

**Worship
Sundays at 10 AM**

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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)

Dear Friends, I wrote this article for our May newsletter edition last year, and I share it again for this newsletter—a reminder that Christ’s resurrection is not about what God WAS doing, but about what God IS doing here and now.

In 2009, I went to Israel with a group of pastors from around the U.S. We started in Galilee and then made our way to Jerusalem.

If you have ever travelled to religious sites of any kind, you are familiar with sacred relics. All religions have them. For Christians, of course, many are housed in cathedrals that have through the centuries weathered periods of intense storm—atmospheric, internal, and political—and still stand to this day. That is the case with the Church of the Holy Sepulcher in the Old City of Jerusalem. For many it is the holiest site in Christendom. Its relics are the location where Jesus was crucified, as well as the tomb where his body was laid.

The first iteration of the church was built in the 4th century very soon after Constantine the Great signed the Edict of Milan, recognizing Christianity as a legitimate religion. It was built as a monument to preserve the actual location where Jesus was crucified, buried, and then resurrected. But where, specifically, in the area enclosed was—and is still—hotly debated.

The Greek Orthodox, the Roman Catholic, the Armenian Orthodox, the Apostolic and other churches had different areas where they constructed chapels within the church, saying “No, this was the place!” As did other arms of the church at sites outside the city walls.

So, what does this have to do with anything as we move through this season of Easter toward Pentecost? For me it is a reminder that the more we hang onto those places where things happened in the past, the more we try to protect and enshrine those, or fight one another about them, the less attention we give to actually following our Risen Lord. The most important question about Jesus’ Resurrection is not “did it happen within a few feet of here or there?” but “what did it do?”

The Resurrection proclaims that the worst in the world and in us never has the last word. No matter how hopeless, how helpless, how devastating are the situations we face, Light continues to shine in the face of death and death has not been able to extinguish it. That is where we need to constantly train our eyes. But we can’t do it looking backwards—whether Jesus was crucified or buried 5 feet from here or there, really doesn’t matter, but what does is how will we live, believing and following the Light—even in the deepest darkness—now? That’s our life question—whether we are looking at our own lives or being church together. How does his resurrection make a difference now? And as importantly, how do we?



Blessings, Melinda

Calendar for May

(For more information, see page #s)

Saturday, May 2 — 9 AM

Food Pantry Landscaping Clean-up Day (pg. 6)

Sunday, May 3 — 10 AM

Communion

Monday, May 4 — 10 AM

“On the Same Page” Book Review (pg. 7)

Thursday, May 7 — 12 PM

Gals’ Lunch, Endless Pastabites, Montrose (pg. 4)

Friday, May 8 — 8 AM

Sego, Utah Day Trip, Meet at Looney Bean, Montrose (pg. 4)

Sunday, May 10 — Happy Mother’s Day!

Wednesday, May 13 — 2 PM

Council Meeting

Saturday, May 16 — 9 AM

Breakfast Forum (pg. 7)

Wednesday, May 20 — 2 PM

Council Meeting

Friday, May 22

Ridgway Senior Graduation Breakfast (pg. 6)

Monday, May 25 — Memorial Day!

Sunday, May 31 — Following Worship

May 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 (Ends May 13)

Community Book Study and Soup Supper (pg.7)

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!

The Administrative Committee of your UCSJ Council met in April. Along with the monthly items an upgrade to our yearly Quickbooks program was approved and will allow council-level access to our financial records.

Other items, included hiring help for yard work and substitute custodial work.

The main focus for your Council in May will be budgeting for the next fiscal year which begins July 1, 2026. If you have thoughts or see needs, we should address in this budgeting process please contact a Council member. We appreciate your insights.

Also, in May, Council will be asked to recommend minor changes in our bylaws that will be presented at the annual meeting for congregational approval.

We will have **two Council meetings in May (Wednesday, May 13 and Wednesday, May 20) at 2 PM**. Please remember you are always welcome and encouraged to attend.

Please note that the Annual Report and ballot will be emailed to active members no later than May 31. If you are an active member and do not use, email a paper copy of the Annual Report and ballot will be made available to you. Voting will begin May 31 and will end at the conclusion of the Annual meeting on June 14. Voting can be done during this period by email (instructions on the ballot), paper ballot (ballot box in the gathering area) or by paper ballot at the Annual meeting. If you are not a member of UCSJ but would like to have a copy of the Annual Report, they will be available in the gathering area. The best part of this Annual Meeting is the luncheon afterwards. Please plan to join in this celebration.

Blessings, Pam Larson, Council Chair

Reaching Out

We can be grateful for the recent caring activities extended to our UCSJ family and beyond in the form of rides, visits to hospital rehab and assisted living, meals provided, phone calls, texts, and cards sent.

Many thanks to care team members **Jere Beaudry, Shirley Didier, La Vonne Glanville, Junella Hildreth, Bob McDaniel, Angela Todd, and others** who continue to reach out to others, extending encouragement and support.



Alice Goertz, Care Team Coordinator

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.

Month End Report — As of March 31, 2026

	YTD Actual	Year-to-Date Goal	Income ABOVE Goal	Annual Budget
Income	\$173,721	\$158,251	\$15,470	\$211,000
Expenses	\$155,394			
Net GAIN	\$ 18,327			

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

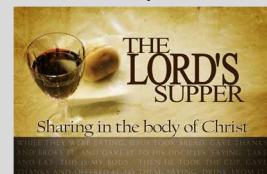
Sunday worship service is also videotaped and posted, following the service, on [Facebook](#) and our [website](#), for those wishing to worship at home.



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

May 3



PLUM Corner

It is great to be in OR about to begin our next "fake" spring. I can't wait for that time in mid-May when we can actually plant veggies and flowers for the summer. Below are a variety of blogs, resources, and news available from our PLUM denominations to support your faith in all seasons of the year.

Kim Lundgren

Presbyterian — There is a proposed 2026 Strategic Plan for the Administrative Services Group, which performs a number of back-office services for Presbyterian Life & Witness (PL&W) as well as for mid councils and congregations across the country. This planning is in preparation for the coming 227th General Assembly of the Presbyterian Church (USA) that will meet June 22-July 2, 2026, in Milwaukee, Wisconsin. [Click here for Strategic Administrative Services Plan details](#) and [Click here for General Assembly details](#).

Lutheran ELCA — The ELCA has a LECTIONARY BLOG, with weekly reflections and insights grounded in the lectionary to support study. There are also a variety of other BLOGS available on a Faith Lens, Worship, Racial Justice, World Hunger, and ELCA Advocacy. [Click here for Lectionary Blog](#) and [Click here for all ELCA Blogs](#).

United Church of Christ — Prayer undergirds our witness, ministry, and advocacy as we work for peace and a just world for all. UCC has an open invitation to anyone who feels called to offer a prayer to end violence in any manifestation, and to bring about peace. You can share your prayers using the People's Prayers for Peace form. New prayers will be published daily. Publishing is at the discretion of the National Ministries of the United Church of Christ and prayers may be edited for content and length. [Click here for People's Prayers for Peace form](#).

Methodist — UM News is the official source of comprehensive information and news about The United Methodist Church. UM News has a variety of articles, Blogs, and Commentary available on a variety of topics. General Conference info is also posted. Use *Trending Topics* to click, explore, and choose what you want to read. [Click here for details](#).

Connections at UCSJ

“Remember the days of old; consider the generations long past.” — Deuteronomy 32:7

As we move into the vibrant month of May, our Congregational Life updates reflect a community that is deeply rooted in both fellowship and history. From the shared joy of our Easter morning potluck to the rugged trails of our upcoming mountain adventures, there are so many ways to connect with one another and the storied landscape we call home.

Fellowship & Celebrations



Easter Potluck Gratitude

A heartfelt thank you to everyone who joined us on Easter Sunday morning. Breaking bread together was a wonderful way to celebrate the Resurrection and the spirit of renewal in our church family.

Gals' Lunch: Lessons from My Mother

When: Thursday, May 7, at 12 PM

Where: Endless Pastabilities, 1544 Oxbow in Montrose

In honor of Mother's Day, please come ready to share a cherished memory or a lesson passed down from your mother. It's a beautiful opportunity to honor the women who shaped our faith and lives.

Birthday Fellowship

Join us following worship on Sunday, April 26 and **Sunday, May 31** to celebrate our community members born in these months. Come for the fellowship, stay for the dessert!



Mountain Adventures: A Journey Through Time

Friday, May 8: Sego, Utah Day Trip (Meet at Looney Bean in Montrose at 8 AM)

We head west into the heart of Utah's Book Cliffs to explore Sego Canyon. This unique site offers three distinct layers of history: ancient petroglyphs (Barrier Canyon, Fremont, and Ute cultures), pioneer life at the Sego Cemetery, and the industrial ruins of a 20th-century coal camp.

It is a scenic 3-hour drive from Ridgway. We'll stop for lunch at Hot Tomato Pie in Fruita on the way back.

- Bring: Water, snacks, and a jacket. High-clearance vehicles are recommended.
- Sign Up: Please sign up in the gathering area or contact Carolyn Snowbarger for additional details.

Looking Ahead:

June: Disappointment Valley (Day Trip). A remote landscape of ranching roots, wild horses, and untamed history. Watch the June newsletter for the date and more details (we'll be checking road conditions).

July 28–30: Creede! Adventure by Day; Theater by Night! We are heading to Creede and the famed Repertory Theatre for *Working*, *The 25th Annual Putnam County Spelling Bee*, and *Fully Committed*.

- **Note:** Most are staying at the Snowshoe Lodge (719) 658-2315. Please make your reservations soon!

September 24: Aspen Gold! We'll find the best color in our region and take a day trip to follow our yellow brick road.

Contact Carolyn Snowbarger for more information about any of these adventures.

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

WE ARE THE CHURCH: Answering the Call to Leadership

Have you ever wondered how things “just happen” at United Church of the San Juans? Behind our vibrant services, community outreach, and the very walls we gather within is a marvelous group of leaders and volunteers who answer the call to serve. We truly are the church, and our collective spirit is what keeps our mission alive.



Each year, we select dedicated individuals to step into these vital roles. Our governance follows a rotating cycle where half of our Council positions open up annually, allowing you—our congregation—to vote for the leaders who will guide us into the coming year.

Open Council Positions for the Upcoming Year

We are currently looking for individuals with a heart for service to fill the following positions:

Administrative Committee

- **Vice-Chair of Operations:** This role is central to our physical and organizational health. You will oversee our building and maintenance team, the communications committee, and our denominational relations.
- **Vice-Chair of Ministries:** If you enjoy coordination and support, this role focuses on our six core ministries, ensuring they have the resources and alignment they need to flourish.

Ministry Committee

- **CARE:** Provide vital support and assistance for the members and friends of our church family during times of need.
- **Congregational Life:** Help us stay connected by planning fellowship activities and events that strengthen our bonds.
- **Education:** Coordinate opportunities for spiritual growth and life-long learning for all ages.
- **Worship & Music:** Work behind the scenes to help plan and coordinate our regular and special worship services and musical offerings.

A Time for Prayerful Consideration

Our nominating committee is currently meeting to identify leaders for next year’s Council. We believe that leadership is a spiritual gift, and we pray that you will consider how God may be guiding you to serve.

Serving on the Council is more than just attending meetings; it is a way to help our church thrive and make a difference in the lives of our church family, friends, and neighbors.

Questions? If you have any questions about these roles or the election process, please don’t hesitate to reach out to any member of the Nominating Committee. We would love to chat with you about where your talents might best fit.

With Gratitude, Your Nominating Committee:

Alice Goertz, Larry Harley, Betsy Lattaner, Ken Sloan, and Carolyn Snowbarger



Monday, May 25

Mission & Outreach

The UCSJ Mission & Outreach (M&O) Committee is excited to provide several opportunities during the month of May for local community outreach projects.

Our current theme is “Caring-Sharing-Doing” and we hope one of these will spark an interest in you!

Saturday, May 2 — Food Pantry Landscaping Clean-up Day (9 AM – 12 PM)

Cleaning up the landscaping in front of the Ouray County Food Pantry building, 602 N. Cora St., is set for May 2 from 9-12. Bring your gloves and a rake to join in the fun! It will involve weeding, raking, and mulching. We are inviting the community to participate with us. Lunch will be served. UCSJ is providing the ‘extras’ for lunch so look to see what you can bring at the sign-up table.

Friday, May 22 — Ridgway Senior Graduation Breakfast

UCSJ is supporting a community effort to honor and celebrate our 20 graduating seniors by providing them with breakfast on the day of graduation. Cheer them on in the morning when they practice at Hartwell Park. Breakfast will be served at the pavilion. There is a box in the kitchen for non-perishable donations. See the sign-up sheet to volunteer to help set up and to donate for the specific food items needed.



May — Shepherd’s Hand

Church attendees can make donations of cake mixes and frosting in support of Shepherd’s Hand in Montrose. **Lucy Scholpp** is the champion, and she spoke with Meriam at Shepherd’s Hand regarding their needs.

If you have ideas for mission or outreach projects, whether local or beyond our region, please feel free to share your thoughts with one of the members in our group. **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.**



City Market Community Rewards

**THANK YOU TO THE 19 HOUSEHOLDS
WHO HELPED UCSJ RECEIVE \$129.85 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 just click [here](#) and scroll down to the “Link your shopper’s card” to get started 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.

Sunday, May 10



Education

UCSJ Spring Community Book Study and Soup Supper is being held every Wednesday through May 13th, at 4:30 PM with soup and bread to be enjoyed at 6 PM.

The following two books are being reviewed in two encouraging small group settings:

The Third Day: Living the Resurrection by Tom Berlin

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

Poetry, Spirituality, and Creativity.

“On the Same Page” Book Review — 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).

The July “On the Same Page,” book review is scheduled 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. Books will be available in the Narthex (\$15) beginning May 4th.

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.

Breakfast Forum — Saturday, May 16, at 9 AM

Celebrating Our History:



The year 2026 brings a monumental dual anniversary: the Semiquincentennial (250th) of the United States and the Sesquicentennial (150th) of Colorado. This month’s forum explores the rugged, enduring spirit of our “Centennial State.”



Presented by **Carolyn Snowbarger**, a retired educator and history columnist, this program will bridge the gap between our national history and local heritage. We will delve into the stories of pioneers and cultural shifts that connect our southwestern Colorado mountains to the broader American story.

May Birthdays

- 1 – Sue Hirshman
- 2 – Roger Brower
- 3 – Roger Duckett
- 13 – Claudia Wolff
- 14 – Glen Ely
- 17 – Stephanie Gregory
- 28 – Anna Strong
- 29 – Donna Whiskeman

May Anniversaries

- 8 – Gary & Kathy Calkins
- 20 – Roger & Charlotte Duckett
- 23 – Rev. Melinda Veatch & Glen Ely
- 24 – Randy & Jen Parker
- 29 – Tim & Kentee Pasek

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

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Council Meeting

(2nd Wednesday)



Wednesday, May 13 & May 20
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



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!



For up-to-date
information, including
newsletters, calendar, etc.
www.ucsjridgway.org



And like us!

www.facebook.com/ucsjridgway

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