

The First Word

*The Newsletter of First Presbyterian Church of
Littleton*

February 2026

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Join us Sunday at 10am



Walking in the Light: From Epiphany into Lent

“I am the light of the world. Whoever follows me will not walk in darkness but will have the light of life.” — John 8:12

February is a threshold month in the church year. We begin in the lingering glow of Epiphany — still tracing the light that led the Magi, still naming where Christ is revealed among us — and we move steadily toward the quieter, more searching path of Lent. It is a season of turning: from dazzling revelation to honest reflection, from outward light to the light that searches the heart.

This month, I am bringing in a reflection from **Richard Rohr**, drawing on the wisdom of CAC faculty member **James Finley**, who invites us to consider what it truly means to *live in the light of God’s love*.

*Living in the Light of God’s Love

Jesus tells us, “*Fear not; I am with you always.*” Not a promise that suffering will be avoided, nor a guarantee that life will be fair — but a deeper assurance of presence. As Finley reminds us, God is not a shield that protects us from all pain, but a presence that sustains us **in** all things.

This is the paradox of Christian faith: we live with fragility and brokenness, yet we do not walk in darkness. The light of Christ transcends, permeates, and shines through even the most shadowed places of our lives. The darkness does not overcome it — and, astonishingly, even the darkness is illuminated by it.

Many of us know what it is to feel disheartened — by our own shortcomings, by wounds we cannot seem to heal, or by the suffering we witness in the world. Like Paul’s “thorn in the flesh,” these places of struggle may not disappear. Yet Rohr invites us to consider that the very stumbling places of our lives may become our teachers — where we learn to depend not on our own strength, but on a mercy that is “oceanic and endless in all directions.”

As we look honestly at the world, the weight of suffering can feel overwhelming. And still, God’s love is not absent from that pain. It unexplainably permeates it. The light of Christ shines not by denying the darkness, but by dwelling within it — transforming broken edges into places of mercy, amazement, and gratitude.

Epiphany proclaims: *Christ is revealed.*
Lent asks: *What does that revelation require of us?*

Lent begins with Ash Wednesday, February 18. As we move toward Lent, we are invited to ask not only Where do I see the light? but also What hinders me from living more fully in it? Lent, at times, has been highlighted as a time for self-condemnation, but, in my experience, Lent is about clearing space — making room for God's healing light to reach places we often avoid. Rohr speaks of the “daily rendezvous with God” — a quiet, intentional meeting in which we allow ourselves to become receptive and vulnerable to divine light. This practice becomes especially important as we enter Lent: time set aside for prayer, silence, scripture, and honest self-examination.

As February unfolds, consider this simple invitation:

- **Pause daily** for a few minutes (*five or more*) of silence.
- **Name one place** in your life that feels unresolved or tender.
- **Offer it to God**, not for fixing, but for illumination.

Listen for the assurance: “*I am with you always.*”

You may not experience clarity every time — but trust that the light is present, shaping you quietly, faithfully, lovingly.

As a church community, we walk this threshold together — carrying the light of Epiphany into the searching grace of Lent. May we learn to recognize Christ's light shining through the ragged edges of our lives and our world, and may we become bearers of that light for one another.

Come, walk in the light of the Lord.

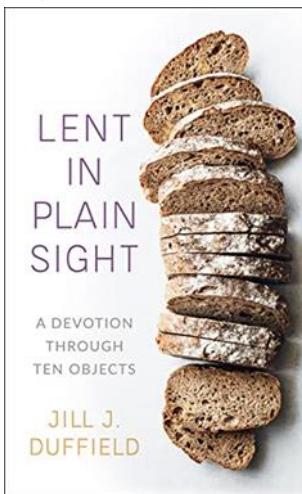
Come, live in the light.



The Reverend Jonathan Murray
Pastor, First Presbyterian, Littleton

**With gratitude for the teaching and witness of Richard Rohr and James Finley, Center for Action and Contemplation*





This sermon series is based on a book (by the same name), and will be the basis of our worship focus through Easter (April 5). You are invited to purchase the book and read along with the series.

If you want a book to read but cannot afford one, please talk with Pastor Jonathan.

WORSHIP FOCUS

Sermon Series "Questions God Asks"

February 1:	<i>What Are You Looking For?</i>	John 1
February 8:	<i>Do You Also Wish To Go Away?</i>	John 6
February 15:	<i>Who Do You Say That I Am?</i>	Mark 8

Sermon Series for Lent "Lent In Plain Sight"

Ash Wednesday, February 18 drive Thru Ashes from noon to 1:00;
worship service at 6p.m.

	<i>Dust</i>	Genesis 2
February 22:	<i>Bread</i>	Mark 6
March 1:	<i>Cross</i>	Mark 8 <i>Bells</i>
March 8:	<i>Lenten Cantata</i>	



rightnow MEDIA



February's RightNow Media picks

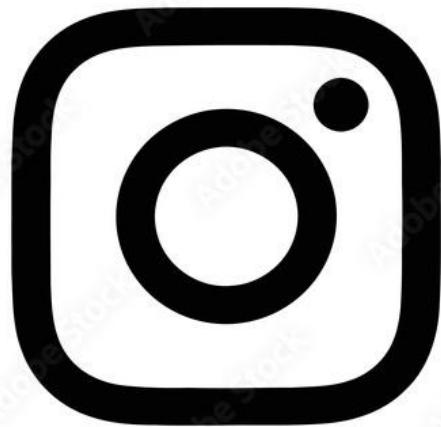
Check out some more videos from the huge selection of inspiring Christian content located at Right Now Media! Everything is accessible for you to conveniently enjoy from your computer or mobile device--absolutely free! Your account is already paid for through FPCL, so all you have to do is sign up [here](#):

If you have any trouble creating your account, or accessing content, please contact Pastor Blakeley for assistance!

For general audience: **"Tame your thoughts"**: Break away from negative thought patterns, and become a little more like Jesus every day! Celebrated pastor and author Max Lucado leads this six-part series that identifies Scripture-based tools you can use to help change your thoughts for the better.

For women: **"Shero"**: Pastor Jerome Gay is your guide through this study highlighting the faith, courage, and fortitude of four Old Testament women. Learn from their examples to draw inspiration in your own walk with the Lord!

For men: **"Jesus, the Ultimate Warrior"**. Pastor Jerome Gay explores a Biblically-based concept of what it means to be a man, and helps you to understand the six battles that each man can win through Christ.



Instagram **Instagram**

Adobe Stock | #350735755

SOCIAL MEDIA UPDATE

FPCL now has an Instagram account! Be sure to follow along for monthly and weekly information and updates on church happenings as well as photos and videos of our community events. Please send any submissions for the Instagram account to Ashley Renz. In order to follow the Instagram account, you must download the FREE Instagram app and register for your own account, then search [@fpclittleton](https://www.instagram.com/fpclittleton) and click FOLLOW!

Thankful for all the volunteers who helped decorate out little church so beautifully and those who helped put it all away to start 2026!!!! They are all amazing!

Thankful for us being able to have a balanced budget to begin 2026!

Thankful for another New Year to meet new members and continue our relationships with past members and to learn and grow together as Christ's followers and be God's love in the world!

Thankful for the starting of Phase One of the windows restoration process due to generous donations and the Grant support. And thanks to Don M, Kathy Mc and Jeff C=for all their hard work on the windows restoration process with Dave L!

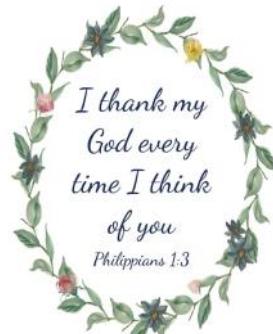
Thankful for Boy Scout Troop 444 organizing a project to collect a HUGE bag of socks to give to the church for the Socks and Bars that we give to the needy. They collected enough to last over 6 months!! Bless them all! These youth are our future!

Thankful for our Nominating Committee getting people to serve. Don M will be serving another 3-year term as Elder, and Roy G and Don W agreed to serve 3-year terms as Elders. Kathy Mc will serve out John K's remaining 2 years as an Elder, and Paul P accepted to be Head of Personnel. Trey McD thankfully agreed to remain as the Clerk of Session! Kathy F is serving one additional year as Deacon, and Linda D and Mary D will serve 3-year terms as Deacons. Having served on this year's Nominating Committee, I pray that all consider serving our church. It is such an honor and a joy! As the Bible says in Luke 6:38, " GIVE, and it will be given TO YOU." I assure you, that every time I have served our little church, I learn and grow closer to Him; and what I receive is huge! This is our little church, and it takes all of us to be what we want it to be — a place where people come to feel closer to Him and have a "sense of family."

God designed us to "make a difference." As Pastor Rick Warren recently wrote, "God wants us to give something back for our being born! To help other people, to make a difference with our lives, and to be a part of making His goals a reality here on earth! That means God has a ministry for all of us in His church, and He wants that to be our mission in the world. He brings us here to fulfill His purposes!" When we serve others in any way, we are actually serving God!" (Colossians 3:23-24) As Ephesians 6:7 says, "Work with enthusiasm, as though you were working for the Lord rather than the people!"

May God hold us all in His loving hands and remember that the best messages are LIVED, not preached! May we all learn to "walk the talk" and be an example of His love for us!

Blessings, Dee



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.

We will hold our annual congregational meeting following worship on **Sunday, February 8**. All members of FPCL have voice and vote; please make plans to stay and contribute your voice and vote.



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

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

Minute for Stewardship— The Gift of Belonging

Stewardship is more than the wise use of money — it's the faithful care of everything God entrusts to us. One of the greatest gifts He places in our hands is the church family. When we invest our time, presence, encouragement, and love into the body of Christ, we are practicing a form of stewardship that strengthens the whole community and reflects God's heart to the world. Choosing to belong, to commit, and to show up is an act of stewardship that blesses others and shapes us into the likeness of Jesus.

The devotional below from *Daily Hope* reminds us why our commitment to the church is not optional but essential.

“Your Love for One Another”

Rick Warren, Daily Hope — 1/9/26

“Your love for one another will prove to the world that you are my disciples.” John 13:35 (NLT)

The Bible says a Christian without a church home is like an organ without a body, a sheep without a flock, or a child without a family. It's an unnatural state. The Living Bible paraphrase says, “You belong in God's household with every other Christian” (Ephesians 2:19).

Today's culture of individualism has created many spiritual orphans—“bunny believers” who hop around from one church to another without any identity, accountability, or commitment. Some even think that it's possible to grow spiritually strong without joining (or even attending) a local church. But God strongly disagrees.

The church is so significant that Jesus died on the cross for it: “Christ loved the church and gave his life for it” (Ephesians 5:25 GW).

So if you follow Christ, it's important to be committed to a specific community of believers. Being part of a church family is one way to show you're a genuine believer. Jesus said, “Your love for one another will prove to the world that you are my disciples” (John 13:35 NLT).

Your commitment to a church is a visible sign that you follow Jesus, but it also strengthens you as a believer. When you meet with your church family, you receive motivation and encouragement from others, and you provide motivation and encouragement to them.

Maybe you've had a great week and feel like you don't need to go to church. But if you don't show up at church, someone will miss out on the encouragement you could provide. And if they're on the edge of hopelessness, your warm smile or kind words might make all the difference. That's what it means to be the church.

Here's the truth: Christians need each other to grow. Many people think spiritual growth is a private matter, but God calls believers to live out their faith in community. You can't develop a deep faith in isolation.

When people from different backgrounds, races, and social statuses come together in love as a church family, it becomes a powerful witness to the world. As Galatians 3:28 says, “You are all the same in Christ Jesus” (GW).

See you in church!

Dave L, (Committee Chair),
Sue C, Dee G,
Don M, Trey Mc,
Nat O, Paul P



Tuesday Evening Shabby Sheep

Calling All Women interested in joining the Tuesday Evening Women's Shabby Sheep Study/ Fellowship Group!

We are inviting you to join us! All Women are welcome!

We will be starting up our Spring study on Tuesday night March 3rd, 7:00 to 8:15 pm at church. This will be a 6 to 8 week study.

Please join us if interested!

If you have questions or would like to join us, please reach out to Janice Fagan or Sue Chandler.

We look forward to learning and growing together during this Spring study session !

Sue C and Janice F
Co- Facilitators

Wednesday Morning Shabby Sheep

We are starting another study beginning on
Feb. 4 at 10 am

We will be doing a video study from
Right Now Media called
Every Thought Captive by Kyle Idleman.

Here is an overview of the 5 week study.

... In Every Thought Captive, you will explore a topic crucial for your spiritual growth: the battle for your mind. In Romans 12:2, we read these words: "Do not be conformed to the pattern of this world, but be transformed by the renewing of your mind." ... our lives are constantly being shaped and molded by the thoughts we think. Join pastor and bestselling author Kyle Idleman for a five-session journey where you will learn to actively and intentionally challenge your thoughts. This isn't a study on the power of positive thinking—or how you have the power to change your life—but about learning how God made your brain. He will transform your life as you learn to take every thought captive and submit it to the truth of his Word.



Christmas joy

On Friday, December 5th, our FPCL Children's ministry celebrated Christmas early! We had a group of 19 in total, parents and children, who came together to take in the always-beautiful Christmas light display at Hudson Gardens. It was a chilly night, with a little snow on the ground—perfect for this special seasonal outing. The most important part of the evening took place at the beginning, when before we strolled around to take in all of the lights, we talked about the One who is the Light of the World—Jesus! Families were reminded of the symbolism of both outdoor and indoor Christmas lights, as we connected this longstanding holiday tradition to the recognition of Christ as the Light that has come to triumph over the darkness, drawing from the **John 1** narrative. Because there were several parents in the group who were primarily Spanish speakers, I even got the chance to dust off my translation skills on the fly, and give them (hopefully) a relatively accurate, if condensed version of my talk again in Spanish. Then, we all enjoyed a leisurely walk through the different lighted displays, and the kids also had the chance to sit for a photo with Santa! It was a great evening, and a wonderful precursor to our other big family event of the month, the 4pm Christmas Eve service! This special worship service came about from a joint planning effort between me and our talented Handbell Choir director, Karen Meersman! Each year, we try to make this service, which is heavily attended by children with smaller families, into something a bit different, and more interactive than a typical Christmas Eve worship time. So for this year, we took the fascinating history behind the creation of the well-loved Christmas song—“Joy to the World”, and for the message, interspersed the story of the song with the classic **Luke 2** account of the birth of Jesus. To help keep some of our youngest attendees alert and involved, we also invited all the children up, and then “Mrs. Karen” divided them into different groups, with everyone in each group getting their own handbell! In between different sections of the message, she then orchestrated the ringing of stanzas of “Joy to the World” with each group hitting just the right note in the right sequence! The result certainly sounded joyful, and everyone had a great experience overall with this service, including my little son!



On Sunday, December 21st, we held one of our most-anticipated annual events with the FPCL Youth Group—our Christmas party! Teens gathered up on the 4th Floor, where we enjoyed a festive catered meal from Qdoba, along with plenty of Christmas cookies and other seasonal goodies for dessert! Afterwards we played Christmas trivia games in small groups, and then came our devotional time, where the students heard about the “Five Kings of Christmas” in an interactive discussion that examined what we could learn from the stories of the villainous King Herod, the Three Magi, and of course, the Newborn King—Jesus. Following the devotional and a prayer time, we all took part in several rounds of the “White Elephant” gift exchange game. Everyone ended up taking something interesting home, although not necessarily the gift they originally brought! These Christmas events marked a fitting end to what was a great year of Children’s and Youth ministry in 2025 at FPCL—and I want to express here again all of my thanks to the many different volunteers whose hard work and dedication make these ministries possible. In 2026, I am excited to continue to serve in ministry to these outstanding young people, who represent the “next generation” of faith growth and development in our church family. And for anyone reading this who has thought about volunteering to help with Children’s or Youth ministry before, there’s no better time to start than now! So please get in touch, and I would be happy to share with you more information about how you can get involved!

Let’s continue to walk in faith with Jesus in 2026 together!
-Pastor Blakeley





Dear First Presbyterian Church of Littleton (YY084),

The Kroger Co. Family of Stores is committed to bringing hope and help to the local neighborhoods we call home. Our stores are on a mission to not just part of, but to help create a stronger community. We recognize that every community has unique causes that need support. Thank you for being such an important organization in our community.

We encourage you to ask your supporters to link their loyalty card to your organization. Community Rewards is easy to use, The more your supporters shop with us, the more money your organization will earn!

We are committed to carefully protecting our customer's personal information. In order to meet their expectation of privacy, we have adopted a simple policy to never share a customer's personal information. Our privacy policy applies to Community Rewards participation as well. If you have any questions, please contact us via email or visit our website.

King Soopers email: KingSoopersCommunityRewards@kingsoopers.com or
<http://www.kingsoopers.com>

For City Market email: CityMarketCommunityRewards@citymarket.com or
<http://www.citymarket.com>

Thank you for being such an important organization in our community,

Community Rewards Staff

01-Oct-2025 to 31-Dec-2025

61

Households

\$ 396.22

Total Donations

WINTER ACCESSORIES DRIVE

The mission committee

Is in need of

MORE GLOVES, please
Cold Weather is here



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



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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



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*

