

The First Word

The Newsletter of First Presbyterian Church of Littleton

April 2026

-A Message from Pastor Murray	2-3
-After Easter Sermons -Easter Pancake Breakfast	4
-Littleton Handbell Festival	5
-Socks and Bars -Leadership at FPCL	6
-Thankful	7
-Heart and Home Campaign	8-9
-Book Club for ALL	10
-Bible Studies	11
-VBS Announcements	12
-Minute for Mission -Pastor Response Phone Line -New FPCL Members	13
-The Clerk's Corner	14
-Prayers for.. -Open Door	15
Images Credit Clip Art, Freepik, Adobe Stock, Ministry Pass, Vecteezy	



Join us Sunday at 10am



Living Into Resurrection Life

Dear Beloved in Christ,

I suspect you know this: Easter (*Resurrection*) Sunday is more than a single day on the calendar. The reality we live, however, would suggest otherwise.

In the life of the church, the Resurrection is not just an event we remember — it is a reality we live into and practice. The empty tomb proclaims that God is always doing something new — even in the dark, hidden from our eyes — even when we cannot see the full shape of it. Resurrection means that despair does not get the final word, fear does not determine our future, and love is stronger than death or hate.

In the Gospel stories, the disciples do not immediately understand what has happened.

Mary mistakes Jesus for a gardener (John 20:15).

Thomas doubts (John 20:25).

The travelers on the road to Emmaus walk beside the Risen Christ without recognizing him (Luke 24:16).

Resurrection unfolds slowly, through encounters, conversations, meals, and moments of awakening... and that is how resurrection continues to work in us today.

A pastor once shared a story about a congregation in a neighborhood that had been steadily losing members for years. The church building was quiet most days of the week, and many assumed the congregation's best days were behind them. One summer, the church opened its doors for a children's reading program because the local elementary school library had closed for renovations. Volunteers expected maybe a dozen kids. Instead, more than sixty showed up that first week.

The sanctuary that had felt empty suddenly echoed with laughter. Youth helped younger children read. Older members baked snacks and listened to stories. Parents who had never stepped into the church before began staying to talk. By the end of the summer, the congregation realized something surprising: what they thought was decline had become transformation. Their calling was not simply to maintain what once was, but to participate in new life emerging around them.

They just needed to see what was possible. Resurrection had not arrived with trumpets. It came with backpacks, storybooks, and the joyful chaos that accompanies children.

That is often how God's new life appears — in ordinary acts of community, welcome, and hope. As we continue to live into the Easter season, we have the opportunity, the choice, to step into that same spirit of resurrection life together.

Vacation Bible School (VBS)

This summer our building will once again be filled with the voices of children discovering stories of God's love and justice. VBS is more than a program — it is a glimpse of the kingdom of God, where curiosity is celebrated and every child is reminded that they are beloved. Volunteers, teachers, and youth helpers make this week a living sign of resurrection joy.

Church Picnic

Gathering around shared food and laughter is one of the most ancient ways Jesus followers celebrate new life. Our upcoming church picnic is a chance to reconnect after a busy season, welcome new friends, and remember that community itself is a gift of the Risen Christ, and is the Sunday following the conclusion of VBS.

Youth-Led Worship

One of the clearest signs of resurrection life is when new voices rise to lead the community. Our young people are preparing to lead and guide us in prayer, scripture and proclamation in a youth-led worship service. Their leadership reminds us that the Spirit continues to move through every generation.

Each of these moments — learning together, sharing meals, lifting new voices — reflects the truth of Easter: life is breaking forth all around us. And as Isaiah asks “*do you not perceive it?*” (Isaiah 43:19)

The resurrection is not just something that happened long ago in a garden outside Jerusalem. Resurrection is something God continues to do in our lives, in our congregation, and in our world. Every act of welcome, every moment of courage, every step toward justice and compassion is part of that new life.

May we continue to be people who recognize the risen Christ in unexpected places — around tables, in classrooms, in the voices of our youth, and in the laughter of children running through the church halls.

Grace and peace to you in this Easter season,



The Reverend Jonathan Murray
Pastor, First Presbyterian Church, Littleton





Worship Focus

The Season of Easter
April 5 - May 17
New Life

through the lens of the gospel according to Matthew.

April 12: <i>New Community</i>	Matthew 18:21-35
April 19: <i>New Priorities</i>	Matthew 6:25-34
April 26: <i>New Eyes</i>	Matthew 5:1-12
May 3: <i>New Identity</i>	Matthew 5:13-16
May 10: <i>New Courage</i>	Matthew 16:21-28

Easter Pancake Breakfast

On Easter **Sunday, April 5th**, our friends in the Cub Scouts will again be preparing and serving a pancake breakfast in Ficklin Hall from **9-10am**. So whether you're coming to the 8am or 10am Easter service, plan to stop by and enjoy the food and fellowship



LITTLETON HANDBELL FESTIVAL!!



Come one, come all, to the
Littleton Handbell Festival!

Who: First Pres. Memorial & TNT Handbell Choirs
and several other local church bell choirs

What: A FREE concert (and an opportunity for community fellowship!)

Where: Littleton United Methodist Church
5894 S. Datura St. Littleton 80120 (corner of Datura & Shepperd St.)

When: Saturday, April 25th, 2026 3:00 p.m.

The Memorial Handbell Choir & Tintinnabulation Ringers will be joining several other Littleton churches for an all-day rehearsal and fellowship experience and perform our pieces in a massed concert with Guest Conductor Jeffrey Harms in the afternoon.

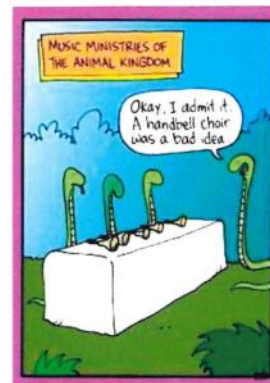
If you haven't had the opportunity to hear an ensemble of bells ringing together, it is truly an event you will never forget, and it is **SO CLOSE TO HOME** - *only 4 blocks from church!!*

Please join us and support the ringers
(and bring friends and family along)!

SEE
YOU
THERE

Contact Karen with any questions at
Karen@fpcl.org

**WE HOPE TO SEE LOTS OF
FAMILIAR FACES THERE !**





*10 years and going strong
Submitted by Scott C*

Four questions for you in this article:

What is this pail that is in the Welcome Center for?

How long has this been going on?

Who makes sure the pail is filled up for FPCL folks to use?

Are these socks and bars needed and valued by the recipients?

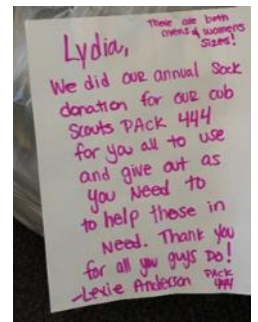
The purpose of this pail is for congregation members to grab a couple of socks stuffed with granola bars to give to people in need as they are asking for support, such as on the side of the street, at a grocery store, etc.

This mission was started by the Rev. Cody Sandahl around 10 years ago and was “handed” over to the Monday Evening Men’s Group and they have been responsible for getting the socks and granola bars. Every other Monday evening the Men’s Group gather in the Welcome Center and at the start of their meeting, if needed, stuff socks to make sure the pail has socks for folks.

One of the folks in our Monday evening men’s group was a homeless person years ago. He said that new socks for a homeless person are like “gold” and huge difference maker. The book that Pastor Jonathan is using for Lent, “Lent in Plain Sight”, also references the importance of new socks for people in need. Page 98 says – “New socks really make a difference” – *Tuesday March 17th study – “Shoes”*.

The Boy Scout troop that FPCL supports, Troop 444, did a group project late last year and provided the church with a HUGE bag of socks !! Enough to last us well into 2026.

So don't be shy on grabbing socks to provide to people in need.



Thankful for —

A new members class to welcome Jeanie A, Merry S and Thomas Q - and for Kathy McD and Stephany C helping me along with two special members to join us - Sharon P and Karla F!

Zoey E, granddaughter of Justie E, lighting the communion candle. She was just perfect and so filled with joy to light it!

The beautiful Cantata led by Mary Dailey that filled the church and our souls with beautiful music! And for Michaela R and Mary's son, Chris G, serving as narrators.

Trey McD treated us to his beautiful organ and piano playing on the 15th, and it was so fun to see how happy he was as he played! We are so blessed to have him share his gift with us! And for Bob C to play for us on the 22nd. For one who plays by ear, it is amazing! And the Lord's Prayer was powerful during the offering.

Young Henry S being baptized on March 22. He had such a powerful personal message for us; and so thankful to the Peace Makers for making him a beautiful quilt! His journey to this time in his life is such a blessing to him and to us, and for us to be able to share it with him is a very special gift!

Randy's Auto donating \$250 to our Community Dinner. He said how much he loves all that we do for the Littleton Community! GOD IS GOOD!

For Teagan W, a HS student, who has helped with VBS in the past and ushered on the 22nd. Kathy F was her tutor at Whiz Kids when Teagan was in the 3rd grade; and now she is paying it forward to "serve" for us! She also hopes to be a tutor for Whiz Kids next year. YOUTH are our future!! And GOD IS GOOD!

And last, I want to share a "God thing" that happened to me on the first snowy day we had in March! I had an appointment at a medical building, and the parking lot and sidewalks were not shoveled. I managed to get into the building, and was so thankful! But when I was ready to leave, it was much worse! And then I remembered when I left my home, I had said, "God, we can do this." And off I went! As I stood looking at the icy sidewalk, some wonderful young DHL delivery man appeared and said, "May I please help you to your car?" And I knew 100% that God had sent him to help me, because I had told God, "We can do this." And we did! That young man did not let go of me until I was safely in my car, and I just kept thanking him over and over. Believe me, I thanked God all the way home, also! I have learned as we grow older, we realize that things change. We need help, and hesitate to ask for it! But kindness? That lasts! Integrity? That echoes generations! And that is why I thanked that young man for his family raising him to be so kind and caring!

If we want a better world for our children and grandchildren, it starts with us — with the way we speak, the way we listen, and the way we show up for one another. Simple values. Strong character. That's a legacy worth leaving behind. And it is all these values, that I see in our church family at First Pres! That said, a friend of mine at church shared their "God thing" that happened to them recently, and it filled my heart that he shared with me! God does guide us! We just have to listen! How wonderful if we could all share a "God thing" with each other! I challenge all of us to do that!

Blessings, ♥



A Minute for Stewardship-Heart and Home Campaign Update

FPCL members, staff, and friends—this month the Stewardship Team is pleased to share an update on the **Heart and Home** renovation effort. In February, we officially passed the **halfway point of the campaign**, and there is much to celebrate.

Early in the campaign, we were able to replace aging carpeting and install new flooring—an important first step in improving both function and appearance throughout the building. Then, in June 2025, FPCL was awarded a grant from **Historic Colorado**, allowing us to begin the long-awaited repair and restoration of our historic stained glass windows.

With your continued generosity and the hard work of our Properties Team, we also secured a competitive bid to replace the aging swamp cooler. A **functional air-conditioning system** has now been purchased and is mostly installed, bringing reliable cooling to key areas of the church. As we approach what may be a record-breaking warm summer, this improvement is a true blessing. Not only will we stay cool, but we will also avoid the humid air from the old swamp cooler that threatened our historic sanctuary and valuable musical instruments.



Unit above youth area for **the sanctuary**



Ficklin Hall



Strategic installation in **the Columbarium**

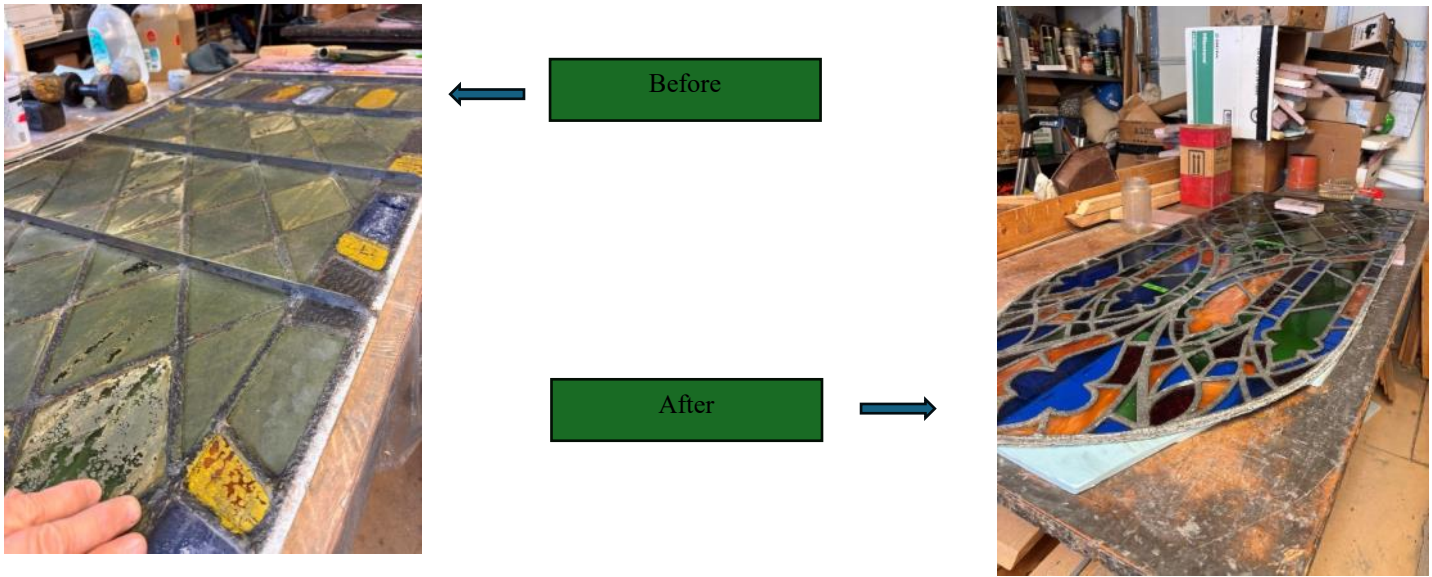


Ayers Parlor

Turning back to the stained glass windows—you may have noticed that our largest and most historic windows have been absent for the past few months. While we had hoped to have them reinstalled by Easter, the restoration work has proven more labor-intensive than originally anticipated. A small group from FPCL recently visited **Watkins Stained Glass Studio**, where the work is underway, and we were encouraged by the quality and progress of the restoration. The current anticipated completion date is **April 30**.



As shared at the annual meeting, these windows had been coated years ago with heavy lead paint. Much of the additional time required has been dedicated to carefully removing this paint so the glass can be restored as close as possible to its original condition. . While some light-filtering characteristics will change, we are happy to report that the colors remain vibrant, and the windows' original beauty will truly shine through once reinstalled.



Looking ahead, we also want to share what’s next for the windows. By the time you read this update, FPCL will have submitted an application for a **Phase 2 grant**, focusing on the east-facing windows. These windows are in urgent need of repair, as bowing has begun to cause structural damage. We are hopeful to receive a similar grant to begin this next phase in late 2026 or early 2027, and thanks to your generosity, we already have matching funds in place to pursue this work.



While there is still fundraising ahead, we are deeply grateful for the financial support, volunteer time, and professional expertise shared by the members and friends of FPCL. Your commitment continues to strengthen and preserve our church home for generations to come.

Your Stewardship Team –
 Dave LeM(chair)
 Sue C
 Dee G
 Trey McD
 Don M
 Nat O





FPCL BOOK CLUB

ALL WELCOME

WE ARE A SMALL, FRIENDLY GROUP AND WE WELCOME ANYONE WHO LIKES TO READ FOR CASUAL DISCUSSIONS ABOUT BOOKS.

WE SHARE THOUGHTS ABOUT THE BOOKS AND ABOUT OUR LIVES WITH NO JUDGEMENT.

APRIL : *THE HEAVEN AND EARTH GROCERY STORE*

- BY JAMES MCBRIDE

MAY: *WHILE JUSTICE SLEEPS*

- BY STACEY ABRAMS

JUNE: *THE LAND IN WINTER*

- BY ANDREW MILLER

JULY: *HAMNET*

- BY MAGGIE O'FARRELL

GROUP WILL MEET THE

SECOND THURSDAY OF EACH MONTH, (EXCEPT AUGUST),

AT 12:30PM IN AYERS' PARLOR-ZOOM IS AVAILABLE AS WELL.

REACH OUT TO JANICE F WITH ANY QUESTION, PLEASE-



Tuesday Evening Shabby Sheep Bible Study

7pm

The Tuesday evening women's Bible study group will be doing a study called, **The Promise And Power Of Easter.**

This study will start on **March 3rd, 7 pm** at church and will run through April 7th. We are inviting any interested women to join us.

This study will go through the four weeks of the Lenten season taking in the details of Jesus' life, the agony of His death, and the overwhelming joy of His resurrection. Relive His steps with a heart full of hope. See it all with eyes of faith. You'll be ready to celebrate Easter in more ways than you ever have and be inspired to share the joy only Jesus could make possible.

Please contact Sue C or Janice F to join this study or for more information. All women are welcome!

Wednesday Morning Shabby Sheep Bible Study

10am

On a break until April 8th when they begin a six week study on *Acts*.

VBS 2026 is coming!!

Join us for an unforgettable winter sports-themed adventure-
-the "Snowball Mountain Challenge"! Children will learn about
how to find their true strength in God, as they enjoy music,
crafts, science experiments, games, and Bible stories.

Tuesday, June 2nd through Friday, June 5th,
from 9am to 12pm each day.

Pre-K (starting at 4 years) to 6th grade

If you would like to sign children up,

<https://first-presbyterian-littleton.mycokesburyvbs.com/register-child>

Interested in volunteering to help, please contact Pastor
Blakeley for more information!



Minute for Mission

The mission committee will be holding its annual food drive for the Life Center during March. The Director said they could use any food, but they are always in need of foods with protein such as Spam, beans, tuna, salmon, peanut butter or any nut butter. We will be collecting food through **April**. There will be a container at the Windemere entrance and at the Littleton Boulevard entrance to place your donations.

Thank you in advance.



Pastor Response Phone Line

FPCL has a phone number specifically for emergency Pastoral needs. Keep this phone number handy to reach the Pastor on-call for emergency pastoral care. You can call [720-662-7277](tel:720-662-7277) directly to reach the Pastor on-call, or you can call the Main Church Office phone number [303-798-1389](tel:303-798-1389) and select #6 on the menu tree to reach the Pastor on-call for any emergency needs. You may need to leave a message, and this message will be sent to the pastor on-call, prompting them to get back with you.

New FPCL Member Introductions

We were pleased to welcome two new members to First Presbyterian Church of Littleton. New members are Merry S and Jeanie A.

Merry grew up in the Hill United Presbyterian Church in Butler, Pennsylvania. She can be found working as a contract Postal worker at ACE Hardware in Greenwood Village. She is a member of the choir. She joined PFCL because of the Biblical teachings, the music program and the friendliness of the congregation.

Jeanie A joined FPCL as a transfer from United Church of Christ. She retired as Director of Management and Consulting from Stanford Research Institute in California and moved to Littleton to be close to family. She traveled extensively between California, Tokyo and Zurich with her job. Recently a bible study group led by a college friend in New York prompted her to find a local church. The music at FPCL caught her attention. She has found the music, the welcoming members and the small church atmosphere to be the right place for her to worship.

FPCL looks forward to their involvement as members and are excited to have them join us. Please extend a warm welcome to these new members

The Clerk's Corner – A Review of the March 22 Session Meeting

At its meeting on March 22 the session received and welcomed Jeanie A and Merry S as new members of First Presbyterian. In my Clerk's report I shared the 2025 Church Statistical Report that I submitted to the General Assembly in February with information on the church's demographics, worship, and financials. I provided updates from Denver Presbytery, including the election of a new Stated Clerk and the Presbytery's decision to stop leasing office space and move to a "Mobile Office" with staff working remote. Pastor Jonathan shared in his Pastor's report that his vacation time the previous week had been relaxing. He also updated the session on efforts to involve our children and youth in worship as acolytes and having the youth lead an upcoming worship service.

The session approved a recommendation from the Personnel Committee for an unpaid pastor intern position this summer. The church will advertise the opening through word of mouth and at the two seminaries in the Denver area.

The focus of much discussion was how First Presbyterian connects with our community, both in the surrounding neighborhoods as well as beyond Littleton. As Jonathan reminded elders, how the church connects can inform discernment on what the church is being called to do. The session acknowledged the church's existing demographics and struggle to attract people, including younger adults, to join the congregation. Jonathan mentioned that face-to-face interaction is what builds relationships and connection that could ultimately lead to membership. This requires the church to go out and meet people where they are instead of simply expecting them to show up at our doors.

To this end, Jonathan shared his vision for a Worship/Mission Day, where in lieu of a regular worship service the congregation would meet and open with prayer and song, disperse in groups to work on projects around the church and community, and then return to conclude worship and gather afterwards for fellowship and a meal. The session approved a motion expressing support for this idea while noting that it would require a significant amount of planning and logistics.

The session approved a motion for Elder Don W to become the new church liaison with Scout Troop 444.

Finally, the next session meeting is currently scheduled for Sunday, April 26 after worship. However, the session is considering if there's another time/date that works better for its regular meetings.

Yours in Christ,

**Trey McD
Clerk of Session**



Open Door Circle
will be meeting every
3rd Thursday,
at 10:30.

All women are welcome.
Please call Hedy L
with
any questions.



First Presbyterian
Church of Littleton

1609 W Littleton Blvd, Littleton, CO 80120



FIRST PRESBYTERIAN CHURCH OF LITTLETON
1609 W. Littleton Blvd., Littleton, CO. 80120
303-798-1389 fpcl@fpcl.org

Office Hours 9am-2pm Tuesday-Thursday
Office Phone Number 303-798-1389
Office Email fpcl@fpcl.org
Pastoral Care Emergency Line 720-662-7277
Staff Members



Pastor Jonathan Murray, Minister of Word and Sacrament
Pastor Blakeley Winslow, Pastor of Christian Discipleship
Lydia Cooper, Office Manager
Mary Dailey, Director of Worship Arts
Karen A. Meersman, Director of Handbells & Children/Youth Music
Joan Lund, Financial Secretary
Tracy Eidson, Child Care

SUNDAY SCHEDULE

- 10:00 am Sunday Worship
- 11:30-12:30 1st and 3rd Sunday of the Month Bible Study



Vision Statement

We Believe the Good News that all of Littleton
is called
Beloved by Jesus Christ
And together we Belong to God's Kingdom

Mission Statement

We Welcome All to Love, Share, Serve and
Grow in Christ