



Embracing Diversity - Honoring Unity

August 2024

295 N. Lena Street, Ridgway, Colorado

Volume 21, Issue 8

Worship Sundays at 10 AM

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UCSJ Staff

Rev. Melinda Veatch — Pastor

Rev. Dick Engdahl — Pastor Emeritus

Deacon Bob Larson — Minister of Missional Outreach

Deacon Kathy Graff — Minister of Spiritual Formation

Shirley Didier — Administrative Assistant

Katy Kristoffersen — Director of Music

Sue Stern — Treasurer

Laura Hagert — Custodian

Mike Kristoffersen — Audio-visual Operator

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UCSJ Council

Rev. Melinda Veatch

Tom Chase

Dennis Eliason

Alice Goertz

Pam Larson (Chair)

Dee Moore

Joan Moyer

Carolyn Snowbarger

Vince Snowbarger

Timothy Spangler

Donna Whiskeman

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Website & Newsletter Editor — Barb Eliason

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ucsjoffice@gmail.com

External Publicity — Kate Kellogg

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UCSJ Office Hours

Monday, Wednesday, and Friday
9 AM to 1 PM



This summer we have been focused in worship on what it means to be the Body of Christ. Most recently it's been the heart, the breath, the mind, the eyes, the mouth, the ears. These are all bodily things, flesh and blood, breath and thought, vision, speaking, hearing. They are elemental to our being human in the world.

The Apostle Paul talks throughout his letters about being the body of Christ together. He understands us, the Church, to be a living, breathing, on-the-ground and out-in-the-world expression of changed and empowered lives in Jesus Christ.

The writer of 1 Peter uses a different metaphor: living stones or building stones. "Present yourselves as building stones for the construction of a sanctuary vibrant with life..." he writes in 1 Peter 2:5—(*The Message*). For him Jesus is the cornerstone of our lives. He is the one in whom we all come together, the one who sets our foundation. And, of course, the name "Peter"—Petros in the Greek—means "rock."

What does it mean to be a rock? In Jesus' day, the via Romana and other main roads in cities were paved with rock. It created a firm surface which made long distances easier to travel. Houses and buildings were set on a foundation of rock, because it created a solid floor on which to build. Rock is stable. Rock is durable. Rock is reliable. When someone is a rock, it means they are going to be there for you. When something is written on stone, it means it will not change.

So, what does it mean to be a living stone? For the writer of 1 Peter, it means letting ourselves "be pulled into a way of life shaped by God's life, a life energetic and blazing with holiness," (1 Peter 1: 14—*The Message*), a life designed to receive blessing and to be a blessing in the world. For some people holiness means living a perfect life: never making a mistake, never losing control, never being wrong. But holiness as the writer of 1 Peter knows it has nothing to do with any of that. Holiness for him is living our lives joyfully in faith, not scrabbling through our lives, diminished in fear.

I was pondering how different our lives would be—and how different the world would be—if we focused ourselves on being living rocks of blessing. What would change in us and around us if all our energy was directed toward being rocks of encouragement and blessing? What would shift in our lives and the world around us if we stood stable in faith and not wavering in fear? Might we be a rock for those who are dealing with fluctuating sands in their life? Or what if instead of regularly joining in the rampant hand-wringing and outrage about the state of the world, we reliably brought words that bridge divides, turn down the temperature on heated discourse, bring a peace that we have all begun to miss?

When I think about living/building stones, I think about our mission statement. It envisions—as 1 Peter does—all kinds of different stones built into a living expression of God's love, stones that build together a living sanctuary for a broken and hurting world. When that vision guides our life together, you can be sure, as Jesus says in Matthew 7:24-27, we will be a shelter that no storm can ever bring down.

Blessings, Melinda

Calendar for August

(For more information, see page #s)

Sunday, August 4 — 10 AM

Communion

Monday, August 12 — 10 AM

Where Does the West Begin in America? (pg. 4)

Wednesday, August 14 — 2 PM

Full Council Meeting

Saturday, August 17 — 8:30 AM

COED (Men's) Potluck Breakfast (pg. 2 & 3)

Sunday, August 18 — 4 PM

Piano Recital (pg. 3)

Tuesday, August 20 — 5-7 PM

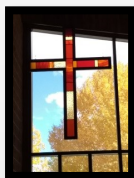
Ladies Happy Hour (pg. 3)

Monday, August 26 — 10 AM

On the Same Page Book Club (pg. 4)

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Weekly Activities



SUNDAYS

10 AM — Worship Service (Communion is served the first Sunday of each month)

MONDAYS — 9 AM (via Zoom)

Centering Prayer

WEDNESDAYS

10 AM — Prayer Shawl Ministry

4 PM — Choir Practice

THURSDAYS

Women's Bible Study (Resumes in September)

SATURDAYS — 8:30 AM (via Zoom)

Men's Bible Study

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Please email ucsjoffice@gmail.com or leave a detailed message on the church phone 970.626.5803.

Address, phone, email changes, or if you wish to be removed from the church directory.

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Thank you for your generous support. To contribute online, [click here](#) or mail your offerings to the church office at PO Box 295, Ridgway, CO 81432.



July Council Highlights

The Administrative Committee of the UCSJ Council met in July. Along with the usual business they approved the final draft of the Annual Report which includes the financials through June 30. We discussed security issues and will get an estimate on putting locks on the south storage units where the new Audio Visual equipment is stored. Outside users will also be contacted and reminded to secure the building when they leave. If issues continue we may need to discuss further actions. Plans for the Council retreat at the Graff's on July 20 were discussed, however, the retreat will be rescheduled due to the illness of Pastor Melinda and the Graffs. Pam Larson and Donna Whiskeman will work on the Council and Ministry meeting schedule for the coming year.

The next full Council meeting will be Wednesday, August 14, at 2 PM, at the church. Please join us.

Danger was averted Sunday, July 14 when gas was detected in the church. Windows and doors were opened and fans were immediately used to circulate the air. By the time church began all was well. This scare reminds us **to be sure to turn off all the burners on the stove**, check that they are in the "OFF" position. We will check with Church Mutual to see if they provide gas monitors.

Blessings, Pam Larson, Chair



If you attended church on Sunday, June 16 and stayed for the Annual Congregational Meeting, you heard me express my concern that we were projecting a shortfall in contributions of \$8,200 in our yearly budget. Remember that I said the good news was that we still had two weeks to make up the difference. In fact, thanks to your generosity, we ended the year with an overage of \$2,055. **Thank You!**

We still ended the fiscal year with a \$5,600 deficit due to additional administrative costs and several unplanned building and landscaping projects. The deficit is not nearly as uncomfortable as the \$16,400 deficit that was projected. Reserve funds will cover the shortfall.

A reminder that we approved a \$10,000 increase for the new year which is about a 5% increase in contributions and expenses. Please keep that in mind as you support UCSJ this year.

Dennis Eliason, Finance Vice-chair

COED (Men's) Breakfast Saturday, August 17, at 8:30 AM

Our speaker will be **C J Brafford** who was born on the Pine Ridge Indian Reservation and is an enrolled tribal member of the Oglala Lakota Nation. Her presentation will be about her experiences over the years as a tribal member and her work at the Ute Museum. C J Brafford moved to Montrose, Colorado, 26 years ago as the Director of the Ute Indian Museum and is soon retiring. *She originally planned to speak at the June coed breakfast but due to a death in her family it was rescheduled for August.*



Treasurer's Report

If you have any questions or suggestions, please contact me by phone 970.596.3755 or email suestern1@gmail.com. Thank you all for your continued support of our church and missions.

	<u>Month End Report — As of June 30, 2024</u>		<u>Fiscal Year End</u>	
	YTD Actual	Year-to-Date Goal	Income Above Goal	Annual Budget
Income	\$192,055	\$190,000	\$2,055	\$190,000
Expenses	\$197,650			
Net LOSS	<\$5,595>			

Sue Stern, Treasurer

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!

Sunday Worship

Sunday worship service is also videotaped and posted, following the service, on [Facebook](#) and our [website](#), for those wishing to worship at home.



Communion

Join us at our Lord's Table (1st Sunday)
Sunday, August 4



Connections at UCSJ



Sunday Sundaes Concert

"Ridgway Grit: Music from the West" — Sunday, July 28, at 4 PM

Our second Sunday Sundaes concert features our UCSJ musicians with a little help from our friends. We'll have great western music, poetry, and a few wild stories. Of course, we'll have ice cream after the concert.

Coed Potluck Breakfast — Saturday, August 17, at 8:30 AM

Join us for our third potluck breakfast of the summer. If you'd like to help with food, please bring an egg dish, potato casserole, fruit or bread. See page two for information on the presenter.

Piano Recital — Sunday, August 18, at 4 PM

Katy Kristoffersen presents her summer students' piano recital performances. Ice cream sundaes to follow the concert.



Ladies Happy Hour — Tuesday, August 20, from 5-7 PM

We'll meet at Jenny Cheek's home (50 N. Juniper on Log Hill) for food, drinks, and great conversation. Please bring an appetizer or dessert for our lovely evening together. You may sign up in the gathering area.

Thank you!

Thanks to **Kay Sibold and Burt and Sue Stern** for providing Sunday fellowship treats and to our coffee-maker **David Stytz**.



Save the Dates

- Sunday Sundaes Concert
"Sounds of Summer" with Valley Symphony Chorus — September 15
- Community Learning — September 18, at 4:30 PM
- Men's Breakfast — September 21, at 8:30 AM
- Fall Colors Tour — September 27
We'll go leaf peeping and explore our aspen gold rush. This won't be an "off-road" adventure, so everyone can join us.

Congregational Life Ministry Team: *Jenny Cheek, Sue Conrad, Charlotte Duckett, Anne Linenberger, Lish Sheppard, Elise Shirey, Kay Sibold, Carolyn Snowbarger, Gen Spangler, and Angela Todd*

City Market Community Rewards



Thank you to the 17 households who helped UCSJ receive \$186.44 last quarter!

It's easy to help UCSJ receive donations using your City Market/Kroger card. You just need a digital account, so if you already have one click [here](#) and scroll down to the "Link your shopper's card" and search for United Church of the San Juans, select, and save. If you don't have a digital account, you will need to create one. Any transactions moving forward will be applied to the program at no added cost to you.

Education at UCSJ



As we begin our new church year, I want to thank **Angela Todd**, our Council Representative for the past year, and her committee for the continuity in programming and assuring our education programs continue through the summer. I also want to thank those committee members who are continuing to serve this coming year.

We can always use more help. I encourage you to get involved by serving on the committee. The committee can also use any suggestions you have for programs or topics of interest you think our UCSJ crowd would like to pursue. Contact me if you can help or have suggestions. *Find a place to get involved—or suggest a new idea for us all to learn together!*

Where Does the West Begin in America? — Monday, August 12, at 10 AM

Join **Glen Ely** (Pastor Melinda's husband) for a robust discussion of the American West. Of course, we'll have food and drinks available, too.

Here are some of the topics we'll be exploring:

What symbols, myths, and traits define the American West and the American South?

What is Southern identity and how do we know we're in the South?

What is Western identity—if I wear a cowboy hat and boots am I western? When do we know we are in the West? Where does the West begin?

Where do we get this Western identity, how much is real, how much created or fake? Western dime novels, western art, western movies, and tv shows.

If a city or a place claims its identity as Southern or Western, how do we know if what we are seeing and experiencing is real?

How to discern the true roots and identity of a place? When it is real and when it is fake, or blended, part truth, part fake.

On the Same Page Book Club — Monday, August 26, at 10 AM

Go as a River by Shelley Read

Have you ever wondered what lies beneath Blue Mesa Reservoir? Homes, ranches, towns, and farms were "washed away" with the construction of the dam along the Gunnison River. This book has been inspired by true events set in Iola, Colorado. It features a young woman facing loss of all that she has known. Yet she begins to see her life as a river—gathering and flowing, finding a way forward. We have copies in the gathering area (\$10).

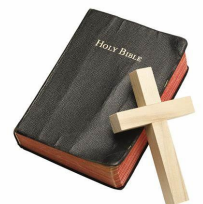
Community Learning — Book Studies and Soup Suppers

Our Wednesday night Community Learning sessions begin September 18. In August, we will be selecting the book offerings for the fall, and we need your help in selecting books. Watch for the display of books in the gathering area and turn in your votes. You will have an opportunity to sign up, order books, and choose your preferred meeting time in September.

Bible Studies

Men's Bible Study meets, on ZOOM, Saturday mornings at 8:30 AM. Contact Bob Larson if you are interested in joining for a fun and meaningful look into God's Word.

Women's Bible Study is on hiatus for the summer. Watch for information about the fall restart in Newslink and/or the Sunday bulletin.



Centering Prayer

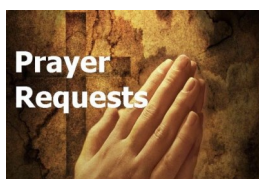
This group meets, on ZOOM, every Monday morning at 9 AM. Contact Kathy Graff if you are interested in taking part.

Vince Snowbarger, Council Representative for Education

Caring for One Another . . .

The love and sympathy of the UCSJ family is with **Max & Alicia Sheppard**, on the death of their daughter, Alyson Blair on July 19, 2024 in Columbus, Georgia.

Safe travels and best wishes to **Don Schwartz** as he moves to the Denver area and settles into his new home close to his sons.



If you have a prayer request or 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 ucsjoffice@gmail.com. You can also contact Pastor Melinda or a member of the Care Team. The Care Team list is posted in the gathering area.

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

Tasty Morsels from “PLUM” Corner

PRESBYTERIANS — The following paragraph is from the *Magazine of the Presbyterian Church in America*. The title of the article is *The Unhindered Gospel in Acts* by Jessica Fikkert.



“Our current cultural moment is marked by fear, anxiety, and pessimism. COVID-19, political turmoil, racial tensions, and economic instability have left many with a deep sense that something has gone terribly wrong in America. And things don’t look much better in the church. The downfalls of many prominent Christian leaders, the rapid decline in church attendance, and the seemingly endless schisms are sowing the seeds of disillusionment and despair.”

This article is a review of a book titled *Saved* by Nancy Guthrie. If this piques your interest you will find the article [here](#). I think the article and book are worth a read.

LUTHERANS — “Relief and Development.” We are a church that rolls up its sleeves and gets to work. The ELCA has an emphasis on God’s Work our Hands. This is a day where congregations are encouraged to find a neighbor that needs some help and provide that help. The day that is set aside for this is September 8, 2024.

The installation for the new Bishop, Dr. Rev. Meghan Johnson Aelabouni, of the Rocky Mountain Synod is set for October 4, 2024.

UNITED CHURCH OF CHRIST — The UCC is calling for an emphasis on “Peoples Prayers for Peace.”

General Minister and President, Rev. Karen Georgia Thompson calls the church to a session of prayer. Prayer undergirds our witness, ministry, and advocacy as we work for peace and a just world for all. For more information [click here](#).

METHODISTS — This month I want to call our attention to The First Methodist Church here in Montrose. They have a very serious problem with there church building. They are faced with foundation problems which will place a heavy burden on the congregation. The repairs to the building may exceed two million dollars. The question I have for our congregation is are we in a position to help?

Tom Chase

August Birthdays

- 3 – Susan Wing
- 7 – Josie Snapp
- 9 – Charlie Scholpp
- 9 – Anita Posey
- 12 – Bailey Sherwood
- 12 – Elliot Kristoffersen
- 14 – Barbara Eliason
- 23 – Lucy Scholpp
- 23 – Gail Callahan
- 26 – Shirley Didier
- 28 – Marsha McCall
- 28 – Randy Parker

August Anniversaries

- 13 – Mike & Katy Kristoffersen
- 13 – Ken & Sandy Sloan
- 13 – Pam & Ken Stofferahn
- 20 – Tim & Gen Spangler
- 20 – David & Lisa Young
- 21 – Mick & Kathy Graff
- 27 – Don & Sheryl Radovich
- 31 – Dick & Brenda Engdahl

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

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Full Council Meeting

**Wednesday, August 14
2 PM**

Administrative Committee meets monthly. **FULL COUNCIL** (Pastor, Administrative Committee, and Ministry Committee Representatives) meets quarterly.

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Thank you to **Jenny Cheek and Larry Harley** for their hard work pulling weeds, weed whacking, and cleaning up our church grounds. They look terrific!

Ouray County Food Pantry

The August focus for donations to the Ouray County Food Pantry is **baking supplies**—flour, sugar (brown and white), baking powder, yeast, spices and seasonings, brownie and cake mixes, bread mixes, chocolate chips—if you bake with it, consider donating it. Donations of unopened, unexpired food and personal care items of all kinds are welcome. Bring your donations to the church any time and leave them in the box in the gathering area. Thank you.



Cindi Myers, Mission & Outreach Ministry Member

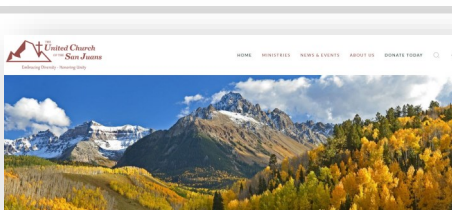
Please remember that pictures of members and their children may be posted around the church and on the internet (website and Facebook). If you do not want your picture used, please contact the church office. Thank you!

Connect with UCSJ!



And like us!

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www.ucsjridgway.org

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

We are affiliated with:

~ Presbyterian Church (USA)

~ Evangelical Lutheran Church in America

~ United Church of Christ

~ United Methodist Church



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