimcollinson@Q.com](mailto:jimcollinson@Q.com), and we will send you instructions on how to sign up.



# Conversation and Ethnic Food

by Rev. Cynthia Paquette

This summer we will come together to enjoy fellowship, conversations, and ethnic food. Learn about the faith, spirituality, religion, and culture of other countries while enjoying food from that country on three Fridays over lunch. Lunch is on you, conversations and fellowship will be shared. Please e-mail Rev. Cynthia at [c.paquette@fcfumc.net](mailto:c.paquette@fcfumc.net) to RSVP. All are welcome!

## June 29

(meet at church south parking lot at 10:30 a.m. Return to church south parking lot by 2:30 p.m. at the latest)

**DAE GEE®** (which means pig in Korean) is a Korean BBQ restaurant progressively blending Korean food tradition with American culture. There are traditional Korean dishes and barbeque.

Check out their website: <https://www.daegee.com/>

## July 27

(meet at church south parking lot at 10:30 a.m. Return to church south parking lot by 2:30 p.m. at the latest)

**Star Kitchen Dim Sum and Seafood Restaurant.** We will enjoy dim sum, which is a style of Chinese cuisine (particularly in Hong Kong) prepared as small bite-sized portions served in small steamer baskets or on small plates.

Check out their website: <http://www.starkitchenseafooddimsum.com/>

## August 17

(meet at restaurant, 2900 Harvard St # A. Fort Collins, CO 80525 at 11:30 a.m.)

**Nyala Ethiopian Cuisine** is a restaurant that offers authentic Ethiopian cuisine served in a traditionally warm and inviting atmosphere. They use organic, locally grown ingredients and a one of a kind assortment of fresh Ethiopian spices.

Check out their website: <https://nyalafortcollins.com/index.php>





# Mission U is coming to First Church

## July 13-14

by Beverly Winsett for United Methodist Women

Mission U is co-sponsored by the Rocky Mountain Conference United Methodist Women and the Board of Global Ministries. Co-deans are Rev. Jim Gulley and Nancy Gully, Compassion Ministries

and Janet Wolfer, United Methodist Women.

All are invited and welcome to experience education and transformation by choosing from the following studies offered:

- Embracing Wholeness—Learn how we can live into Beloved Community
- What About Our Money?—Grow as a steward of resources, financial and otherwise
- The Missionary Conferences of the United Methodist Church in Appalachia, Oklahoma, and Alaska

You may register for two days (two studies) or one day (one study). The daily is 8 a.m. to 5:30 p.m. On Friday only, there will be dinner, a mission program, and an ice cream social from 6 to 8 p.m.

Registration forms may be found online at [www.rmcmw.org/mission](http://www.rmcmw.org/mission) beginning **DATE HERE** or contact Lara Fulton at (303) 439-2129 or [rmcmwregistrar@gmail.com](mailto:rmcmwregistrar@gmail.com) Hope to see you at Mission U for learning, fun, worship, and fellowship.

## Foundation Grants Awarded

by Rick Norton, Foundation President

The First Church Foundation is an incorporated non-profit Board founded by some visionary church members in 1986 for the purpose of receiving, administering and dispersing money for the ultimate and sole benefit of our church. With assets of over \$1.6 million, the Foundation has provided over \$338,000 in grants since its inception. In April the Board of Directors for the FUMC-FC Foundation awarded grants totaling \$23,500 to support a wide range of the church's hopes and needs. Thanks to those who submitted grant applications.

Description	Associated Group	Amount
New Worship Service Support	Worship Team	\$3,000
150 <sup>th</sup> Anniversary Celebration (Preparations for 2019)	150 <sup>th</sup> Team	\$4,450
Handbell Supplies	Music	\$1,000
Suicide Awareness Program	Youth	\$2,000
Coffee on the Plaza (Outreach at CSU)	Wesley Foundation	\$1,000
Leadership Institute Training	Welcoming, Hospitality and Discipleship	\$2,000
Fellowship Hall Lighting (improve function and cost)	Trustees	\$3,000
Kids' Closet Redecorating	Kids' Closet	\$600
Removal of Cottonwood Tree	Trustees	\$5,100
Replace Vacuum Cleaners	Facilities	\$750
Replace Children's Restroom Flooring	Preschool	\$600

# Pine Ridge Reservation Mission Trip: August 4-11, 2018

by Theresa Holbrook for Community and World Mission

Please join us for a unique and moving experience—our mission to the Pine Ridge Reservation in South Dakota. Pine Ridge is the poorest reservation, located in the third poorest county in the United States, but it is filled with positive energy, scenic landscapes, and incredible people. First Church has been visiting this beautiful area since 2008—meeting new people, interacting with children, making friends, helping where needed, and learning about the Native American population through its history and current life.

We will be going to the Pine Ridge Retreat Center from August 4-11. ([pineridgeretreatcenter.org](http://pineridgeretreatcenter.org)). We will attend the annual Pine Ridge Pow-wow—experiencing delicious food, amazing costume, wonderful dancing, and beautiful crafts. During the week, we will spend a couple morning helping individuals or families with small projects, and our afternoons will be helping with the daily children's hour as well as supervising a Vacation Bible School program. We will also spend time interacting with many local artisans and educators and learn what life is like on the reservation today and how our cultures can all fit together.

If you are interested in coming with us or learning more about the trip, please come to an information meeting on Sunday, June 10 at noon at Mission Corner in the Fellowship Hall. For other questions or information, stop by the Mission Corner any Sunday morning or contact Theresa Holbrook at (970) 219-5960.

## Financial Secretary



We welcome Catherine Pawlikowski as our new Financial Secretary. Catherine has been serving as our Interim Financial Secretary and was formally interviewed for this job along with some other very strong and well qualified candidates. After the interviews, the consensus of the interview team (which included representatives from Finance and SPRC) was that Catherine has the best skills, background and relationships necessary for this very important job in our church. Catherine will continue to serve as Membership Secretary and Volunteer Coordinator, as well.

Catherine is a long time member of First Church where she was also baptized and confirmed. Catherine also serves as a Lead Teacher for our Mom's Day Out program, is one of two First Church Lay Representatives to the Annual Conference, and plays in our handbell choir. Catherine is married to Bob Pawlikowski, and she has two children, Sarah and Matthew. Catherine can be contacted at [FinancialSecretary@fcfumc.net](mailto:FinancialSecretary@fcfumc.net) or (970) 482-2436 ext. 33 or in person at the Church Office.

# Faith Family Hospitality

From Annette Zacharias, Executive Director, Faith Family Hospitality

Cassidy and his 7-year-old son, Dougie, joined the FFH overnight program earlier this spring. At his intake appointment, he was advised that the FFH expectation would include him obtaining employment. At his first case management meeting, he had secured a job in Denver and arranged childcare with a friend for Dougie. He left the church each morning around 3 am to drop off his son and get to Denver by 6 am, returning in the late afternoon each day. It was a grueling schedule but worth it to get back on his feet.

After only two weeks, FFH got a call from our partner, One Village One Family. They had a village ready for a family who was working and could afford to move into housing. Cassidy was perfect for the opening. When we asked him if he was willing to apply for the program and accept additional support, he said, "I have never accepted help before, but you have shown me I don't have to do this by myself." He was accepted into the program, offered housing and a village to support him. The next week, he secured another job for better pay with a local company. Cassidy moved into his home in west Fort Collins two weeks ago. Today, Cassidy and Dougie are stable, secure and back on their feet! Together, our community helped this family get their foundation back together. In 2017, FFH served 25 families, 106 family members with overnight shelter. 67% moved into permanent housing. Thank you for your amazing support.

Our next FFH week is June 24 through July 1. Sign up in Fellowship Hall to help some families reach stability in the form of permanent housing.



United  
Methodist  
Women

FAITH • HOPE • LOVE IN ACTION

by Beverly Winsett, UMW Communications Coordinator

June 14 at 5 p.m. United Methodist Women will be having our unit meeting in the Parlor and on the patio, and you are invited. A meal will be served, and the program will be given by women who are attending the United Methodist Women Assembly in Columbus, OH May 18—20. Assembly is held every four years. The theme for this year's celebration our 150th anniversary in 2019 is Be Bold.

Assembly is a time for fellowship, worship, hearing inspiring speakers, taking interesting workshops, and learning from exhibits and town hall-style meetings. Thousands come from all over the United States and the world. If you are there you get the big picture of UMW. On June 14, all who attend our unit meeting will get a taste of the big picture from assembly participants.

Did you know that you can listen to sermons online the week after they are preached? Just go to our website ([fcfumc.net](http://fcfumc.net)) click Media, and then click Sermons.

# Water is Life: News from the Recent Kenya Mission Trip

by

Rich Fisher for Community and World Mission

Over the past nine years our church has generously given to the Kenya Clean Water project. Together with the Rotary and many other churches and individuals, more than 80 poor rural primary and secondary schools in central Kenya have received Clean Water Systems since 2010. This amounts to more than 26,000 students served with clean drinking water, hand washing stations, training and education about personal hygiene through 2017.

Importantly, the installations and the instruction have been by Kenyans for Kenyans. A small Kenya business, Running Water International, operated by a smart young Kenyan entrepreneur, Isaac Soita, with his key employee, charismatic 28 year-old Nelson Mandela Anyanga do all the work in Meru and Nakuru. In Samburu, a bright 19 year-old Kenyan, Alfonso, has done the installations in three women's villages. They are experts in WASH (water, sanitation and hygiene) and are all great communicators in the school communities with a positive vision for themselves and their country. We are hoping to find ways to help them further their education at University.

Meanwhile, Kate and Rick Norton and Rich Fisher who returned from Kenya in March are looking for ways to share their experiences with the church and others. Should you wish to have a presentation, contact them through the church office.



# Safety First

by Elise Harkey, Office Manager

Your First Church Board of Trustees and staff continue to seek ways to keep our congregation members, guests, and staff safe in our facility and on our grounds. In order to better serve you in case of emergency, we ask that if you are at the church during the week for anything other than a **group** meeting (UMW, committee meeting, etc.), you check in at the Church Office. For instance, if you are at the church, by yourself or with only one other person, working on a maintenance project indoors or outdoors, updating your committee's bulletin board, accessing one of the many storage areas in the church, practicing music, being a pew angel, etc. please stop by and let us know when you arrive, where you plan to be, and when you plan to leave.

This simple sign-in promotes safety in several ways. If we are aware of individuals working throughout our building, we can account for everyone in the case of an evacuation such as a fire drill or gas leak. Also, if we know someone is cleaning out a storage space in a remote corner of the building and we haven't heard from her in a while, we will check to be sure that she is safe. Additionally, if any other safety concerns arise we can look at our sign-in and know whom to notify.

Thank you for helping us in our safety efforts. If you have any questions regarding individual weekday sign-in, please contact Elise Harkey, Office Manager at [officemanager@fcfumc.net](mailto:officemanager@fcfumc.net).

## Enriching Outdoor Opportunity

Do you enjoy being outdoors? Do you like helping beautify your surroundings? Then your church needs YOU. We are looking for some volunteers to help with the outside grounds upkeep this summer. We have a paid service for mowing and some weed mitigation but need volunteers to help in other areas around this enormous 2 city block facility. You might adopt a flower bed, playground, or patch of land and you are free to help as much or as little as your time and interest allows. We need your help. If interested, please contact our Outdoor Grounds Coordinator Jerry Hagar at (970) 988-3940 or [jhager@frii.com](mailto:jhager@frii.com) Thank you very much!

## McCurdy Ministries

by Theresa Holbrook for Community and World Mission

McCurdy Ministries is a faith-based organization in Espanola, NM helping children, youth, and families through quality education and life-enrichment programs. They started out as McCurdy School in 1912 with four students, and today they are known as McCurdy Ministries with 543 students, grades K—12, in their McCurdy Charter School. The ministry includes a preschool, Project Carino (mental health support), after school care, Volunteers in Mission, and Camp Stars Summer Camp. McCurdy Ministries is a United Methodist Agency and a United Methodist National Mission Institution sponsored by United Methodist Women.

The Tyson A+ Program is a way you can help raise funds to support their work. It's simple—when shopping, look for Tyson products with Tyson A+ on the package. Then cut out the label and turn it in at Mission Corner in Fellowship Hall. For each label turned in McCurdy Ministries receives 24 cents.

For a complete list of participating products, please go to <http://projectaplus.tyson.com/products> or check the list available at Mission Corner. For more information on McCurdy Ministries, visit [www.mccurdy.org](http://www.mccurdy.org)

# A Way Forward for the United Methodist Church

By Dr. Melanie Rosa

As with our broader society, the United Methodist Church is divided on how we interpret the Bible regarding same-sex relationships. Our current *Discipline* states, “the practice of homosexuality is incompatible with Christian teaching” and on that basis, forbids “self-avowed, practicing homosexuals” from seeking ordination. The *Discipline* also forbids same-sex weddings from taking place in United Methodist churches or being conducted by United Methodist pastors. (The Bishops have clarified that pastors may participate in such services, reading scripture or praying, but not officiating.) All of these provisions were added to the *Discipline* in 1972 and after – before which none of these statements were a part of our guiding principles.

After many months of study and dialogue by the Commission on the Way Forward (a 32-member, Bishop appointed group that has advised the council on possible options), 3 different plans have been proposed:

- **The One Church Plan** encourages a generous unity by giving local churches the ability to address different missional contexts in ways that reflect their theological convictions. Decisions about whether to ordain LGBTQ clergy or to officiate at same-gender unions would be made at the congregational level. This plan would remove the restrictive language against the practice of homosexuality in the Book of Discipline. This is the plan that the Bishops recommend.
- **The Traditionalist Plan** would affirm the current language in the denomination’s Book of Discipline, the denomination’s governing document, and seek to strengthen enforcement.
- **The Connectional-Conference** plan would allow conferences to choose among three connectional conferences for affiliation. The connectional conferences would align based on theology or perspective on LGBTQ ministry — be it traditionalist, progressive or allowing for a variety of approaches.

Ours is a global church, and a global governance structure creates unique challenges. United Methodists in Africa are overwhelmingly conservative regarding same-sex relationships and they represent over 30% of the church. In the US views on same-sex marriage are rapidly changing. The results of a 2017 poll conducted by the Public Religion Research Institute found that 61% of Americans support the right of gay and lesbian people to marry, up from 52% in 2013.

In the United States, support for changing the church’s position is strongest in the northeast, the west and in larger metropolitan areas. It is also strong among young adults in the United Methodist Church. Opposition to changing the church’s position is strongest in the south and in rural areas.

No matter what happens at the denominational level, First Church will remain unapologetically inclusive, warmly welcoming of our LGBTQ sisters and brothers. We need their gifts and participation, and they are an essential part of our community. This particular demographic has been deeply hurt and marginalized by the church for far too long. Decisions will be made during the specially called General Conference in February, 2019 which will chart a path forward, yet whatever the denomination decides, this church will remain welcoming, accepting, and loving toward all people, no exceptions. We will draw the circle of love wide and wider still. We will model God’s radical inclusion for all, including our LGBTQ sisters and brothers, and that is not going to change.



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**We extend our sympathy to the families of ...**

- April 5 — Eileen Kelsall
- April 8 — Paul Smith
- April 16 — Tim Cline
- April 19 — Jean Johnson
- April 21 — Margo Fixter

**We joyfully celebrate the following Baptisms**

- May 6 — Julia Del-Rae Gentile
- May 6 — Colter Daniel Marcy
- May 20 — Jack James Ryan Johnson