

The First Word

The Newsletter of First Presbyterian Church of Littleton

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July 2025



**Join Us
Sundays
at
10am**

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

"How many persons *of a particular denomination* does it take to change a lightbulb?"

Charismatic: Only one. (*Hands are already in the air.*)

Pentecostal: Ten. (*One to change the bulb and nine to pray against the spirit of darkness.*)

Amish: What's a lightbulb?

Atheists: One. (*But they are still in darkness.*)

Methodists: Undetermined.

"Whether your light is bright or completely out, you are loved – you can be a light bulb, turnip bulb, or tulip bulb. Church-wide lighting service is planned for Sunday. Bring the bulb of your choice and a covered dish."

Nazarene: Six. (*One woman to replace the bulb while five men review church lighting policy.*)

Presbyterian: Change?

"*We've never done it that way before*" is a common stereotype about many Christian communities, not just Presbyterians. That statement is full of fear, a fear of change and of life/ministry being different. There have been a number of changes over the past 18 months of my being here, and some of it has been very good and other change less so. The change in the size of the bulletin and having copies of hymn pages has been very good – as we have reduced our budget by at least \$500/year. The shift of community assistance to Tuesdays and Thursdays has opened time for staff and congregation to be intentional and interactive with those who need assistance – and that, too, is very good! The Session (ruling council) of FPCL has been engaged in exploring how we want to promote ourselves to Littleton extended community by our mission statement. The statement we have is beautiful – I do not think there is any debate – but it is not a mission statement. A mission statement directs our actions, and the Session has been clarifying what we believe God is calling us to do here and now (*and we ourselves to Littleton extended community by our mission statement*). The statement we have is beautiful – I do not think there is any debate – but it is not a mission statement. A mission statement directs our actions, and the Session has been clarifying what we believe God is calling us to do here and now (*and we want to keep our current statement as a Vision Statement --- which well articulates what we believe!*)

The talk of *change* often raises anxiety, but change is something I know you – even in your worry – can get excited about, and the excitement of possibility breaks the adage of “*we’ve never done it that way before.*”

And I know you believe in change --- otherwise there would be no reason to worship the God of resurrection and new life. Our profession of faith tells of how we encounter the holiness of God and why we gather to worship God as a community of faith every Sunday.



We profess that as we learn more about God’s good world, as we learn more about God’s Word, and God’s will for our lives, we change. One of the most powerful scripture passages about being change comes from Acts 9:13-15

¹³ But Ananias answered, “Lord, I have heard from many about this man (Saul), how much evil he has done to your saints in Jerusalem; ¹⁴ and here he has authority from the chief priests to bind all who invoke your name.” ¹⁵ But the Lord said to him, “Go, for he is an instrument whom I have chosen to bring my name before Gentiles and kings and before the people of Israel...”

We often focus on Saul (*later known as Paul*) who encounters the Risen Christ on his way to Damascus, and Saul/Paul is changed from a persecutor of Followers of the Way (*early Christians*) to one proclaiming the salvation through Christ crucified and risen.

We often categorize this type of transformation as the pinnacle, the best work of God’s Spirit. But there is another that is equally as powerful.

The change... the transformation of Ananias. He is changed from fear of death by Saul to seeking him out because the Word of the Lord changed Ananias.

That is how Christ changes us as well so we might participate in the “life that is truly life.”

If you were to review your life, maybe especially the life of God’s Spirit in you through FPCL, what has changed in you? How have you been transformed?

In other words, what is your testimony of God’s work within you?

I firmly believe we all have a story and testimony, and even though Presbyterians “don’t do it that way” often perhaps we need to more frequently. We need to share stories and testimony of God’s work within and through us. I am convinced it will do 4 things (at a minimum):

Remind you of God’s work within you

Share with others to enable them to recognize how God is (or might be) at work within them

Celebrate the joy of God’s Spirit at work within the community of faith that is FPCL

Give you words that are ready to share about why someone should accept your invitation for them to join you at worship of God at FPCL.

The telling of our stories, of how God is at work in and through us, is our own individual stories, just as each of our walks in faith are different so too is our potential for change. Saul/Paul was a Pharisee convinced of how he was right and was willing to kill for it, and his conversion or transformative story is impressive; our story does not need to be Saul/Paul’s to be powerful. Our story needs to be the truth of how God is at work and will continue to transform us each day we open ourselves to God’s Spirit.

May God’s Spirit be at work within and through you,



The Reverend Jonathan Murray
Pastor, First Presbyterian, Littleton

Worship Focus

Finding God in the Flames

July 6: Daniel 3

July 13: Leviticus 6/2 Timothy 1

The Fiery Furnace

Eternal Flame

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

July 20: Revelation 3:20

July 27: Philippians 4:5-6

August 3: Psalm 37

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!

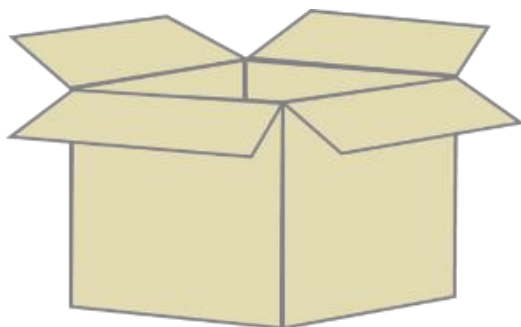
In return for filling the truck **ARC Thrift** will make a special financial gift to First Presbyterian!

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:

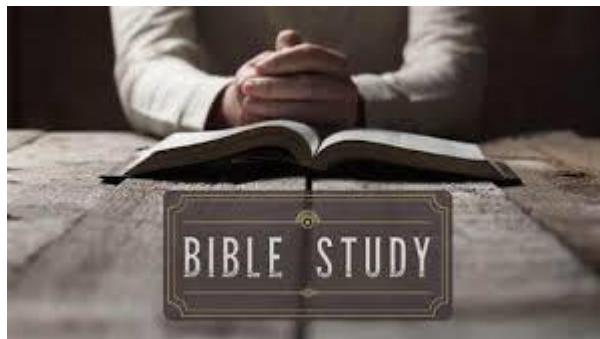
- TVs and Computer Monitors
- Mattresses and Box Springs



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 —

The amazing church picnic and all the hard work from the Deacons and Scouts. The food was delicious and everyone enjoyed just relaxing and visiting with each other in the beautiful park by the lake.

The great VBS we had! Blakeley always does such a great job and his helpers were caring and made sure the kids had fun! I volunteered checking them in, and it was just a joy to see their excitement. And Karen did an amazing job with their singing for the congregation the following Sunday. They are just so cute! What a gift to see them have such fun and sing!

The grandparents program that was the last dream for kids of Adonna Hipple's. It keeps her memory and love for First Pres alive! They had seven grandparents (two were grandfathers) and seven grandchildren. The June program was given by the Raven Dancers, who educated the kids about the Native American culture through dance, stories and traditional dress. How amazing the kids could have fun AND learn some of the way of life of the Native Americans.

The HUGE grant of over \$46,000 we were awarded for our beautiful stained glass windows we see as we enter the sanctuary behind where the choir sings! Dave LeMay and Jeff Colwell have worked diligently to make this happen. And Kathy McDaniel and Scott Cantine have been working very hard on this special need for a very long time. We are so blessed!!!!!!

All the birthday wishes for my 85th birthday! Time flies, and life is precious — and I have learned so much that I am thankful for, starting with the Golden Rule I learned very young in Sunday school to "do unto others as we would have them do unto us." We cannot always give others what they need, but we CAN be the presence they need in their lives. Kindness is not an act; it's a reflection of our souls. We may never know how many hearts have felt lighter because we were there for them, or how many dark days turned brighter just by our acts of kindness. God did not add another day to our lives because we needed it. He did it because someone out there needed US. So each day we are alive is like a "birthday," because we have the opportunity to be there for others. May we all go out and BE the reason someone believes in God!

Blessings,

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, July 7

Learn and create with artists of Littleton's
Painters Guild—No Experience Needed!

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





ANNUAL BACKPACK MISSION

Great News!

It's time for our annual collection of backpacks and monetary donations for gift cards for each backpack. We already have our goal of 35 backpacks. We want to be able to put \$50 gift cards in each backpack so our monetary goal is \$1750. The deadline for this mission is July 27. Thank you in advance for your donations.



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

Minute for Stewardship– Heart and Home Fall Fundraising Event

What: Heart and Home Fundraiser Dinner and Auction
When: Saturday September 20th from 5 to 7:30pm
Where: Columbine United Church 6375 S Platte Canyon Rd, Littleton, CO 80123



You're Invited!

Join us this September for a special evening of delicious food, community connection, and celebration. Set in a stunning venue, this catered event will honor the incredible progress we've made together in our two-year fundraising journey—and set our sights on the exciting milestones ahead.

More details, including how you can get involved as a volunteer, will be shared later this month. We can't wait to celebrate with you!

See you in church!

FPCL Stewardship Committee:

Dave LeMay, (Committee Chair)

Sue Chandler, Dee Getzinger, Don Meersman , Trey McDowell, Nat Opperman, Paul Parish



The Raven Dancers help Adventures with Grandparents and Grandchildren kick off Summer 2025!

On Monday morning, June 2, AWGG (Adventures with Grandparents and Grandchildren) welcomed 7 grandparents and 7 grandchildren at our initial gathering for this summer.

One family was returning from last summer, but 12 of the participants were new registrants from our community!

The group met in the Youth Room for introductions, ice breaker conversation and a very brief history of the church building and the Bride's Bell. The kids and adults alike were thrilled with the opportunity to see the bell and meet the challenge of pulling the heavy rope to make it ring!

Snacks on the lawn under the shade of the big tree followed, while The Raven Dancers finished setting up for their educational presentation on Native American culture.

Our group enjoyed nearly an hour of music, dance, storytelling and Q&A with The Raven Dancers. Everyone was invited to participate in the final 2 circle dances as their leaders taught us how to keep in step with the "heartbeat" rhythm of the drum. Thank you to the many volunteers who made this a great day!

July's AWGG event will be Monday, July 7, with a program from the Painter's Box Guild of Littleton.



**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**

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** 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.

Please Pray Joe Eurton, 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)



Hello from Pastor Blakeley



Vacation Bible School 2025

Dear FPCL family—They say that Christmas is the “most wonderful time of the year”, but for those of us fortunate enough to serve in Children’s ministry, our annual week of Vacation Bible School is a close second! This year’s VBS ran from Wednesday, May 28th through Saturday, May 31st, from 9am to noon each day. In addition, all of the VBS participants were invited back for worship at FPCL on Sunday, June 1st, where they sang a few of the songs they learned during the week, and then attended the churchwide picnic. The theme for this year’s VBS was “Road Trip”, with the key verse being **Joshua 1:9—“The Lord your God is with you wherever you go.”** Each of the four days of VBS, children learned about how God is always present with us through studying a different Biblical “road trip.” Lessons included Abraham and Sarah journeying to the Promised Land, the Exodus from Egypt, Jesus visiting the home of Zaccheus, and Paul’s missionary journeys. Bible lessons were reinforced throughout the day as kids rotated through the different VBS stations. These included opening and closing celebrations in the sanctuary with music, team gatherings up on the fourth floor, crafts in Ficklin Hall, science experiments in the Windermere level classroom, Bible drama in the basement, and recreation out on the church lawn.

For VBS this year, we had a total of 22 participants, ranging in age from pre-K to 5th grade. We also had a wonderful group of adult and youth volunteers, who helped out with all aspects of the program, and without whom we simply could not have put together a ministry event of this magnitude. I want to recognize them here, and extend a special thank-you for all of their hard work, which in some cases started weeks, or even months beforehand! Each one of them chose to make a spiritual investment in the lives of young people, in the spirit of **Proverbs 22:6**, and for that, I’m extremely grateful!

VBS 2025 team

Registration

Jennet White, Donna Sue Boatwright, Linda Carrizales, Dee Getzinger

Team leaders

Heidi Taylor, Mary Doner, Rebecca Shefte, Lexy Grohmann, Sue Chandler

Team leader assistants

Teagan, Emerson, Helen, Veronica, Chris

Music

Karen Meersman, Taylor Ann Meersman



Craft station

Janice Fagan, Becky Gibson, Cheri Blanchard

Science station

Joy Carreno, Alex Holt

Bible drama station

Karla Ferguson, Ben, Betsy

Recreation station

Keenan, Isabella

Supplies shoppers

Cheryl Baughman, Laurie Tur

***Creative teens in action!***

On Sunday, June 8th, we held our most recent Youth Group outreach event, in conjunction with two volunteers from the Littleton Paintbox Guild—Fredia Cox, and Toni Cappucio. After enjoying sandwiches from Jimmy John's and discussing everyone's summer plans, we then had a devotional which referenced some of the different passages in the Bible which discuss creativity, and how that is related to the concept of being made in God's Image. Then it was time to exercise some creativity, as Fredia and Toni instructed the group in a variety of artistic endeavors. These included tie-dying t-shirts, decorating tennis shoes, and making special customized cards for Father's Day. How great that we got to hold this event alongside with some friends from one of the many different community groups that utilize our church throughout the year for their meeting space!





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

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.



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***