

The First Word

The Newsletter of First Presbyterian Church of Littleton

August 2025

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Images Credit: Western Welcome Week

Join us Sunday at 10am



Pastor Jonathan's 'First Word' Article – August 2025

In the 50's church took on more of the *Field of Dreams* approach to evangelism – “if you build it, he will come.” (often misquoted as “they will come”). And it worked – well. The church was the physical location to which people flocked for social interaction and fellowship, as well as to re-focus their life on God. But, I am sure you realize, we are not in the 50's anymore.

The ministry of Jesus, which prompted Followers of the Way (as they were first called) to gather in secret. The meetings with the first disciples and especially the Apostle Paul, was always... always about the kingdom of God – learning how to live and become more like Christ; learning to be the body of Christ in a culture that placed strictures on what you could or could not do. That is the major factor of why Paul's words, through the various letters, seem to contradict. It isn't that Paul was talking out of both sides of his mouth, but with every city comes a certain set of rules – rules that everyone who lives there knows... but typically these rules aren't communicated to the newbies, you were just supposed to know. Paul was telling the people to “play by the rules of the city” because those seeking to persecute Christians did not need an extra reason.

It is not that the church then, or now, needed to be or do different things, but how we go about them must change based on the city in which we live, based on the culture of the geographic area because the culture that surrounds us, dictates (to some degree) what is acceptable or unacceptable. And we must be ready to pivot as the culture changes.

I've been in Littleton 18 months now, and I am still learning some of the known, but unspoken, rules. But being the church isn't secret; following Christ and his mission isn't an unknown. G.K. Chesterton is known for saying,

*“Christianity has not been tried and found wanting;
it has been found difficult and not tried.”*

Being a Christian in the world is difficult, but to follow Jesus and his teachings, we must live it through our actions and the words we speak to and with those around us. As disciples of Christ, it is time – right here and now – to follow Christ. I realize this means different things to different Jesus followers... and I am not worried about the differences. None of the first 12 got it right when they were following the physical Jesus to the cross, or got everything right after Jesus was raised from the dead. I do not expect us to get it right all the time.

I do, however, expect us to seek and to strive to be faithful. Without fear of punishment, we must hold one another accountable. God does not expect us to live sinless lives, but to turn from our sin when we recognize it... to confess and, then, repent in order to turn and rely fully on God's grace and mercy and forgiveness, living in ways that reflect how we are empowered by the presence and activity of the Holy Spirit within us. That is what it means, as a sinful human being, to be faithful.

This month, during Western Welcome Week, we have the special opportunity to greet the community within our walls as they voluntarily enter to appreciate the beauty and skill of the quilts and quilters as well as peruse the used book sale. But these are people we do not see throughout the rest of the year... because the community sees the church as largely negative and skeptical. Carey Nieuwhof stated the 'church, often, is a historical building or a community hub for services and events.' Many of our community neighbors see the church as outdated, irrelevant, judgmental, and/or hypocritical.

This perception of the universal church has grown because of Christians who have not sought to live Jesus' teachings. *God's interaction with God's people from the beginning and continuing through today is full of more grace than anything else.* As Jesus followers, we must read God's Word to us, take time to understand it, seek to incorporate Jesus' teachings into our lives, which often means changing how we think or act. And then, we must demonstrate what it means to follow Jesus, as human beings who are flawed and seeking to be faithful, within our every day living interacting with the world around us.

That is the God's Good News the world needs to see (as we live), and then hear (when we speak). We can no longer live cautious or hidden, or in hope that we have a beautiful and friendly church to which people will come because it has been built. People will come because they have interacted with someone (just like you!) who passionately seeks after God and demonstrates a faithful life. Living as a Christian – at any time, even in the face of difficulty – must be tried.

We gather on Sunday mornings to praise God as a community of faith, to interact with God in a place we know God can be encountered. Just as you stop at a filling station to re-fuel your vehicle, church is a place where we unload our baggage before God and are filled once again with God's amazing holy presence. That makes us church. What makes us Christians is when we carry God's holy presence into the world so others can encounter God.



What we do in church as the Body of Christ cannot stay here...

What we do in church as the Body of Christ matters, and therefore it must be carried into the community around us and shared with others.

The church is a beautiful place to gather, to be re-fueled, to connect with one another, and strengthened for the journey ahead, but the community is where the church must go.

May God's Spirit be at work within and through you, especially as you share God's Spirit with all whom you encounter.

A handwritten signature in cursive script that reads "Rev. Jonathan Murray".

The Reverend Jonathan Murray
Pastor, First Presbyterian, Littleton

WORSHIP FOCUS

"Scripture Shapes Us" (these passages are from those who submitted scripture verses that have shaped them --- not all were included, which means a possible 'second edition') --- July 20 - September 7

August 10: Psalm 23

August 17: Psalm 139

August 24: Psalm 118

August 31: 1 Thessalonians 5

September 7: 1 John 4

Stewardship “Bag and Box” Donation Drive 2025!!

Sunday August 17 & Sunday August 24

The Stewardship Committee is welcoming your participation in our “Heart and Home” donation drive. This is in partnership with arc Thrift. Please bring your **gently-used** items to support the mission of **arc Thrift** of Colorado!

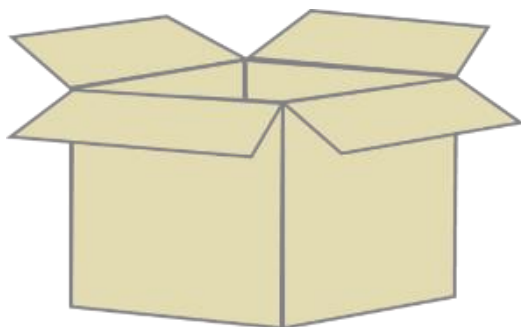
In return for filling the truck **ARC Thrift** will make a special financial gift to First Presbyterian!

Please bring bags and boxed items to church on either Sunday August 17 or August 24.

Examples of eligible donations include:

- Clothing
- Art Work
- Nicknacks
- Household Items
- Toys and Games

All items should be in good condition and able to be re-used. No broken parts or pieces please!



Please box or bag all items for easier storage and packing when arc Thrift picks up the items

Sorry!

The following items cannot be accepted for donation:

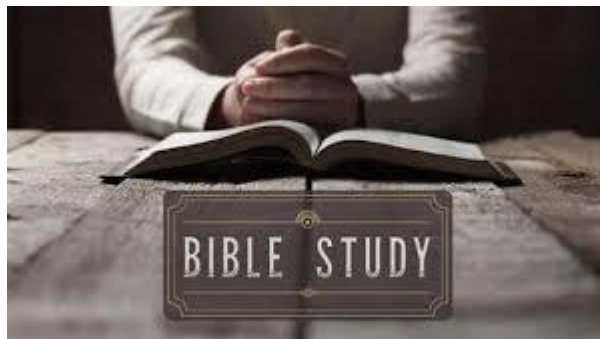
- TVs and Computer Monitors
- Mattresses and Box Springs



arc Thrift of Colorado was created to generate resources to support and advocate for people with developmental disabilities. For over 40 years arc Thrift has raised millions of dollars through its stores for this mission. arcThrift and FCPL have had a great partnership over many years. arcThrift has provided over \$10,000 of vouchers over the years to FCPL for its mission activities,

Keep shopping at the ARC Thrift Store in Woodlawn Shopping Center

Please reach out to Scott or Sue Chandler for any questions or further information.



Sunday Bible Study

Bible Study is on the 1st and 3rd Sundays, following worship. Bring a 'brown bag' lunch and join us as we discuss God's Word to us. Both children and Adult Sunday Bible Study will meet, starting in Ficklin Hall for lunch.

Men's Bible Study

Join in the fellowship and study, (2 studies that alternate every other Monday between a morning study and an evening study).

Morning Study 7:00am

Evening Study 6:30 pm

**Contact Scott Chandler for morning information,
scott@franklincourtpartners.com or 303-888-0132**

Leadership

Elders: Trey McDowell-Clerk of Session, Don Meersman, Rick Wilson, Sue Chandler, Beth Opperman, John Kleinfelder, Jeff Colwell and Paul Parish

Presbytery Commissioners: Rick Wilson and Kathy McDaniel

Deacons: Deacons - Joy Carreno, Becky Gibson, Jess Karet, Jennie Staritzky, Deb Graham, Kathy Frear, Serena Amaral, Justie Ellis, Maria Franklin, Janice Fagan

Stewards: Karla Ferguson, Kathy McDaniel, Stephany Crosby, Cheri Blanchard

Thankful for Kathy Frear being through with her long cancer treatment and back with us at First Pres.

Thankful for the fun Adventures with Grandparents Day on July 7th and the program presented by the Paint Box Guild and lessons in painting for the children.

Thankful for little Samuel coming to be there when his Daddy/Blakeley had the sermon on July 20th.

Thankful for the friendly people at First Pres who are so kind and caring. I have learned that we may never know how many hearts have felt lighter because we were there for them. Or how many dark days have turned brighter just by our one act of kindness. That said, I am so very thankful to be a Texan right now who grew up on the Guadalupe River and went to camp there and seeing how many strangers have gone to help during the horrific flood, who are now friends with each other. There are so many lessons to be learned by what happened! Ten school buses in Kerrville made trips to get girls at the Christian Mystic Camp and saved 900 girls. The drivers said when the girls got on the buses, they were so thankful for the strangers who had come to save them, they sang all the way to their families waiting for them.

But something I saw one man say who lost both his parents and then stayed to help others, I shall never forget. He said, "I have seen the most beautiful part of this world in this tragedy. If everybody could be this kind to everyone on a daily basis, this world would be an amazing place. If everyone could set aside their differences and just go love each other — how amazing that would be. It doesn't take much. Just smile at somebody today, just open a door and walk somebody across the street. Be kind. Say 'good morning.' We don't know what somebody is going through each day; nor what that simple act of kindness can mean to another. Please do that for a stranger today — we never know what tomorrow may bring."

After I heard Blakeley's sermon on Sunday about Jesus "Knocking on our Door," I thought about what this Texas son said. Are we "opening the door" when we hear knocking at First Pres?

May you all remember that each day is a gift — and an opportunity to be "that person" for someone else.

God hold you all in His loving hands!

Dee



EXTRA! EXTRA!
GRANDPARENTS MARK YOUR CALENDARS
AND BRING YOUR GRANDKIDS ALONG FOR:

Adventures with Grandparents and Grandchildren!

A **FREE** summer program developed to foster relationships between grandparents and their grandchildren ages 4-11 yrs with games, snacks, crafts, conversation and visits from community friends!

Join us on the following Mondays this summer, from **9:00am-11:30am**:

Monday, Aug 4

Meet our local Littleton Police Department officers in person
& tour a patrol car!

Sponsored by and Hosted at:
First Presbyterian Church of Littleton 1
609 W Littleton Blvd Littleton,
CO 80120
Register at FPCL.org or by calling 720-353-1801



KING SOOPERS REWARDS

**We are happy to help people sign up anytime
if you have not already.**

Remember, every time you use your King Soopers rewards card you are helping
to raise monies for our church.

Any questions, please call Sue Chandler, 303-347-9191.

KING SOOPER'S REWARDS 2nd QUARTER (April to June 2025) UPDATE –

The church received our 2nd quarter payout for the 2025 King Soopers reward card program. We received **\$434** from **61** rewards members cards used. **This was a slight increase in proceeds received in the 1Q of this year !** For those who used your rewards, thank you for linking your King Soopers reward number to the FPCL church account. Remember to use your KS rewards account each time you are purchasing groceries, pharmacy, and other purchases.

We are happy to help people sign up for the program anytime. It's easy to use so we are encouraging more people to sign up to help the church. Encourage your family and friends to sign up also. Using your rewards card helps raise monies for our church.

Any questions, please call Sue Chandler, 303-347-9191.



**First Presbyterian
Church of Littleton**
1609 W Littleton Blvd, Littleton, CO 80120

Minute for Stewardship – Stained Glass Window Update

🔔 Exciting News for Our FPCL Community!

We're thrilled to announce that First Presbyterian Church of Littleton has been awarded a **mini-grant of \$45,787** from the **State Historical Fund (History Colorado)** for the **repair and restoration of our beautiful south-facing stained glass windows!** This grant represents another key milestone in our **Heart and Home campaign**, a two-year renovation effort launched this past February.

Even more heartening: thanks to the incredible generosity of our members and friends, we already have the **\$15,263 match** required for this grant safely tucked into a restricted church account. ❤️

We're grateful to **Jeff Colwell**, Elder and Finance Committee member, who is leading the charge as grant manager. Jeff submitted the necessary paperwork in early July, and we're now awaiting final confirmation from our State Historical Fund representatives. Once everything is officially approved, our renovation team will begin scheduling contractors and ordering materials—expected to kick off by **mid to late August**.

🔧 The following stained-glass windows will be lovingly restored as part of this project:



We are deeply blessed to have such a devoted team of volunteers and a generous congregation supporting this meaningful step forward in preserving the spirit and beauty of our sanctuary.

Thank you for continuing to be part of the Heart and Home journey!

Dave LeMay, (Committee Chair)

Sue Chandler

Dee Getzinger

Don Meersman

Trey McDowell

Nat Opperman

Paul Parish



Pastor Response Phone Line

FPCL has a new phone number to reach the Pastor on-call; whether it is Pastor Jonathan or Pastor Blakeley, or another pastor who will be responding, keep this phone number handy for your needs. You can call directly to [720-662-7277](tel:720-662-7277) or you can call the main church office menu tree (#6) to reach the Pastor Response line. 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.

**First Presbyterian Church of Littleton
Presents the 22nd Annual
Western Welcome Week Quilt Show
& Used Book Sale**



**Come enjoy the Beautiful Quilts Displayed in our Historic Sanctuary,
(built in 1929 by Jules Jacques Benois Benedict)
and Used Book Sale.**

**Quilt Drop-off Day: Thursday, Aug. 14, Noon– 6pm
Quilt Show & Used Book Sale, Friday, Aug. 15, 2pm - 6pm
Quilt Show & Used Book Sale, Saturday, Aug. 16, 8:30am - 3pm
** Quilts must be picked up on Saturday, Aug 16 at 3pm**

**A beautiful Amish hand quilted quilt has been donated and will be given away on Saturday,
August 16 at 3 pm. All donations for the Quilt Show will be donated to Habitat for Humanity of
Metro Denver who have served more than 2,500 local families in their 45 year history.**



Chance tickets - 6 for \$5 or \$1 each.



Proceeds from the Used Book Sale will benefit Whiz Kids Tutoring.

**We will begin collecting used books for our Used Book Sale July 1st. Contact
Kathy Frear at 303-241-3405 or kathyfrear@gmail.com to arrange a drop-off or
pick up. Please feel free to leave a message with your name and phone number
saying you're calling about used books for our sale.**

**First Presbyterian Church,
1609 W. Littleton Blvd. Littleton, CO 80120
303-798-1389 ▪ fpcl@fpcl.org
www.littletonpresbyterian.org**

**Western Welcome Week, info@westernwelcomeweek.org
www.westernwelcomeweek.org, 303.794.4870**

Please Pray Joe Euron, Phil Ansted, Russ Fuiks, Taylor Ann Meersman, Joyce Fuller, Joy Carreño, Judy & Bob MacDonald, Lonna Williams, Joan Cook, Pat & Jaime Yrastorza, Sabrina Czaplicki, and Cynthia Cook

In Service to Our Country

Major Ricky Casburn; Capt. Connor Venrick; Brett Wilson;
Sgt. Benjamin Lund, Jordan; Bobby Johannsen; Connor McDaniel, Army; CDR.
Per Rychecky USS Carl Vinson, Whidbey Island; Donnie Donahue,
Marines; Nathaniel Syron; Sgt. Isaiah Boehm, Ft. Carson CO;
Jeremy Colwell; Cameryn McKinnell, USAF; Maj. Wm McKinnell, USAF;
Ulises Serrano

Missions

Jory & Mallory Bayne; Metro Denver; Presbytery of Zimbabwe;
South Asia Mission;
Highline Place; Love INC, Love With Actions(Rwanda)



Thank You from Kathy Frear

I would like to let you know that on Friday July 11, 2025, I finished my 7 months of chemo and radiation treatments (that followed surgery) and want to thank you all for your prayers, absolutely delicious meals and food, lovely flowers and plants, gifts, phone calls, emails, texts, and the many, many cards offering love and encouragement!!! So, many, many thanks for helping to ease our burdens during this time. We appreciate it all very much!!! Certainly a loving and caring congregation!!! Bill and I are truly blessed!!!

Kathy Frear



THE ADVENTURES OF FLAT JESUS

This summer, let's send Flat Jesus to every corner of the world! Let Flat Jesus be a reminder that Jesus is with us, whether we are near or far from home.

The LORD your God is with you wherever you go. (Joshua 1:9)

It is also a fun reminder for us to help others encounter God! 🙏❤️

1. Decorate and cut out your Flat Jesus. You may also laminate him, if you'd like. Packing tape works well as an at-home laminate. ✂️👍

2. Take Flat Jesus with you everywhere and take photos holding Him. 📷😊

3. Talk with your family and friends about what you all and Flat Jesus experienced. 😊👉

4. Throughout the summer, email your photos, along with your name and a brief description of your locations/adventures to Miss Karen at Karen@littletonpresbyterian.org. After August 10th the photos will be made into a fun video which will be presented at church and on the FPCL website!

* Please note that submitted photos are considered an act of consent for FPCL to use the photos for the church website, worship services, and other online FPCL social media sites (**no names will be attached; images only**).

5. **As an added bonus**, there will be a world map available on Sunday mornings for you to place a pin in the location/s you and Flat Jesus have traveled throughout the summer. Let's show the world that Jesus is with us wherever we go! 📌🌐



Please Send Flat Jesus pictures to Ms. Karen at karen@fpcl.org.
Deadline for the pictures are August 15. Also, please add your pin to the map in Chandler Hall.



FIRST PRESBYTERIAN CHURCH OF LITTLETON

1609 W. Littleton Blvd., Littleton, CO 80120

303-798-1389 • fpcl@fpcl.org • littletonpresbyterian.org

FPCL STAFF and Their Hours

Please call the church office for contact information. 303-798-1389

Rev. Jonathan Murray, Minister of Word & Sacrament ————— Tuesday & Thursday 9-2

Rev. Dr. Blakeley Winslow, Pastor of Christian Discipleship —Monday & Wednesday 10:30-3:30
and Tuesday 1-4:30

Lydia Cooper, Office Manager ————— Tuesday-Thursday 9-2

Mary Dailey, Director of Worship Arts

Karen 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



Mission Statement

*We Believe the Good News that all of Littleton is called
Beloved by Jesus Christ*

And together we Belong to God's Kingdom