

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)*

Betsy Lattanner *(Worship & Music)*

Elise Shirey *(Education)*

Carolyn Snowbarger *(Ministry)*

Vince Snowbarger *(Finance)*

Tim Spangler *(Operations)*

Terry Thomas *(Congregational Life)*

Lisa Young *(Mission & Outreach)*

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

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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)



Fall is finally sliding in, and after a full summer of drought, high heat, fires, and smoky skies, it is a gift to feel the cool temperatures of the morning and see the mountains against the clear blue sky. It feels as if we can finally take a collective deep

breath after holding it for weeks on end.

This has been a tough season. We have all felt the daily tension of uncertainty and the grief of watching our beloved mountains burn. But we have also felt the reassurance of walking through this challenging time together. In the midst of all the anxiety, we have been touch points of hope for each other. And that is the gift of a community that focuses on faith and not fear.

For weeks during the summer, as I was driving from the smoke in Grand Junction through the smoke in Delta and Montrose to the smoke in Ridgway and back, I kept thanking God that I was part of a community that is grounded in hope. Not because faith immunizes us from real-life challenges, but because it helps clear a path through the fear that obscures the way forward. The more we lean into faith, the more we trust that God is at work in the middle of the worst that can happen. The more we trust God is at work, the more clearly we can envision alternatives to whatever that worst might be.

To see and be in the presence of others who trust that there is something greater than the worst that is in front of us is a powerful witness against fear. I learned that by being part of a community of people who focused their lives on trusting God. No matter what was going on in their lives or around them, they taught me by how they lived one day at a time that love is stronger than fear, stronger even than the grave. I also learned from them that growing in faith is not a solo endeavor. It is something we are designed to do together.

So I am grateful as we slide into fall that we have been here for each other through the smoky summer. I am grateful that through all the nights that the flames were visible raging up and down the mountains and all the days when the smoke obscured our view of even the closest hills, that we kept walking together, we kept showing up to worship together, sing together, pray together, be present to each other. That is real holiness in action.

That's why God created us to be in community. Life can hand out brutal circumstances and situations, but we can always get through them when we lean into faith together.

Blessings, Melinda

Calendar for October

(For more information, see page #s)

Friday, October 2 — 5 PM

Dinner and a Show (pg. 6)

Sunday, October 4

10 AM — Communion

**2-5 PM — UCSJ Birdhouse Booth at
Voyager Children's Fair (pg. 5)**

Thursday, October 8 — 6 PM

Confused about Medicare (pg. 7)

Wednesday, October 14 — 2 PM

Administrative (pg. 2)

Saturday, October 17 — 9 AM

Breakfast Forum (pg. 6)

Committee Meeting **Thursday, October 22 — 12 PM**

Gals' Lunch at True Grit (pg. 6)

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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

10 AM ([via Zoom](#)) — Women's Bible Study (pg. 2)

**4 PM — Community Book Study and Soup
Supper at 5 PM (pg. 4)**

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!

Building Improvement projects are underway at UCSJ. A Parking Committee consisting of Tim Spangler, Terry Thomas, and Vince Snowbarger presented Council with detailed information on expanding the parking on the alley side of the church. The approved plan will extend the sidewalk and parking area south to the wooden shed, move the dumpster and metal storage shed into the vacant lots east of the new sidewalk. The project cost is not to exceed \$24,000. The group is preparing a building application for the Town of Ridgway and Coulter Construction has presented their bid. It is hoped that this will be completed this fall. In addition, automatic door openers for the kitchen door and the library door have been approved not to exceed \$15,000. The funds for these improvements will come from the General and Building Reserves with the expectation that the congregation will financially support these endeavors.

In other business, the Administrative Committee approved a few events at the church. A Rhythm Workshop on October 14 and two Neighbor to Neighbor events in October (a Medicare informational gathering on October 8 and luncheon on October 28).

Remember the new directory pictures? The new directories will be available at the church office. Pick one up.

The October Administrative Committee meeting will be **Wednesday, October 14, at 2 PM** at church. Hope to see you there.

Blessings, Pam Larson, Council Chair

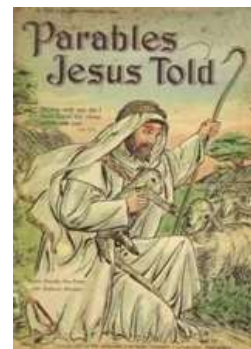
Women's Bible Study — The Parable Project October 7 to November 4

One of the constants in the Gospels is a variation of the following: "He said to them in a parable..." Depending on which biblical scholar one reads, there are between 35 to 50 parables that Jesus used to explain his teachings to those around him. Beginning on October 7, **Carol Layton** is inviting the women of the church (and their friends) to come together and explore some of the parables of Jesus as we look at "The Parable Project, Part 1." This session will run for five weeks and will begin with the Parable of the Good Samaritan.

The other parables to be studied will be announced at the first session, and if you have any favorites for discussion, please let Carol know.

All classes will meet at 10 AM on Wednesdays, via [ZOOM](#).

Carol Layton



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 August 31, 2026

	YTD Actual	Year-to-Date Goal	Income BELOW Goal	Annual Budget
Income	\$36,637	\$36,667	<\$ 30>	\$220,000
Expenses	\$36,240			
Net GAIN	\$ 397			

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)
October 4

The Hands and Hearts of UCSJ: Spotlight on Our Care Ministry

At the heart of a vibrant church community is a simple promise: no one walks alone. Whether walking through a season of illness, grieving a loss, celebrating a new chapter, or simply navigating the quiet challenges of everyday life, the Care Ministry at United Church of the San Juans serves as a steady reminder of God’s grace in action.



Steered with gentle dedication by council representative, **Alice Goertz**, the Care Ministry team works behind the scenes to ensure our congregation stays connected and supported. Their mission is straightforward yet vital—bringing comfort, practical help, and genuine presence wherever a need arises. From handwritten notes of encouragement and timely phone check-ins to coordinating home visits and lending a quiet ear, this team embodies compassion in its most practical form.

Carrying out this caring work alongside Alice is a committed group of committee members who bring warmth and attentiveness to our church family:

- Jere Beaudry
- Shirley Didier
- LaVonne Glanville
- Junella Hildreth
- Bob McDaniel
- Angela Todd

Each member brings their own unique gifts of hospitality, prayer, and listening, ensuring that our outreach remains personal and responsive. Their efforts remind us that ministry is not just what happens on Sunday mornings, but what takes place around kitchen tables, in hospital rooms, and over the phone throughout the week.

How You Can Connect

Care is a ministry that belongs to all of us. If you or someone you know in our church family is facing surgery, recovering at home, experiencing a difficult transition, or could simply use a friendly visit or call, please don’t hesitate to reach out to Alice Goertz or any committee member. Likewise, if you feel called to help provide a meal, send a card, or assist with occasional check-ins, the team always welcomes willing hands and compassionate hearts.

Carolyn Snowbarger, Ministry Vice Chair



PLUM Corner

Some great updates and news on support for others that our PLUM denominations provide... and as always, explore all their websites for even more news.

Kim Lundgren

Presbyterian — The Presbyterian Church (U.S.A.) doesn't fight hunger and poverty alone. We work with partners at home and abroad, who are a crucial part of this mission. Together, we strive to alleviate hunger and eliminate its root causes, echoing Jesus's call to feed the hungry. [Click here to read more on this and other programs.](#)

Lutheran ELCA — The ELCA responds to build resilience to hunger, violence, and disaster, meeting needs while addressing root injustice so neighbors thrive today and tomorrow, in the US and around the world. [Click here to read more.](#)

United Church of Christ — Neighbors in Need offers support for ministries of justice and compassion, with one-third of the offering given to the Council for American Indian Ministries and the remaining two-thirds supporting UCC justice ministries. In 2025 the Neighbors in Need offering supported 26 grant recipients across the UCC who were engaged in projects of direct service and advocacy. In 2026, the suggested offering date is October 4, but churches collect the offering for a month or any other season throughout the year. [Click here for more information.](#)

Methodist — Churches go solar, putting creation care into action, and with UMC providing grants for up to 20 churches to switch to solar. [Click here to read more.](#)

Education

Community Book Study — Beginning Wednesday, September 23 — Ending Date TBD
Book Study (4-5 PM) followed by Soup and Bread Culinary Experience (5-6 PM)

Please pick one of the books below to enjoy and discuss.

1. *Yesterday's Voices, Today's Choices* by Pastor Harry L. Strong, (in-person or via [zoom](#)—former minister of many congregations including UCSJ—What if the men and women of the Bible could step off the page and speak directly to modern readers? In this compelling collection of eighteen sermon-dramas, Pastor Harry gives readers that opportunity. Drawing on decades of ministry, Strong brings iconic biblical figures to life—from King David and Judas Iscariot.
2. *The Wisdom of the Enneagram* by Riso and Hudson—A guide to using the wisdom of the Enneagram for spiritual and psychological growth in your daily life.
3. *The Beauty Chasers* by Timothy Willard—Reimagining, finding, and seeing again is the overall pursuit of this book. It's a beautifully written book that will wake up your mind and senses.

"On the Same Page" Book Review

Monday, November 2, at 10 AM, Facilitator will be Pam Larson

The book she has chosen to review is one of her all-time favorites: *The Lion, the Witch and the Wardrobe* by CS Lewis. Pam Larson's favorite quotes from the book: "It's always winter and never Christmas" And "Aslan is on the move."

Elise Shirey, Education Council Representative





Ed has ranching roots here that stretch back over a hundred and thirty years. Early on Ed partnered with his uncle, Bryan Fisher, and parents, Carl and Clara Ingo. The operation has evolved over the past fifty-eight years under Ed and Linda's watch from running registered Herefords to today's commercial herd of Red Angus cattle. Ranching is still a family business for the Ingo's and their daughter and both Ed and Linda have been active Ouray County Cattleman's Association members and officers.



For more on the Ingo's, at the Ouray County Fairgrounds & Event Center's Post on Facebook [click here](#).

Mission & Outreach

The UCSJ Mission & Outreach (M&O) Committee is focusing our projects on **"Serving in Practical Ways."** The M&O Committee chose to make a donation of \$300 this month to the Nepal Prime Minister's Fund for the Nepal Flood Relief.

We want to thank everyone that has brought in donations for **Peace Jam** during the months of August and September. The response has been tremendous, and we are excited for the delivery to the Ute reservation. Sveri May and the youth involved in Peace Jam will go to Towaoc on October 10. If you have questions, contact Kate Kellogg, our champion for Peace Jam, at katebkelllogg@gmail.com.

We also want to express our appreciation for the funds given during our special offering drive for **Shepherd's Hand**. We will be purchasing XL hoodies, men's jeans, sleeping bags, and backpacks that are very much needed but not frequently donated. If you are interested in learning more about Shepherd's Hand or how you can volunteer with this Christian nonprofit organization committed to serving the physical, emotional, and spiritual needs of individuals experiencing homelessness or economic hardship, contact Lucy Scholpp at chaslucy8@icloud.com.

UCSJ Birdhouse Booth at Voyager Children's Fair:

Voyager is hosting a children's festival on **October 4 from 2-5 PM in Hartwell Park**. It is for 8–13-year-olds. Bruce Shirey has precut 20 birdhouses for the kids to put together and paint. If you are interested in being a part of this fun activity, add your name to the sheet on the sign-up table! Everything needed to create the birdhouses is provided—wood, brushes, paint, screws, and screwdrivers. We just need some adults to join in the fun! Email Bruce at bpshirey@gmail.com with your questions.

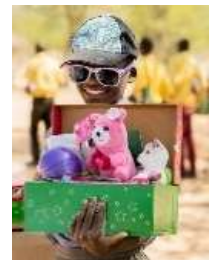


We will be collecting for the **Ouray County Food Pantry** during the months of October and November. The focus will be on holiday food, but all food items are welcome. Cindi Myers, at cmysterstex@aol.com, is our OCFP champion if you have questions.

In November, keep your eyes out for the Operation Christmas Child boxes on the back table. Start now to collect the items you want to fill your box. If you are wondering what to put in the box, check out the [Official Shoebox Gift Suggestions](#). All boxes will need to be returned before Thanksgiving, exact date TBD. POC is Donna Whiskeman, donnawhiskeman@gmail.com, if you have questions.



In late November and early December, we are anticipating having the opportunity to purchase Angel Tree Gifts. Look for the Christmas tree with gift ornaments!



Lisa Young, Mission & Outreach Council Representative

Congregational Life

Upcoming Outing: Dinner and a Show on Friday, October 2nd!

Mark your calendars for an exciting evening out combining great food, community, and interactive local theater!



5:00 PM — Dinner at The Stone House: We'll kick off the evening gathering together for a delicious meal at The Stone House. It's a wonderful opportunity to catch up, relax, and enjoy good company before the show.

7:30 PM — Magic Circle Play: *The Last Trial of Alfred Packer*. Following dinner, we will head over to the Magic Circle Players theater for a special reader's theater production of Colorado's most notorious historical event. Set against the rugged backdrop of the San Juan Mountains, the play explores the mysterious events surrounding Alfred Packer and his ill-fated expedition. In this unique interactive experience, we—the audience—become the jury and get to decide the fate of Packer!

Get Your Tickets Now: Tickets are available at Magic Circle Players (<https://magiccircleplayers.com/>) or call the ticket office (970) 249-7838) before they run out! Don't miss out on this fantastic double feature of dining and drama. Save the date and join us for a memorable night out!

Saturday, October 17 — Potluck Breakfast Forum with Speaker Karen Risch

Karen led the **Ouray Women's Hiking Group** for over 20 years. She will provide a slide show of some of the beautiful photographs that were taken on these Ouray hikes. Plus, she'll share a list of all the hikes and trailheads.

Gals' Lunch: Get Your Grit On!

Grab your boots and pull up a chair! On **Thursday, October 22, at 12 PM**, we are gathering for a special Gals' Lunch at **True Grit in Ridgway**. Alongside great food and fellowship, we're having a bit of fun with our theme: Get Your Grit on! During our lunch, we invite everyone to share a "gritty tale"—whether it's a memorable hiking adventure, a time you had to show a little extra mental toughness, or even a funny story about a major mess you had to clean up. Come ready to laugh, share, and enjoy a wonderful afternoon together. We hope to see you there!

Upcoming Adventure: Explore Paradox Valley and Uravan Ghost Town!



Join us on **Saturday, November 7**, for an exciting day of fellowship, history, and breathtaking scenery as we head out on a **Mountain Adventure to Paradox Valley!**

On this trip, we will explore the stunning landscapes of the Paradox Valley and take a special guided tour of the **historic "ghost town" of Uravan**. Our tour will be led by **local historian Jane Thompson**, who will share fascinating stories and insights into the area's rich history.

Whether you are a history buff, love exploring the great outdoors, or just want to enjoy a wonderful day out with church family, this trip is for everyone. Keep an eye out for more details regarding departure times and carpooling arrangements.

Gen Spangler, Terry Thomas, and Ken Sloan

From Kelvin Kent

Thank You!

I received the lovely card with all the many warm messages. I was absolutely overwhelmed and amazed and would like to sincerely thank all who were part of it. My links with UCSJ remain strong and your kind words struck a bell in my heart which is still ringing.

With love and appreciation, Kelvin (in Montrose)

Joyful Forklift Podcast

Give yourself the pleasure of listening to **Katy and Mike Kristoffersen’s podcast**—there are 15 available podcasts and more to come!

“Welcome to the Joyful Forklift Podcast!” Joy is a fundamental part of the human experience. It can be noticed everywhere and created anywhere. It is a shelter strong enough to withstand some of the hardest, deepest losses. It is found in relationships. It is found in nature. It is found in creativity, education, music, art, math, play, spirituality, literature, gardening, sports, hard work, memories...everywhere. And you can find it here.

Joyful Forklift is a place where you can access joy by listening to people talk about it. It’s that simple. Their stories about joy can be enough to light the fire of joy within you as well—even if you have nothing in common with them. These are everyday people—just like you and me—and they have so much to teach us.

There are also random videos of moments in nature that evoked joy for Katy, when she viewed them. Nature is often one of our first “joy” teachers. Looking under rocks, hearing birds in the back yard, holding a worm in your hand. You know what I mean.

You can listen or watch, if you’re interested, on [Spotify](#) or [Youtube](#).

Elise Shirey, Education Council Representative

October Birthdays

- 5 – Dave Young
- 9 – Ed Ingo
- 10 – Lisa Young
- 14 – Lynne Evans
- 14 – Junella Hildreth
- 16 – LaVonne Glanville
- 17 – Becky Kent
- 21 – Kay Sibold
- 24 – Melinda Veatch
- 26 – Floyd Day
- 26 – Jack Sibold
- 26 – Katy Kristoffersen

October Anniversaries

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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Administrative Committee Meeting
(2nd Wednesday)



Wednesday, October 14
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



Are you confused about
Medicare?

Join
Neighbor to Neighbor & Region 10
for a presentation

- An overview of Medicare
- Information about Supplemental Policies
- Medicare Advantage
- How to understand Medicare literature

United Church
of the San Juans
295 N Lena St
Ridgway

Thursday
October 8, 2026
6 pm



Neighbor to Neighbor
Region 10

If you or a loved one
is in need of help,
please contact us
at 970-325-4586 or
ouray.neighbor@gmail.com

Bible Studies

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

Contact is Kathy Graff.

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

"The Parable Project" (October 7 – November 4), contact is Carol Layton.

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

Contact is Bob Larson.



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