

**Worship  
Sundays at 10 AM**

**Mailing Address:**

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**UCSJ Staff**

**Rev. Melinda Veatch** — Pastor

**Rev. Dick Engdahl** — Pastor Emeritus

**Deacon Bob Larson** — Missional Outreach

**Deacon Kathy Graff** — 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**

*(Ministry in Parentheses)*

Rev. Melinda Veatch

Charlotte Duckett *(Membership)*

Alice Goertz *(Care)*

Pam Larson *(Council Chair)*

Joan Moyer *(Operations)*

Elise Shirey *(Education)*

Carolyn Snowbarger *(Congregational Life)*

Vince Snowbarger *(Finance)*

Timothy Spangler *(Worship & Music)*

Donna Whiskeman *(Ministry)*

Lisa Young *(Mission & Outreach)*

[\(Learn more about their roles here\)](#)

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Website & Newsletter Editor — Barb Eliason

NewsLink Editor — Administrative Assistant

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

External Publicity — Kate Kellogg

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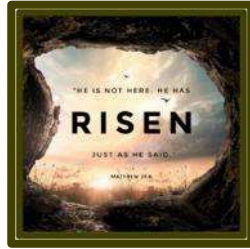
**UCSJ Office Hours**

**Tuesday, Wednesday, and Thursday**

**9 AM to 1 PM**



*(Drawing courtesy of Dick Engdahl)*



*The Life-Light blazed out of the darkness; the darkness couldn't put it out.*

— John 1:5

We begin April in the shadows of Holy Week.

We walk with Jesus and the disciples into the Upper Room of a home in Jerusalem. There they celebrate a last Passover meal. He washes their feet, an act of servant leadership. He takes the unleavened bread of the Passover, the quick sustenance for the enslaved Israelites as they rushed to get out of Egypt. He takes the cup of wine, a symbol of the saving blood smeared on each door lintel to keep the angel of death away on their way out. And he establishes a new meal celebrating our liberation to new life from sin and death.

After that meal, the shadows lengthen. In the Garden of Gethsemane, we see his anguish and his prayer. He is arrested. His disciples scatter. He is tried, mocked and beaten. He is nailed to a cross. He dies and is buried in a sealed tomb.

But on the first Sunday in April, Easter Sunday, we walk into the light of the resurrected Christ. Death is not the conqueror, but the conquered one. Shadows have not deepened, instead they have disappeared. Jesus, the Life-Light is out of the tomb and on the move. He surprises Mary in the garden. She recognizes his voice when he says her name. He walks with two disciples on the Road to Emmaus, who recognize him in the breaking of the bread. He enters a room where he breathes his peace into his disciples huddled in fear.

Through the centuries there have been countless theories about the Resurrection. To our 21st Century minds (and to minds from the centuries before) it is a real challenge to fathom how that could even be possible.

Yet the most important point about the Resurrection—and about the Christ we follow—is that death does not ultimately win. It has no final word on who we are or what we can do. There will always be darkness and death in the world and in our lives, but the power of Christ's light and life will ever break it. Our fear, our doubt, our hesitancy to trust may blind us to that truth, but, thankfully, the Light of Christ shines whether we are on the lookout for it or not.

So, as we go into this season of Easter, may we pursue the Life-Light the darkness cannot overcome with all we do, and may we be changed in ways that only Love can muster.

*Blessings, Melinda*

### Calendar for April

(For more information, see page #s)

**Good Friday, April 3 — 7 PM**

A Tenebrae Service

**Sunday, April 5 — Happy Easter!**

**7 AM** — Sunrise Service at Inspiration Point on Log Hill

**8 AM** — Potluck Brunch

**10 AM** — Easter Worship Service

**Wednesday, April 8 — 2 PM**

Administrative Committee of Council Meeting

**Sunday, April 12 — 10 AM**

Communion (Note the **DATE** Change)

**Saturday, April 18 — 9 AM**

Breakfast Forum (pg. 7)

**Thursday, April 23 — 12 PM**

Gals' Lunch, Eatery 66, Ridgway (pg. 4)

**Sunday, April 26 — Following Worship**

April Birthday Celebration (pg. 4)

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### Weekly Activities



#### SUNDAYS

**8:30 AM** — Choir Practice

**10 AM** — Worship Service

(Communion is served the first Sunday of each month)

**MONDAYS — 9 AM** ([via Zoom](#))

Centering Prayer

**WEDNESDAYS — 4:30 PM** (Begins April 8)

Community Book Study and Soup Supper (pg.5)

**SATURDAYS — 8:30 AM** ([via Zoom](#))

Men's Bible Study

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



### Council Highlights!

Your UCSJ Council is working on several items:

- This summer a concert is being planned by Katy for the 150/250 Celebration. This will include a commissioned original song by Dylan Fixmer. Please, plan to attend this event.
- A committee has been formed to look at our record keeping software as there are a number of packages that are specifically for church use. This group will, with input from our users, try to determine if something new would more easily help us keep track of our finances and membership.
- A Bylaw committee has been reviewing our bylaws and has come up with a few minor changes that they would like to present to you, the congregation, for approval. Final wording will be presented to the Council for approval and then to you for approval at our Annual Meeting in June.
- Entry signage is being considered for our front door so that visitors can easily find our main entry.
- Elliot Kristoffersen has let the Council know that he is available to do work. The Administrative Committee of the Council will determine what work we would like him to do and who will supervise him. If any of you have needs, he could help with, please let him know.
- The west parking lot drainage project will begin sometime soon.
- The Council will be working on next fiscal year's budget soon, let us know if you see needs or improvements we should consider.

Our next meeting is for the **Administrative Committee of Council on April 8, at 2 PM** at the church. As always, you are welcome and encouraged to attend.

*Blessings, Pam Larson, Council Chair*



### HOLY WEEK

**Palm Sunday, March 29, at 10 AM**

**Maundy Thursday, April 2**

**Good Friday, April 3, at 7 PM —**  
Tenebrae Service

**Easter Sunday, April 5**

**7 AM** — Sunrise Service at Inspiration Point on Log Hill

**8-9:30 AM** — Potluck Brunch

**10 AM** — Easter Worship Service



## Treasurer's Report

If you have any questions or suggestions, please contact me by phone (970) 596-3755 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 February 28, 2026

	YTD Actual	Year-to-Date Goal	Income <b>BELOW</b> Goal	Annual Budget
Income	\$140,188	\$140,667	<\$ 479>	\$211,000
Expenses	\$137,222			
Net <b>GAIN</b>	\$ 2,966			

*Sue Stern, Treasurer*

## 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.

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

**April 12**

(Note the DATE Change)

## Finances

As you can see above, we are beginning to fall short of our budgeted contributions. The end of our fiscal year is June 30, so we have time to reverse the trend. Please be prayerful and faithful in your UCSJ giving.

*Vince Snowbarger, Vice Chairperson of Finance*



## PLUM Corner

**Presbyterian** — Young Presbyterians share a vision of the future of the church. For the first time in six years the youth and young people gather to discuss the future of the church. [Click here for more information.](#)



**Lutheran ELCA** — “Imagine More” is the theme for the youth gathering for ELCA Youth. Dates for this event are June 28–July 2, 2027. The 2027 ELCA Youth Gathering will bring thousands of young people together in Minneapolis to worship, learn and celebrate God’s limitless love. It’s a once-in-a-lifetime experience, filled with energy, faith, and connection.

**United Church of Christ** — Hawaii UCC church welcomes volunteers into community’s work toward healing from wildfires by [Kayla Berkey](#), published on March 10, 2026. At Po’okela Church, new seats in the first rows of the sanctuary have a special purpose. The church replaced two rows of pews with chairs that unfold into beds to host volunteers who come to assist with the area’s wildfire recovery work.

The **UCC and Presbyterian USA** have combined their efforts to help with the people of Maui and the town of Lahaina. God’s people at work helping others.

**Methodist** — [Minnesota Pastor Testifies to U.S. Congress.](#) The Rev. Mariah Tollgaard, senior pastor of Hamline United Methodist Church, spoke to a U.S. House committee about the impact of the federal crackdown on her parishioners and state. “No nation can build a true future on the terror of its own people,” she said.

Join us—your Mountain Sky Conference Co-Lay Leaders—as we gather as God’s family at the [2026 Mountain Sky Annual Conference](#) of The United Methodist Church in Billings, Montana, from June 10 to 13, 2026. We hope you will make plans now to join us in person or online, because the Annual Conference is most meaningful when the full richness of our Mountain Sky connection is present.

*Tom Chase*

## Warmth, Worship, and Wild Adventures: Congregational Life Updates

*Spring is in the air, and our church family has plenty of reasons to gather, celebrate, and explore the beauty of God's creation together.*

### Upcoming Gatherings:

#### Easter Potluck Brunch

- When: **Sunday, April 5, from 8—9:30 AM**
- Celebrate Resurrection Morning with food and fellowship!
- Bring a dish to share as we gather in joy (between our sunrise and worship services)
- Please sign up in the gathering area, so we know how many are coming.

#### Gals' Lunch: For the Beauty of the Earth

- When: **Thursday, April 23, at 12 PM**
- Where: **Eatery 66**, 520 Sherman Street in Ridgway
- In honor of Earth Day, come ready to share stories of your favorite San Juan location.
- Let's celebrate the natural wonders right in our backyard!

#### April Birthday Celebration

- When: **Sunday, April 26, Following Worship**
- It's time for cake! We are gathering to celebrate all our church family members born in April. Come for the fellowship, stay for the dessert!



#### Mountain Adventures: Save the Dates

Dust off your hiking boots and grab your camera! We have some incredible excursions planned for the warmer months:

**July 28-30 — Creede, CO**

Nighttime theater, dinners together, outdoor excursions

**September 24 — Crested Butte, CO**

Discovering our gold

#### Dreaming & Planning

We are also working on details for trips to Marble (BBQ and camping), Disappointment Valley (wild horses and ranches), and Segoe (a mining ghost town). Stay tuned—details coming soon!

Let  
THE  
adventure  
BEGIN

### Heartfelt Thanks to Our Volunteers

Our Sunday fellowship time is the heartbeat of our community, and it wouldn't be possible without our wonderful volunteers. A huge "Thank You" to the following individuals for providing coffee and delicious treats this past month: **Alice Goertz, Junella Hildreth, Gen Spangler, Gail Callahan, Dee James, Lucy Ledgerwood, and David Stytz.**

Want to help? If you'd like to host a future Sunday, you can sign up to bring treats in the gathering area!



*Blessings from Your Congregational Life Ministry Team: Jenny Cheek, Sue Conrad, Charlotte Duckett, Junella Hildreth, Marge Quist, Lish Sheppard, Elise Shirey, Carolyn Snowbarger (chair), Gen Spangler, and Angela Todd*

## Education

### UCSJ Spring Community Book Study and Soup Supper Begins Wednesday, April 8, at 4:30 PM

The following two books were voted and selected to be reviewed:

*The Third Day: Living the Resurrection* by Tom Berlin

*Anam Cara — A book of Celtic Wisdom* by John O'Donohue

Poetry, Spirituality, Creativity. Books (\$15) are available in the church Narthex while supplies last. Sign up in the Narthex or email Mick Graff at [mickgraff4@gmail.com](mailto:mickgraff4@gmail.com).

### “On the Same Page” — Monday, May 4, at 10 AM

The facilitator will be **Lisa Young**, and she will be covering the book, *Our Lady of the Lost and Found* by Diane Schoemperlen. Copies of the book (\$ 15) are available in the Narthex (please leave your money in the envelope).

Thinking and planning ahead to the July “On the Same Page,” mark your calendar for Monday, July 13, at 10 AM. **Donna Wiskeman** will be facilitating the very helpful and insightful book *The Ruthless Elimination of Hurrying*, by John Mark Comer.

*Elise Shirey, Education Chair*

### Bible Studies

Centering Prayer — Mondays at 9 AM, via Zoom. Contact is Kathy Graff.

Men’s Bible Study — Saturdays at 8:30 AM, via Zoom. Contact is Bob Larson.



## Hey Community!

You are invited to join the UCSJ Choir and sing the **FABULOUS “Hallelujah Chorus”** from Handel’s Messiah on Easter Sunday. This is a fun, open community event. All are welcome, no matter your experience or your age. And if you know someone who would love to join, please share!

### Details:

**Rehearsal Times: (All rehearsals take place at the United Church of the San Juans in Ridgway)**

Thursday, March 26—REHEARSAL

5:00-5:30 PM — Hallelujah Chorus

Thursday, April 2 — REHEARSAL

4:30-5:30 PM — Hallelujah Chorus

### Music:

Provided at rehearsal

**Easter Service Schedule — Sunday, April 5**

Rehearsal from 8:45-9:30ish AM

Easter Service: 10-11 AM



**Questions? Email Katy at [ucsjmusic@gmail.com](mailto:ucsjmusic@gmail.com)! Let me know if you plan to sing, so that I can prepare music and seating for you.**

*Katy Kristoffersen, Director of Music*

## Mission & Outreach

David and Lisa Young want to extend their many thanks to all that partnered with them by donating items for their mission trip in March to Indonesia. The mission families were so grateful and felt blessed by the generosity of the communities supporting them.



The M&O Committee met and designated the following funds to be sent to ministries that are doing valuable mission or outreach either locally or internationally:

\$500 to Mercy Chefs for meal distribution in disaster areas

\$500 to Haven House for their summer youth program

\$500 to HopeWest for their hospice support

The **congregation mission project in April** is to clean up the landscaping in front of the Ouray County Food Pantry building. **Donna Whiskeman** is coordinating this activity. Please sign up to help with the weeding, raking, mulching, and some planting (*see page 8 for more details*).

Approximately 25 vendors, Health and Wellness Advocates along with UCSJ had tables at the Sunday, March 15, WellnessPalooza event held at the 4H Center. UCSJ handed out Self Care brochures, Lent Reflection handouts and had their very own Art and Sand Meditation table for attendees to participate in.



The current M&O Committee members are Lisa Young (chair), Charlotte Duckett, Claudia Wolff, Kate Kellogg, Donna Whiskeman, Cindi Myers, Lucy Scholpp, Betsy Lattanner, Gini Barker, Randy Kee, and Bruce Shirey.



### Caring for One Another . . .

A celebration of **Margaret Fredericks** (Betsy Lattaner’s mother) remarkable life will be held April 24 at 11 AM at the First Unitarian Universalist Society of Marietta with visitation following in the Fellowship Hall. A private burial will take place at Mound Cemetery. In lieu of flowers, donations may be made to the Roland and Margaret Fredericks Charitable Fund, Marietta Community Foundation, P.O. Box 77, Marietta, OH 45750.

*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](mailto:ucsjoffice@gmail.com). You can also contact Pastor Melinda.

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

### Breakfast Forum — Saturday, April 18, at 9 AM



The program for April will be presented by **Salley Thoreson and Carol Howe** on spring bird migration and bird banding. Salley Thoreson is the co-president, and Carol Howe is the education committee chair of the Black Canyon Audubon Society.

The Black Canyon Audubon Society (BCAS) was formed in 1990 and is one of 11 National Audubon society chapters in Colorado. The BCAS is committed to conservation of natural resources through their birding, conservation, and education activities. The region covered by the Black Canyon Audubon Society encompasses nearly 8,300 square miles and includes Delta, Gunnison, Hinsdale, Montrose, San Miguel, and Ouray Counties. Board of Directors includes Sheryl Radovich (Montrose), Susie Buttery (Ridgway), and Don Marsh (Ridgway).

*Submitted by Ken Sloan*



## Sunday April 5

### April Birthdays

- 3 – Jim Hill
- 3 – Jan Osterhof
- 4 – Harriet Turner
- 4 – Dee Moore
- 4 – David Stytz
- 6 – Dave Conrad
- 6 – Marge Quist
- 16 – Terry Thomas
- 19 – Sandy Sloan
- 20 – Eric Lattanner
- 21 – Laura Hagert
- 23 – Charlotte Duckett
- 25 – Elise Shirey

### April Anniversaries

- 12 – Bob & Pam Larson
- 21 – Gary & Martha Elliott
- 28 – Don Scholl & Lysa Riggs

Please contact the church office ([ucsjoffice@gmail.com](mailto:ucsjoffice@gmail.com) or (970) 626-5803 if we are missing your birthday and/or anniversary.

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### Administrative Committee of Council Meeting

(2<sup>nd</sup> Wednesday)



**Wednesday, April 8  
2 PM**

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

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UCSJ QR Code  
Scan to get up-to-date events information

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**Join the Fun!**  
**Spring Clean Up at**  
**The Ouray County Food**  
**Pantry**  
 (602 W. Cora, Ridgway)  
**Saturday, May 2, 2026**  
**9:30 AM to Noon**



Bring your favorite rake,  
 trimmers, clippers,  
 water, gloves, and a smile!  
 Lunch included!

For information call:  
 Donna Whiskeman (970) 729-0273

*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!*



For up-to-date  
 information, including  
 newsletters, calendar, etc.  
[www.ucsjridgway.org](http://www.ucsjridgway.org)



And like us!

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**Connect with UCSJ!**

- 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