THE United Church OF THE San Juans
Embracing Diversity - Honoring Unity

November 2026 | 295 N. Lena Street, Ridgway, Colorado | Volume 23, Issue 11

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)
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)

Give thanks in all circumstances; for this is the will of God in Christ Jesus for you.
— 1 Thessalonians 5:18

November is the month that has a special focus on gratitude. With Thanksgiving, the emphasis is on appreciating and expressing gratitude for those people, experiences and things that make our lives worth living. It is great to have a month in which we take time to really look at our lives and all we have to be grateful for, but it is even better to make gratitude a regular practice all through the year.

I was reading an article about the librarian, educator, and children's book author John Schu. His latest book is *Lily-May's Joyful Day*, and it shares the story of "joywalking," an invitation to slow down, pay attention, and make space to notice the big and the small details of goodness all around us.

A joy walk combines mindful awareness with gratitude and encourages us to pause and be present: to notice something beautiful, to wonder about something we see, to reflect on the events of the day, or just to enjoy being out in God's amazing creation.

Mindfulness and gratitude—whether on a walk or just sitting and reflecting at the end of a day—shift us from a fixation on what's wrong to a concentration on all that is good. I regularly end the day with a list of all the gifts I have received that day. Sometimes I even begin the day by listing all that has come into it with me. In doing that, I am able to really lean into how good my life is. At the end of a day, I can even see how those things that have been difficult have been a catalyst for turning to God and for lessons that I might not have received in any other way.

A myriad of psychological studies attests to the power of gratitude to foster both physical and psychological health. Gratitude can boost mental resilience and shift inner attention away from negative emotions like resentment and envy. More importantly, gratitude draws us closer to the God who gives us breath. When I contemplate God's many and incredible gifts in my life, in our lives, it helps me see the ways God is right there, providing in ways we all tend to miss when we don't take the time to really look for them.

This November, I invite you to make the month foundational: to establish a regular gratitude practice that you can carry with you throughout the rest of the year. Each day, make a list of at least three things you are grateful for, and see how that shifts how you look at yourself, at others and at the people around you. I think you will be amazed at the difference it makes in your mood, in your perspective—and in your faith.

Blessings, Melinda

Calendar for November

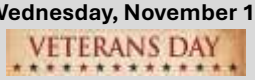
(For more information, see page #s)

Sunday, November 1
Daylight Saving Time Ends
10 AM — Communion

Monday, November 2 — 10 AM
On the Same Page Book Review (pg. 4)

Saturday, November 7 — 8:15 AM
Mountain and Mesa Adventure (pg. 6)

Wednesday, November 11



2 PM — Full Council Meeting (pg. 2)

Sunday, November 15 — After Worship
Celebrating November Birthdays (pg. 6)

Sunday, November 22 — After Worship
Pie Sunday and Hanging of the Greens (pg. 6)

Thursday, November 26

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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
Ends November 4 (pg. 2)

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 discussed a number of issues:

- After the monthly report by Pastor Melinda, the committee reviewed the monthly financial report by Vince Snowbarger. It was noted that contributions to the church are not as much as expected for the first quarter, while our expenses are typical for this time of year. Vince will make a quarterly report to the congregation on Sunday.
- Tim Spangler reported on the mobility project and indicated that Coulter Construction will start work on October 16 and take about ten days. We are also installing two electric door openers in the next three weeks. (See page 7 for more details).
- Requests to utilize our facility were reviewed: several were approved and a request by ROCC was returned encouraging them to choose different dates.
- Carolyn Snowbarger reviewed activities by the ministries, and the committee was really impressed with the depth of all that we do. Our church family is truly blessed, and our ministries are wonderfully active! We are seeing incredible opportunities to grow together in faith, heart, unity, and love. We are also receiving more requests from outside groups to use our space for meetings, concerts, and programs. However, with all that vibrant activity comes a very happy challenge: **we are running out of room**!
- Tim Spangler reviewed the activities of the operation team, including closing down the sprinklers for winter, inspecting the HVAC system, and signing a contract with Tyler Snow Solutions for snow removal.

Full Council Meets on Wednesday, November 11 at 2 PM.

Tim Spangler, Acting Council Chair

Women's Bible Study

Women of the church (and their friends) are continuing to explore some of the parables of Jesus. This session ends on November 4.

After a short recess, another session, "Scripture or Tradition?" will begin on December 2. Many of the things we do during Advent and Christmas are so ingrained in our thinking that scripture and tradition are blended together. This four-week study will separate the threads of the story even as the value of tradition as truth will be explored. **This will be coed… all are welcome**!

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 September 30, 2026

	YTD Actual	Year-to-Date Goal	Income **BELOW** Goal	Annual Budget
Income	$ 48,838	$ 55,000	<$ 6,162>	$ 220,000
Expenses	$ 53,411			
Net **LOSS**	<$ 4,573>			

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)

November 1

The Hands and Hearts of UCSJ: Spotlight on Our Worship & Music Ministry

Every Sunday morning when our sanctuary doors open, we step into a sacred space of quiet reflection, song, and fellowship. But long before the service begins, a dedicated community of hands and hearts has been quietly at work preparing the way.

Steered with dedication by Pastor Melinda Veatch, Music Director Katy Kristoffersen, Council representative Betsy Lattanner, and Chair Joan Moyer, the Worship & Music Ministry at United Church of the San Juans serves as a vibrant team that weaves together liturgy, art, and song to help our congregation encounter God week after week.

Guiding the ebb and flow of our church year requires both pastoral vision and careful logistical choreography. Working closely with Pastor Melinda, the ministry coordinates our regular Sunday services as well as the special seasonal journeys.

Every detail of our worship life is thoughtfully designed to reflect the liturgical season:

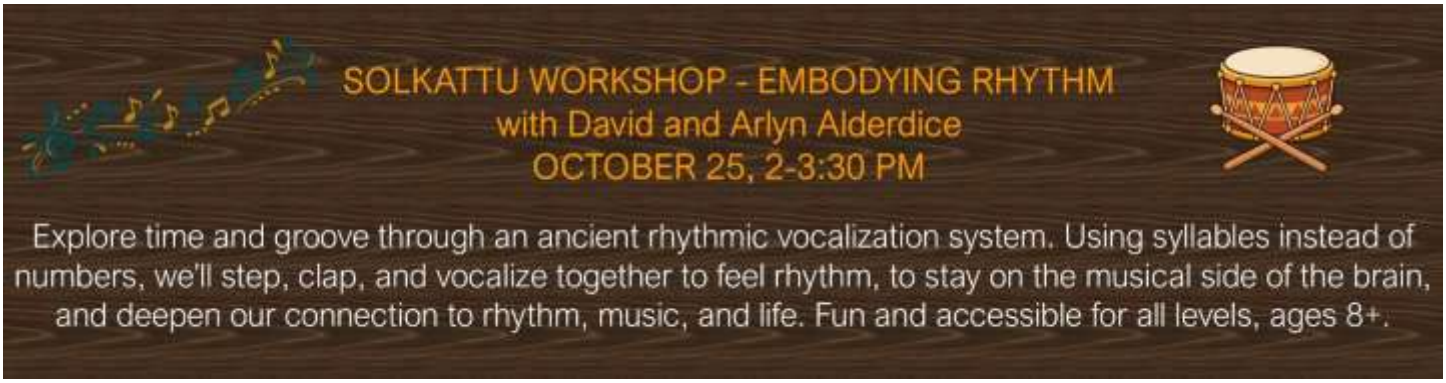
- Sanctuary Art & Atmosphere: The visual spirit of our space is lovingly tended through seasonal wall hangings, flowers, paraments, banners, and altar table dressings that visually ground us in the church calendar.
- Worship Leadership: The team recruits and supports the dedicated communion servers, readers, worship leaders, and ushers who make every service a warm, participatory experience.
- Sound & Digital Presence: Behind the scenes, the ministry ensures that services have clear sound and are reliably recorded so that everyone can remain connected to our worship life.

Music has always been the heartbeat of our church, lifting our prayers higher than words alone can carry them. Supporting Pastor Melinda and Music Director Katy Kristoffersen, is our choir who transform simple words and notes to create a spiritual experience every week.

Whether it is a soaring anthem that fills the high timbered rafters or a beloved hymn sung in unison by the congregation, the music and elements we share are deeply and intentionally designed to comfort, challenge, and inspire. Carrying out this vital weekly work alongside Betsy and Joan is a committed group of committee members who bring their unique gifts to our services: **Pastor Melinda, Betsy Lattanner, Joan Moyer, Katy Kristoffersen, Carolyn Snowbarger, and Donna Whiskeman**.

Please contact Betsy or Joan if you'd like to be part of this integral ministry team.

Carolyn Snowbarger, Ministry Vice Chair



www.embodyingrhythm.com/solkattu

PLUM Corner

The holidays are approaching fast, and I have some ideas if you are interested in an alternative to gifting this season. Check out what our different denominations have to offer.

October is pastor appreciation month and it is never too late to send an email or a card telling pastor how much we appreciate her.

Presbyterian — Check this website for the Presbyterian gift ideas that change people's lives **"Give with a purpose."**

Lutheran ELCA — Here is an idea for gifting this year. I should receive a catalog soon and I will put it in the library. If you would like to check this option out sooner **here is a link to the catalog**.

United Church of Christ — Here is a website for the brothers and sisters at the **UCC Holiday Gift Giving**.

Methodist — For a different idea on giving **check this out at the United Methodist website.**

Hoping everyone has a blessed Thanksgiving!

Tom Chase

Education

"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." Come, and learn all the reasons these quotes are important. Books are available by the east door.

Elise Shirey, Education Council Representative

NO Breakfast forum in November and December

Mission & Outreach

Many thanks to all who contributed money towards **Shepherd's Hand**. We were able to purchase many articles that were requested. These included six sleeping bags, six back packs, seven hoodies, a T-shirt, a ground mat and a pair of men's pants. Again, thank you for helping out with this worthy church mission project.

Lucy Scholpp

The UCSJ Mission & Outreach (M&O) Committee oversaw several projects during September. Donations were collected for Peace Jam for delivery to the Ute reservation in Towaoc in October. Again, this year we were overwhelmed by your generous response! Sveri May indicated how amazed and grateful she is for the support of UCSJ for this project. She and many Ridgway students will be taking the donated items to Towaoc and be given a special tour of the reservation this year. POC for questions is Kate Kellogg, our champion for Peace Jam, at katebkellogg@gmail.com.

Check out the Ridgway Oktoberfest Pumpkin Palooza Birdhouse Booth that UCSJ sponsored! It was a gorgeous day to support the Voyager kid's activities during this fun Fall community event. Twenty-plus birdhouses were painted by very enthusiastic and focused children in less than an hour. Children from as far as Delta were in attendance and able to take home a special memory of the day. Hoping we hear about baby birds in these boxes in the spring! Many thanks to **Bruce and Elise Shirey, Junella Hildreth, and Donna Whiskeman** for their willingness to get close to the paint brushes!

M&O projects to get ready for in the coming months:

October: Ouray County Food Pantry — The focus will be on holiday foods items.

November: Operation Christmas Child — Keep an eye out for the OCC boxes at the back table. All boxes will need to be returned **by November 15**, National Collection Week is November 16-23.

December: Angel Tree Gifts — When you see the small Christmas tree with paper ornaments you know it is time to go shopping for a family.

Lisa Young, Mission & Outreach Council Representative

Congregational Life Activities

Mountain and Mesa Adventure to Nucla and Uravan

Ken Sloan has arranged another exciting excursion for us, offering a fascinating journey through southwestern Colorado's stunning landscapes and rich mining history.

Trip Details & Itinerary:

- **Date & Time: Saturday, November 7. Meet at UCSJ at 8:15 AM (Returning around 3 PM).**
- Route & Transit: We will drive over to Paradox Valley via Highways 62 and 145. No four-wheel drive is needed, as we will be traveling on paved and well-maintained gravel roads.
- What to Bring: Please bring water, snacks, and a jacket.

Our Expert Tour Guide:

Jane Thompson, president of the Rimrocker Historical Society will serve as our expert tour guide. Many of you may remember Jane from her wonderful presentations at our Breakfast Forums.

Itinerary Highlights:

- Nucla: We'll stop at a sandwich shop in Nucla to order our picnic lunches, or you are welcome to pack and bring your own. We will also tour the Rimrocker Historical Museum located at 470 Main Street.
- Uravan Mining History: Uravan became a vibrant mining community in 1939 as the U.S. began focusing on uranium mining during World War II. In the 1980s, the town became an EPA Superfund site due to hazardous waste from the operations.
- Exploration: We will tour the historic former town site and share our picnic lunches together at the Uravan baseball field.

Celebrating November Birthdays — Sunday, November 15, Following Worship

Following our return and adventures, we will celebrate November Birthdays—and rest assured, there will be cake!

Gen Spangler, Terry Thomas, and Ken Sloan

Join Us for Pie Sunday and the Hanging of the Greens!
Sunday, November 22, following morning worship

Kick off your Thanksgiving week and help us prepare our hearts and sanctuary for Advent! Right after our morning worship service, we are launching our Thanksgiving week celebration with Pie Sunday Fellowship and our annual Hanging of the Greens.

- **Pie and Cobbler Fellowship:** Enjoy a delicious spread of homemade pies, fruit cobblers, and apple crisps generously provided by our talented church bakers.
- **Hanging of the Greens:** Stay after enjoying your treats to help decorate the sanctuary with wreaths, garlands, and the Christmas tree as we transition into the season of Advent.

Thursday, November 26

Mobility Project

For quite some time, we have known that the available parking on the west side of our building along the alley is insufficient for church members with mobility restrictions. A committee of **Tim Spangler, Terry Thomas, and Vince Snowbarger** proposed to the church council the idea of expanding our parking from nominally four spaces to eight spaces by relocating the small storage shed, trash bin, and by extending the sidewalk along the west side of the church. This proposal was discussed by church council who walked the area and kicked around different ideas, finally deciding on the following:

- Remodel a van accessible parking space on the north side of the parking area by enlarging the concrete pad;
- Relocate a storage shed and trash bin to the south side of the church building;
- Extend the sidewalk along the west side of the building by 31';
- Apply gravel to the entire area from the van accessible parking spot to the wooden sheds currently on the lot;
- Provide concrete pads for the relocated shed and the trash bin on the west side of the extended sidewalk;
- Provide for drainage under the sidewalk into the lot south of the church;
- Install a fence around the trash bin shielding its view from Lena Street.

We also took a good look at the old sheds southwest of church and decided not to take any action on them right now. This parking enhancement project will be completed by Coulter Construction (who built our church building) during the third week of October, at a cost of around $20,000. We have laid out parking so that most spaces can be accessed easily from the north. Only the van accessible space should be approached from the south.

In addition, the committee also felt that the two west side doors (single door by the kitchen and one of the doors into the library) were difficult to open, and so we explored the idea of installing electric door openers for the kitchen door, and one of the library doors. Two vendors were contacted for proposals: DHPace in Colorado Springs was selected. Council approved this project at a cost of around $16,000 total and we hope the doors will be installed by early November.

One additional note: we apparently have a trash bin with heavy covers that theoretically discourage bears from opening it. The result is that the covers are so heavy that only the local bears can open it while church member's struggle. Bruin Waste Management is going to give us a new bin in November that should be easier for both church members and bears to open. We will explore locking the bin as well.

Tim Spangler, Operations Vice Chair

November Birthdays

6 – David Young
7 – Diana Schreiber
9 – Alicia Sheppard
18 – Pam Stofferahn
18 – Brian Wood
21 – Bob Larson
26 – Michael Moore
28 – Dennis Eliason
29 – Larry Harley
29 – Ian Snapp

November 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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Full Council Meeting

(2nd Wednesday)

Wednesday, November 11
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

Socialize
Games
Exercise
Learn

Cimarron Gathering Place

Sponsored by Ridgway Ouray Community Council (ROCC)

Tuesday, October 27 (9 AM to 2 PM) at the Ridgway 4-H Event Center
(Drop in for snacks, ribbon cutting and learn about the upcoming scheduled programs)
The center will be open on **Tuesdays and Thursdays (9 AM to 2 PM)**.

Gere Beaudry

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.

Find us on Facebook
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

The United Church of the San Juans

PO Box 295—Ridgway, CO 81432