

**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 — 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

~ ~ ~ ~ ~

UCSJ Council

(Effective July 1 – Ministry in Parentheses)

Rev. Melinda Veatch

Charlotte Duckett *(Membership)*

Alice Goertz *(Care)*

Pam Larson *(Council Chair)*

Betsy Lattanner *(Worship & Music)*

Elise Shirey *(Education)*

Carolyn Snowbarger *(Ministry)*

Vince Snowbarger *(Finance)*

Tim Spangler *(Operations)*

Terry Thomas *(Congregational Life)*

Lisa Young *(Mission & Outreach)*

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

~ ~ ~ ~ ~

Website & Newsletter Editor — Barb Eliason

NewsLink Editor — Administrative Assistant

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

External Publicity — Kate Kellogg

~ ~ ~ ~ ~

UCSJ Office Hours

Tuesday, Wednesday, and Thursday

9 AM to 1 PM



(Drawing courtesy of Dick Engdahl)



For the rest of the world, the new year begins in January. But for this church, July ushers in the new year, when the decisions made by the congregation at our annual meeting begin to “go live.”

As we move into the new year, I want to take a moment to say a huge “THANK YOU!” to two members who will step off Council.

Joan Moyer, who has served as our Vice Chair of Operations, has done a phenomenal job of keeping going all aspects of our church administration and physical plant. So many details, and Joan has followed through on each and every one. She has had steadfast help from her amazing team of David Stytz, Steve Wolff, and Dave Young, who have donated countless hours to keep things up and running.

Donna Whiskeman, who has served as our Vice Chair of Ministry, has been instrumental in pulling our ministry teams together to work more collaboratively and has done a tremendous job of moving our ministries into a more cooperative approach. She has had fantastic help on that from our ministry team leaders, Alice Goertz (Care), Elise Shirey (Education), Carolyn Snowbarger (Congregational Life), Tim Spangler (Worship & Music), and Lisa Young (Mission & Outreach)—all of whom will continue on into this year.

And, I want to welcome two new Council members, Betsy Lattanner, who will represent Worship & Music on Council as Tim Spangler steps up to take on Vice Chair of Operations, and Terry Thomas, who will represent Congregational Life as Carolyn Snowbarger steps up to take on Vice Chair of Ministries. Betsy and Terry bring wonderful gifts of spirit, perspective, and experience that will bless this church, and I am so grateful that they have said, “yes” to the invitation to serve in this way—and grateful for the gifts that Carolyn and Tim will bring to the Administrative Council as we keep journeying as a congregation. God is good!

All that said, I also wanted to fill you in on next steps following our congregational look at the work of the Long-Range Visioning Team (LRVT). Thirty-five of you stayed to review and discuss the draft vision and your responses to the vision statement—which were overwhelmingly positive. Once our LRVT has had a chance to process your comments and make any adjustments to our vision strategy, we will bring you the finalized version and put it into full play.

Just so you know, we are already moving on getting things set up to “go live,” as we prepare for a Council retreat and a Ministries Team planning retreat, as well as continue to hone our communication and our outreach as UCSJ. It’s going to be another great year together!

Blessings, Melinda

Calendar for July

(For more information, see page #s)



Sunday, July 5 — 10 AM
Communion

Sunday, July 12 — Following Worship
Special Anniversary Celebration (pg. 6)

Monday, July 13 — 10 AM
On the Same Page (pg. 4)

Thursday, July 16 — Noon
Gals' Lunch at Jimmers in Montrose (pg.6)

Saturday, July 18 — 9 AM
Breakfast Forum (pg. 7)

Sunday, July 26 — 4 PM
Sunday Sundae Concert

July 28-30
Creede Adventure and Theatre (pg. 6)
~ ~ ~ ~ ~

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 — 10 AM [\(via Zoom\)](#)

Women's Bible Study, begins July 8 (pg. 4 & 7)

SATURDAYS — 8:30 AM [\(via Zoom\)](#)

Men's Bible Study
~ ~ ~ ~ ~

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 UCSJ Council has been busy this month.

First is the yearly assessment of our Pastor Melinda. Following is the summary from the council and staff and WOW what an assessment!:

- 1) Worship Leadership and Preaching: Rev. Melinda is a highly respected, spiritually grounded, engaging, and effective worship leader and preacher whose sermons deeply resonate with the congregation.
- 2) Ministry to Families and Individuals: She is a compassionate, highly engaged pastor whose greatest strengths are personal connection, pastoral presence, and caring ministry.
- 3) Leadership to the Church: She is a highly respected and capable church leader whose strengths are vision, collaboration, administration, and ministry support.
- 4) Community Involvement and Outreach: She is thoughtful, available, and appropriately engaged community leader in her position as a part-time pastor.
- 5) General Comments & Concerns: Council's concerns are less about criticism and more about a protective concern. We highly value her and want her ministry to remain healthy and sustainable long term.

Second, we, your Council, renewed her contract for 2026-2027! We also renewed the contracts of our Music Director, Katy Kristoffersen, and our Administrative Assistant, Shirley Didier. Good News!

Third, the results of the elections at the Annual Meeting confirmed and approved the 2026-2027 budget; elected Alice Goertz, Care Representative, Betsy Lattanner, Worship & Music Representative, Elise Shirey, Education Representative, Terry Thomas, Congregational Life Representative, Tim Spangler, Vice Chair of Operations and Carolyn Snowbarger, Vice Chair of Ministry to the UCSJ Council; elected Larry Harley, Tom Chase, Ken Sloan, Alice Goertz, and Carolyn Snowbarger to the 2026-2027 Nominating Committee; and approved the bylaw changes by the required 2/3's majority. Thanks to all for a fantastic meal, good fellowship and collaborative conversation.

The **new UCSJ Council will have a retreat in July** to begin the new fiscal year. And **Full Council will meet on Wednesday, August 12, 2026, at 2 PM** at the church. Please feel free to join us.

Also, please contact any Council member with your ideas, concerns and questions.

Blessings, Pam Larson, Council Chair

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 May 31, 2026

	YTD Actual	Year-to-Date Goal	Income ABOVE Goal	Annual Budget
Income	\$213,845	\$193,417	\$20,428	\$211,000
Expenses	\$186,819			
Net GAIN	\$ 27,026			

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.



~ ~ ~ ~ ~

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

July 5



PLUM Corner

Presbyterian — I think you will find this a very informative article I found from the Presbyterian website. How we serve, discover resources, campaigns, and opportunities that address critical issues in church and society, including gun violence prevention, hunger, and poverty. Join us in building a world that reflects Christ's vision of peace and justice for all.

[Click here for more information.](#)

Lutheran ELCA — The ELCA has a wonderful magazine titled "Living Lutheran." You will find one of the featured articles titled, "Grounded in Sabbath" written by Mindy Holland. A minister of Word and Service, she is the chaplain of the Lutheran Campus Ministry at the University of Delaware in Newark and author of Wind-Borne Sister. [Click here for more information.](#)

United Church of Christ — Here is an interesting article titled "Witness for Justice." I believe it gives you some insight into how the UCC is doing ministry in a broken world. [Click here for more information.](#)

Methodist — The emphasis this month is on connecting with God in our outdoor world. You will find an article titled "Nature Connects us to God." Here is a copy of the first paragraph "Time spent outdoors can strengthen our faith and reveal a deeper meaning in our daily life. God equipped us with five senses to help us discover and better appreciate the natural world—it's up to us to step outside, engage and explore." I hope this encourages you to [check it out here.](#)

Tom Chase



Education



Bible Studies

Centering Prayer — Mondays at 9 AM, [via Zoom](#).

Contact is Kathy Graff.

Women's Bible Study — Wednesdays at 10 AM, [via Zoom](#).

Sing a Song to the Lord, begins July 8. Contact is Carol Layton.

Men's Bible Study — Saturdays at 8:30 AM, [via Zoom](#).

Contact is Bob Larson.

“Sing a Song to the Lord” — Women's Bible Study, Begins Wednesday, July 8, at 10 AM

Pastor Carol Layton will be facilitating a 7-week study of some of the songs which are found in scripture. While some of the songs are very familiar such as the Psalms and the Song of Solomon, there are others, such as the songs sung by Moses and Mariam, or Hanna's song or Deborah's song that are not as well known. [Click here to join via Zoom](#).

“On the Same Page” — Monday, July 13, at 10 AM

The focus is on the book *The Ruthless Elimination of Hurry* by John Mark Comer. The gathering will be facilitated by our dynamic, and so very smart, **Donna Whiskeman**, who knows a thing or two about being busy. Give yourself some time to really absorb this book. Books (\$15) are available on the pew by the east door.

The **Book Donation shelf**, located in the UCSJ library, is ready for more of your books, fiction or non-fiction. Take a look and see if there is a book or two that has been donated you might enjoy as well.



Fall Community Book Study and Soup Dinner

We are collecting your nominations: your BOOK CHOICES to be voted on for the 2026 Fall Community Book Study, Soup, and Bread and Butter evening gatherings.

The dates are being worked on now so please look for them to be set on Wednesday evenings in October. As one participant commented at the last gathering, “It's always such a wonderful culinary eating experience, filled with great community and stimulating book discussions.”

In September, the “On the Same Page” book to be reviewed is *The Noticer* by Andy Andrews, dates to come. Copies will be made available on Monday, July 13th at 10 AM for \$15—they will be located on the pew by the UCSJ east door. Or consider purchasing from your area bookstore, Amazon, or borrowing from the library as it has knowledge and guidance needed for everyone.

Elise Shirey, Education Chair



Retreat in July Full Council Meeting

(2nd Wednesday)

Wednesday, August 12, at 2 PM

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

Mission & Outreach

We are going to continue collecting items through July for the Ouray County Food Pantry as they gear up for summer! Think kids out of school, days in the park, and moms and dads needing a quick healthy meal on the go! They also can always use any of the following things that they never have enough of—ground meat, toilet paper, paper towels, cleaning supplies, non-sugary cereal (NO CHEERIOS), and gluten-free items.



UCSJ will hold Educational Staff Appreciation Breakfasts to say thank you to our county teachers and staff. **Ouray School will be on Tuesday, August 18,** and **Ridgway Elementary and Secondary Schools will be on Thursday, August 20.** There will be sign-up sheets for those that can help set up or want to bake something to share with our educators.

The final mission fund distribution has been made for this church fiscal year. The committee chose to give \$840 to Luke McNutt in support of his extraordinary musical gift for 24 piano lessons and mentoring sessions with Katy Kristoffersen. The remaining \$656.01 was sent to Doctors Without Borders for their work with the Ebola Outbreak.



With regards to the 2026-2027 Mission & Outreach budget, the committee has decided to follow a framework for donations with \$2,000 to be distributed quarterly. In general, 70% will be given to local organizations/projects and 30% for national/international denominational disaster/relief organizations. Each quarter one of the denominational organizations will be highlighted with the congregation.

To give you a heads-up as we look ahead, we will be collecting donations for Peace Jam and Haven House during the months of August and September.

If you ever have questions about the organizations UCSJ supports, feel free to contact our M&O champions for local charity/non-profit organizations:

- | | |
|--------------------------------|--|
| Kate Kellogg – Peace Jam | Lucy Scholpp – Shepherd’s Hand |
| Claudia Wolff – Haven House | Donna Whiskeman – Law Enforcement |
| Lisa Young – Voyager | Cindi Myers – Ouray County Food Pantry |
| Betsy Lattanner – Ouray School | Gini Barker – Ridgway Schools |
| Charlotte Duckett – Hope West | Bruce Shirey, Randy Kee – Ad Hoc Members |

*Wondering what M&O projects are going on?
Look at the bulletin board above the name tags!
We will always have our current projects highlighted there.*

Lisa Young, Mission & Outreach Chair

Congregational Life

Special Anniversary Celebration — Sunday, July 12, Following Worship

Join us as we celebrate Floyd and Karen Day's 60th anniversary.

Gals' Lunch — Thursday, July 16, at Noon

Since it's BBQ season, let's meet at Jimmers in Montrose (1413 E. Main). Our theme is "America, the Beautiful," so come ready to share a place in the United States you've never seen but hope to visit. We can create our own gals' lunch bucket list!

Sunday Sundae Concert — Sunday, July 26, at 4 PM

July 28-30 — Creede (Adventure by Day, Theatre by Night)

It's not too late to join us. Theatre tickets are still available and rooms at Snowshoe Lodge, too. Contact Carolyn Snowbarger for details.

Blessings from Your Congregational Life Ministry Team



What an amazing concert on June 7th to celebrate Colorado's 150th birthday with music inspired by Colorado. Special thanks to UCSJ music director, Katy Kristoffersen, Colorado composer, Dylan Fixmer, and all of the choir members (*photos courtesy of Gen Spangler*).

Caring for One Another . . .

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.



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

Breakfast Forum — Saturday, July 18, at 9 AM



Jane Thompson will give a presentation on the history of the Paradox Valley. The history is composed of outlaws (Butch Cassidy, Bill and Tom McCarty and others), cattle rustlers (Gene Grimes) and

many rancher feuds. Paradox Valley has a wealth of wild west stories.

Jane is the president of the Rimrocker Historical Society of Western Montrose County. She gave an excellent talk to the Forum a couple of months ago on Uravan, Colorado.

Ken Sloan

NEW — “Sing a Song to the Lord” Women’s Bible Study

Have you ever wondered about the songs in the Bible? Moses and Mariam sang songs of celebration after the Egyptian army was destroyed. Samuel’s mother, Hannah, sang for joy when he was conceived. Deborah and Barak rejoiced in song after victory in warfare. Mary’s song, the Magnificat, is a regular part of Advent worship, and there is the enigmatic book in the Old Testament, The Song of Songs, also known as the Song of Solomon. Many of the Psalms are identified as songs. If you would like to know more, the women’s Bible study, led by **Carol Layton**, will resume at 10 AM on **Wednesday, July 8, via ZOOM**. The series will last 6-7 weeks and we will kick off with the song of Moses and Mariam. Hope to see you there!



Carol Layton

July Birthdays

- 1 – Susan Hart
- 1 – Lloyd Hannah
- 4 – Mick Graff
- 5 – Linda Ingo
- 8 – Gen Spangler
- 8 – Jen Parker
- 10 – Ken Linenberger
- 13 – Bill Hirshman
- 13 – Kentee Pasek
- 14 – Sheryl Radovich
- 15 – Margot Kristoffersen
- 18 – Cindi Myers
- 18 – Ken Stofferahn
- 19 – Sue Stern
- 21 – Rick Gregory
- 21 – Teya Dow
- 23 – Karen Day
- 24 – Kris Boettger
- 25 – Gary Calkins
- 25 – Cristy Cole
- 28 – Bridget Hannah
- 29 – Steve Wolff
- 31 – Shelley Becker
- 31 – Tim Pasek

July Anniversaries

- 14 – Harry & Anna Strong
- 19 – Charlie & Josey Scoville
- 22 – Rick & Stephanie Gregory
- 27 – Don & Carolyn Stiltner
- 27 – Kelvin & Becky Kent
- 29 – Dennis & Barbara Eliason

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

~ ~ ~ ~ ~



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