



First Presbyterian Church of Littleton

1609 W. Littleton Blvd. Littleton, CO 80120

www.littletonpresbyterian.org ♦ fpcl@fpcl.org ♦ 303-798-1389

April 2024

Join us for
Worship Every
Sunday at 10am

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"In the spring, I
have counted 136
kinds of weather in-
side of 24 hours!"
Mark Twain



*For behold, the winter is past; the rain is
over and gone. The flowers appear on the
earth, the time of singing has come, and the
voice of the turtledove is heard in the land.*

Song of Solomon 2:11-12



A Message from Pastor Jonathan

Easter holds many memories for most of us. Perhaps it was the new spring outfits, or the smell of vinegar for the colored eggs; maybe for you Easter welcomes the relatives with the ham and sides around a large family dinner table (or like at our house several smaller tables). Perhaps Easter brings memories of early morning SONrise services, with a joyful singing of 'alleluias'. Easter holds many memories, unique to each of us and yet common for us all.

The very first memories tell the story of the first Easter, when death was defeated. Depending on which gospel text you are reading of the first Easter morning account, we get slightly different stories:

Most scholars think the original ending to Mark comes in verse 8 of chapter 16:

'[the women] went out and fled from the tomb, for terror and amazement had seized them, and they said nothing to anyone, for they were afraid.' This begs the question 'how, then, did the word get out?'

Matthew and Luke tell of a group of women going to the tomb, for different reasons, but they listen to the angel who tells them to go tell the [male] disciples of Jesus' being raised from the dead.

John is similar except it is primarily an interaction of Mary Magdalene with Jesus; Mary, then, rushes to tell the [male] disciples that she had seen the Lord!

In each of these records, it is the women who are the first evangelists, preachers, and proclaimers of God's amazing news of life when death was expected.

Even with the descriptions from the gospels, I often find myself wondering what the women, especially, must have felt on that Sunday morning. What emotions – I'm sure a mixture of fear and joy, *at least* – must have accompanied their resurrection discovery? My imagination is not keen enough to create an adequate scenario of that first Easter. Amidst the memories of Easters past and reflecting on the tales of that first Easter, I am reminded that Easter is not so much about memories as it is about the future.

Easter is an expression of hope and promise for what is to come. It is a reminder that wherever we go in life, God goes with us. Easter is a reminder that wherever we go after life, we go with God. We are not alone. It is the future that Easter holds for us. It is a promise fulfilled for life beyond what we can imagine. And again, my imagination is not keen enough to create an adequate scenario of the future God promises through the Easter event. Having moved through another Holy Week into the Day of Resurrection, I am reminded again of what God can create out of our human failings.

Recently, I was reminded of a quote from Mike McHargue:

“The cross was not God’s invention – it was ours. In all our need for an ‘eye for an eye’, I have to wonder sometimes if God listened to us cry for blood and offered his own – if Jesus’ sacrifice on the cross was not to sate God’s wrath, but to show God’s response to ours.”

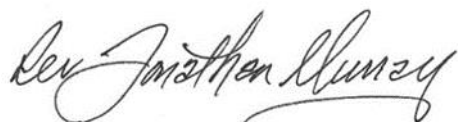
If McHargue is right, *and I think he is*, I think that holds great hope for our future. I think it proclaims loudly the loving response God makes to us over and over again. I think that’s what Easter is all about.

I wonder how we might grow more fully in God’s likeness by offering grace to others (in spite of their poor behavior and judgments).

I wonder how we might embody Easter – life instead of death, the hope of God’s resurrection as a response to human failings?

It is a tall order, for sure, and while my imagination is not keen enough to create an adequate scenario, I am hopeful of what life could look like when we try.

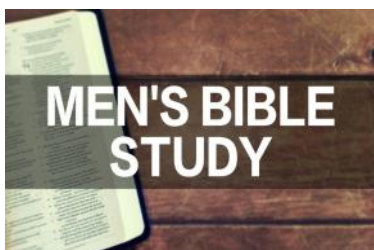
Easter has come again, but it has not gone. If we understand every Sunday is a renewal offered by God, a life-giving response to be recreated in God’s image, then we can live in an Easter world inviting others to know they are God’s beloved and claimed people.



The Reverend Jonathan Murray*
Pastor, First Presbyterian, Littleton
jonathan@fpcl.org

832-583-6160

* *My door is open to you.*



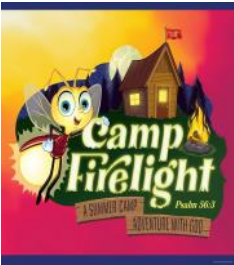
Join in the fellowship and study

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.

Hello From Pastor Blakeley Winslow

Hello everyone! As you've probably heard, my life has changed a lot over the past few weeks! Melissa and I are now the proud parents of a new baby boy, Samuel, born on March 1st! I'll be sharing more in future editions of "First Word", but for now, I just want to say how much I appreciate everyone's love and support. Thanks to FPCL's generous staff support policies, I was fortunate enough to be able to take a couple of weeks of family leave. During that time, so many of you have sent gifts, cards, texts, and emails, and our family feels blessed beyond words! With a new baby at home, I've adjusted my office hours at the church. They are now Mondays-Tuesdays from 10:30am to 1:30pm and Wednesdays, 10am--1pm, or by appointment. And of course, any time you see me at church, even outside of those scheduled times, please feel free to stop by my office, or you can always reach out via phone or email. Also, there are some changes being made to dates/times for certain upcoming events with the FPCL Children's and Youth ministries. I will be emailing those out, but please get in touch if you have any questions in the meantime. Amidst this tremendous new blessing in my life, I remain committed to serving our church family, and again Melissa and I are so appreciative of how you have celebrated together with us the arrival of this amazing gift from God!

In Christ, Pastor Blakeley



Hey Parents & Grandparents... Mark Your Calendars

Vacation Bible School will be here before you know it!
Camp Firelight: A Summer Adventure With God
Wednesday, May 29 - June 1
9:00am to Noon

Financial Update

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

The giving in February was substantially below the giving in January or even last February. I am hoping it is just a timing issue because the church spent almost \$9,000 more than was collected for the month. We did receive \$761.65 from King Soopers for the 1st quarter of 2024. This is a program that gives the church a percentage of what people spend. It's easy to designate First Presbyterian of Littleton as your charity of choice. If you haven't signed up for this program, please do so. If you need assistance, I'm happy to help. Thank you for your continued generosity. Joan Lund

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.

Thankful for ~~~~~

- ♥ Blakeley and Melissa being blessed with Samuel
- ♥ Caressa Murray bringing Pastor Murray to church each Monday and Wednesday since he cannot drive
- ♥ Caroline Graham volunteering in the nursery
- ♥ The members of New Hope Church in Castle Rock, who have been bringing Rev. Murray to church on Sunday
- ♥ Ashley Renz singing a beautiful solo for us at the end of February.

The wonderful people who came to the new members class on Saturday, March 16 — and for Elinor getting the booklets out during the snow storm, for Rev. Stephany Crosby presenting the Presbyterian history, and for Kathy McDaniel helping me with the set-up, food and greeting people at the door. She even stayed for the class, which was fun! One member shared how much we were there for them during a very stressful time in their life with health issues. It was amazing! And the message from all was the sense of family they feel, togetherness and unity; which is what I felt the moment I entered First Pres in 2006. To me, we are a great example of caring and “being there for others.” And while thinking of how to express that, in my message, I got a quote from my friend in Texas who attends the First Protestant Church my great-grandfather helped build with about 350 German immigrants about 178 years ago. It was a “God thing” and is a prayer that exemplifies something I pray every day. And so I wanted to share it with you -----

“Rivers do not drink their own water; trees do not eat their own fruit; the sun does not shine on itself and flowers do not spread their fragrance for themselves. Living for others is a rule of nature. We are all born to help each other. No matter how difficult it is, life is good when you are happy; but much better when others are happy because of you.” — Pope Francis

I am so thankful for our little church that is a great example of “helping each other.” I am certainly happier when I know I have helped someone else!

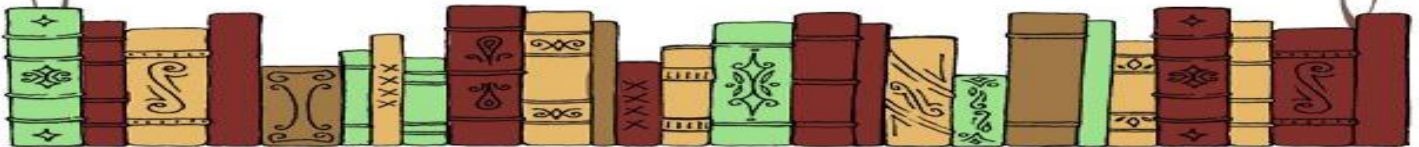
May we all be an example of His love! God bless you all and hold you in His loving hands.

Dee

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):

- April 11 - The Girl Who Wrote in Silk (novel) - by Kelli Estes



Thank You!

The Memorial Reception committee would like to thank the following ladies who volunteered to help with the three memorial receptions held at the church, the beginning of March. They baked, they helped set up, serve, and clean up and they were very much appreciated. Those who helped were Becky Gibson, Deb Graham, Cathy Graves, Hedy Lemieux, Connie Strandberg, Joy Carreno, Mary Lareau, Kathy Frear, Karen Ervin, Julie Johnston, Maggie Ashworth, Sheri Wyatt, Karla Ferguson, and Don Meersman, who set up tables and chairs. Many, many thanks to all of you.

The committee would like to have at least two more members to help organize the receptions. If you are interested and have questions, please contact a member of the committee. Again, thanks to all of you for your help. Kathy McDaniel

Thank you to the PNC committee for your time and consideration our church needed regarding a new minister - and choosing Pastor Jonathan. He has shown respect for our congregation when he advised us that he would have congregational meetings. It is our church, and we must have our voices heard. We know changes are needed; especially our investment in younger families, to keep our church important in the community.

As I sat in my quiet home on Palm Sunday, waiting for the service to start, I could not have imagined what was about to happen. Our liturgist, Alex Holt, gave us a gift from her heart. It set the tone for the service; and Pastor Jonathan's sermon continued the feeling of unity that Covid obstructed for a while. And Blakeley and the children kept that wonderful feeling of the day!

A Minute for Stewardship—Planning Your Legacy

"Let us think about each other and help each other to show love and do good deeds." **Hebrews 10:24 (NCV)**

In late July of 2022, Pastor Rick Warren wrote this message in his daily devotional as it pertains to leaving a legacy of hospitality:

Awesome families teach their kids that they're not the center of the universe. They teach their kids that God made them and shaped them for a mission. They model dedication, service, generosity, and prayer. Average families don't do those things. Awesome families do.

This month, our Stewardship committee extends a warm invitation to join us for a special **"Planning Your Legacy"** gathering on **Sunday, May 19th**, following our worship service. Whether your plans for your earthly possessions are well underway or the thought of how you'll be remembered is something you've yet to ponder, this event is designed with you in mind.

We invite you to share in refreshments and camaraderie as we welcome **Joseph Moore** from the Presbytery Foundation. Joseph will offer an insightful overview of the various strategies available for legacy planning. Additionally, our Stewardship team will share personal reflections and engage in discussions on the importance of creating a meaningful legacy for your loved ones.

Keep an eye out for further information in the next few weeks. We eagerly anticipate your presence on **Sunday, May 19th**, for an engaging and enlightening afternoon

See you in church!

Your Stewardship Committee:

Dave LeMay, Chair:

Trey McDowell

Sue Chandler

Dee Getzinger

Don Meersman

Nat Opperman



Minute for Mission



Update from Love With Actions, in Rwanda. Your support helps make a difference!



Today, we are celebrating a huge milestone for 15 of our LWA children. They have been with us for 6 years! Today they graduate from the physical therapy program!

Throughout the past 6 years, these children have been supported through physical and occupational therapy, as well as surgeries. Now, Love with Actions will continue to support them through their educational journeys.

Most of these children were unable to walk or care for themselves when they came to LWA. Our amazing staff has worked tirelessly with them on a day to day basis for 6 years, growing their strengths and building their skillsets.

The transformation of these children’s lives has been a miracle made possible by all of our donors and friends around the world. You can see the joy on their faces, as they look ahead towards a future that is brighter than they ever hoped for.

Together we are changing lives and lifting up the children of Rwanda! Thanks for your support!

These plaques were recently given to the church in appreciation for our long time support to them. Both of these Christian organizations are located in Rwanda, Africa. Love with Actions and Shalom Community Organization are doing amazing work changing lives there.

Thank you to our Congregation!

If you would like to hear more about these organizations, please talk to a member of our mission committee.



LITTLETON HANDBELL FESTIVAL!!



Come one, come all, to the
Littleton Handbell Festival!

Who: First Pres. Memorial & TNT Handbell Choirs
and several other local church bell choirs

What: A FREE concert (and an opportunity for community fellowship!)

Where: Littleton United Methodist Church
5894 S. Datura St. Littleton 80120 (corner of Datura & Shepperd St.)

When: Saturday, April 20th, 2024 3:00 p.m.

The Memorial Handbell Choir & Tintinnabulation Ringers will be joining several other Littleton churches for an all-day rehearsal and fellowship experience and perform our pieces in a massed concert with Guest Conductor Luke Nabeta in the afternoon.

If you haven't had the opportunity to hear an ensemble of bells ringing together, it is truly an event you will never forget, and it is **SO CLOSE TO HOME** - *only 4 blocks from church!!*

Please join us and support the ringers (and bring friends and family along)!

Contact Karen (303-798-1389) with any questions.



WE HOPE TO SEE LOTS OF FAMILIAR FACES THERE !



Dollars and Sense – A Word from Finance

mis-sion \ 'mish-en \ n \ **1** the purpose of an organization, **2** a ministry commissioned by a religious organization to propagate its faith or carry on humanitarian work. Wow! That pretty much ties it all together -- the same word to represent the overall purpose of an organization, and describe one of the most important things we do.

So – what is the extent of our missions? First, there's the Missions budget, an important line item in our operating budget. For 2023, the budget was \$15,000, with disbursements coordinated by the Missions Committee. Over half supports such local organizations as Whiz Kids, Meals on Wheels, Habitat for Humanity, GraceFull Café, and several others. The Missions team also provides important support to missionaries Jory Bayne and John Altemus, and missions in Zimbabwe and Rwanda. Disaster relief donations are funneled to places in need such as Morocco, Turkey, Israel, and Maui via the Presbytery and Samaritan's Purse.

Beyond this, the Missions team coordinates fund drives beyond the operating budget for Whiz Kids Christmas Tree, Backpack Mission (35 backpacks, \$1525), and Food Drive for Life Center.

In addition, several missions are supported from contributions to Restricted Accounts, which are separate from the operating budget. Prominent are Community Dinners (11 dinners/year, average attendance about 70, \$3661) and Thanksgiving Dinners (356 meals prepared and delivered, \$2318). Whiz Kid tutoring supports 20 children (\$735). Additional restricted account missions include Meals on Wheels (\$300), food packs for homeless (\$293), shelter assistance (\$1545), gift cards (\$2922), bus passes (\$1036), ARC cards (donated by ARC), and member assistance (hearing aids, \$380). Finally, there are Presbyterian missions that members individually support – One Great Hour of Sharing (\$487) and Christmas Joy (\$777).

Additional missions (often spontaneous needs) are supported from the discretionary accounts of both pastors; these are supported by contributions from the Missions team (often from the fifth-Sunday offering) and individual contributions.

While we've focused on the financial side of Missions, there is often even greater giving of Time and Talent to our missions outreach through the many hands of our volunteers.

When added up, our small church covers a lot of ground. But going back to our definition, Missions is basic to who we are, and there's an unlimited upside to what we can do. Thanks to all, and with God's help we can continue to do more.

Your Finance Committee -- Scott Chandler, John Ansted, Susan Strauss, Dick Graves, Charles Kellogg, Dave LeMay (ex-officio), and Joan Lund (ex-officio), Beth Opperman (co-moderator), and Bob Chapman (moderator).

Please Pray for....



Linda Griffith, Phil Ansted, Betty Anderson, Jill Van Den Bos, Donna Farris, Jan & Russ Fuiks, Taylor Ann Meersman, 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; 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)

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 Ferguson, Kathy McDaniel



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!

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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Believe Beloved Belong

Next Sunday– Deacons Appeal

The need is great right now, with many coming to the church for some sort of assistance. The deacons use your donations to provide needed assistance our church community and others, as well as, provide the flowers for the Easter services and other special occasion items. Your donations to the Deacons' fund is appreciated.

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 May newsletter is April 19.**