



## First Presbyterian Church of Littleton

1609 W. Littleton Blvd. Littleton, CO 80120

[www.littletonpresbyterian.org](http://www.littletonpresbyterian.org) ♦ [fpcl@fpcl.org](mailto:fpcl@fpcl.org) ♦ 303-798-1389

March 2024

Join us for  
Worship Every  
Sunday at 10am

*Happy Easter!*

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## *Lent, Holy Week & Easter*

March 17: Lenten Cantata 10am

March 24 Palm Sunday -Worship, 10am

March 28: Maundy Thursday Worship, 7pm

March 29: Good Friday Worship, Noon

March 31: Easter Sunday Worship 8 & 10am

Pancake Breakfast at 9am



## A Message from Pastor Jonathan

There is a certain amount of “being on your best behavior” that comes with initial steps of any relationship. Everyone likes to make a good impression and so we keep our dark, personal secrets in the closet. But after a while the stories seem to “*grow legs and walk out*,” the good stories along with the embarrassing. When the stories come out, that is when you really get to know someone – when the unknown becomes known, when we reveal who we really are – warts and all. We’ve all got them. A little about me:

- I enjoy telling (and hearing) ‘dad’ jokes. My goal in telling ‘dad’ jokes is to make you groan.  
*How do you know when a joke becomes a dad joke?*  
When it becomes ‘a-parent’
- *What is the difference between a well-dressed man on a tricycle and a poorly dressed man on a bicycle?*  
A-tire
- You may not realize, but I am an introvert. I enjoy interacting with people, but I am also exhausted by those interactions. I need quiet, alone time to re-charge (hence the next fact about me)
- I enjoy working with my hands, most specifically crafting wood. I am an amateur, but I still have all 10 fingers.
- I have owned 3 motorcycles in my life, had a significant accident on one, and enjoyed some 40k miles of God’s beautiful creation.
- I enjoy reading, from theological books that challenge me, science fiction that engages my imagination, and some fantasy literature – three of my favorites are Tolkien’s *Lord of the Rings*, Rowling’s *Harry Potter*, and Lewis’ *The Chronicles of Narnia*.
- I enjoy well-written sitcoms with good character development. Most recently I have enjoyed ‘Ted Lasso’ through Apple TV. (*the language is off-putting, but the story and character development is fantastic!*)
- I have some OCD tendencies though I enjoy being flexible when the Spirit moves.

But the beauty of our pasts sneaking into awareness is that we are given permission to be human, to share life, and to live as a community of forgiven sinners. That is how we, the Body of Christ, are different from other societal arenas – we forgive one another; we live with one another despite some of our worst actions and hurt feelings. That is what truly makes us Christ-like.

We are made in the image of God – every one of us. We have each attempted and continue to attempt in small and large ways to have life apart from God – this is one reason we confess our sin each week. Despite our actions to seek life apart from God, God still chooses us, calls us by name, forgives us, and calls us to live in relationship with God and one another.

God chooses us again and again. If you don’t believe me, re-read the Old Testament, especially Exodus when the people turn from God, an un-countable number of times, and still God calls the people back into relationship.

What a joy and pleasure it is to know that not only has God formed us and created us, but invites us to be God's own children! I see this clearly in the example of Judas Iscariot. I believe Jesus knew Judas was the one to betray him – from the very beginning, and still Jesus taught Judas, shared meals with him – especially the meal Jesus instituted, bringing the new covenant into reality – and *then* washed Judas' feet. I firmly believe Jesus loved Judas – despite his past and future actions.

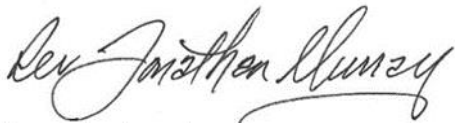
This is our call to be in Christian community... and to carry this relationship into the world and teach others what it is to know sin and to forgive (and be forgiven).

*As God's own, clothe yourselves with compassion, kindness, and patience, forgiving each other as the Lord has forgiven you, and crown all these things with love, which binds everything together in perfect harmony. Colossians 3:12-14*

We are called to clothe ourselves with compassion, kindness, and patience – crowned in love – within all our relationships: with Christ's disciples and those who will never follow Christ; with those we like and those we struggle.

I know, as you know, it is not easy; let us learn from Jesus who embodied this fully.

As we continue our Lenten Journey, how will you be more mindful of embodying yourself as God's own?



The Reverend Jonathan Murray (*he/him/his*)  
 Pastor, First Presbyterian, Littleton  
[jonathan@fpcl.org](mailto:jonathan@fpcl.org)  
 832-583-6160



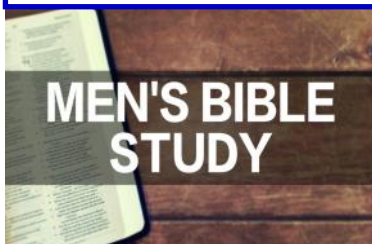
## Sunday School Resumes March 10

Arrive at 8:45 am for a light breakfast!  
 Classes start at 9:00am

Adults will be using "Meeting Jesus at the Table" for discussion. Books are now available in the office. \$12—make checks payable to First Presbyterian Church.

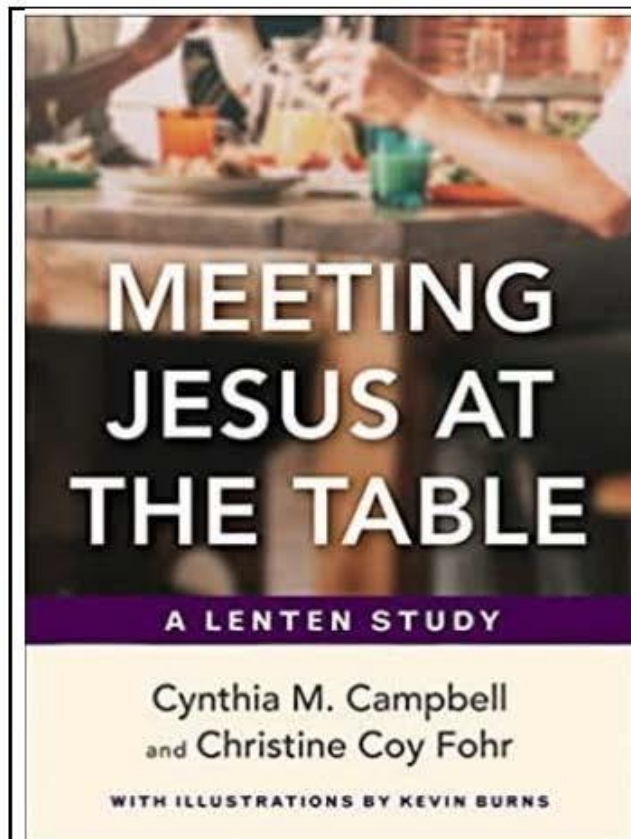
Children's class will be held in the Sunday School room on the Windermere level.

No Sunday School on Easter Sunday.



**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.





# Lent 2024

## February 14 – March 30

The Gospels are full of stories of Jesus sharing meals with disciples, friends, even tax collectors and Pharisees. Whether multiplying bread to feed a whole crowd, relaxing with his inner circle, or telling curious elites stories about even greater banquets, Jesus imparts wisdom as he shares the wine and grants forgiveness as he distributes the fish. This eight chapter resource provides biblical insights along with thought-provoking queries regarding our own time, such as who should we invite to Sunday dinner and who is left out and left behind in our culture today.

DATE	FOCUS	SCRIPTURE	PREACHER
Wed., February 14 (6p.m.)	<i>Dining Alfresco</i>	Mark 6:30-43	Pastor Jonathan
February 18	<i>The Welcome Table</i>	Matthew 9:9-13	Pastor Blakeley
February 25	<i>Surprised By Grace</i>	Luke 7:36-50	Pastor Jonathan
March 3	<i>Relationships &amp; Reciprocity</i>	Luke 14:7-14	Pastor Jonathan
March 10	<i>Invitations &amp; Excuses</i>	Luke 14:15-24	Pastor Jonathan
March 17	Lenten Cantata		No Sermon
March 24 (Palm)	<i>Hospitality &amp; Discipleship</i>	John 12:1-8	Pastor Jonathan
Thursday, March 28	<i>A Meal of Memories</i>	Matthew 26:17-30	Pastor Jonathan
Friday, March 29 (NOON)			Pastor Blakeley

*You are invited to read along with us through Lent; there are 25 books available for purchase in the office at the cost of \$12/each.*

## ***I Thank God Every Time I Remember You!***

### ***Philippians 1:3***

**I believe it is important to “thank” people for doing services in this church. It exemplifies who we are — a very giving church, with very giving people.**

While there have not been as many “special things” in the last month, I am so thankful for all we are doing. For so many getting involved at First Pres.

- ♥ It was wonderful to see Pastor Jonathan at the last Community Dinner and see him interact with most all of our guests there. And so thankful he also visited the ladies book club to get to know those wonderful women.
- ♥ It is awesome how Blakeley has put together such a fun and meaningful calendar for youth group gatherings 2024; and to see more little children coming to church on Sunday’s.
- ♥ Another thing to be thankful for, are all those who do so much “behind the scene” so to speak — helping Elinor in the office and when she is sick or on vacation. People who greet strangers at the door. People who bring those who cannot drive to church every Sunday and take them home. They are all such gifts as they do God’s work at First Pres.
- ♥ The most wonderful thing we have to be thankful for is that First Pres is a church of giving. I often refer to us as “small but mighty.” I have heard through the years, that we can give without loving; but one thing for sure, is that we cannot love without giving. And we give love at First Pres. Love isn’t just about our words or thoughts; it’s about our actions. Love is about reaching out and meeting the needs of others, and that is our huge gift! Sometimes meeting someone’s needs is as simple as a smile or sharing a word of encouragement. Today and every day, may we look for ways to put our love into action.
- ♥ James 2:17 is a great guide for us - for “...faith by itself, if not accompanied by actions, is nothing.” First Pres became my church home, my “safe place,” when I saw that people’s faith always includes actions — caring for others and reaching out. First Pres means “home.” His home for us to worship Him.
- ♥ Easter is a time of new beginnings, and we are blessed to have Pastor Murray with us now.

May we all continue to be an example of His love.

Blessings, Dee

### **Thinking Ahead or is it Time to Say Good-Bye? WWW Quilt Show Team Needs Your Help!**

**The beautiful annual Western Welcome Week Quilt Show has been a staple of FPCL’s evolvement in Littleton’s Western Welcome Week for 20 years!.**

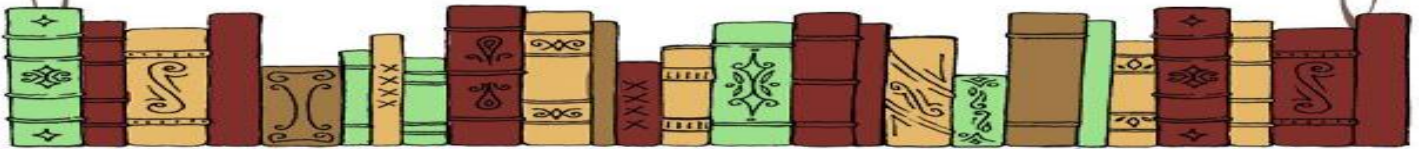
**However, the team’s numbers have dwindled and without your assistance, the show will not be able to continue. The WWW Quilt show team needs a COMMITMENT of 20 volunteers to continue. The show dates are August 15—17th. There are many ways to help, but the Thursday set-up is the most critical! Also, volunteers are needed to help Friday and Saturday during the show and Saturday afternoon to help return the borrowed quilts to their rightful owners.**

**We must register for the event in April and the donation quilt must be created. We are asking for your commitment by March 29. Please contact Blythe Lund or call the office to sign up or for more information.**

## Afternoon Book Club

Love to read? Join the Afternoon Book Club  
Group Meets on the 2nd Thursday of the Month at 1:00 pm  
Here's what we are reading next to discuss on these dates (1:00 pm Ayers' Parlor):

- March 14: Walden - by Henry David Thoreau
- April 11 - The Girl Who Wrote in Silk (novel) - by Kelli Estes



### Dates to Remember

- 3/1: Memorial Service for Carolyn Roark, 1pm
- 3/2: Memorial Service for Eileen Witt, 11am
- 3/3: Communion Sunday
- 3/5: Memorial Service for Marian Becker, 10am
- 3/10: Adult & Children's Sunday School Resumes. 8:45am
- 3/16: New Members Class, Saturday at 1pm
- 3/17: Lenten Cantata Concert, 10am
- 3/24: Palm Sunday- Bell Choir
- 3/28: Maundy Thursday Worship at 6:00pm
- 3/29: Good Friday Worship Noon

### Tuesday Evening Women's Bible Study



**When: Tuesday Evenings—7pm through April 23, 2024**

**What: DVD Study through RightNow Media. "When Nothing Changes Everything" By Laurie Polich Short.**

**Where: 4th floor in the Shabby Sheep Room**



## ***A Minute for Stewardship—***

**1 Corinthians 12:18-20, NIV** *"But in fact God has placed the parts in the body, every one of them, just as he wanted them to be. If they were all one part, where would the body be? As it is, there are many parts, but one body."*

This month we celebrate the ways in which our gathering together makes Christ's church possible. One of these ways is through our generous support of the Presbyterian Church (USA) in the form of per capita gifts. These gifts are part of our call to be one church, one community. Our offering of per capita in 2024 is \$32 per member (membership based on FPCL's statistical report to Denver Presbytery). This annual contribution is divided the following way:

- 60% stays to support Denver Presbytery
- 30% supports the General Assembly
- 10% supports the Rocky Mountain Synod



In years past, we have included a spot on the pledge card for per capita but our committee decided this year to simply inform the members of this offering opportunity and hope that you'll consider this as part of your annual pledge. FPCL pays the amount due in full regardless of member support, so it is truthfully an annual expense in the operating budget. For example, this year's budgeted expense is ~\$8,000. Traditionally, FPCL receives less than half of that amount so an increase to our per capita income from members would really help trim that expense.

We hope that you'll consider sending a per capita payment in this year as we remember all that we can accomplish.

See you in church!

### Your Stewardship Committee:

Dave LeMay, Chair; Trey McDowell, Sue Chandler, Dee Getzinger, Don Meersman, Nat Opperman



**An Easier Way to Give Online!**  
**Scan the QR Code with your phone! It will take you**  
**directly to our website where you can give online!**



## ***Hello From Pastor Blakeley***

### **Christian education update**



During the first couple of months of 2024 we have been actively engaged in Christian Education programs here at FPCL! With our Children's Ministry, the kids have been enjoying their weekly spotlight moment during the worship services—the Children's Sermon. We have been doing a series on things we find in the sanctuary that help us with worship, and

have learned about the friendship pad, the offering plate, the elements for Communion, prayer cards, and the Bible and hymnal. Also, on Saturday, February 10<sup>th</sup> we had our first event of the year—a children's Valentine's party at the church. The group enjoyed pizza and Valentine's-themed desserts, and the kids all made special Valentine cards that they could then take home to share with their families and friends. Later, we enjoyed playing some games together in Ficklin Hall. But best of all—I got to share with the children about how God is love, and we talked about ways that we can show our love to God. Looking ahead to the rest of the year with the Children's ministry, we have several more special outreach events planned this spring, and we also have already scheduled the dates for Vacation Bible School 2024! This year's VBS—"Camp Firelight", will have a summer camp theme, and will take place from Wednesday, May 29<sup>th</sup> through Saturday, June 1<sup>st</sup> from 9am to noon each day.

With the FPCL Youth Group, we had our first Tuesday night gathering of the year on January 23<sup>rd</sup>. This was a fun time for fellowship, and planning for the year ahead. We also had the chance to pray for each other, and do a devotional from John 1. We are calling these monthly Tuesday night gatherings "First Impressions", and will be looking to host more special outreach events soon, when we can find dates that will work with everyone's busy schedules!



As we think about plans for Adult Education this year, we wanted to get some feedback from all of you—the FPCL family, about what types of programming, as well as dates/times would be most helpful. So a big thanks to everyone who took the time to fill out our Christian Education surveys! These responses have provided Pastor Jonathan and me with a good sense of what to plan, and we appreciate all of the helpful suggestions and ideas you shared about Sunday school topics and schedules!

### **Fellowship with the Word**

As Presbyterians, coming from the Reformation tradition, we are a "people of the Book", that Book, of course being the Bible! We seek to base all of our spiritual practices—our worship, our theology, and our individual beliefs, on the teachings contained in God's Holy Word. And thus it is so important for us on a regular basis to find opportunities to enrich our knowledge of the Scriptures in study and fellowship with one another. Each week at FPCL, there are opportunities to do just that. On Mondays, we have two different men's Bible study groups that alternate meeting in the morning and evenings. The 7am Monday morning group usually meets via Zoom, and we are currently engaged in a fascinating study of the Book of Revelation. The Monday evening Men's Bible study meets at the church at 6:30pm, and we have been utilizing Right Now Media to do a series through the Book of Mark that is introduced by videos from Francis Chan. Both of these groups are open to men of any age who'd like to join—whether you are a church member or not! So consider taking part, and invite a friend! Women's Bible studies are also very active at FPCL—with two different "Shabby Sheep" groups meeting. There is a Tuesday night group that meets at 7pm, and is doing the study "When changing nothing changes everything", using additional resources from Right Now Media.



The Wednesday morning women's study meets at 10am, and is currently going through the "Unshakeable Hope" Bible study, facilitated with videos from Max Lucado. Both of these groups meet up in the 4<sup>th</sup> floor "Shabby Sheep" room, are also open to any women, whether FPCL members or not!

### **Reaching out to the community**

At First Presbyterian Littleton, we pride ourselves on being a welcoming family of faith—and you can witness this every Sunday when we share the Peace of Christ! We tend to keep on talking with each other until a pastor or liturgist "calls us back to order"! Anyone who is a guest or visitor during Sunday worship is sure to meet some smiling faces—people who make them feel glad to be there, and hopefully excited to come back again! I'm so proud of that, and I'm also proud of the way that we are equally welcoming to those who stop by our church throughout the week. With our downtown location, we are ideally suited to be a place where members of the community who are in need can come in for assistance. Thanks to your generous tithes, I am able to distribute monthly benevolences from my pastoral discretionary fund. Pastor Jonathan has a similar fund that he can use, as do the Deacons. During the first couple of months in 2024, we have helped numerous visitors with RTD bus passes, food bags, and ARC thrift-store vouchers (*whose donation is arranged by Scott and Sue Chandler*). There have also been some occasions, when I've been able to provide additional direct assistance for certain individuals in the form of King Soopers gift cards. Please remember too that while many of the people who we help with these benevolences aren't directly connected to the church, we are always more than happy to assist FPCL members! I know that sometimes people feel hesitant to come forward, but as members, please don't hesitate to get in touch with me if there is something we might be able to assist you with. Lastly, a big thank you goes out to Mary Lareau and Angie Imamura, who have been coming each Monday morning to stay in the Welcome Center and help with assisting those who stop by the building. Mondays are usually our busiest day of the week in the FPCL offices, so we appreciate these ladies coming by to help, and show the love of Christ to our friends from the community!

### **A smooth transition with new leadership**

The start of 2024 brought some big new changes to life at FPCL, as we were blessed to begin the tenure of our new Head Pastor, Jonathan Murray! I have really enjoyed getting to work with Jonathan so far, as have the rest of the church staff, and I know that all of the members who've had the chance to meet him are excited about his vision and leadership for our congregation. In addition to staff meetings, worship planning, and attending different committee meetings, Pastor Jonathan has jumped into a variety of additional ministries, from helping out at the Community Dinner to assisting with some brainstorming for VBS 2024, and leading a training time for Deacons and Elders. Even his recent ankle injury isn't slowing him down—the day before he was scheduled to have his surgery, he was sending me emails, already at work in planning a summer sermon series! So if you haven't introduced yourself yet, I encourage you to visit with Pastor Jonathan after an upcoming Sunday service, or reach out to say hello via a phone call or email. And of course, he appreciates all of our continued prayers for a complete and speedy recovery from his injury!

Lastly, as always, remember that as your Pastor of Christian Discipleship, that I am here to serve you! So whenever you have any questions or pastoral needs, feel free to contact me! I have office hours every **Monday-Wednesday from 9am to 12pm, or by appointment**. You can also call my direct office number at the church: **720-662-7134**, or email me at [pastorblakeley@fpcl.org](mailto:pastorblakeley@fpcl.org) Thank you for reading, and God Bless!

In Christ,  
Pastor Blakeley

***"Therefore, my beloved brethren, be steadfast, immovable, always abounding in the work of the Lord, knowing that your labor is not in vain in the Lord." --1 Corinthians 15:58***

## Dollars and Sense – A Word from Finance

At the January Session meeting, Maggie Ashworth brought a question from a member – if I want to give money above my pledge, where does First Pres have needs? Great question, and no simple answer!

There are many areas of need in First Pres – many different, and all good. First and perhaps most important, is extra support of the operating budget beyond pledges. Since pledges NEVER cover all the normal expenses for staff, missions, and programs, many members routinely give a bit (and sometimes A LOT) extra -- we show this in the financial reports as “Member Support Not Pledged”. In 2023, MSNP added up to \$105,000 – 23% of our total income (thank you, members!!!)

Beyond this, there are several “Restricted Accounts” with money set aside for specific activities or needs. Some are always in need with open-ended opportunities supporting local missions – examples among several include the Deacons’ Fund, Pastor and Parish Associate Discretionary Funds, Mission Committee Outreach Fund, and Community Dinners.

Other restricted accounts provide *extra* support for church activities (beyond what is already funded from the operating budget); examples include the Music Fund, Handbells, Christian Education, and others. These funds are often healthy but sometimes are not; financial secretary Joan Lund or the leader involved can advise you re the current health or needs of these funds.

An important giving opportunity comes with periodic fundraisers for specific needs. We’re all familiar with the Deacons’ “Fifth Sunday” collections, and such annual drives as Whiz Kids Tutoring, Backpack Mission, and Giving Tree. Support these as they come around!

A major fundraiser is in the planning stage – for needed renovations to our 93-year-old building. The renovations team has identified a list of items needing attention, and is currently developing specific project plans and cost estimates. Examples include carpet replacement, sound system upgrade, air-conditioning improvement, window upgrades around the facility, and several others. These are items beyond the reach of our operating budget; watch for more news on this potential special fundraiser.

A final opportunity is the Legacy Fund, which we will convert into an endowment for First Pres once it achieves a practical critical mass. We receive annual gifts to this fund from some members, and it’s a great place to remember First Pres in your will.

Our extra contributions are one of the things that makes First Pres special. Thanks to all for this ongoing **and outstanding** generosity!

*Your Finance Committee*

### Leadership

**Elders:** Trey McDowell-Clerk of Session, Maggie Ashworth, Jan Hole, David LeMay, Don Meersman, Rick Wilson, Sue Chandler and Beth Opperman, Presbytery Commissioners: Rick Wilson and Kathy McDaniel

**Deacons:** Joy Carreño, Becky Gibson, Cheryl Baughman, Kathy Frear, Julie Johnston, Jess Karet, Jennie Staritzky and Deb Graham

**Stewards:** Connie Strandberg, Cheri Blanchard, Karla Fergurson, Kathy McDaniel

## Please Pray for....



Phil Ansted, Betty Anderson, Jill Van Den Bos, Donna Farris, Jan & Russ Fuiks, Jon Heggie, Joyce & Rollie Fuller, Joy Carreño, Judy & Bob Macdonald, Lonna Williams, Joan Cook, Pat & Jaime Yrastorza

### In Service to Our Country

Major Ricky Casburn; Capt. Connor Venrick; Brett Wilson; Sgt. Benjamin Lund, Jordan; Bobby Johannsen; Connor McDaniel, Army; LCDR. Per Rychecky, Germany; Donnie Donahue, Marines; Nathaniel Syron; Cpl. 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)

## Financial Update

	January 2024	
	Actual	Budget
<b>Income</b>	\$58,126.45	\$50,878.00
<b>Expenses</b>	\$35,425.38	\$45,320.58
<b>Operating Surplus</b>	\$22,701.07	\$5,557.42

January was an exceptional month for contributions. Seven people paid their 2024 pledge in full. Expenses were less than budgeted due in part to having Jonathan Murray for only 3 of the 4 weeks in January and not hiring a facilities manager yet. The Community Dinner received a grant for \$1750.00 from the City of Littleton to support their mission. Thank you for your continued support.

### FPCL STAFF

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

Rev. Jonathan Murray, Minister of Word & Sacrament

Rev. Dr. Blakeley Winslow, Pastor of Christian Discipleship

Mary Dailey, Director of Worship Arts

Karen Meersman, Director of Handbells & Children/Youth Music

Elinor Packard, Office Administrator

Joan Lund, Financial Secretary

Tracy Eidson, Child Care





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### New Members Class—March 16th

Are you interested in becoming a member or learning more about FPCL? This class is for you! It's the perfect opportunity to meet people and explore all that First Pres has to offer. Contact Dee Getzinger or call the church office to sign up! 303-798-1389 ext 1.

**Believe Beloved Belong**

### You're Invited

TLC Toastmaster Invites to a FREE demonstration meeting on the elements of public speaking. See how YOU can overcome stage fright, prepare for a presentation, and deliver it confidently. Tuesday, March 19, 2024, 5:45-7:00pm. Contact [vpm-7028@toastmastersclubs.org](mailto:vpm-7028@toastmastersclubs.org). TLC Toastmaster meets twice/month here at FPCL.

### OFFICE HOURS

Monday—Thursday 9am to 2pm, Friday 9am to Noon, Closed Saturday

### WORSHIP SCHEDULE

- 10:00 am Sunday Worship
- ♦ **FIRST WORD NEWSLETTER:** The DEADLINE for the April newsletter is March 15.