

September 2025



# First Church Communicator

Monthly Newsletter of Castle Rock First United Methodist Church

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## Outdoor Popup Choir

New Worship Time Starting Sept. 7th  
9 a.m. Worship Together

Starting September 14<sup>th</sup>  
Community Faith Time at 10 a.m.

Admin. Council 18<sup>th</sup> at 6 p.m.

Our Monthly Newsletter Can be Found  
<https://www.fumccr.org/newsletter>

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9/7/2025

### Open House Sunday

We will celebrate the many ways God is at work in and through our church. During worship, we'll highlight our ministries, and after the service you can explore ministry tables, meet leaders, and discover ways to connect. Whether you're new or have been here for years, it's the perfect time to see where you belong and how you can get involved!

### WEDNESDAY'S

#### Bell Choir & Chancel Choir Returns

Bell Choir 4 p.m.  
Chancel Choir 5:30-7 p.m.

9/11/25  
@11:45 A.M.

#### Leah Circle Returns

All women are invited to gather with this United Women of Faith group as we begin our year of fellowship, food, and programs. Long term commitment is not required, Come any third Thursday as often as you like. This month we'll be collecting items for "Kits for Kids." Lunch is provided.



# COMMUNITY CONNECTION



With summer coming to an end, autumn will soon be bringing hues of orange, red, yellow, and brown to the landscape. Nature is in transition, and as Rev. Sarah says in her column this month, it's a pretty good time to consider doing something new and different for ourselves, to step out of our comfort zone and learn something new.

Pastor Matt's August 31st sermon opened with this scripture: "Keep loving each other like family. Don't neglect to open up your homes to guests, because by doing this some have been hosts to angels without knowing it." Hebrews 13: 1-2 (CEB)

This is a great reminder that it is our relationships with one another ("community connections") which provide the heartbeat for the body of Christ. Opportunities abound within the walls of our church to change our routine, to explore something new, connect with other, and grow closer to God:

- Our hour of Community Faith Time (beginning September 14th) following Sunday morning worship creates a place to grow in our faith, whether you choose the intergenerational group in Fellowship Hall or probe deeper into the pastor's sermon in Soul Cafe.
- Our contemporary and traditional Bible studies offer time to reflect on our faith, to pray together, and share stories from our lives that deepened or challenged our faith.
- Second Thursdays open up the opportunity to lunch with other Methodist women while third Thursdays Do the same for the men who gather at Pegasus.
- September means it's time to sign up for a meal group, another opportunity to socialize with others and try out some of those delicious recipes in the Sesquicentennial Cookbook.
- We have a variety of places to serve as well as socialize, groups like Knot Again, Chancel Choir, Bell Choir, ushering, greeting, office volunteering, and supporting the projects of our HOME and GROW teams
- Our VIPP trips (initiated by a Very Important Point Person) to the Indian Paint Wells in Calhan, the Vibes game in Colorado Springs, and this month's trip to History Colorado bring people together for a few hours of wonderful camaraderie.
- Last, and certainly not least, our Stephen Ministers offer us confidential, one-on-one connection when we need it most.

Author and social work professor Brene Brown defines connection as "the energy that exists between people when they feel seen, heard, and valued; when they can give and receive without judgment; and when they derive sustenance and strength from the relationship."

Our September 7 Open House is a great time to talk with others already involved in an activity or service that interests you. To all who are on the Wesleyan journey to perfection, we wish a "bon voyage!"

**Fiscal Year End June 2025**

	\$
Revenues	422,654
Expenses	\$
Personnel	268,164
Conf Apportionment	39,777
Trustees	108,848
Church Office	19,481
All Other	8,513
Total Expenses	444,783
Net Total	\$ (22,129)

**Nominations and Leadership Development Change**

As part of our ongoing efforts to strengthen leadership and streamline planning, our Nominations and Leadership Development process will transition to follow the calendar year rather than the program year. This change will better align us with the Charge Conference timeline and make it easier to recruit, equip, and support leaders for key teams such as SPRC, Trustees, Finance, and the Administrative Council.

As a result, all current committee terms will shift to this new schedule, with transitions taking effect January 1, 2026. Those completing their service will roll off at that time, and newly selected leaders will begin their terms at the start of the new year.

**Staff Role Transition**

The Staff-Parish Relations Committee is delighted to announce a significant and exciting transition for Theresa, as she steps into a new, dual role as Preschool Director and Business Manager for the Church. This strategic move leverages Theresa's proven capabilities in both early childhood education and business administration. In this comprehensive position, approximately 60% of her time will be dedicated to overseeing the preschool's operations, including curriculum oversight, staff leadership, and ensuring a nurturing and enriching environment for our children. The remaining 40% will be focused on the church's vital business affairs, encompassing financial oversight, resource allocation, and enhancing overall operational efficiency. We are confident that Theresa's expertise and dedication, alongside Pastor Matt's leadership in congregational development, will be instrumental in the continued growth and success of both the preschool and the Church's broader ministries.

**Volunteer Church Secretary(s)**

We are looking for a volunteer church secretary for the First United Methodist Church of Castle Rock. This position is crucial for our daily operations and outreach. The volunteer will welcome visitors, manage communications, and keep the office organized. The role includes answering phones, maintaining the church calendar, and helping with Sunday materials. The secretary will also keep staff informed of member needs, such as illnesses or deaths.

There is a sign up sheet at the welcome desk and training will be dependent upon persons availability.

**Welcoming Our New Choir Director**

The Staff-Parish Relations Committee is thrilled to welcome Sarah Shinn-Molieri as the new Choir Director.



**Cookbook Launch**  
The August 24th Cookbook Launch and Tasting was a tremendous success as evidenced by these tables laden with delicious food and everyone in attendance who sampled the offerings.



# Stephen Ministry Reflection

from Louise Molieri

When I went through the training to become a Stephen Minister, I never expected that training to get me through one of the most difficult times in my life.

My friend Joan Williamson and I became best friends almost from the day we met in 1969 in elementary school. We played in the playground pretending we were horses while other kids were playing kickball and climbing the monkey bars. We spent countless hours at each other's houses (our houses were only a block and a half apart) all the way through high school. We walked to middle school together, and even though we each had our own group of friends that weren't part of our duo in high school, we remained close throughout.

When she joined the Air Force after graduation, we stayed in touch through the mail. I met Vince, and when we got engaged, Joan was honorably discharged just in time to be my maid of honor. Though we were separated for those post-high school years, we picked up our friendship as if no time had passed. When Vince and I moved to San Diego after his graduation from UW, saying goodbye to Joan was one of the hardest things I had to do. She came to visit us several times in San Diego, then more times in Colorado.

Joan didn't grow up going to church, although she sometimes went with our family if she was spending the night before. I was never able to persuade her to join our youth group, but I shared many of my faith experiences with her over the years. About eight years ago on a visit to Seattle, we noticed a small lump on Joan's temple. On our next visit it had grown and we learned that she had been afraid to go to the doctor, so I nagged her with a phone call every week until she finally went. Then she called me from the hospital as she was about to get surgery to remove it. She told me she was scared. I asked her if she wanted me to pray with her. Her voice broke when she told me "that's why I called." We prayed together, and after I hung up the phone I called my sister. When Joan woke up, my sister and her best friend Bev were at the hospital, and they all prayed together.

A few years later, Joan was diagnosed with breast cancer. She was in remission after chemo and radiation, but it had spread to other parts of her body. Several rounds of different chemos were unsuccessful, and she started to decline fast. She also had a huge falling out with her two sisters after their mom, whom Joan had devoted over 20 years of taking care of, passed away. This rift left Joan with no family around her at the end. We had many conversations in the last few years about God, forgiveness, everlasting life and a lot more. I credit my Stephen Ministry training for giving me the right words at the right time to reassure her. She passed away July 19, 2025. At the end she was at peace and ready to be in the arms of our Lord.

NO ONE HAS TO FACE LIFE'S CHALLENGES ALONE.  
OUR STEPHEN MINISTERS CAN HELP.



Find out more info.  
<https://www.fumccr.org/stephenministry>





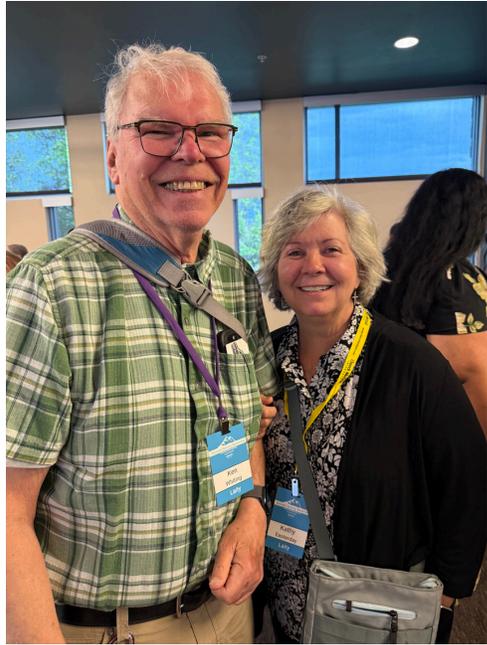
### Vibes Baseball Game

The August 15th outing to the Vibes baseball game in Colorado Springs was well attended for a warm summer evening. Fouls balls were caught (or landed at the feet of) by Ben Carenella and Julie Bailey's grandson Graydon Thompson.



In June we had six people who participated in the 2025 Mountain Sky Annual Conference at St. Andrews UMC in Highlands Ranch Co. I invited a three delegates to share their reflections.

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### Reflections from Annual Conference

Ken and I had the privilege of attending the Annual Conference (AC) session at St. Andrew United Methodist Church as equalization members representing the Front Range District. We joined 636 members in worship, fellowship, and conducting the business of the conference. These sessions include hearing reports on past and ongoing work, adopting future goals, approving programs and budgets, and celebrating the ordination and retirement of clergy.

Bishop Kristin G. Stoneking framed the conference with the theme, “Beloved. Belong. Becoming: On the mountaintop with Jesus.” She invited us to share the love and sense of belonging we experience with others—expanding the table of fellowship and welcome so that all can participate in the community of faith. Throughout the session, each presentation and decision reminded us that where we’ve been and where we are now are all part of the journey toward a transfigured church. We are beloved, we belong, and we are becoming the church we can almost imagine.

One of my favorite parts of Annual Conference is reconnecting with friends and family. My brother-in-law, Rev. Steve Easterday-McPadden, was honored among the retiring clergy this year. My niece, Amy Go, serves as co-lay leader of the Front Range District. Ken and I also caught up with pastors from previous churches and spent time with district United Women in Faith (UWF) leaders—it felt like a family reunion!

As soon as the dates for next year’s Annual Conference in Billings, MT, are announced, we’ll be marking our calendars!

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### Annual Conference Reflection

I had never attended an Annual Conference before, so it was an honor to participate as a delegate from our church.

Before the business portion of the conference began, a half-day was set aside for us to attend sessions of personal interest. I chose a session on Disaster Preparedness, which challenged us to consider not only how our church can be better prepared, but also how we can support our members and the wider community. We learned more about UMCOR (the United Methodist Committee on Relief) and the vital work they have done – and continue to do – in response to crises around the world. Next, I attended a session led by a pastor who holds worship services every Sunday evening in a bar. Each service begins with the community making sack lunches, which are then distributed across several locations in the Denver metro area. During the session, we experienced this hands-on approach to worship by making PB&J sandwiches, adding chips, fruit cups, and bottles of water, then preparing them for delivery. Scripture was read, a brief sermon was shared, followed by group discussion and a closing prayer. In both sessions, I met new friends who helped shape the rest of my conference experience.

One personal goal I set for myself was to sit with people I didn’t know – whether at meals, in breakout sessions, or in the sanctuary. To my surprise, during one lunch I sat with several women who recognized me through my mother, whom they had known well. Though my mother has been gone for some time, it was deeply touching to hear that she is still remembered.

Two of the people I met on the first day later stopped and prayed with me when I had to leave suddenly due to a family medical emergency – a moment of true grace and support.

Another highlight was the reading of pastoral appointments across the Conference. The room was filled with celebration as delegates cheered, embraced outgoing pastors, and warmly welcomed those newly appointed. Finally, the ordination service was especially moving, as we – the Body of Christ – gathered to welcome and affirm those entering ordained ministry.



## Friday Fellowship Becomes “Marvelous Mondays”

Our summer coffee shop gatherings on Friday morning were quite successful with stops at 8 different coffee shops around town. For the last two, we had 12 outside at Lost Coffee and 16 on hand at Lala’s. In fact the success of our weekly meet-up has prompted a slightly different approach for this fall.

Beginning September 8th, the coffee shop group will continue into the autumn months, but on Mondays and in one setting for the month. Coff33 on the south side of Festival Park will be the gathering spot at 10am for all four September Mondays. There is plenty of parking in the parking garage north of the library.



## VIPP Event: September 16 Colorado History Museum: Sand Creek Massacre Exhibit

Join us Tuesday, September 16, for a trip to History Colorado to see the Sand Creek Massacre Exhibit.

The church bus leaves at 9:30 a.m. There are 14 seats available on the bus with the possibility of some carpooling.

We'll tour exhibits and the gift shop, then have lunch at Café Rendezvous around 12:30. Return to church about 1:30 p.m.

Group rate: \$13

Special guest: Bishop Stoneking will join our tour!

September 14<sup>th</sup> last day to sign up at the welcome desk and please reimburse Mike Vitek, who will pay upfront.



## Meal Group Sign-up in September

Meal Groups provide opportunities to connect with others over meals at least three times from October to May. Led by a Core Group Leader, these relaxed gatherings help build community.

Sign-ups are open until the end of September. Interested participants or potential leaders should contact Pastor Matt.

## A Little background information From History Colorado

“The Sand Creek Massacre was the deadliest day in Colorado’s history, and it changed Cheyenne and Arapaho people forever. At sunrise on November 29, 1864, the US Army attacked a camp of mostly women, children, and elders on Big Sandy Creek in southeastern Colorado. The soldiers murdered more than 230 peaceful people.

“The Sand Creek Massacre, a horrifying betrayal against the Cheyenne and Arapaho people, is a pivotal point in Native American history and culture. This dark period showcases a heart-wrenching narrative of broken promises, warfare, and untimely bloodshed.

“At History Colorado, the brutal event comes to life through storytellings and depictions. Delve deep into a raw narrative that forms an inextricable part of America’s history, shaping the future of these indigenous tribes forever.”

Also John Chivington was a Methodist Clergyman who lead the charge. The Mountain Sky Annual Conference is working towards healing of the events of Sand Creek.



## Intergenerational Red Bird Mission Trip 2026

Have you ever wanted to go on a mission trip? Have you been on mission trips in the past and yearned for the day you could do it again? We’ve got you covered! Save the Date: Sunday, May 31st to Saturday, June 6th, 2026 We will be traveling to the Red Bird Mission in Beverly, Kentucky. Many of you likely remember them visiting and filling up the fellowship hall with their handmade crafts.

They have work camp opportunities and we’ll take a group of all ages to work with them for the week. We’ll also include a fun activity that is yet to be determined. Information coming soon on how to sign up for this intergenerational mission trip opportunity



**Sharing the transforming love and forgiveness of Jesus Christ  
to impact the hearts and lives  
of incarcerated men, women and youth,  
as well as their families,  
to become loving and productive citizens  
of their communities.**



## **Kairos Prison Ministry**

One of the best parts of church affiliation is that as a group, each of us is able to do more. I can bring in a can of soup, but together we are able to donate pounds and pounds of food when we do a food drive. If I donate a few dollars for the mission trip I know that even though I am not there, I have helped to spread the goodwill. So it is with Kairos Prison Ministry, not everyone is ready to go behind bars, but Castle Rock First United Methodist Church has supported this ministry with prayers and funding that everyone has been a part of for 15 years.

This November, the Kairos team at Buena Vista will be conducting another weekend retreat, BV #12, from Thursday the 6th to Sunday the 9th. During the weekend, we tell the participants that they can choose to be part of The Church, a bigger organization that lifts them up and enables them to do more. We show them the prayer chain and they see the names of numerous members of The Church who are praying for them right now! They also get to witness The Church at the very end of the weekend at the closing ceremony.

As the retreat comes to a close, we ask the participants to prepare some remarks for each other to answer the questions:

1. What was your spiritual condition when you arrived?
2. What did you find during the weekend?
3. What do you take with you when you leave?

When they arrive for the closing, they are led into a room full of strangers, free world members of The Church whom they have never met! It is a powerful testimony to the awesome power of The Church that we have discussed throughout the weekend. For those free world members who do attend, it is an opportunity to see that the Holy Spirit is alive and well and working through us. I have heard some talk that perhaps a busload from our church is a possibility...

At the open house on the 7th there will be a table with more information about Kairos and the work at Buena Vista. I will see everyone at the service!



**Paul's Mystery Ship Walk to End ALS**  
For six years we have supported the Dannels' family and all who live with an ALS diagnosis by participating in this walk to raise funds for ALS research and to raise awareness. We encourage you to learn more about this event and register online at

[paulsmysteryship.com](http://paulsmysteryship.com)



### **Thank you For Outdoor Crew**

To all who helped with the Outdoor Chapel this season thank you!

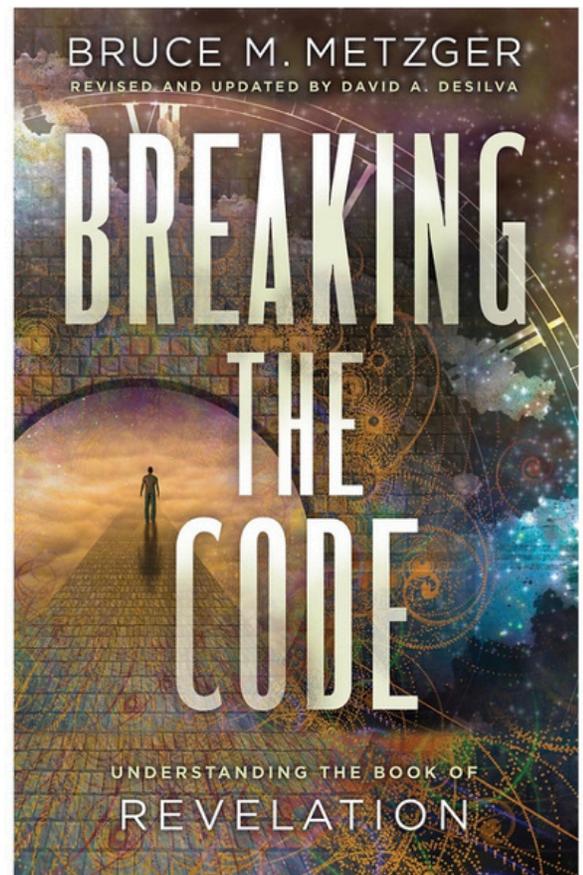
From clearing branches, setup, teardown, ushering, leading music, running sound your contribution to this ministry is deeply appreciated.

Thank You!!!!

## **Tuesday Morning Bible Study**

On September 23, the Tuesday morning Bible Study group will begin a 6-week study of the book of Revelation using the guidance of Bruce Metzger's *Breaking the Code* (revised edition), a book that provides a trustworthy guide to the rich symbolism of this important biblical book. Metzger presents the fruits of solid scholarship in a non-academic style. This revised edition includes updates based on current biblical research, as well as additional teaching from author and respected New Testament scholar David deSilva.

Meeting every Tuesday at 9:30 in the library, this group encourages reading from various translations of the Bible and frequently shares personal experiences encountered in our individual faith journeys. Drop-ins, visitors, and new participants are always welcome.





# Rev. Sarah's Space

email:

sms11@mindspring.com



This is the time of year that we watch as the children and youth in our lives gather the necessities with care and place them in their backpacks. They head out the door to school and the continuation of their learning. Hopefully they take on this task of preparing with joy and anticipation of the year ahead. It is a good time for us to assess how we can take on simple tasks that will help us to be life-long learners.

This commitment to learning can start with seeking out intentional conversations with knowledgeable people. This dialogue allows space to ask questions and receive answers that are tailored especially to our needs.

Perhaps we can make a commitment to read. Books have the amazing value of being accessible anytime and anywhere. The door to learning books offer can be opened at any time and we can read at our own speed and reread as needed.

A class can offer opportunity to continue learning. Being in a group has the advantage of learning with others, benefiting from their questions and insights. We have set aside the class time for our continued learning. Our first thought about continuing our learning might be that I have a family and a full time job. If time is tight what you can do to be intentional about making windows for learning.

People of faith, declare yourself a learner. With that backpack full and ready to go, fight against learning to be something quarantined to school days and essential only to childhood and adolescence. Resist that urge to squander spare time. Embrace today and always the glorious infinity of God and brace yourself to never stop learning. Embrace learning not as a burden, but as a great joy. Resolve to be a life-long learner.

Rev. Sarah



## PASTOR MATT'S SPACE

email: [matt.franks@fumccr.org](mailto:matt.franks@fumccr.org)  
social media @mattdamethdoist



Thank you for the cards, food, and other acts of support you gave us during the time of my aunt and father's passing. It meant so much to our family.

### **A New Season: Worship, Community, and Creation**

Starting on Sunday, September 7, Castle Rock First UMC will begin a new season in the life of our church. For the first time, our congregation will gather together for one unified, Spirit-filled worship service at 9:00 a.m. each Sunday. This change is not about losing something, but about creating something new—bringing our voices, traditions, and gifts together to worship as one body in Christ.

We will begin this new chapter with a worship series called "The Serviceberry," based on the writings of Robin Wall Kimmerer and paired with scripture. The serviceberry, a plant that is often overlooked, becomes a powerful metaphor for how God designed creation to thrive through gift, reciprocity, interdependence, and hope. Together, we will explore what it means to live in right relationship with the earth, with one another, and with God.

- Week 1 (Sept. 7): Gift Economy - Genesis 2:4–8, 15–17, 19
- Week 2 (Sept. 14): Reciprocity - Deuteronomy 29:22–25
- Week 3 (Sept. 21): Interdependence - 1 Corinthians 12:12–27
- Week 4 (Sept. 28): Hope for Creation - Isaiah 55:10–13

Each week, we will be reminded that creation itself is a gift, that we are called to give back, that all life is interconnected, and that God's promise of renewal gives us hope.

### **Community Faith Time**

Beginning September 14, we'll add another new opportunity: Community Faith Time. After the worship service, everyone is invited to stay for coffee, donuts, and a time of growing in faith together. Children, youth, and adults will each have meaningful ways to connect, learn, and share life in Christ. We'll gather in three unique spaces designed to meet the needs of our whole church family:

**[More on the next page](#)**

- Nursery (Ages 0–4): Our youngest children will experience God’s love through safe, nurturing care, simple stories, and play. Even the littlest ones are treasured members of our community.
- LIFT (Living In Faith Together) - Intergenerational (Ages 5 and up): A creative, engaging space where children, youth, parents, grandparents, and everyone in between can learn side by side. Through scripture, conversation, and activities, we’ll discover how faith comes alive across the generations.
- Soul Café (Adults): A relaxed gathering for adults to enjoy coffee, conversation, and meaningful reflection on scripture and life. This is a space to share stories, ask questions, and deepen faith in community.

This is a season of fresh beginnings for our congregation. One worship service. One community of faith. One call to live as God’s people in harmony with creation. We hope you will join us each Sunday as we gather, worship, and grow together in love.

### **Pastor Matt’s Book Conversation**

Join us for a one-night discussion on *Massacre at Sand Creek: How Methodists Were Involved in an American Tragedy* by Gary L. Roberts.

This book explores the difficult history of Methodist involvement in the Sand Creek Massacre. This isn't just a history lesson; it's a chance for us to reflect on our faith and our place in the world. Let’s engage with this important story and move forward with greater wisdom and compassion.

Date: September 28th

Time: 6:30 p.m.

Location: In-person or on Zoom. Email Pastor Matt for the link.

I am excited for what is coming. I hope you join us.

The Peace and Love of Christ light your way,

Pastor Matt