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Minister's Message

The Peaceful Transition of Pastoral Leadership

I'm writing this before I know the results of the election, so I pray that on the national level, if there is a transfer of power, it will be peaceful. Fortunately for our church, the transfer of leadership is much less anxious. That's not the case with all churches. It can be a stressful time when leadership transitions in unhealthy ways. But we are poised for an auspicious new chapter at First Congregational, Greeley.

Several people have asked in the last few weeks: "What is to become of Rev. Nate when he retires?" It's a fair question that deserves an answer. Here's what I expect.

For a time I will absent myself from church life. This aligns with best practices for ministers who leave a position but remain in the community. There may come a time when the church returns to in-person worship. I may, in consultation with your clergy leaders, re-join the choir. There may be times when Rev. Ben and Rev. Tamara call on me with a question. Probably it will be something like: Where did I hide that key to the boiler room? The guiding language for my future role is found in the UCC's Manual on Ministry: that I "neither interfere with nor intrude upon the ministry of my successors." Among other things, it means I will not be available to provide pastoral services.

This transition is unfolding exactly as we planned it. Years ago we re-examined and adjusted our clergy roles. Seventeen months ago I announced my retirement so you could conduct an unhurried and thoughtful search process. Everything fit into place with the Call of Rev. Ben to the Minister, Head of Staff position and the Call of Rev. Tamara as your new Minister, Head of Programs.

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(Minister's Message—Continued from cover page)

Keep in mind that Rev. Ben and Rev. Tamara have a couple decades of strong church leadership experience between them. Both are highly qualified and the basket of their combined gifts overflows. Things will not be the same—nor should they be! You are in for a wonderful adventure as the Spirit works among you in fresh ways under their leadership.

As for me, I will be on my own new adventure. This fall I began handing off key responsibilities and tasks. The transition is already taking place as we mapped it out. You've heard me say it before—that each morning I wake up and say to myself, "Today I get to go to church!" I don't know yet what my new waking mantra will be. But just like the future of First Congregational, I trust it will unfold as God intends.

With Great Hope,
 Nate

Trunk or Treat, Guadalupe, & Habitat Faith Build



Welcoming the Stranger Virtual Event

Sunday, November 22

4:00—5:00 p.m.

In partnership with Sojourn Mennonite Church, we will be hosting a virtual event called “Welcoming the Stranger.” Welcoming the Stranger is a production through Motus Theater in Boulder that seeks to expand people’s understanding of immigration by sharing the stories of young adults in our area who are undocumented. Along with hearing the stories of two individuals with DACA status, there will also be music and an opportunity for conversation with the individuals whose stories we hear. A link to join this event will be made available through the November 20th Friday email blast.

Ten Thousand Villages Virtual Sale

While we aren’t able to host our in-person Ten Thousand Villages sale this year, we are excited to host a virtual sale! You may order from the Ten Thousand Villages online catalog before November 20th. Orders will be delivered to the church no later than November 30 and can be picked up here! Shop online at focofairtrade.com/online-catalog



Church Records Update

Our church directory and database are important resources to help our congregation connect! They will also be an extremely helpful tool for Rev. Tamara when she arrives. That is why we are beginning a complete church records update!

Please take a few minutes to update your church record online or reach out to Laura in the church office at 970-353-0828, ext. 25.
<https://forms.gle/vsk5yvg5swAZ6C896>

Welcome, Rev. Tamara Torres McGovern

After a successful six month search and call process, we are excited to welcome Rev. Tamara Torres McGovern as our next Minister, Head of Programs. Rev. Tamara will join our staff in January and you should expect to see her in virtual worship with us in mid-January. Rev. Tamara is a graduate of Union Theological Seminary in New York and has served several churches in the New England area. She’s particularly excited to continue building relationships with our local ministry partners. She will move here from Portland, Maine with her wife Piper, daughter Tovi, and dog Caper.

Courageous Conversations on Race

The Racial Justice Think Tank of the Rocky Mountain Conference invites participation in the Courageous Conversations on Race series! Gatherings occur every other Tuesday through December.

Upcoming topics include:

Code Switching (November 10)

White Supremacy (November 24)

Implicit Bias (December 8)

You can register on the RMC website at <https://rmcucc.org/anti-racism-resources/>

Advent Workshop

The Family Faith Formation team has been hard at work to offer a safe Advent Workshop experience! This year, we will offer At-Home Advent Workshop kits, full of activities, crafts, and other projects for your family to take part in together throughout the Advent season! Kits are free of charge, but please sign up so that the team knows how many kits to assemble!

Wreath making has always been a favorite Advent Workshop activity. We’ll be offering a wreath making workshop in the west parking lot, snow or shine, on Sunday, December 6 from 10:00—2:00. All supplies will be provided free of charge, but you must sign up for a time slot in advance.

Both activities are open to all ages. Sign ups are available now on the church website (firstconggreeley.com) under Events > Advent.

Outreach Opportunities

- Weld Food Bank is seeking volunteers. For more information visit: <https://weldfoodbank.org/volunteer/>
- The church has been providing weekly treats and snacks to the staff at Fairacres Manor. If you’d like to assist in shopping for, baking, or delivering treats, please contact Kate Norris at knorris.mail@gmail.com for more information.
- We are collecting donations of gift cards for the purchase of coats for Immigrant and Refugee Center of Northern Colorado and Lutheran Family Services. If you are interested in giving, please send a check to the church by November 30 or use the Givelify app on your smartphone
- The Heath Giving Tree aims to help families from Heath Middle School put gifts under the Christmas tree this year. If you’d like to donate, please send a check to the church office by November 30 and note Heath Giving Tree on the memo line. You may also give using the Givelify app

Weld Food Bank Backpack Program Goal Surpassed!

Thanks to your generosity, we not only met, but exceeded our 101 Backpack Goal! Backpacks are filled with shelf-stable food items and sent home with students on weekends who may otherwise be hungry. Thank you, once again, for your generous support of this program!

Thanksgiving Offering

This year’s Thanksgiving Offering will benefit the Heath Giving Tree fund. Each year, we collect money on our Heath Giving Tree and purchase gift cards for Heath families in hard situations to ensure that each child has something under the tree on Christmas. If you wish to donate to the Thanksgiving Offering, you may send a check to the church office and note Thanksgiving in the memo line or use the Givelify app. Please have offerings in by December 7 so we may distribute to families before Christmas break.

Thank you, Search & Profile Teams

Our church’s congregational vote to Call Rev. Tamara Torres McGovern as our new Minister, Head of Programs was the culmination of a search process that began in March, over six months ago. Those who were part of the profile and selection teams devoted countless hours to this important process for the future of our community. Please take time to express your gratitude to the following church members for faithfully leading our church in such a successful search process:

Profile Team: Laura Gurney, chair, Jon Billheimer, Heather Schulte, Kay Fisher, Julie Garbus, and Judy Smith

Selection Team: Michelle Heiny, co-chair, Ashlyn Friend, co-chair, Sandy Magnuson, Whitney Janzen-Pankratz, Bridget Hulac, Keith Thompson, Laura Gurney, Ron Heil, Aaliyanna Hubert-Combs, and Christian Schulte

Plymouth UCC’s Virtual Visiting Scholar Event w/ Dr. Eric Elnes

Saturday, November 14, 9:00—3:00

You are invited to join together as Rev. Dr. Eric Elnes leads us on a provocative and inspiring journey designed for anyone who feels awkward in their search for God, who seeks to find holiness amidst their holy mess, and who desires real, concrete reasons for hope in a Christian landscape that often seems bleak or barren.

For details or to register for the event, go to <https://www.plymouthucc.org/visitingscholar.html>

