

# The First Word

*The Newsletter of First Presbyterian Church of Littleton*

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**May 2026**

**Join us Sunday at 10am**

## Pastor Jonathan – “First Word” article for May 2026

What does it really mean to live a “new life”?

It’s a phrase we hear often in the church, but Jesus gives it depth and clarity in his teaching — especially in the Sermon on the Mount and in his final words to His disciples. In the Gospel according to Matthew, we are invited into a way of living that is not simply improved behavior, but a transformed identity.

In Matthew 5:1–12, Jesus begins with the Beatitudes — blessings that turn the world’s expectations upside down. The poor in spirit, the meek, the merciful, the peacemakers — these are not the people the world typically celebrates. And yet, Jesus calls them blessed. Why? Because they are living the new life of God’s kingdom, a life shaped not by power, status, or self-interest, but by humility, trust, and love.

This new life doesn’t stop at inward transformation — it moves outward. In Matthew 5:13–16, Jesus tells his followers, “*You are the salt of the earth... You are the light of the world.*” Salt preserves and enhances; light reveals and guides. In other words, the new life we are given is meant to make a difference. It is not hidden or private — it is active, visible, and deeply engaged with the world around us.

But here’s the challenge: the world teaches us to look out for ourselves, to seek comfort, success, and recognition. The way of Jesus calls us beyond that. It invites us to live above those instincts — not in pride, **but in purpose**. We are called to love when it’s inconvenient, to forgive when it’s hard, to serve when no one is watching.

Consider this...

A man was walking home after a long day when he noticed an elderly woman struggling to carry groceries across a busy street. People passed by, some glancing at her but continuing on. The man hesitated — he was tired — but something stirred within him. He stepped forward, offered his help, and gently walked with her across the street. When they reached the other side, she smiled and said, “**Thank you. I didn’t think anyone would stop.**”

The man later reflected that what seemed like a small act felt deeply significant. In that moment, he realized: the new life he had been given wasn’t just about belief — it was about becoming the hands and feet of Christ in everyday moments.

This is what Jesus calls us into.

Not grand gestures alone, but faithful presence.

Not perfection, but willingness.

When we live this way, our lives begin to point beyond ourselves — to the love and grace of God.



Finally, in Matthew 28:16–20, Jesus sends His disciples out with a mission: “*Go and make disciples of all nations... teaching them to obey everything I have commanded you.*” This is the natural overflow of the new life. We are not just recipients of grace — we are participants in God’s work of renewal in the world.

So as we continue in this “New Life” series, may we ask ourselves:

**Where is God calling me to live differently?  
Who around me needs to experience the love of Christ?  
How can I be salt and light in my daily life?**

The new life Jesus offers is not always easy — but it is always good. And as we walk in it together, we become a living testimony to the transforming power of his kingdom.

Let us go, then — not just as hearers of God’s word, but as doers.

Let us go as salt.

Let us go as light.

Let us go as Jesus’ hands and feet in a world that desperately needs hope.



The Reverend Jonathan Murray  
Pastor, First Presbyterian, Littleton





## **DID YOU KNOW ?? FPCL Partner Spotlight**

FPCL has had a long and successful partnership with arc Thrift over several decades. FPCL members have provided lots of donations to arc Thrift over the years such as “Fill the Truck” or “Fill the Welcome Center”, unsold books from Western Welcome Week, etc. arc Thrift has supported FPCL financially.

Below is an overview of arc Thrift. FPCL has been a benefactor of some of the Community and Humanitarian support (discussed and highlighted below) such as arc Thrift vouchers for the homeless and for some of the attendees with need at Community Dinner.

arc Thrift Stores is one of the largest social enterprises in Colorado, using a retail thrift model to fund and deliver disability impact at scale.

The model has multiple integrated pillars:

### **1) Economic Engine for Disability Advocacy**

- Converts donated goods into **\$150M+ annual revenue scale** business across 3 states
- Has generated **\$180M+ in funding** for Arc chapters across Colorado
- Provides **ongoing funding for 14 Arc chapters** delivering:

- o Advocacy

- o Education

Housing & employment support

☞ This is **one of the largest sustained funding streams for Intellectual and Developmental Disability (IDD) services in the U.S.**

### **2) Employment & Inclusion at Scale**

- Employs **2,000+ people**
- One of Colorado’s **largest employers of people with intellectual & developmental disabilities (IDD)**
- Provides:
  - o First jobs
  - o Skills training

Long-term employment pathways

☞ Directly advances **economic independence for hundreds of individuals with IDD**

### **3) Community & Humanitarian Support**

- Donates goods and financial support (vouchers) to:
    - o Organizations serving the community such as FPCL
    - o Supports families and caregivers of individuals with disabilities
- Supports **food insecurity programs (e.g., Feed Colorado)**

☞ Functions as a **broad safety-net contributor beyond disability alone**

### **4) Environmental & Sustainability Impact**

- Diverted **1.6 billion pounds of goods from landfills**
- One of Colorado’s **largest recyclers**

☞ Combines **humanitarian + environmental impact** in one model

**FPCL is proud of this partnership over the years.**

Submitted by Scott Chandler



Dear FPCL family,

I have an important, but bittersweet announcement to share with you.

I will be concluding my tenure as the Pastor of Christian Discipleship at First Presbyterian Littleton, effective Friday, June 5, 2026. I have accepted an offer to become the Care and Discipleship Pastor at Rockland Community Church in Golden.

This was a difficult decision, as Melissa and I have been coming to FPCL together since 2018, and I've been on staff here now for a little over four years. We were married and had our son baptized here. We have also served in various ministries at the church and First Presbyterian Littleton has been a large part of our lives for many years for which we are deeply grateful!

But we have sensed for a while that God might be calling us to serve in a new way and we have been praying for His wisdom and plan for our family as we discerned where He was leading us.

We believe this new opportunity at Rockland is where the Lord has directed us, and are excited for this next step, even though we will greatly miss the friendships and community that we've been a part of at FPCL!

I have already spoken with Pastor Jonathan about my transition plan. I'm staying on through early June to honor some of my upcoming ministry commitments, including preparing for and helping to lead VBS. While I'm not sure if/when a successor may be brought into my position, I'm happy to meet with and help train a new person prior to my departure date. I believe that taking this extra time to fulfill existing commitments will help me to finish my tenure at FPCL well, and hopefully leave in a way that sets the church up for success should they decide to bring in someone else to fill my existing roll.

In closing, I just want to reiterate what a privilege it has been to serve our FPCL family in the areas of Christian education, pastoral care, and community outreach, as well as in worship. I will be praying for the church as a whole during this time of transition. Thank you to everyone who has made our time here so memorable, and for all the love and encouragement our family has felt through the years! While our congregation is blessed to have a long and rich history, as well as a beautiful building, it is ultimately the people that make FPCL so special. I know you will embrace and support a new staff person if/when they come, and I wish you all God's continued blessings as you carry out His Kingdom work here in the heart of Littleton. We will miss you all! In Christ,

-Pastor Blakeley





**Remember Loved Ones on Memorial Day and Beautify our Columbarium**

Dear Friends,

We invite you to join us for worship as we honor and remember our loved ones during the Memorial Day Weekend service on **May 24th**. The Columbarium gates are always open on Sundays, and you are welcome to visit at any time using the gate code **1929**.

As we honor our loved ones this Memorial Day, we invite you to support the ongoing care of our Columbarium and Memorial Gardens with a gift of any amount.

Blessings,

The Columbarium Committee

**In Memory of** \_\_\_\_\_  
**Donated by**  
**Name** \_\_\_\_\_  
**Email** \_\_\_\_\_  
**Address** \_\_\_\_\_

Names will be printed in the bulletin if received by **May 15<sup>th</sup>**.

**Place in the offering tray or mail to:**

First Presbyterian Church of Littleton  
1609 W. Littleton Blvd., Littleton, CO 80120  
Please make checks payable to First Presbyterian Church of Littleton

## Thank you

For the young scouts making the great pancake breakfast for us. Loved how the young boy at the door was so mannerly and kind! I love having the scouts of all ages at our church.

For the joy of ushering on Easter Sunday! One little boy sat at the end by his parents and pulled a \$20 bill out of his pocket and gave me a huge smile! His parents were beaming! And then a guest with his family putting a \$100 bill in my hand and not the offering plate and saying, "Thank you for all this." Both of these amazing happenings filled my heart!

Teagan W, a young teenager, having the courage to be the liturgist on April 12 and my observing the two Renz teenagers sitting on the front pew with her to show support! They are our future, and it was a joy to just "watch" them together!

Bob C and Trey McD playing the organ for us again with such joy and enthusiasm! They are both so talented and we are blessed to have them sharing their talents with us!

For Jeanie A and Merry S joining our church!

Having communion both on Maundy Thursday and again on Easter, celebrating that very special time of the year for us all!

As I ushered on Easter, listened to the choir and watched so many of our members and guests, even children go up with the choir to sing the Hallelujah Chorus, I was overwhelmed by "who we are" at First Pres! And I remembered that love is not what we say, but what we do; and why I love James 2:17 - "... faith by itself, if not accompanied by action, is dead." Our "action" at First Pres comes from the heart! I also believe that the legacy we leave is not just in our possessions, but in the quality of our lives - by what we do for others! I recently read that "We all have two lives. The second one starts when we realize that we only have one." And as I was writing this, I believe God led me to read a quote by Jackie Robinson, that says, "A life is not important except in the impact it has on other lives." I pray we can all continue to work together "as a community" to have an impact on others! I truly believe that our kindness and caring for others at First Pres, and giving of our time, talents and treasures, IS "our pot of gold." May we all add to that "pot of gold" so it overflows for us to keep helping each other and our community!

Blessings to all!



## A Minute for Stewardship— Understanding Per Capita @ FPCL

**“There are many parts, but one body.”** (*1 Corinthians 12:20*)

You may have noticed us talking a bit more about “per capita” lately. If that raised a question or two—or even a little concern—you’re not alone. We want to take a moment to explain what this is, why it matters, and how it fits into the life of our church.

**Q:** Why does Denver Presbytery ask for Per Capita, and why does this matter for us as a church?

**A:** As Presbyterians, we believe we are stronger together. We are part of a larger church family, and per capita is one way we share in that connection. It helps support the structure that keeps our denomination organized, accountable, and working together. At the end of the day, this is about connection. We are not just one church on a corner—we are part of something much larger. Per capita is one small but meaningful way we stay connected, support one another, and share in the work God is doing through the wider church.

**Q:** How much is Per Capita and how is it used?

**A:** Per capita is the **\$32 each member** contributes to support the shared work of the whole Presbyterian Church (U.S.A.): \$19.15 stays with **Denver Presbytery**, \$3.00 goes to the **Synod of the Rocky Mountains**, and \$9.85 supports the **General Assembly**.

**Denver Presbytery** uses its portion to fund the legislative and judicial work of our commissioners, support committees that guide churches and prepare future ministers, cover judicial processes when needed, and maintain basic administrative operations.

**The Synod** strengthens presbyteries across six states by providing administrative support, training, judicial resources, and collaborative ministries—recently saving money by moving to virtual and church-hosted meetings.

**The General Assembly** uses per capita to bring commissioners together, publish our constitutional documents, support the Co-Moderators, train leaders, oversee ordination exams, maintain the call-process system, guide presbyteries on immigration matters, preserve our history, and represent Presbyterians in ecumenical work around the world.

**Q:** When do I need to pay this? What happens if I do not pay it?

**A:** If you’re a member of FPCL, you’re asked to contribute your per capita each year. The timing isn’t critical if it’s received within the calendar year. When members don’t contribute their portion, FPCL still pays the full amount on their behalf, which means it becomes an expense to the church without matching income.

**Q:** Is per capita owed by the household or by each individual member?

**A:** Per capita is owed by each active individual member. So, if two people in the same household are both members, their total per capita for 2026 would be \$64.

**Q:** How much did members contribute to per capita in 2025, and how much did FPCL pay to Denver Presbytery?

**A:** In 2025, FPCL **received \$714.11** in per capita contributions from members but paid \$7,008. That left the church covering **\$6,293 as an expense** without matching income.

**Q:** I thought Per Capita would simply be taken out of my annual pledge to the church, is that not true?

**A:** No. Unless you specifically designate a gift as ‘Per Capita,’ the Financial Secretary will not treat any portion of your pledge as a per capita contribution. If you intend part of your giving to cover your per capita, please note that on the pledge or payment so it can be allocated correctly in the budget.

### **A Final Thought**

We know change—or even just new information—can feel a bit unsettling, especially when things have been done a certain way for many years. Our goal isn’t to add pressure, but to offer clarity and transparency. If you have questions, we welcome them. We’re in this together.

### **Your Stewardship Team –**

Dave L (chair)  
Sue C  
Dee G  
Trey McD  
Don M  
Nat O  
Don W





## 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

On a break for now.



# **Wednesday Morning Shabby Sheep Bible Study**

10am

*The six week study on Acts has begun.*

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 2<sup>nd</sup> 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!



## 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 directly to reach the Pastor on-call, or you can call the Main Church Office phone number 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.



	March 2026		Year to Date 2026	
	Actual	Budget	Actual	Budget
<b>Income</b>	\$28,002.56	\$27,514.00	\$ 113,376.85	\$ 121,540.00
<b>Expenses</b>	\$37,392.78	\$41,682.35	\$ 113,900.70	\$ 116,599.06
<b>Operating Surplus/Deficit</b>	(\$9,390.22)	(\$14,168.35)	\$ (523.85)	\$ 4,940.94

The church is in a good financial position right now due to previous year surpluses and the continued vigilance of the staff to contain costs. The pledged support is less than we anticipated at this point in the year so please review your giving statement to be sure you are on track for 2026. We received grant money in March for the stained glass window repair project and support for the community dinner for 2026.

May God continue to shower us with his blessings and guide us in the best use of the gifts we receive.

# sermon series

## Worship Focus

### Sermon Series *New Life*

May 3: *New Identity* – Matthew 5:13-16

May 10: *New Courage* – Matthew 16:21-28

May 17: *New Calling* – Matthew 28:16-20

### Sermon Series *Spirit on the Move* (A study through Acts of the Apostles)

May 24: *New Power* – Acts 2:1-21 (**Pentecost – wear red!**)

May 31: *What Does That Mean?* – Acts 2:14-21, 37-39





**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](mailto:fpcl@fpcl.org)

**Office Hours** 9am-2pm Tuesday-Thursday

**Office Phone Number** 303-798-1389

**Office Email** [fpcl@fpcl.org](mailto: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



#### **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