



The Church Bell

First Congregational Church, UCC
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Minister's

Message

As we begin a new year and a new decade together as a church, you have probably noticed there's a lot going on!

Last fall we began a process called "Sharing Our Story" with our church coach John Laster. The first set of gatherings of Sharing Our Story in October focused on our core values and identity as a community. The second set of gatherings in November focused on our vision for faithfully living into God's calling for the witness and ministry of our church moving forward. The

participation in these gatherings was terrific, with nearly 200 people involved! Thank you to those who helped to get these important conversations started for our church. Your time and thoughtful and prayerful participation are greatly appreciated.

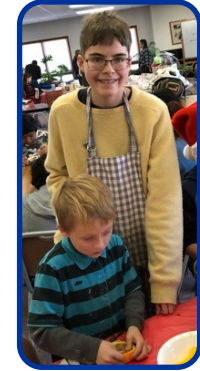
Whether or not you were able to participate in the gatherings in the fall, we hope you will be involved in the next part of this process, called "First Impressions." During these gatherings, John Laster will present the findings from the fall conversations and will help us begin the process of focusing and distilling the many thoughts and ideas that were presented during Sharing Our Story Parts 1 and 2. This next step in the process will help lead us towards the creation of (1) an identified set of shared values we hold as a community and (2) a compelling shared vision that will serve as inspiration for our church as we move forward into the future.

As John helps identify and articulate our shared story later this month, he will also help us begin the conversation about engaging in a capital campaign, raising funds that could serve as a springboard for our church to move into a future that is vibrant, vital, and fruitful.

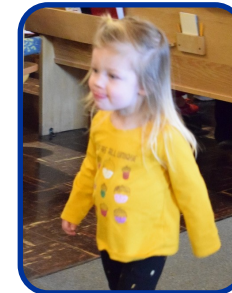
On the threshold of this new year, there are so many important and exciting things happening for our church family. We hope at least one of your resolutions for 2020 will be your involvement at church! Your prayers, insight, questions, and support are so important as we seek to faithfully follow God's calling into the future.

Rev. Ben

Advent Workshop



Christmas Pageant





**Dinner @ 5:30 in
Chadwick Hall
Programs @ 6:30**

January Schedule

6:30 p.m.

For Kids:

- **Rainbow & Jubilation** choir rehearsal—lower level
- **Middle School Youth Group**—led by Robbie Carlson, Youth Room

For Adults:

- **Praying the News**—led by Rev. Nathan Miller, Slighter Hall
- **The Praxis Project**—led by Rev. Ben Konecny, Hope Room

7:30 p.m.

- **High School Youth Group**—led by Robbie Carlson, Youth Room

Note: January 29 is our Annual Congregational Meeting, taking the place of adult programs. All youth programs will meet as usual.



We will offer another round of gatherings with John Laster later this month. These will be very different from our meetings of last fall.

Now it's time to focus on

what we've heard from you so far and how we move forward with a refreshed vision for ministry. We'll also be talking about how we can develop a plan for a capital campaign to raise money for multiple projects for our campus and enhanced programs. Sessions will be offered Saturday, January 25 (10:00 & 2:00), Sunday, January 26 (11:30 & 2:00) and Monday, January 27 (6:30).

It's time once again for our annual youth group mountain retreat! We'll meet at the church on Saturday, January 18, at 9:00 a.m. and take the van up to the Frisco/Dillon/Silverthorne area

for a weekend of community building. On Monday, January 20, we'll head back to Denver to participate in the MLK March downtown. We'll be back at First Congregational in Greeley at 2:30 for parent pick-up.

Youth families—check your email for more information and schedule for the weekend.



We're winding up our "Count Me In" campaign to receive pledges for our 2020 Generosity program. So far we have received 200 pledges in financial support promised for next year for a total of \$524,200. We hope to have more than 220 pledges on hand by the end of the month. If you have already made a pledge, THANK YOU! If you have not yet made a pledge, it's not too late. Please pick up a card at the church office. Every gift matters!

Coming Soon! Our youth will begin hosting a coffee bar at St. Drogo's Porch (just off the west entry) on certain Sundays of the month. Espresso and tea drinks will be available for a suggested donation to support our youth ministries.



Saturday, February 8

Mark your calendars to join us in the Gathering Place on Saturday, February 8, from 5:00 to 7:30, for Pizza and a Movie at church. We will watch a family-friendly movie together. All are welcome to attend!



**Beginning
Wednesday, February 5**

First Congregational Church will begin hosting a dementia caregiver support group the first Wednesday of each month starting February 5, 2:00-3:00 p.m. Support groups are a safe place to receive support for the difficult journey of caring for a loved one with dementia. If you have questions, please call the Alzheimer's Association Greeley office at 970-392-9202 or the 24/7 Helpline at 800-272-3900.

Children & Youth Variety Show

Sunday, February 23, 4:00 p.m.

Youth and children (age 18 and under) of all abilities are welcome to participate. Sing, play



an instrument, tell a joke, juggle, dance, do magic, have fun! We're looking for silly and serious talent.

Please limit your appearance to no more than two acts. Piano students: one selection per act, please.

See Robbie with any questions or to sign up.



On the Thursday before Winter Break, we delivered donuts and coffee to Heath Middle School teachers.

Thank you for your generous donations to the Heath Middle School Giving Tree. We were able to provide gift cards to 29 families to help with expenses this holiday season.

We are so grateful for the gifts made to the special Christmas Offering in support of our Church's Community Care Fund. Your contributions will help our Church respond to the needs of our neighbors throughout the year ahead.

Joseph Noëlliste Resignation

With regret we received Joseph Noëlliste's resignation from his position as Director of Adult Choirs. He has accepted a 3/4 time position at a Denver church and will start there the end of January. In the meantime, we are pleased he will continue to direct our choirs through the last Sunday of January. We have been blessed by Joseph's leadership and wish him all the best.



**Volunteering at
the Weld Food Bank
in December**