

From First Church Restart Team

During this challenging year, your Restart Team has kept the health and safety of our congregation as our foremost priority. We have carefully considered what groups could meet at the church, what programs could resume, and when it would be safe to launch face to face worship. We affirm our decision not to resume in person worship for the foreseeable future, as difficult as that decision is for many of us. Last week Bishop Karen Oliveto notified the Mountain Sky Conference that all of the churches in our four state Conference should cease indoor worship immediately, through at least the end of January, 2021. Larimer County has implemented new COVID restrictions under an Emergency Public Health Order, transmission rates are higher than ever, and hospitals are exceeding capacity. We know this is difficult, especially heading into Advent and Christmas. We are hopeful that the recent promising news on vaccines will have us safely back together in 2021. Our church is engaged in meaningful ministry in so many ways during this challenging time. We ask for your continued patience and support as we navigate the greatest health crisis of a generation.

First Church Restart Team

Gerry Sampson, Church Council Chair
Helen Gray, Church Council Vice Chair
Kate Norton, Lay Leader
Bill Whitaker, Board of Trustees Chair
David Adkins, Director of Music and Communications
Dr. Melanie Rosa, Lead Pastor
Rev. Cynthia Paquette, Executive Pastor



Faith Community Nurse Notes

As we spend more time indoors with the cooler weather, it becomes more important to pay attention to the health of our indoor air. There are a few things we can all do to make sure our indoor air is as healthy as possible. If you have gas forced air, it just might be time to have your entire system serviced, as they can go way deep into your ducts and use a very powerful vacuum to suck out all of the dust, etc. that may be lurking in there. If you haven't changed your furnace filter, now would be a good time to put in a "winter" filter. For more information, please check out the following link:

<https://www.epa.gov/indoor-air-quality-iaq/air-cleaners-and-air-filters-home>

As always, keep washing your hands, limiting exposure to others, and wearing masks. Stay safe and let us all help keep each other healthy!

Donna M. Newkirk, *Faith Community Nurse*

Ring the Bells of Heaven!

Great things continue to happen at First Church despite the pandemic. **Thanks to generous bequests to the First Church Foundation, we will be installing a wonderful, new, state of the art carillon in our bell tower.** Our current carillon is almost 14 years old and great advancements have been made in the digital sound and ease of programming newer digital carillons. Ours is being designed and built by the Verdin Company, one of the oldest manufactures of bells in the United States. With new features we will be able to utilize our carillon in worship in many new ways including starting and stopping the playing of music at the touch of a button for funerals and weddings and the capability to actually play the carillon from a keyboard and from the Chapel organ. Please note that these funds could not be spent for any other use. They were given specifically for the carillon. Please watch for more information as the installation progresses!



**First Church: An inclusive, deeply relational community
inviting all people to experience God's presence today.**

**Discover God's Love
Inspire Hope • Grow in Faith • Serve With Joy**

ADVENT AT FIRST CHURCH "CHRISTMAS PAST, PRESENT, AND FUTURE"

NOVEMBER 29 - FIRST SUNDAY OF ADVENT

Online Worship

"The Dawning of Christmas"
Isaiah 8:5-9:7

DECEMBER 6 - SECOND SUNDAY OF ADVENT

Online Worship

"Christmas Past"
Isaiah 43:18-19; Luke 1:67-79

DECEMBER 13 - THIRD SUNDAY OF ADVENT

ONLINE MUSIC SUNDAY

"Lessons and Carols" by Hal Hopson
Presented by

First Church Singers, String Quartet, and Handbell Ensemble

DECEMBER 20 - FOURTH SUNDAY OF ADVENT

Online Worship

"Christmas Present"
Luke 1:46-53

DECEMBER 24 - CHRISTMAS EVE

Online Candlelight Worship

Available all Day

"Christmas Future"
Luke 2:1-20

**From Erika Nossokoff, Faith & Global Engagement Director,
Fort Collins Habitat for Humanity**

“You at First Church are the big “God story” of the year for our faith builders. You are an example of saying “yes” to the goal of raising \$50,000 to not only help build Becky and Ember’s Habitat for Humanity home, but using that money as a matching challenge to other churches. And isn’t it just like God to not only meet our needs, but exceed them when we step out in faith? In a year with so many unknowns, we’re reminded of God’s constancy and faithfulness, especially through people like you who say “yes” to God-sized goals! Please accept this sincere thanks to everyone who participated in this Habitat home in any way, from donating, praying, fundraising, making baked goods and building/painting shelves.”

Thank You First Church Staff and Lay Leaders!

It is important for me to publicly thank those who have helped to steer our church through this most challenging year. Our Staff has stepped up like never before. Facilities Manager Henry Renya has frequently been at the church 7 days a week, making sure everything is functioning, safe, and well maintained. Our custodians Gabe, Juanita, Max and Kathy have worked hard to keep our building and grounds looking great. Administrative Assistant Haley Candelario is competent, efficient, and helpful in every way. Membership Secretary Gail Wells is so smart and thorough in keeping our membership records up to date. Our Financial Staff is now outstanding and responsive, after Shauna Bjork became our Accountant, and Julie Iven became Financial Secretary (with thanks to Pam Raab for filling in as Interim Financial Secretary). Liza Salimbeni runs our Kid’s Closet beautifully, with the help of dedicated volunteers. Our Music Staff is spectacular, led by David Adkins with his deep knowledge, skill and rigorous standards of excellence, and Karen Stoody with her impressive talent and dedication. We are renown for our music and David and Karen are the reason why, in addition to our Choral Scholars, handbell ringers, musical guests and volunteers. David Adkins holds two full time jobs in our church, and in the area of Communications he has steered us brilliantly through this challenging year, keeping us connected and well informed. Our Technology Lead, Jim Doser is excellent, and deeply committed to the highest quality in our worship and special events. David Reid has worked harder than ever to offer a broad variety of adult educational opportunities that have been very well and widely received, in addition to keeping our Faith Library going strong. Barb Grauberger and Laurie Elliott have inspired our children and families in countless ways, letting them know that they are loved, missed, and precious to us and to God. Josh Malave leads our youth very well, keeping them close to God, and each other during a difficult time. And how blessed we are to benefit from the ministry of Rev. Cynthia Paquette. She loves our church and works harder than you know to keep us organized, care for you, and further the mission of Jesus Christ. While she is not paid staff, Cindi Ross-Bell spends lots of time helping us with high quality, visually appealing worship and we are so grateful.

There are numerous Lay Leaders rotating out of their positions this year, and we owe a huge debt of gratitude to them. These are leaders of the highest Christian character and skill: Gerry Sampson, Church Council Chair; Kate Norton, Lay Leader; Bill Whitaker, Trustee Chair; Kelly McBartlett, Staff Parish Relations Chair; Martha Conant, Welcoming, Hospitality and Discipleship Coordinator; Rich Fisher, Missions Coordinator; Rick Norton, Foundation Board President; Helen Gray, Nominations Vice Chair. Thanks to all of them, as well as the many other committee members rotating off after fulfilling their terms of service. We could not have navigated through this year so well without their dedicated service and leadership. I am truly grateful.

Dr. Melanie Rosa

Message from Melanie

December invites us to reflect on the year just past, and consider our hopes for the year to come. This certainly has been a year like no other. How innocent our lives were back in January and February before COVID-19 became an ever-present fact of life. We have lived through deep social unrest over racial injustice, a punishing and exhausting political season, a year of anxiety and suffering, rancor and division, plus devastating wildfires right in our backyard. Several studies indicate that during 2020 Americans have been more stressed and unhappy than they have been in a generation. We feel emotional fatigue, mental overload and physical malaise.

And yet, there is a source that can replenish our peace and equilibrium, which is found in our faith in God. If this challenging year has shown us anything, it is that our dependence upon God is undeniable. In the face of so much that we cannot control, we trust in that which we cannot see. We wait in eager expectation for the light that is to come. **Advent is the season of remembering and celebrating our foundational belief, that God came to be with us once, and God is with us still.** We need that promise more than ever this year. Please join us in worship each week, as we journey through Advent toward hope, love, and joy. May the pure goodness that came to earth in Jesus come to us once again, especially this year.

Melanie

Dr. Melanie Rosa, *Lead Pastor*



**December Sermon Series -
Christmas Past, Present, and Future**

December 6 - “Christmas Past” Isaiah 43:18-19; Luke 1:67-79

December 13 - Christmas Music Sunday

December 20 - “Christmas Present” Luke 1:46-53

December 24 - “Christmas Future” Luke 2:1-20





Address Correction Requested



Invitation to all Women!

Are you new to First Church? Or, have you been here for a while and would like to get to know more people in a creative and supportive community? United Methodist Women might be a place for you. We have several groups currently meeting online for fellowship, study, spiritual growth, and involvement in mission in Fort Collins and around the world. For more information, get in touch with Margaret Hotze at 223-8539 or margarethotze.umw@gmail.com; or with Rita Bee at 215 7857 or rbee50@hotmail.com. We'd love to hear from you!

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

Nola Mason - Oct 27,2020

Lee Hoover - Oct 29, 2020

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If you have not already done so, please don't forget to mail your 2021 commitment card to the church office as soon as possible so that we can know what ministries we can support financially in 2021. You may also complete a commitment card online at our website, www.fcfumc.net. Thank you!

Welcome Julie Iven, *Financial Secretary*!



Julie Iven came on board as our new Financial Secretary recently, but she has been a part of our church family since 2018. Upon retirement from Colorado State University this summer, Julie has been deciding where she would best use her gifts, skills, and talents. She wanted to invest her post retirement time at an organization that gives back to the community. Here she is! Julie comes to us with a strong background and close to two decades of experience in accounts receivable, accounts payable, financial balancing and reporting. She has also worked with a wide demographic and different age groups. During her spare time, Julie likes to read, weave, further her spiritual journey, and deepen her faith. Julie can be reached at FinancialSecretary@fcfumc.net or by calling the church office and leaving a voicemail with our finance office. Currently, Julie works half days on Tuesdays and Thursdays. Welcome, Julie!

THANK YOU VERY MUCH, PAM RAAB for filling in as Interim Financial Secretary!

MUSIC MINISTRY IN DECEMBER *submitted by Karen Stody*

When you read this article, Advent will have begun! We will have the Advent wreath liturgy every week, and we will have Christmas carols! In addition to the First Church Singers, who have been faithfully participating in weekly worship, there will be others sharing weekly. We will have 8 different handbell ringers participating in small ensembles: a solo, two duets, a trio, and a quintet. We will have flute music again, and oboe music, in addition to organ and piano.

Watch on the website for a short Christmas music recital with organ and piano and oboe—a collaboration between Jordan Pyle and myself. The plan is to have this accomplished by December 4.

Christmas Eve will include our traditional carols, so we will be joyously celebrating Jesus' birth, just not all in the same space.

For December 27, we would like to have a Christmas carol sing-along. Please send requests to me at karestoo@gmail.com and choices will be made from your requests. We have done this at times in the past when the Sunday after Christmas is so close to Christmas, and it was fun. I hope many of you will participate!

Have a blessed Advent season!

Christmas Music Sunday - December 13

Assuming the COVID-19 situation does not move back in to the "Stay at Home" category, we will have our traditional Sunday of Christmas Music on Sunday, December 13. The First Church Singers accompanied by a string quintet, handbell ensemble, and organ, will present "Lessons and Carols" by Hal Hopson. This is a beautiful collection of carols, many of which are very familiar and you are invited to sing along with. Although we won't all be together in the Sanctuary as we wish we could be, we can worship together from wherever we are.

The online worship video will be available on Sunday, December 13. Please take a few minutes out of your day at some point to watch this inspiring service guaranteed to get you in the spirit of Christmas despite this year of pandemic. Please share with your friends and neighbors. Simply send them the link and they can watch at their leisure! Many thanks to everyone who has made this special musical presentation possible.

David Adkins, *Director of Music and Communications*