



# The Church Bell

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SUBMIT ARTICLES USING THE ANNOUNCEMENT REQUEST  
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## **Thank you to Whitney Janzen-Pankratz & Kati Rittner**

As Whitney nears the completion of her seminary education and continues her process toward ordination in the United Church of Christ, she has decided it is time to step down from her role as our church's Community Coordinator. We are grateful that FCC will continue to be Whitney and her family's church home as Whitney pursues her calling into ordained ministry.

As Kati Rittner continues to move forward in her career in teaching and performing, she will be stepping down as our organist to pursue some other exciting opportunities. We are so thankful for the incredible work that both Whitney and Kati have done during their time as part of the staff team.

## **A Note from Whitney**

To my beloved Community at First Congregational: The time has come for me to resign as Community Coordinator on the First Congregational Church staff. As Community Coordinator I was able to see the ways you care for one another and cultivate the vibrant life of our church community through your time and attention. Witnessing this has been an honor and a privilege. Thank you for the ways you live as the Body of Christ.

I have learned a lot about myself and our church in this season that will serve as sources of wisdom and guidance as I move into my own work of ministry in the years to come. I am grateful for the ways this congregation and staff have been patient, present, and supportive as I have navigated the spiritual, personal, and professional growth that often accompany seminary education. First Congregational Church continues to be our church home as a family, and my supporting congregation as a Member in Discernment for ordination with the United Church of Christ. I continue with my internship with The Refuge at La Foret through December, and I will be graduating with my MDiv with a concentration in Social Transformation this spring. I look forward to my ordination and the becoming of my Ministry in the seasons to follow.

## **Please Welcome our New Organist, Katie Hughes!**

Katie Hughes is thrilled to be joining the staff at First Congregational Church. She studied organ at Indiana University with Dr. Janette Fishell and has degrees in Collaborative Piano and Piano Performance from University of Cincinnati-College Conservatory of Music and University of Northern Colorado, respectively. Katie has worked as the Accompanist at Chadron State College, and pianist for various theaters, high schools, and university students in Colorado. She is also a Staff Collaborative Pianist at UNC and Music Director/Pianist at Candlelight Dinner Playhouse in Johnstown, CO. In her free time, she enjoys hiking, crafting, and baking!



## Introducing our new Youth Leader, Mike McBride!

Hello! My name is Mike, and I am so excited to join First Congregational Greeley's youth programming! A little bit about me and my journey in youth ministry: I have been a youth group volunteer for over 6 years serving several congregations and denominations, which have spanned a broad spectrum of thoughts and beliefs. In addition, my passion for working with youth was honed over the course of two summers when I was a camp counselor for a camp which specifically catered to people with Autism, Down Syndrome, and Cerebral Palsy. Most recently, I have been a regular volunteer for Plymouth Congregational Church in Fort Collins. In that role, I have had the opportunity to be part of many collaborative events with FCC, and have had an awesome time learning about and spending time with your students at La Foret, on the Rosebud, on the trip to New Mexico, and for a variety of local and regional events.

During college I was an athlete, playing basketball for my university. There I met my wife, Brooklyn, and we instantly knew that our future was together. Then, slowly realizing my dream of going pro was going to involve an astronomical amount of debt, I decided to take a more non-conventional route for my career. I ended up finding myself in the trades finishing four years of electrical school. I am planning to test out in December and become a full fledged electrician.

Working with youth groups has a special place in my heart for many reasons. I plan to be here for the long haul, and want to make sure your students have a safe space to be themselves and be able to have friendships that last a lifetime. I can't wait to meet all of you officially and spend this school year with your students!

-Mike



## Other Youth Group News

**Sunday Youth Group** has resumed from 10:15-11:15 on Sunday Mornings with Rev. Ben or Rev. Tamara and Josh Huntley!

**WNL Youth Group** will resume on Sept 4th from 6:00-7:15 with new Youth Group Leader Mike McBride (read more below!) and Josh Huntley

**Elitch Gardens** Join Rev. Ben and Mike for a day at Elitch Gardens on August 24 from 9:30am - 6pm! Registration is \$20; please also bring money for lunch. Please [register and pay here](#).

## Annual Fall Picnic

Join us for our annual fall picnic - this year as a pizza party! We'll gather in the courtyard on **Sunday, September 15 following the 10am worship service**. And, of course, we'll have a bouncy house! You're invited to bring a side or dessert to share. Please remember that we don't have kitchen access during construction, so no refrigeration or serving utensils are available.

## Women's Retreat

Women of First Congregational church ages 16-200+ are invited to join us for our first Women's Retreat in years! All who identify as women are welcome; mark your calendars for November 1 - 3, 2024 at La Foret. This year's theme is Rest, Reflect, and Relax: A Woman's Retreat in the Wild. Details regarding sessions will be available in the next few weeks, so please keep an eye out! [Register here](#).

IT'S TIME TO KICK OFF OUR

# Fall Programs

## Scripture Seminar Resumes

This year the Scripture Seminar (Bible Study) will delve into the Gospel of John starting in September. A date and time for this weekly class has not yet been determined. Please reach out to Rev. Ben if you are interested in participating (revben@firstconggreeley.com)!

## Children's Choirs Resume

Children's Choirs resume on **Sunday, September 8 from 9:00-9:45am** in the choir room. All children ages 4 years old - 5th grade are invited to participate! For more information, please contact Shona Royle-Grimes (shonaroylegrimes@gmail.com)

## Adult & Youth Choirs

Bell and Chancel Choirs are back! If you ring, sing, or have any interest in learning more about us, please join us for our Welcome Picnic at the home of Eric and Amy Long on **Thursday, August 29 at 6pm** (please reach out to the church office for address).

Rehearsals begin in the sanctuary on **Thursday, September 5th!** Bells rehearse 5 - 6pm weekly, and Chancel Choir from 7 - 8:30pm weekly. We also offer a choir social hour the first Thursday of each month from 6:15 -7pm. For more information, please contact Nicholas Gilmore (nicholas@firstconggreeley.com).

Youth Choir will meet sporadically throughout the year to prepare for special services and will be directed by Nicholas Gilmore. Stay tuned for more details in the weeks ahead!

## Wednesday Night Live

Wednesday Night Live will look a bit different this year, but will resume on **Wednesday, September 4**. Please join us each Wednesday Night for a time of learning and fellowship.

**5:15pm - 6pm:** Shared meal in courtyard with vegetarian and gluten-free options available weekly. You are invited to bring a side dish or dessert to share each week. View the weekly meal rotation [here](#). Please [RSVP here](#) so that we know how many people to order food for each week. You may RSVP each week or for all of September at once. Dinner will be \$5/person or \$15/family.

**6pm - 7:15pm:** Structured play in gym for kids, Youth Group with Mike & Josh, Adult Education. We will kick off our Adult Ed as Revs. Ben & Tamara lead an 8-week series from The Colossian Forum, which invites Christians to cultivate mindsets and habits that build love and connection in our increasingly politically polarized times. This isn't about changing political positions, but learning how to hold others' beliefs and still be in relationship with them. Runs September 4 - October 30.

## In Loving Memory

Please hold the families and loved ones of the following in your prayers:

### Marge Curtiss

March 9, 1931 - July 11, 2024

Services will be held Saturday, September 7 at 11:00 am in the sanctuary. A reception will follow at Allnutt-Macy Chapel. *\*Please note that the time has changed.*

### Bob Ruyle

April 17, 1934 - July 26, 2024

Services will be held Saturday, November 2, 2024 at 1 pm in the sanctuary.

## Connect With Us Online

Did you know there are three ways to connect with First Congregational Church on social media? You can like and follow our [Facebook](#) or [Instagram](#) pages for information on church-wide events, photos of church life, and more. Additionally, our [FCC Community Facebook Group](#) provides a more private place in which you may share your celebrations, prayers, and needs with our community. Be sure to answer the membership questions when you join the group to help us ensure that the information shared here remains internal to the FCC community. Please reach out to Heather Schulte or Kate Norris for help accessing the group.

## Directory Photos

We'll have new printed directories to distribute in October. Please stop at our photo booth during the all-church picnic on Sunday, September 15 or send a family photo - formal or not - to Laura no later than Wednesday, September 18 to have your photo included in the directory!

## Church Logo Gear

Have you ever wanted to show your church pride as you're out and about? Church member Heather Schulte has worked with local screen printer GOJOs to make a large number of FCC logo items available. There are shirts, polos, pullovers, jackets, sweaters, hoodies, and more! Check out all of the options and place your order [here](#). Once completed, items are delivered to the church and we will contact you to arrange pickup.

## Labyrinth Theatre

First Congregational hosted the premiere performance of Labyrinth Theatre this summer with their production of "The Laramie Project." Featuring many members of the congregation, the play told the story of Matthew Shepherd and his brutal beating and murder in Wyoming as a gay man. The production addressed many deep seeded prejudices and fears we still face today, more than two decades later. The show was supported by the amazing people at PFLAG, FCC Safety & Welcome Team, the FCC staff, and so many others. Labyrinth Theatre works to provide meaningful and inclusive theatrical works with a goal to better the lives of everyone around us. The company thanks FCC so deeply for the support of this hugely successful production, and looks forward to more!

## King Soopers Rewards

Did you know that our church receives around \$575 quarterly just because our members shop at King Soopers and designate FCC as their preferred charitable organization? Help us raise that average by linking your Soopercard to FCC! Once you have signed up, everytime you shop you support the church. If you already have an online account with King Soopers:

- Login to your account at [www.kingsoopers.com](http://www.kingsoopers.com)
- Go to the drop down menu under your name on the right hand corner of the page and select "Account"
- On the left hand side of your Account page, select "Community Rewards"
- In the "Find Organization" put "First Congregational Church of Greeley" and select "Enroll"

If you do not have an online account, or need assistance signing up, please reach out to Laura in the church office.

## Tamara's Podcast Enters the Religious Archives Network



Rev. Tamara, and her colleague Rev. Dr. Marvin Ellison, invite you to the upcoming launch of the "Queer Spirit" podcast exhibit. Housed at the Religious Archives Network in Chicago, the exhibit includes 30+ audio interviews the two did with queer spiritual leaders in Maine that explored queer life and the power of the sacred. It also includes a history of the "Queer Spirit" program, and more. Needless to say, Tamara is super excited!

The launch will take place on August 22 at 6:00pm. If you are interested in joining, please register for the webinar sponsored by the LBGTQ Religious Archives Network [here](#).

## Wholeness & Wellness Weekend: Sense & Sensuality

Recharge your spirit and reconnect with your body and nature at the Wholeness & Wellness Weekend at La Foret Conference & Retreat Center **September 13-15**. The theme for this year's retreat, "Sense & Sensuality," invites you to experience the fullness of being through your senses and bodily awareness. In a world often dominated by mental activity, this weekend encourages you to move beyond the cerebral and reconnect with the joy of living in a body. Enjoy somatic practices, creative expression, wellness treatments, community and connection in this family friendly weekend. Do not let cost deter you from attending! We have options for EVERY budget through scholarships and tiered pricing. You can register to save your spot for only \$50. Learn more or register [here](#).

## Capital Campaign Update

We are continuing to make progress on the interior renovation! Asbestos abatement is complete and many other projects are underway, including new carpet in Slighter Hall and the light fixture that will be hung over the labyrinth in the main entrance. We are on-track to complete construction by the end of October. Check out some of our progress pictures here!

