

## Worship Sundays at 10 AM

### Mailing Address:

P.O. Box 295  
Ridgway, CO 81432

Email: [ucsjoffice@gmail.com](mailto:ucsjoffice@gmail.com)

Website: [www.ucsjridgway.org](http://www.ucsjridgway.org)

### Facebook:

[www.facebook.com/ucsjridgway](http://www.facebook.com/ucsjridgway)

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## UCSJ Staff

Rev. Pamela Stofferahn — Pastor

Rev. Dick Engdahl — Pastor Emeritus

Deacon Bob Larson — Minister of  
Missionary Outreach

Deacon Kathy Graff — Minister of Spiritual  
Formation

Nicole Lovesky — Administrative Assistant

Katy Kristoffersen — Director of Music

Sue Stern — Treasurer

Laura Hager — Custodian

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## UCSJ Council

Pastor Pam Stofferahn

Rob Datsko

Dennis Eliason

Alice Goertz

Linda Ingo

Joan Moyer (Secretary)

Jen Parker

Carolyn Snowbarger

Donna Whiskeman

Dave Young

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Newsletter Editor — Barb Eliason

Newslink Editor — Administrative

Assistant ([ucsnewslink@gmail.com](mailto:ucsnewslink@gmail.com))

External Publicity — Kate Kellogg

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## UCSJ Office Hours

Tuesday — Friday

8:30 AM — 1:30 PM



Five months into the Coronavirus pandemic, I get the sense that folks are starting to feel imprisoned by the necessary precautions we're all taking to halt the spread of COVID-19 and wondering how much longer it's going to last. Don't you wish we could just draw a "Get out of Jail Free" card and put this suffering all behind us?



Thinking about this season we're in as a kind of jail sentence brought to mind the story Luke tells about Paul and Silas' imprisonment in Philippi (you can read the story yourself in Acts 16:16-40). They had been arrested and imprisoned because they had exorcised demons from a slave girl whose owners were enraged because, after she was healed of the demons that possessed her, she could no longer tell fortunes, which was how they had used her to make money for themselves. Because of their outrage, Paul and Silas were stripped, beaten, jailed in the innermost cell of the prison, and locked in stocks. A worse fate for a prisoner couldn't be imagined. But instead of losing heart and giving up, Paul and Silas devoted themselves to praying and singing hymns to God while they were in bondage—well within the hearing of their fellow prisoners, and they grew in compassion toward others during their confinement. What a powerful witness that must have been! By the end of the story, even the jailer himself had been converted!

So, I wonder, how might our living faithfully—as Paul and Silas did—in the midst of our COVID incarceration—serve as a witness to those who are incarcerated with us? How might we, instead of searching for a "Get out of Jail Free" card, look at our circumstances and see God's presence with us—working for good even now . . . or especially now, as we adapt and learn and live out our faith in this new, restricted place?

If you think about it, God has taught us a lot during this stretch of time in which our freedoms have been limited due to the virus. Think about it.

- We've realized how precious our relationships are . . . and most of us have found new ways—or additional ways—to communicate our love and care for others. Have you read stories to grandchildren over the internet or written cards to old friends? What other faithful actions have you taken to cherish the relationships in your life?
- We've gotten comfortable with experiments, of trying new things. As a congregation, we've explored new ways to meet online; we've tried worshipping without singing indoors; we've adapted to worshipping outdoors, even though it means a bit more work for each of us . . . AND, now that we're outdoors, more people are witnessing our worship than ever before!
- We've seen that old dogs can learn new tricks, with enough incentive and help. How many of us even knew what Zoom was before 2020? What new things have you tried in the past five months? Are people noticing that you're adapting, and trying new things, and not resisting change?

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Do you notice the less we resist change, the less stressful change is?

- We've learned that things that used to seem essential may not be as important as we thought. We seem to be having far fewer church meetings these days, but our congregational life is still strong. We had a memorial service in July with no congregational singing and heard that it was the most meaningful worship service some folks had ever attended! What have you learned to do without during the pandemic? Has giving some things up helped to make room for new things to take root in your life?
- We've learned that how we look isn't nearly as important as we thought it was (especially now that Zoom only shows our faces). Smiles are more important than outfits (even if you can only smile with your eyes over the top of an M16 mask). Sometimes perfectionism becomes an obstacle in our relationships, while authentic imperfection and vulnerability can draw us closer to one another. Have you started to relax a bit more about the details and enjoy the opportunity to worry less about insignificant things? Has your vulnerability in this season worked to draw you closer to others?
- We've realized that technology can be our friend and have been surprised by how authentic our conversations over the internet can be. Can you think of a conversation you've had—by phone or over the internet—that was more meaningful than the average chat? What made it so? Can you incorporate that style of communicating more and more in your life so that conversations facilitate meaningful connections instead of just idle banter?
- We've started embracing the truth that we're all in this together (a truth that Paul shared back in those difficult days, about how we're all parts of one body—each differently gifted and each equally essential to the functioning of the whole). We will never take our health care workers, our teachers, our store clerks, and our delivery people for granted ever again! What is one profession that you've gained new appreciation for during the pandemic? How have you expressed your gratitude?
- We've learned that the church is not the building! Each one of us can be the presence of Christ right where we are. Can you think of a time, during the pandemic, that you felt you were witnessing through your actions or your words?

My prayer for us this month is that we will continue to adapt and thrive during this pandemic—seeing it not so much as house arrest as an opportunity to give witness to our faith in all circumstances. I invite you to pray with me—that God will continue to transform us through this experience and use our reactions and actions to spark faith in others around us.

*Pastor Pam*

### Calendar for August

(For more information, see page #s)

**Sunday, August 23 — 1 PM**

New Member Orientation (pg. 3)

### Weekly Activities

**SUNDAYS — 10 AM**

Worship Service in Hartwell Park

REGISTRATION REQUIRED. Please sign up [here](#) or call the office at 970.626.5803.

Sunday worship is also LIVE-STREAMED on

Facebook [here](#), for you to worship at home, or through our website [here](#).



**THURSDAYS — 10 AM (Via Zoom)**

Going Deeper, Women's Bible Study (pg. 5)

**SATURDAYS — 8:30 AM (Via Zoom)**

Going Deeper, Men's Bible Study (pg. 5)

### Ministry Chair Opening

The Nominating Committee is working to fill the position of **Finance Ministry**. If numbers are your "thing," they would love to hear from you, by **Wednesday, July 29!** The committee members are Alice Goertz, Randy Parker, Charlie Berger, Kate Kellogg, and Donna Whiskeman. Any member can give you a copy of the job description and answer any questions you may have.

### UCSJ 2020-2021 Council Members and Their Ministries

Rob Datsko — Worship & Music  
 Dennis Eliason — Denominations Relations  
 Alice Goertz — Membership Development  
 Linda Ingo — Care  
 Joan Moyer — Recording Secretary  
 Jen Parker — Congregational Life  
 Carolyn Snowbarger — Education  
 Vacant — Finance  
 Donna Whiskeman — Mission & Outreach  
 Dave Young — Building & Maintenance

**Council chair to be elected.**



### Treasurer's Report

If you have any questions or suggestions, please contact me by phone 970.626.4397 or email [suestern1@gmail.com](mailto:suestern1@gmail.com). Thank you all for your continued support of our church and missions.

	Month End Report — As of June 30, 2020		Fiscal Year End	
	YTD Actual	Year-to-Date Goal	Income ABOVE Goal	Annual Budget
Income	\$199,751	\$195,000	\$ 4,751	\$195,000
Expenses	\$191,147			
Reserves	\$ 8,604			
Net GAIN	\$ 0			

**Remember:** If you plan to make a stock or cash donation from a brokerage account, PLEASE notify me or have your broker send a contribution letter to UCSJ. These transactions rarely include the name of the account holder making it difficult to determine who sent the donation. Thank you!

*Sue Stern, Treasurer*

### Sunday Worship is Live-streamed on Facebook



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Prayer Requests or Announcements for the Sunday bulletin (deadline is Wednesday at noon).

Address, Phone, Email Changes

Please email [ucsjoffice@gmail.com](mailto:ucsjoffice@gmail.com) or leave a detailed message on the church phone 970.626.5803.

### Congregational Life Ministry

The Congregational Life team has been challenged but assisted with ways to fellowship in these COVID times. We held a successful Zoom wine tasting that everyone seemed to enjoy. Lots of tips were shared. Topsy Tuesday was delightful but not well attended. Those who did attend were helpful and seemed pleased that they joined the party. With the first "outdoor church" it came as no surprise that everyone was eager to catch up even without the coffee and treats.

Please join us for a picnic at Hartwell Park at 5:30 PM on Thursday, July 23. You will need to wear a mask, practice social distancing, and bring your own picnic and chair. While we won't be sharing food or drink we can enjoy each other's company "COVID-style." It will be great to see everybody. If you have questions, please contact Jen Parker at 518.578.5948 or [parkers1@msn.com](mailto:parkers1@msn.com)!



Our hat goes off to everyone's patience and positive attitude as we travel together down this unknown and at times rocky road. We hope as time passes, we will begin to see some degree of normalcy. In the meantime, be safe.

*Jen Parker, Congregational Life Chair*

### Ready to Deepen Your Relationship with the United Church of the San Juans?

New Member Orientation  
 Sunday, August 23 from 1-3 PM  
 Hartwell Park Pavilion (across from UCSJ)

Are you starting to feel at home at UCSJ? If you feel like you've found a place to belong here, perhaps you're ready to imagine what the next step might be. This informal gathering will give you an opportunity to learn more.

- Hear about the founding of this amazing faith community.
- Meet congregation leaders.
- Learn about our many faith partners.
- Build some new relationships.
- Devote some time to thinking about how you would like to grow in faith.
- Understand what membership here is all about.

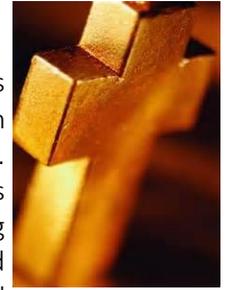


Please contact Membership Chair Alice Goertz at [haalg@yahoo.com](mailto:haalg@yahoo.com) or 574.523.1588 to register.

**Note:** Participants will be asked to honor COVID-19 protocols wearing masks and maintaining physical distancing. Masks will be provided for those who need them.

## Tasty Morsels from “PLUM” Corner

**PRESBYTERIANS** — A new report from PC(USA) Research Services describes some of the challenges that worshiping communities are facing as a result of the COVID-19 pandemic. The most common response to local virus-related needs is praying for health care workers and increasing food ministries. One church leader said their congregation began a pen pal program connecting available members with members isolated due to age, mobility or illness. Some churches have found virtual conferencing tools could benefit their congregations even during normal times. For example, another leader said there has been “an awakening in the congregation that use of technology could be a really meaningful tool to include homebound members. The huge grin on the face of a 90-plus-year-old member when he logs in from assisted living and gets to worship with his church family for the first time in months has been deeply heartwarming.”



**LUTHERANS** — [Lutheran Disaster Response \(LDR\)](#) is responding to the pandemic here in the United States and around the world. Our Rocky Mountain Synod’s online newsletter, eConnection, recently offered information on how congregations and individual members can contribute to this mission’s effort: “GIVE to Lutheran Disaster Response’s general account so that we can respond quickly whenever and wherever disaster strikes. Did you know that 100% of gifts to LDR go to relief because of the underlying work of ELCA World Hunger? Contributions can be made through congregations or directly online at the LDR web address above. And PRAY for our nation and the world as we face uncertainties. May God deliver comfort to those who mourn the loss of loved ones and strength to those who are working diligently to care for affected communities.”

**UNITED CHURCH OF CHRIST** — From Rev. Carol White, of Pinedale Community UCC in Pinedale, Wyoming: Pinedale, in cooperation with other churches, had been assisting the local school district as they continued to distribute meals through the end of June. Volunteers helped in the elementary school cafeteria on Wednesday and Thursday mornings. They were gloved, masked, and temperatures taken. But their work is far from finished. Rev. White reports that her congregation resumed Free Lunch for all children (and adults who need it) at their church starting July 1. The volunteers bag lunches in the kitchen and then distribute them under the awning outdoors. Kids are welcome to grab and go. As in the school program, all equipment is frequently sanitized. “Our intention is to continue to provide food security for our community,” said Rev. White.

**METHODISTS** — As always, Mountain Sky Conference Bishop Karen Oliveto’s weekly message is insightful and thought provoking. She begins with a humorous anecdote. “Last week, I posted a picture of a former train station that now had a sign declaring ‘Railside Redemption.’ Of course, I immediately wondered what kind of church had taken up residence there, only to chuckle to find out it was the recycle center for the region!” But it did get her thinking, she writes. “Where, in the midst of COVID-19, are the places where God’s saving grace found in Jesus Christ being experienced? If the church building is closed, where is the church as the Body of Christ now moving in communities, touching and changing lives? ..... Our offerings no longer need to prop up a building that has had decades of deferred maintenance but instead can build much needed ministries that can transform individuals, families, communities, and a world as we seek to bring healing as Christ’s hands to a broken world.” Read her message and see the picture [here](#).

*Kate Kellogg*



## 4x4 High Country Wildflower Tour

As was mentioned in the July UCSJ newsletter, our Congregational Life Ministry is sponsoring some 4x4 Jeep trips this summer and fall. The first adventure is coming up on **Friday, July 24**. We will depart UCSJ at 8:30 AM and we will be gone for 8-9 hours, weather dependent. Route for that day will include Corkscrew, Hurricane, California, Placer, and Picayune Gulch, with lunch along the way. Due to COVID-19, no carpooling please.

If you are interested in participating, please sign up by [clicking here](#). Charlie Berger will email you detailed information. We look forward to a great day of exploring!

## From Our Congregation

The love and prayers of the UCSJ congregation are with:

The **Spirek** family and friends as they mourn the loss of **Dick** (June 15) and **Mary Ellen (M-E)** (June 21) who died while on hospice care at Montrose Memorial Hospital.

**Katy Kristoffersen** and family grieving the death of her mother, Julie Gonzales.

*Do you have a prayer request or pastoral care concern that you would like your UCSJ faith community to hear or a confidential prayer request for our prayer team (but not for public communication)? Please call the church office at 970.626.5803 or email Pastor Pam Stofferahn at [ucsjpastor@gmail.com](mailto:ucsjpastor@gmail.com).*

Concerns shown here are printed only with the permission of the person involved.



## New Volunteer Opportunity for Our Church!

Heads up, you clever and creative people! Looking ahead, perhaps far ahead, when we can safely worship together in our sanctuary, a new small group is being formed to help out our Worship & Music Ministry. This group will be called "WORSHIP ARTS," and members will be responsible, on a rotating basis, for ensuring that our worship space, such as the liturgical colors of the paraments, banners, altar-table decor, and so on, both look lovely and give an appropriate and inspirational message for those coming to worship. No experience needed, and training will be provided. Only your imagination will limit what you can do! With a rotating schedule, you may only be needed to commit to one or two times PER YEAR! IF YOU CAN HELP PLEASE JOIN THIS GROUP. YOU WON'T BE CALLED UPON TO DO ANYTHING UNTIL EARLY SEPTEMBER TRAINING PERIOD!



Please prayerfully consider if you would enjoy helping us beautify our sanctuary, and improve a worshipful area in our space on Sunday mornings. If you think you might join this group or want more information please contact Jackie at [bergerhof17@gmail.com](mailto:bergerhof17@gmail.com) or Rob at [robertdatsko@yahoo.com](mailto:robertdatsko@yahoo.com)!

*Rob Datsko, Worship & Music Chair and Jackie Berger*

## Education: Wherever you are This Summer!

### Weekly Bible Studies

#### Men's Group — Saturdays at 8:30 AM

Zoom meeting: <https://zoom.us/j/3387893558>

Questions, contact Bob Larson at 970.325.4600.

#### Women's Group — Thursdays at 10 AM

Zoom meeting: <https://zoom.us/j/95452126537>

Questions, contact Donna Whiskeman at 970.729.0273.



### Community Learning Begins in September on Zoom!

If you have suggestions for books for us, please send them to Carolyn Snowbarger or Mick Graff by **Saturday, August 8.**

*Carolyn Snowbarger, Education Chair*

## August Birthdays

- 3 – Duane Compton
- 3 – Susan Wing
- 4 – Karen Compton
- 5 – Jon LeGrand
- 7 – Josie Snapp
- 8 – Toni Wyrick
- 9 – Charlie Scholpp
- 12 – Elliot Kristoffersen
- 12 – Bailey Sherwood
- 14 – Barbara Eliason
- 14 – Ann Glandorf
- 14 – Scott Withrow
- 15 – Sabrina Butler
- 18 – Joy Wyrick
- 23 – Gail Callahan
- 23 – Lucy Scholpp
- 26 – Shirley Didier
- 28 – Marsha McCall
- 28 – Randy Parker

## August Anniversaries

- 7 – Rob & Kathy Datsko
- 8 – Don & Sally Swartz
- 11 – Terry & Sabrina Butler
- 13 – Mike & Katy Kristoffersen
- 13 – Ken & Sandy Sloan
- 13 – Ken & Pam Stofferahn
- 17 – Jon & Lee LeGrand
- 20 – Chuck & Mary Anderson
- 21 – Mick & Kathy Graf
- 27 – Don & Sheryl Radovich
- 31 – Dick & Brenda Engdahl

Please let the church office ([ucsjoffice@gmail.com](mailto:ucsjoffice@gmail.com) or 970.626.5803) know if we're missing your birthday and/or anniversary. Thank you.

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**Thank you** for your generous support during this time of social distancing. Your gifts enable our ministry to continue even while we're taking extra precautions because of COVID-19.

To contribute online (through Tithel.ly) just click the donate button below. You can also send your offerings to church at P.O. Box 295, Ridgway, CO 81432.

[Click Here to Donate Today](#)

## September Newsletter

DEADLINE is NOON

Friday, August 21

Please submit items to:

Barbara Eliason at

[baeliason2006@msn.com](mailto:baeliason2006@msn.com).



## Looking for Volunteers to Help with In-person Worship

If you would like to sign up to be a **GREETER** click [here](#).

If you would like to be an **USHER** click [here](#).

Or call the office at 970.626.5803 and Nicole can sign you up. Thank you!



*Please remember that pictures of members and their children may be posted around the church and on the internet (website and Facebook). If you do not want your picture used, please contact the church office. Thank you!*

## Connect with UCSJ!



And like us!

[www.facebook.com/ucsjridgway](http://www.facebook.com/ucsjridgway)



[www.ucsjridgway.org](http://www.ucsjridgway.org)

For up-to-date information, including council highlights, newsletters (in color), calendar, etc.

*We are affiliated with:*

*~ Presbyterian Church (USA)*

*~ Evangelical Lutheran Church in America*

*~ United Church of Christ*

*~ United Methodist Church*



PO Box 295 — Ridgway, CO 81432