



The Insight

Giving insight into the life of FUMC Loveland and keeping our mission in sight.

Those of you who have been part of FUMC for more than a few years know that FUMC has had a monthly newsletter before. This is not a new concept, but the time is right to start a new monthly newsletter again. There have been a few newsletters for folks to read through: The Senior Newsletter, the Mission Memo, and of course the weekly news found in The Window and eblast. Yet, despite all these news sources, there is still a need and desire for more updates and stories about what's going on in the life of the church, and an uncertainty about how best to share all this information. So, with some conversation among various church leaders, this newsletter was born. It will be a place to read updates from various committees (without reading a copy of the minutes from the meetings). You'll find stories or highlights from events and ministries of FUMC. You'll also find reflections and inspiration from the pastors, staff, and others who want to contribute. While the Mission Memo and Senior Newsletter will be replaced by this newsletter, we are striving to maintain updates and stories that would be found in those newsletters.

Please know that the weekly news sources will not go away. Look for the weekly eblast and The Window for timely news and upcoming events. And, what's in a name? When asking for suggestions for the name of the newsletter, one name was suggested twice: The Insight. One person noted it could be spelled In-sight. And that inspired the slogan for the newsletter. We hope that this newsletter not only provides insight, but also greater connection among us all!

Happy reading!
Pastor Lee

HOW DO I GET THE WEEKLY EBLAST?

From your desktop/
laptop:

- Go to fumcloveland.com. At the top of the home page, you'll see the header "Publications".
- Underneath Publications is a green button that says "Subscribe (weekly emails)".
- Click on that and enter your email address & name, then hit subscribe. You're done!

From your phone:

- Go to fumcloveland.com. Scroll through the white tabs until you see "Publications" and click on that.
- Click on the green button that says "Sign up to receive weekly emails."
- Click on that and enter your email address & name, then hit subscribe. You're done!

LENTEN SHRINE TRIP

BY MELINDA BART

On April 2 and 3 Pastor Leslie, Judy Stout, Carole Ware and Melinda Bart went on a Lenten expedition to the Stations of the Cross shrine in San Luis, CO. We took the scenic route down highway 285 to Buena Vista, where we stopped for lunch. The weather was sunny—if cold—and the rain clouds stayed to the west of us so that we had mostly clear and stunning views of the mountains. We reached Great Sand Dunes National Monument late in the afternoon. After spending some time in the visitor center for a little natural history background we went out onto the dunes. A few minutes in the biting cold wind were long enough to take a few pictures and absorb a feeling of awe at the tremendous accumulation of sand deposited there by the wind over time.

The next morning after breakfast we set out for the shrine in San Luis. The chapel and a cross are visible on the top of a rocky hill, and along the winding upward path the stations of the cross are marked by plaques with scripture verses telling of Jesus' journey to the cross. Each

station is dramatically illustrated by a bronze sculpture, the work of an artist who lives in San Luis. I thought the figures were wonderfully expressive; their faces strongly depict the emotions they are feeling. The natural setting—arid, steep and rocky—has a feeling of wilderness that is entirely in keeping with the narrative. After standing for a few minutes beneath the tall cross on which Jesus is crucified, and taking in the view across the valley, we went inside the chapel to get out of the cold wind.

At the end of our descent back down the trail a welcome sight was a coffee shop and bakery where we were able to warm up and enjoy the paintings of local artists which covered the walls. A group of five or six women were seated around a table working on embroidered squares using “colcha” (Spanish for “bedspread”), a technique that uses wool yarns to create colorful designs. The trip was a great success, both as a time of fellowship and of focusing and deepening our experience of Lent.





The combined bell and chancel choirs for Easter morning worship...what a glorious sound!

A WORD FROM THE FINANCE COMMITTEE

Greetings from Finance. By now you may feel bombarded with information from Finance about FUMC's current cash crunch. We have sent e-mails to all, followed by snail mail to all, and had two all church meetings so that people can better understand our current situation. A very brief re-cap: The budget passed for the 2025 calendar year projects a deficit of over \$120,000. We have some reserves, but they will be quickly used up and our financial situation will become dire. We have looked at all possible savings on our expenses. If our revenues do not rise in the near future, we will have to reduce staff and that likely will mean the loss of a pastor. We are open to any and all ideas to change our current course so that these steps will not be

necessary. We are working hard to generate revenues from our building by opening it up to our community. The goal here is to reach out and serve our community and at the same time gain some much needed income from rentals. If you haven't seen the work that has been done, please take a tour of your building and take a look. If you didn't get a chance to share your ideas at our meetings, feel free to contact me. We are certain that God has a plan for FUMC as we transform and grow into the church he wants us to be going forward.

Sincerely,

Charlie Bouchard
Finance Chair
chazzbouchard@msn.com

SPANISH AND ENGLISH CLASSES

Spanish Classes will continue in the Youth Range. A beginner class will start this summer on June 18th and continue for 6-8 weeks on Wednesday evenings from 5:30-7:30 pm. Folks who have completed previous classes are invited to participate in a self-study book group that uses an audio CD. This group will meet at the same time.

Feel free to join us and keep your mind sharp by practicing (and laughing) in a new language!

English classes may continue into the summer. However, many folks travel to see loved ones during this time, and there may not be enough students. Each year is different. This semester the students chose to read in an Easy Reader Bible. Other activities include a "Guess What I Am!" game with popular categories.

CARE AND NEW LIFE FOR THE CHURCH BUILDING

The Trustees here at FUMC function as Christian stewards of property God has entrusted to the congregation. This includes supervising and maintaining both the physical property of the congregation and gifts made to the congregation so that the ministries of the congregation can be effective and all legal requirements related to the property are satisfied.

Our Trustees have been working hard on a number of different projects. We made a concerted effort to focus on safety and have made a lot of changes to increase safety aspects in our church. As most of you have noticed, our church has undergone a major overhaul in the flooring of most of the church. Most of our carpet in the building was fraying and tearing, causing major trip hazards. In areas where we see a lot of usage and where spills might occur, we chose to put in LVP flooring with better durability and easier cleanup than carpet. We chose the commercial industry standard of Carpet Tiles in the other areas for easy replacement of damaged carpet.

Areas that have been renovated include Coy Hall, the Sanctuary, Fellowship Hall, basement hallway, Youth Range, and the Education Wing 2nd Floor which will house our new preschool. Plans are for the Education Wing 1st floor and all stairways to be completed in the first few weeks in May. The Bell Room will be carpeted in June. Funding for this massive project is coming from the Loveland Methodist Foundation, which was incorporated in 1949, to manage the gifts given to the church. These gifts can be directed to a specific fund or put in the general fund which are invested to be used for emergency repairs or capital improvements.

Other areas of improvement are facilitated by having new flooring:

The balcony area overlooking the sanctuary has a new look and will be housing the Circle of Life group as well as being an option for other inside and outside groups.

The Youth Range also has a new look and will house the Sunday school and Union Kids group, plus the Spanish and ESL groups.

The Building Use Committee is working on opportunities for room rentals to provide much needed space for the community and income to the church.

More improvements in the last few months include new Accordion Doors in the storage areas of Coy Hall to replace the broken doors. We also have new windows in the outside doors to Coy Hall, thanks to Larry and Mike Carlson for their wonderful donation. This provides a more welcoming look to the most used entrance to our church.

On the horizon, we will have the parking lots restriped. We will have to close the lots for a day so be on the lookout for that. Parking will still be available on 6th Street. The Trustees will continue to address the building issues that affect the ongoing services of our church. Please let us know of any concerns you may have.

Joanne Scheihing
Vice Chair, Board of Trustees

CHURCH COUNCIL ADOPTS NEW MISSION STATEMENT

The UM *Discipline* says that “[t]he church council is the primary group responsible for the overall ministry of the local church. By establishing the vision of the congregation, the council can then help to order and implement the various ministry opportunities.” Church Council is the visioning body of the church and is comprised of all committee chairs and at-large members. We are not a “confederation of silos” acting independently, but we are all working together for the good of our church and community.

To that end, we adopted a new mission statement:

Loveland FUMC strives to bless and serve our local and world communities while living the teachings of Jesus Christ. We accept people as they are and strive to live in harmony with God and all of divine creation.

The Council is working to determine that our plans and opportunities support that mission. Our minutes and committee reports are posted on the FUMC website. Meetings are open to all, and we would love to have you join us.

**Future Church Council Meetings:
Mondays at 6:00; May 12, July 7,
Sept. 8, Nov. 10**

FUMC Church Council
Judy Stout, Chair



LPS's signs were installed after Easter. Suddenly it feels real!

We will celebrate their new home with them on May 3 for their Spring Fair and Open House.

A SLICE OF LIFE

SUBMITTED BY DESIREE ARAGON

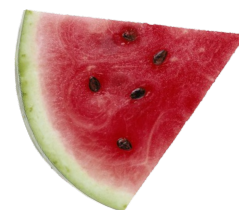
I was finishing up a two-day backpacking trip in Southern California. It was hot, and I was tired and hungry—that morning I'd spilled my oatmeal, and I hadn't eaten since.

As I came to the parking lot at the trailhead, I noticed a group of 10 or so older hikers gathered together. They were laughing and talking, eating watermelon. As I passed, I smiled, as backpackers do, then dragged my spent self to my car. I dropped my pack and sat on the ground, exhausted.

And then I looked up and saw a woman coming toward me with an enormous piece of

watermelon. She didn't smile or speak. She just held it out. I took it and thanked her, and she nodded and walked away. I tore into that ice-cold fruit, the juice running down my face, and almost cried. To this day I always keep extra treats in my pack and dole them out to those I think would appreciate them. It's the little things that often carry the most weight.

—TJ Fraser.



DESIGN AND DÉCOR COMMITTEE UPDATE

BY MARLENE THURMAN

The past several months have been a whirlwind of activity for the Design and Décor Committee, and we're excited to share what's been happening around the church!

- At the request of Susan Harding, our Bell Choir Director, we facilitated the removal of the two front pews in the sanctuary to better accommodate the choir. (A huge thank you to the hardworking 5M's for making it happen!)
- The basketball hoop that once adorned the north wall of Coy Hall has been taken down—another successful project completed with the help of the 5M's.
- Joanne Scheihing has been diligently overseeing the new flooring throughout the church. The fresh look is already making a big difference—thank you, Joanne!
- Have you noticed the sleek, new gray folding doors in Coy Hall? These modern doors have replaced the original 50-year-old ones that have served us well, but had seen better days. Not only is the update stylish, but with the 5M's handling removal and disposal of the old doors, we saved over \$1,000. Incredible!

- We've been researching the best, most efficient folding dividers for the East and West Coy Hall spaces. Several of you have inquired as to when those dividers will be installed, replacing the old orange accordion doors, which needed to be removed to make way for new flooring in Coy Hall. While Trustees have placed this project on hold due to budget limitations, we're keeping it on our radar for the future, hoping we can move forward soon.

Up next: the north wall of Coy Hall! We're working with interested members of the congregation to brainstorm ways to brighten and beautify this space. Meanwhile, the 5M's are already hard at work repairing the brick wall, where the basketball hoop was hanging.

We are immensely grateful for the tireless efforts of the 5M's and everyone else who has contributed their time and talents to these projects. Your dedication helps make our church a more welcoming and beautiful place for all.

FIRST MISSION FUNDRAISER MEAL A HIT!

BY MARK ELLIOTT

The premiere Mission Fellowship Dinner, held on March 26th, was a success judging by the turnout. There were 43 people signed up ahead of time, but more than 50 people showed up. Unfortunately we ran out of salad, but there was plenty of meat for everyone. We want to emphasize that for future dinners, it's important that you sign up ahead of time so we have an accurate head count when calculating how much food is needed.

A debt of gratitude is owed Carl Williams for the excellent meal he prepared. He cooked pot roast accompanied by potatoes, corn, and a green salad with strawberries. He donated the food and his time to make the dinner a success, which is the way he chooses to serve in mission. Members of the Missions Committee helped with setup, serving, busing, and tear down, but Carl did all the cooking and wouldn't even let anyone help wash dishes.

The dinner raised \$620. About half of that will be sent to World Central Kitchens which is doing wonderful work feeding people in Gaza, Myanmar, and a number of other places. The remainder will be held in reserve to provide aid and relief for unforeseen local circumstances such as fire, flood, temporary displacement, etc.

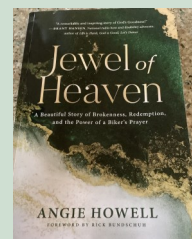
Future dinners are scheduled for the year, and are every other month on the 4th Wednesday, typically. 2025 dates are May 28, July 30, September 24, and November 19. Carl will be varying the menu to keep you engaged. As Carl writes: "Let's keep good going."

Mark your calendars for the next meal, which is Wednesday May 28 beginning at 5:30pm. Food will be served between 5:30 and 6:00, so come anytime in that time frame. *Advance registration is requested for adequate food supply.* Look for how to sign up and pay in The Window as the date gets closer.

WHAT ARE YOU READING? LISTENING TO? WATCHING?

This is a space where you can recommend a book, podcast, movie, and so on. FUMC has a lot of curious learners who love to share about the things that are feeding them!

Lois Beers recommends *Jewel of Heaven*, by Angie Howell. A woman loses her faith in God but finds it again. The Beers' daughter worked with the author!



Pastor Lee recommends *Leading Ideas Talks* podcast from the Lewis Center for Church Leadership. This is good for anyone who wants to learn more about what's happening in the greater church world and hear different ideas.

Share your recommendation to Pastor Lee at lee@fumcloveland.com!

SPIRIT SOUNDS BELL CHOIR 40TH ANNIVERSARY BY REV. LEE ANDERSON-HARRIS



If you read the Loveland Reporter Herald, you may have seen the Spirit Sounds Bell Choir had some coverage in April 25th's edition! On April 26, they presented a free concert to the community in celebration of the choir's 40th anniversary. It was a beautiful spring day and there was a good turnout. We sat silently to beautiful pieces, we laughed at the creative "coffee shop" scene, and we certainly applauded the gifts and skills of all of the choir members and director Susan Harding.

Spirit Sounds ringer Kathy Prevost wrote an excellent article for the concert program on the history of the bell choir. She wrote "In 1985, church member Bob Mitchell purchased our first three-octave set of handbells as a memorial to his wife, who had heard a bell choir at a church in Arizona and thought that our Loveland church should also have bells." She went on to tell how the "bell bug hit" and the choir grew, members have come and gone and even returned, and more bells and chimes have been purchased over time. And in case you think Spirit Sounds only leads us in worship, you might be surprised and happy to hear that they have

played for Loveland schools, theaters, service organizations, centers, and homes. They have "rung in the holiday season at many city events," have traveled to other cities for worship services, and have attended workshops and festivals, and even led a memorable workshop at the Denver Women's Correctional Facility. Kathy wrote that "over the years more than 160 people have rung FUMC bells. Forty years of ringing not only highlights the dedication and passion of its members but also underscores the importance of music!" We celebrate the many lives enhanced by playing in or listening to this bell choir.

I also know that the members of Spirit Sounds support one another in the ups and downs of their lives. I hear again and again how valuable this community is. Thanks be to God for the gift of community in whatever form they take in our lives, and for all the ways we get to worship our amazing God!

ON SABBATH, CARE, AND MY UPCOMING RENEWAL LEAVE

BY REV. LEE ANDERSON-HARRIS

Per the UM Book of Discipline, clergy are allowed renewal leave of up to six months after six years of ministry. In my time as clergy, I have heard encouragement to take these leaves from the Bishop, District Superintendents, and other leaders. Many pastors I know, both UM clergy and from other denominations, have taken renewal leave of varying lengths and reasons. Some travel, including pilgrimages, some stay home. But all find it necessary for their own health and longevity, as well as the health of the churches they serve, to take a renewal leave or sabbatical (however you want to phrase it!) at least once in their career and often more.

Jeremiah and I have both reached our six years in ministry and then some. In July and August we are taking six weeks away from work to rest and renew. Last summer we approached our respective SPRC's to discuss this and get approval, and the time is now approaching! We are traveling to Scotland for some of that time, taking his mother on a bucket-list trip. When we return, we will focus on sabbath time. For me this means being in nature, practicing the art of letting go (versus my usual tendency to try and “stay on top of things”), and spending time in a spiritual retreat away from home.

I recognize that not every career supports taking a sabbatical, and some encourage one with strings attached, such as using the time to study or do research. This is where the spiritual life is different from the secular life. Taking a paid renewal leave from your work may not be possible, but regular sabbath time is, and not just for working folks. There is a reason it is built into God's way of life through the

scriptures and teachings across centuries. I advocate having a sabbath day each week where you disconnect from life's demands and practice the art of letting go. It's not easy, but it is so important for our health. Sabbath days are meant for remembering our connection with God, who delights in us just as we are, not because of what we accomplish. This is a day to do the things that reconnect you with yourself, and reconnect with the living Christ.

I am so grateful for the support that SPRC and others in this church have shown me in terms of taking care of myself. There will be a need to support Rev. Leslie with pastoral care while I am away, so while I work on the plan in advance of my leave, I extend an invitation to you. Care for fellow parishioners is a shared ministry, not just when the pastor is away or unavailable, but as a part of being in community together. If you have a gift for being present to others, a gift for listening, or just a compassionate heart that wants to be there for people, you might be called into caring ministry. And if you aren't sure but want to try it out, this is a good time to do so. You may have skills you want to dust off, or you may be new to this type of service. If you are in the latter camp, have no fear! You don't have to be a retired counselor to be a partner in caring ministry. In fact, I have taught basic caring skills to both laity and pastors over the years, and have created a half-day workshop to teach people in the church how be a supportive presence to others.

On Saturday, June 7 I will teach one of these workshops, called How to Care. Look for information in The Window or reach out if you are interested!

HAVE A STORY TO TELL?

Connect with Pastor Lee if you would like to submit a story. This is a great way to connect with one another and build up this community!

CONTACT US

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LOOKING FOR BIRTHDAYS?

The Senior Newsletter published the birthdays of those 65 and older in the congregation each month. As I began putting this newsletter together, I realized that space would be an issue. Some months will be leaner than others, obviously. Since birthdays of all ages are listed by week in The Window, it is redundant to include them here too. If having the birthdays is something you value so that you can mail cards to your fellow congregants, please let me know and I can get a birthday list to you for the year. Contact Pastor Lee at lee@fumcloveland.com or (970) 667-0876.

WHAT IS SPIRITUAL DIRECTION?

Do you want to go deeper in your relationship with God? Want help seeing or hearing God's activity and voice in your life? This is what a spiritual director helps with. "Director" is a bit of a misnomer, as this individual doesn't direct you. But they are trained to guide, ask questions, and help you discover God's presence in your life. This is not counseling. But, spiritual directors go through specific training and certification process. In addition, most clergy are not trained and certified spiritual directors; this is a unique profession.

You can learn more about spiritual direction by listening to this podcast episode, from the podcast Lee recommended on page 7. Find "Exploring Spiritual Direction", episode 161 dated January 21, 2025, on the Leading Ideas Talks podcast by the Lewis Center for Church Leadership.

Revs. Leslie and Lee each have their own spiritual directors, and have recommendations to provide you. If you would like a recommendation, please reach out!