

**Worship
Sundays at 10 AM**

Mailing Address:

P.O. Box 295
Ridgway, CO 81432

Email: ucsjoffice@gmail.com

Website: www.ucsjridgway.org

Facebook:

www.facebook.com/ucsjridgway

~ ~ ~ ~ ~

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

Gail Callahan — Acting Treasurer

Laura Hagert — Custodian

Mike Kristoffersen — Audio-visual Operator

~ ~ ~ ~ ~

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

~ ~ ~ ~ ~

Website & Newsletter Editor — Barb Eliason

Newslink Editor — Administrative Assistant

ucsjoffice@gmail.com

External Publicity — Kate Kellogg

~ ~ ~ ~ ~

UCSJ Office Hours

**Monday, Wednesday, and Friday
9 AM to 1 PM**



(Drawing courtesy of Dick Engdahl)



In the midst of all the darkness in the world, the thought that light is powerful enough to take it on and stand right in the middle of it is comforting and hopeful.

Yet darkness has a pretty strong track record. Wars, poverty, racism, famine, violence, addictions, betrayal, deception, injustice, corruption, and so on. The list of its accomplishments is long.

So, calling out darkness and elevating light seems a little naïve, actually, given the ways darkness brings deep shadows to our lives and to our world. Yet that is exactly what the season of Epiphany does. It focuses us on the light and its ability to infiltrate and keep shining in the midst of the worst the world has to give.

The magi who travel hundreds of miles to pay homage to Jesus are part of a long line, many generations, of sky watchers, looking into the darkness, searching for the light. And when they finally see it, after centuries of waiting and watching, they launch out to meet it where it is living. It is no short journey, no easy effort. It takes determined intention to get to the light. When they arrive, though the source of light may not have been what they were expecting, they recognize it and open themselves to it as they bow and present their gifts at the manger.

The *American Heritage Dictionary of the English Language* defines “epiphany” as:

- 1) A Christian feast celebrating the manifestation of the divine nature of Jesus to the Gentiles as represented by the Magi.
- 2) A revelatory manifestation of a divine being.
- 3) A sudden insight or intuitive understanding.

The trip of the magi encompasses all three of those. The magi not only experienced a revelatory manifestation of a divine being, but they also received a “sudden insight and intuitive understanding” of the new way God was now at work in the world, crossing barriers and building bridges across them.

The season of Epiphany not only contrasts the light and shadow in the world, but it focuses us on the way the Spirit of Christ is at work in the midst of the darkest of places. Epiphany calls us to open the darker places in our own lives to the light, to receive it, be healed by it, and then to carry it with us as we walk out in the world.

The first Sunday in January is Epiphany Sunday. In worship we’ll be celebrating the magi and their trip to the light in worship—and God’s invitation to us to live in light—and we’ll carry that over from worship as we gather for lunch afterward. I hope you will join us. There will be plenty of food—and lots of light!

Blessings, Melinda

Calendar for January

(For more information, see page #s)

Wednesday, January 1



Sunday, January 5 — Epiphany Sunday

10 AM — Communion

11 AM — Epiphany Lunch (pg. 4)

Wednesday, January 8 — 2 PM

FULL Council Meeting

Monday, January 13 — 10 AM

On the Same Page Book Club (pg. 2)

Saturday, January 18 — 8:30 AM

Men's Breakfast (pg. 3)

Wednesday, January 29 — Noon

Gals' Lunch at Toasty All Day Eatery, Montrose (pg. 4)

~ ~ ~ ~ ~

Weekly Activities



SUNDAYS — 10 AM

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

MONDAYS — 9 AM (via Zoom)

Centering Prayer (pg. 6)

THURSDAYS

9 AM (via Zoom) — Women's Bible Study (pg. 6)

4:30 PM — Choir Practice

SATURDAYS — 8:30 AM (via Zoom)

Men's Bible Study (pg. 6)

~ ~ ~ ~ ~

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.



~ ~ ~ ~ ~

Church Doors and Lights



Please make sure the doors are secure and lights off when you are the last to leave the building. Thank you!

Council Highlights

Happy New Year 2025! Your UCSJ Council has facilitated several changes this past year 2024. We have a new Administrative Assistant, **Shirley Didier**, who has given us great bulletins and communication.

New Council members have taken over several ministries, **Vince Snowbarger**, Education Ministry, **Tom Chase**, Membership Ministry, and **Alice Goertz**, Care Ministry. Council Notebooks have been prepared for each Council Member.

Several policies have been reviewed, especially the Facility USE Policy and Procedures.

Succession planning has begun particularly in the Financial area. **Gail Callahan** has stepped up to take over as Treasurer with the assistance of Denny Eliason, Vice-chair of Finances, and Sue Stern, Treasurer.

The next FULL Council meeting is Wednesday, January 8, at 2 PM.

The Council members, past and present, thank each of you, our congregational family, for your support in work, contributions and especially in prayer. Please continue to hold all of us at UCSJ in prayer this new year.

Blessings, Pam Larson, Council Chair

Education at UCSJ

On the Same Page Book Club — Attention Women AND Men

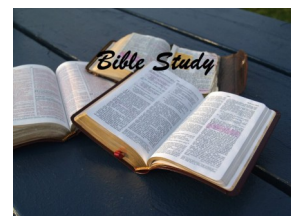
Monday, January 13, at 10 AM



Our next book is *The Happiest Man on Earth: The Beautiful Life of an Auschwitz Survivor*. Our author Eddie Jaku always considered himself a German first, a Jew second. He was proud of his country. But all of that changed on November 9, 1938. He was beaten, arrested,

then imprisoned in Buchenwald and Auschwitz concentration camps. Finally, he was rescued by Allied soldiers. In 1950 he moved to Australia and spent the next 45 years telling his story, sharing his wisdom, and paying tribute to those who were lost.

This book is meant for these times. Vince and Carolyn Snowbarger will facilitate our discussion on January 13. Books (\$10) will be available in the gathering area.



Bible Studies

Centering Prayer meets on ZOOM, Mondays at 9 AM. Contact Kathy Graff if you are interested in participating.

Women's Bible Study meets on ZOOM, Thursdays at 9 AM. Contact Donna Whiskeman if you are interested in joining.

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

Vince Snowbarger, Council Representative for Education

Treasurer's Report

If you have any questions or suggestions, please contact me by phone 970.318.0793 or email g3cunningham@gmail.com. Thank you all for your continued support of our church and missions.

Month End Report — As of November 30, 2024

	YTD Actual	Year-to-Date Goal	Income ABOVE Goal	Annual Budget
Income	\$98,228	\$83,333	\$14,895	\$200,000
Expenses	\$77,988			
Net GAIN	\$20,240			

Gail Callahan, Acting 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

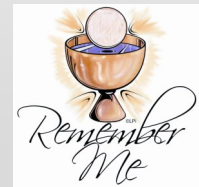
Sunday worship service is also videotaped and posted, following the service, on [Facebook](#) and our [website](#), for those wishing to worship at home.



~ ~ ~ ~ ~

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

Sunday, January 5



Ouray County Food Pantry Items for HAVEN HOUSE This Month



This month we are turning our focus to collecting cleaning supplies (dish and laundry detergent, glass cleaner, all-purpose and bathroom cleaners, sponges, etc.) and paper products (toilet paper and paper towels) for Haven House. They have an urgent need for these items and we want to help them out.

Haven House is a faith-based organization that helps families move from homelessness to a self-reliant lifestyle. UCSJ has long supported Haven House in this effort. Please bring your donations to the church during the month of January. Thank you, as always, for your generosity.

Cindi Myers, Mission & Outreach Ministry Member

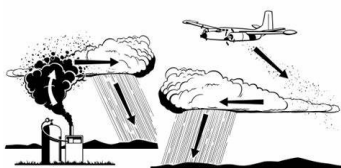


Ridgway Noel Night December 6

UCSJ Choir singing at the tree lighting in Hartwell Park



Men's Breakfast — Saturday, January 18 at 8:30 AM



Tim Spangler will be speaking on "Water doesn't freeze at 32F and other interesting facts about Cloud Seeding in Colorado." He will briefly explain some basics of cloud physics like why water doesn't freeze at 32F, and then describe how cloud seeding works to enhance snowfall, how Colorado has two cloud seeding programs, and he will throw in stories like how he was on approach to landing at Hill AFB in a blinding snow storm, or the time he realized his pilot was drunk on a cloud seeding mission.

Congregational Life at UCSJ

Leftover Sunday Fellowship — December 29, Following Worship

Do you have leftover holiday treats that you'd like to share? Please bring them for our fellowship time following our lay service.

Epiphany Lunch — Sunday, January 5, Following Worship

Epiphany is a special Christian feast day to honor the arrival of the three wise men, who followed the Bethlehem star to Jesus. Please join us for a special luncheon to celebrate this church and its mission in our community.



Gals' Lunch — Wednesday, January 29, at Noon

Have you been to Toasty All Day Eatery? It's a new restaurant in Colorado Outdoors at 1341 Mayfly Drive in Montrose. Yes, they have breakfast, lunch, and special drinks. Please sign up in the gathering area or let Carolyn Snowbarger know you plan to attend.



January Birthdays

If you have an upcoming birthday or anniversary, please contact Carolyn Snowbarger. We want to celebrate with you during our fellowship time following worship.

Cookies, Cookies, and Cookies!

Thanks to all of you who brought cookies to share during fellowship and special Advent events.



Ministry Team Members: Jenny Cheek, Sue Conrad,

Charlotte Duckett, Lish Sheppard, Elise Shirey, Carolyn Snowbarger, Gen Spangler, and Angela Todd



Tasty Morsels from "PLUM" Corner

Merry Christmas !!!

I hope you have had wonderful celebrations of Christ's birth with those you love and who love you.

Below are articles, news, and events from our four denominations.

Happy New Year to all... Kim Lundgren

PRESBYTERIANS — The wonderful online *Looking into the Lectionary* continues. Past editions and news items are also available by [CLICKING here](#).

LUTHERANS — Brave Experiments: Lay Leader Edition—Thursday, February 20, 2025 at 6:30 PM

UCSJ demonstrates a unique organization of a church community. The Rocky Mountain Synod is holding an event to discuss this topic. While there is a shortage of pastors and deacons the fact is many congregations are unable to afford full-time or even part-time leaders. Despite these challenges, congregations are innovating. Lay leaders are stepping up to roles traditionally held by rostered leaders, and Brave Experiments are underway to meet the needs of our communities. For more information and registration [CLICK here](#).

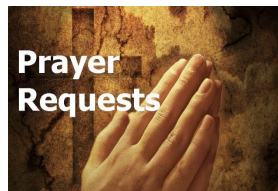
UNITED CHURCH OF CHRIST — General Synod 35—July 11-15, 2025, in Kansas City, Missouri

Registration is now open for the General Synod of the United Church of Christ, an opportunity for thousands within the United Church of Christ to gather for worship, fellowship, attending to business, offering public witness, and setting the denomination's priorities for ministry. The application for General Synod workshop proposals is now open as well. [CLICK here for more information](#).

METHODISTS — UMC has great Methodist church history posted online. Christmas is a very special time of the year for music in the church and Charles Wesley is a big part of that history. Born on December 18, 1707, Wesley became famous for the hymns he wrote (think "Hark, the Herald Angels Sing") and the movement he helped found with his older brother, which grew to become The United Methodist Church. To learn about Charles Wesley's Gift of Music [CLICK here](#).

Caring for One Another . . .

The love and sympathy of the UCSJ family is with **Dick Engdahl and family, on the death of his wife, Brenda** on December 10, 2024. A Celebration of Life was held at UCSJ on December 14.



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.)

New Community Volunteer Opportunity with the Ouray County Sheriff's Department

The Ouray County Sheriff's Department recognizes the need to provide spiritual support to our citizens and law enforcement officers from time to time. With that in mind, the department is creating a volunteer Sheriff's Chaplain program. We are seeking interested clergy and congregants from local churches to participate as trained volunteer chaplains.

The volunteer chaplains will:

- Participate in scheduled chaplain meetings
- Often accompany deputies on ride-alongs during their shift
- Provide spiritual support in situations to both law enforcement personnel and those whose situation law enforcement has been called on to address
- From time-to-time respond to deaths and complete death notifications
- Visit at the hospital and attend funerals if requested

A brief overview of preparation for this volunteer program includes:

- An interview with the Sheriff and coordinator on Monday, December 6th
- A background check to assess eligibility
- Participation in a training program to equip volunteer chaplains

Training and uniform shirt will be provided through the Sheriff's Office. Once a team of volunteer chaplains has been assembled, we will create a participation roster that works to accommodate the volunteers' schedules.

If you are interested and would like more information, please call Ed Pecis, Chaplain Coordinator at 530.604.4155.



January Birthdays

- 3 – Ina Dow
- 5 – Wendy Kidd
- 7 – Leslie Wood
- 10 – Mike Kristoffersen
- 12 – Harvey Scoville
- 15 – Kathy Graff
- 16 – George Weekly
- 18 – Peg Kristoffersen
- 19 – Gary Elliott
- 20 – Josephine Scoville
- 22 – Ken Sloan
- 23 – Gay Kempner
- 24 – Kia Chandler
- 27 – Jim Wing

January Anniversaries

22 – Charlie Carson & Marsha McCall

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

~ ~ ~ ~ ~

FULL Council Meeting

(2nd Wednesday)

Wednesday, January 8

2 PM

Administrative Committee meets monthly.

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



~ ~ ~ ~ ~

Now that winter is here, please remember that the parking spaces on the west side of the building are primarily for those who have difficulty walking. Thank you!




So Many Ways to Help Out! We Need YOU!



*Ushers, Greeters,
Readers, Worship Assistants,
Communion Assistants,
Treats, Coffee Prep and Clean Up, Flowers, etc.*

Sign-up sheets are on the table in the gathering area... please add your name!

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!



www.ucsjridgway.org

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

Connect with UCSJ!



And like us!

www.facebook.com/ucsjridgway

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