

## Puzzle Community Ministry

A puzzle community ministry may seem simple on the surface, but it carries deep spiritual and communal significance. At its heart, it creates a welcoming space where people can belong without pressure, conversation can happen naturally, and relationships can form gently over time.

Puzzles invite people to slow down in a hurried world. As hands work and pieces come together, barriers often fall away. Conversation flows more easily when there is something shared to focus on, making this ministry especially meaningful for those who may feel isolated, anxious, or unsure of how to connect. No one needs special skills, theological knowledge, or physical strength to participate—just a willingness to sit together.

This kind of ministry reflects the body of Christ in a tangible way. Each person contributes a small piece, and no single piece makes sense on its own. Together, something whole and beautiful emerges. In that way, puzzle ministry becomes a living parable of Christian community: different people, gifts, and stories coming together to form one picture.

Puzzle ministry also offers hospitality without words. It welcomes children, adults, seniors, newcomers, and longtime members alike. It can be intergenerational, low-cost, and accessible, providing a meaningful connection for those who might not attend traditional programs. For some, this may be their first or safest doorway into church life.

Spiritually, it creates space for presence rather than performance. It reminds us that ministry does not always look like teaching or leading from the front—it often looks like sitting side by side, sharing silence, laughter, and patience. In that shared time, trust grows, stories are exchanged, and God's grace is quietly at work.

A puzzle community ministry may not draw attention, but it builds something essential: belonging. And in a world confirming loneliness at every turn, that may be one of the most important ministries the church can offer.

I thank the anonymous donor who gave a new puzzle board case. It is an example of how many members support the church's ministries.





### Trustees

We want to extend our heartfelt thanks to our Trustees for their hard work and care in making recent improvements to our building. The new lighting in Fellowship Hall has made the space brighter, more welcoming, and more functional for everyone who gathers there. We are also grateful for the installation of new carpet in Room 015, which enhances both comfort and accessibility. These updates make a real difference for all who use these spaces. Please take a moment to go and see the new changes—we are thankful for the Trustees' dedication to serving our congregation so faithfully.

### Chancel Choir

We extend our heartfelt thanks to the Chancel Choir for the gift of music they shared with us through the beautiful Christmas Cantata. Through their dedication, voices, and faith, they helped lead us more deeply into the mystery and joy of Christ's birth. We are especially grateful to Jean Johnson, our Director, for her faithful leadership and tireless preparation; to Kevin Utter, our Organist, whose musical artistry enriched every moment; and to Gary Turner, who narrated the Cantata. The Music Ministry truly blessed the congregation and glorified God this holy season.

### Thank You,

I am grateful for the offered prayers, Christmas cards, and gifts this season. Your kindness, thoughtfulness, and generosity were deeply felt and truly appreciated. Each note, prayer, and gesture was a reminder of the care and love that make this congregation such a blessing.

Thank you for surrounding me with encouragement and grace during Christmas. It is a joy to serve as your pastor, and I am grateful for each of you.



*Grace and Peace,  
Pastor Leah*



# January Birthdays

Sunday	Monday	Tuesday	Wednesday	Thursday	Friday	Saturday
				1	2 Steve Freese	3 Connie Kuntz
4	5	6	7	8	9	10
11	12	13 Larry Moline	14	15	16	17
18 Corinne Gutsche	19 Deanna Ballantine Mike Harrington	20	21 Ruth Toliver	22	23 Keith Peters	24 Lorrene Peters
25	26	27 Chuck Panella Edith Silvas	28	29	30	31





New books in the United Women in  
Faith Library!

The Reading Program books for 2026 are now in the UWF Library. Fiction and non-fiction—good reading for everyone. You do not have to be a member of UWF to check out a book. United Women In Faith have many books in their section of the Library. Those shelves are at the far east end of the Library. Current books on Social Action, Nurturing for Community, Leadership Development, Education for Mission and Spiritual Growth give many choices for every reader. You will see the checkout instructions on one of the shelves.

PLEASE RETURN ANY BOOKS YOU  
CHECK OUT IN 3 WEEKS OR LESS.

Other readers are waiting.

Here is a short review of a book from the  
“Nurturing for Community” category.

**THE PERSONAL LIBRARIAN** by MARIE BENEDICT &  
VICTORIA CHRISTOPHER MURRAY BERKLEY.

Named a Best Book of the Year by NPR and a Good Morning America Book Club Pick, this historical novel explores the life of J. P. Morgan’s personal librarian, Belle da Costa Greene, a Black American forced to hide her true identity and pass as White. In her twenties, Belle was hired by J. P. Morgan to curate a collection of rare manuscripts, books, and artwork for his newly built Pierpont Morgan Library. She became a fixture in New York City society and one of the most powerful people in the art and book world. But Belle has a secret—she is the daughter of Richard Greener, the first Black graduate of Harvard and a well-known advocate for equality.

The book cover features the title 'Library News' in a large, bold, serif font, with 'the' in a smaller, cursive font below it. The main title 'PERSONAL LIBRARIAN' is in a large, bold, serif font. The background is a sepia-toned image of a grand library interior with high ceilings and bookshelves.

## Library News *the* PERSONAL LIBRARIAN





**MONDAY 9:30 A.M. BIBLE STUDY:**

The Monday Morning Bible Study in room 107. Our current study, The Acts of The Apostles, from the New Testament shows the growth of the early church after Jesus' crucifixion. We follow the ministries of Peter, Stephen, Philip, John and others to Samaria, Antioch, Jerusalem and Damascus. Sound exciting? Come join us!

**Seekers Bible Study**

Seekers Bible study will take a two-week break from the study of John's Revelation.

John was no dreamer; he listened and learned from visions. Anyone can join the

Seekers at any time! The group will reconvene on January 6<sup>th</sup> at 9:30 a.m. in room 107. Begin the new year seeking God's truth about hope.

All are welcome.

Contact Carol Hopson (817-228-3452) for additional details.

**Adult Sunday School**

New Bible Study: A video study by Dr. David Jeremiah titled **THE GREAT DISAPPEARANCE: How to be Rapture Ready!** The Rapture can happen at any time so staying ready is something that every Christian should practice each day. Join us in adult Sunday School class to see the video and join a good discussion.

We will begin January 4, 2026 in the Lounge at 8:45 a.m.

All are welcome!

Sue Ptacek (970) 218-8701.

**Tuesday Afternoon Bible Study**

In January, the Tuesday afternoon Bible Study will continue the study: **Questions God Asks Us** by Trevor Hudson. God wants to enter into a conversation with us, His children, and the questions He poses in the Bible draw us into a deeper sharing and intimacy with Him. We will not be meeting on January 12<sup>th</sup>, but please join us on January 27<sup>th</sup> at 2:00 pm in the Lounge for interesting insights and discussion.

Contact Carma at [Mynacee@aol.com](mailto:Mynacee@aol.com) for materials.



## Christmas Decorations

We are deeply thankful to the CUMC elves who worked their seasonal magic by beautifully hanging the greens for the Advent season. Then they carefully repacked the decorations for another year and even added to our joy by donating another Christmas tree! Their joyful work helped prepare both our hearts and our space for worship, and we are truly grateful for their time, care, and generosity.



*Christmas*  
2025







### United Women in Faith

would like to thank members of the congregation and friends who supported our fundraising events this past year. We hosted Bunco, sold Fort Collins Nursery cards, and Cheese Balls. Throughout the year, we had fun, enjoyed fellowship, and made new friends. We are proud to donate \$1000 to the Food Bank for Larimer County, \$1000 to Project Self-Sufficiency, \$500 to the Trailblazer Foundation, \$500 to CASA of Larimer County, \$500 to Respite Care, \$250 to UWFaith 150 Legacy Fund, and \$250 to UMCOR. Thank you for supporting UWFaith. We can't wait to see what we can do in 2026.

### **Congregational Care Team**

The goal of the Congregational Care Team (CCT) is to reach out to those in our community of faith who have special needs and to help make our church a friendly, nurturing faith community.

When the Care Team is made aware of someone who needs a little extra encouragement, they do their best to be there with cards, phone calls and visits. During the past month CCT members sent 79 cards and emails, made 8 calls and 6 visits.

The Congregational Care Team (CCT) meets on the second Tuesday of each month at 11:00 a.m. in the church lounge to update, review and to assure that the known needs of those in our community of faith are being met.

You are invited to join the Team!

For more information, please call Linda Glover, 970-481-1415.



## From Finance

In September of 2023, Christ UMC applied for and received a tax credit from the IRS. The credit is called Employee Retention Credit, ERC. It was part of the recovery plan from COVID, and intended to help businesses and non-profits retain employees during the COVID shutdown, which we did. This is separate from the PPP Loan/Grant we received but part of the same COVID recovery plan put in place by the government for businesses like ours.

The funds are currently in the church's Money Market Savings account. The Church Council decided to keep the funds in savings for two years and do the proper due diligence to satisfy any concerns that we might get audited. An IRS audit is unlikely and the Council feels it is appropriate to use these funds when needed to meet expenses of operating the church. In 2025 money was borrowed from the ERC fund to help cover shortages in the operating fund. Because the operating fund was unable by year's end 2025, to pay back this loan in full, the loan amount was considered income and Mission Shares were paid on it. The plan is to continue to leave the balance of the tax credit in savings and use it to cover shortages as needed.

Monthly Review	Givings	Expenses	Difference
Sept, 2025	20,528.43	29,641.63	<9113.20>
Oct, 2025	26,463.58	24,255.32	2,208.26
Nov, 2025	33,101.35	23,516.89	9,584.46

Joyce Lathrop  
2025 Chair of Finance

## Heifer International 2025



Once again, our congregation has been very generous! You gave \$3750 to provide bio-stoves, clean water, heifers, goats, sheep, pigs, llamas, ducks, geese, chicks, honeybees and food baskets. These gifts, along with education, were given to families worldwide to help sustain them, help them prosper and ultimately for them to pass these gifts forward to another family. Our CUMC monetary gift will be doubled at the corporate level making the grand total \$7500.

**THANK YOU SO MUCH!**



## MORNING GLORY PRESCHOOL JANUARY NEWS



### On the horizon:

January 6 - Back to School  
January 19 - No School Dr Martin  
Luther King Jr Day

**January is time to open  
enrollment for Fall 2026**



### PROGRAM HIGHLIGHT OUTSIDE PLAY IN THE WINTER

At Morning Glory Preschool, outdoor play remains a priority even in winter. When temperatures are 20 degrees or above, children are bundled appropriately and spend time outside each day. Cold-weather play supports physical development, gross motor skills and mental well-being. Fresh air and movement improve focus and reduce restlessness indoors. With proper clothing and supervision, winter outdoor time is safe, purposeful and an important part of our daily routine for all ages year round.



### WHAT'S HAPPENING

Welcome 2026 and Happy New Year!

December had so many wonderful things and we know 2026 will have even more. Just ahead of us is enrollment for the 2026 school year. If you know any littles that need an amazing preschool to learn and grow, send them our way!

Galatians 5:22-23

But the fruit of the Spirit is love, joy, peace, forbearance, kindness, goodness, faithfulness, gentleness and self-control.



Christ United Methodist Church  
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*Return Service Requested*



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