

The Insight

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

Pastor's Pondering, by Rev. Leslie Wood

A picture paints a thousand words...or so it's said.

I take a lot of pictures. Pictures capture memories that I want to remember in color!

Every few days Microsoft gifts me with a handful of memories...photos that I've taken and that have been stored on my computer over the years. This past week, a couple of times, the photo selections were very timely.

The first day, I received the photo of what I affectionately named the "Body of Christ field." The field, just outside of Ridgway, CO, was home to the camel, the yak, the cows and the goat (seen in the inset). Whenever I passed the field, it always made me think "That's what it should be like, these very distinct and different animals living in peace and harmony with each other and bringing joy to others. Why can't we human animals do the same?!"



A day or two later, I received the photo of the water and bread. One evening during a trip to the Holy Land in 2019, a few of us took the 2 ½ mile walk on the parapets that surround the Old City of Jerusalem. Each step felt spiritually and historically significant. At one point I said, "I wish we could share communion together up here. That would be very cool." Someone said, "I have a bit of leftover bagel." Someone else said, "I have a bottle of water." That was all we needed. We prepared the table right there on the parapet, overlooking the Kidron Valley where Jesus crossed to the Mt. of Olives to pray in the Garden of Gethsemane, then back again to the Holy City,

on the night of his arrest. We then shared a deeply meaningful communion together.

During Advent, we live in a time of waiting and preparing to honor and celebrate the birth of the Christ Child. As we wait, we focus on certain themes...hope, peace, joy, love. We light a candle each Sunday to help us reflect on the Christ-promises contained in those themes.

It's a nice tradition, yet I must confess. I often find myself reflecting more frequently on the opposite of those themes. I get bogged down in thought and worries of what's not hopeful or peaceful, joyful or filled with love in the world.

That's why, in this particularly difficult period, I was grateful to get those specific photos in my inbox. The Body of Christ photo made me smile and remember that there is, indeed, hope. Despite appearances, God is always at work, bringing together the different and unlikely to build God's kin-dom in the world.

The parapet communion in the city and land marked for centuries by both strife and holiness, reminded me that peace doesn't demand the cessation of conflict, or even for everyone to agree on everything or believe the same way. As Rev. Lee so thoughtfully expressed during her message last Sunday, "Jesus was born to free the oppressed by teaching...that the peace this world has to give is not true peace; it is not God's peace... 'My peace I give to you,' Jesus said. 'I do not give as the world gives' (John 14:27). True peace does not come from... anything that promises a false sense of security. For true peace, we receive the peace of Christ, and we live the peace of Christ."

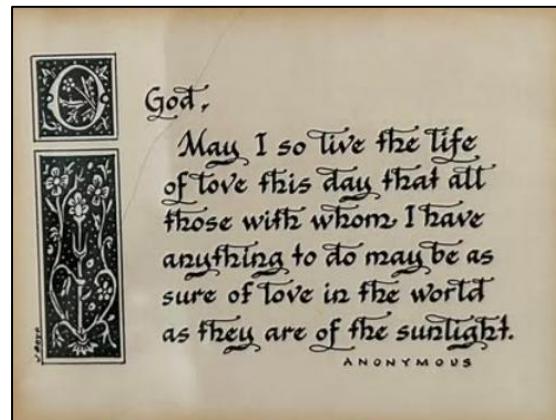


Of course, other photos help me reframe my Advent angst, too. This one of me holding my two-day old granddaughter, Sage Aurora Wood, is a sure reminder that joy defies the struggles. Joy is found all around in the evidence of God's creative activity, persistently bringing beauty and light to even the darkest of places.

The photos don't have to be my own, of course. Our former Bishop Karen Oliveto posted this photo a few hours ago. A gift from a friend, she says that it's the first thing she reads every morning. She centers her first prayer of the day on its words.

Perhaps, as we prepare to celebrate the birth of God's love incarnate in the world, it is a good reminder, and a good prayer, for us to pray each day, too "God, may I so live the life of love this day that all those with whom I have anything to do may be as sure of love in the world as they are of the sunlight."

May we live the life of love, trusting in the Christ-promise that, through us, God will work out hope, peace, joy and love to build God's kin-dom in the world.



Trustees Report, by Joanne Scheihing, Vice-Chair

As we enter into another Christmas season, I hope the miracle of Christmas fills your life with love and His grace.

We have some exciting things going on here at Loveland UMC that will make our building safer and more comfortable. Our Air Handling Unit (AHU) is over 20 years old and has not been working correctly, causing wild temperature swings in various rooms in our building. The AHU is a major component of an HVAC system that supplies and circulates air throughout the building for heating, cooling, and ventilation. AHUs are essential for maintaining indoor air quality and consistent temperatures by managing ventilation, air pressure, and the temperature of the air supplied to different rooms. We will have a full upgrade to the controls performed that fix the current problem and have options for future upgrades. The cost for this is about \$33,000. The installation should be complete in about 2 weeks.

We are excited to have our Sanctuary elevator overhauled next year. We are waiting for the ordered parts to arrive and then a technician from TKE will replace all of the controls, cable, hydraulics and inside door. It will take about 3 weeks and we will notify everyone in advance. We may need to move meeting rooms in order to accommodate everyone. Please contact Pam in the office if you have concerns about being able to attend any meetings in the basement. The cost for this is \$150,000+ but it is a necessary repair for the safety of our congregation.

We have new security cameras in both the Children's Sunday School area and Serenity Center (Fellowship Hall). We would like to thank Garry Perry for his work on handling these cameras and also for all his help in maintaining the old AHU and obtaining quotes for the new AHU.

Expired fire extinguishers have been replaced with new ones.

It was brought to the Trustees' attention that there is interest in allowing memorial plaques on the walls by our Urn Garden. We will allow them on the walls on either side of the existing plaque wall, reserving the existing wall space for those souls whose urns are placed in the garden.

As we finish off 2025, we want to thank Debbie Tikka for all the leadership she provided to Trustees this year. Her knowledge of building maintenance and her work on the elevator upgrade plan were immensely helpful for Trustees to keep our building safe and secure. Thanks, Debbie!

The Trustees would like to wish everyone a blessed Christmas and a grace-filled New Year.

Mountain Sky ERTeam (Part 2), by Mark Elliott

UMCOR Flood Buckets are a valuable resource for those recovering from a natural disaster. Thanks to all of you who responded to the campaign to replenish buckets. There's also a need for boots on the ground following a flood or other disaster, which is why each UMC Conference has Emergency Response Training (ERT) to prepare volunteers to help with recovery.

I took the required ERT training years back (pre-pandemic) so that I could join a group from our church traveling to St Croix, a US Territory, to help out following a hurricane. This was a FEMA organized and funded effort. I later joined two other FEMA-led deployments to the Pacific, but I hadn't volunteered for a Mountain Sky Conference relief effort until May of this year. Following spring floods in Kentucky, the conference sent out an invitation to come help with the recovery (teams can only help if invited). I responded to the email from Jim Robinson-Cox, our conference's ERT coordinator, and the wheels were put in motion.

Each of us made our own travel plans and met at the Nashville airport; our team was seven people, a good ERT size. Three states in the Mountain Sky Conference were represented: Colorado, Utah, and Montana. All but our team leader, Jean, had flown in. She had packed her Subaru with tools and had set out for Kentucky by way of a Minnesota visit. We piled into her car and a rental to make the two hour drive to Sacramento, KY where we would be put up at the United Methodist Church for the week.



The Sacramento UMC was very welcoming. There was plenty of space for us to bunk down on air mattresses that Jean had purchased for us. The following morning, Sunday, we were served breakfast and invited to worship. In all, we were treated extremely well. Each day we worked, parishioners came in at breakfast and dinner to serve us meals.

Unfortunately, the person tasked with finding jobs for us to do in the area was a no show. Jean emphasized that, like Gumby, we needed to remain flexible. Since we didn't have anything lined up and the church had collected donations for flood victims, we were asked to sort through the donations. There also was a tool trailer that needed organizing. But before getting

too involved in that, we had to take time to visit the annual Sacramento Civil War battle reenactment (it had actually taken place in winter, but who wouldn't rather come out on a nice spring day). There were opposing troops with muskets and cannons. You could feel the concussion of the cannon fire in your bones. This being Kentucky, it was a battle won by the confederates.



Come Monday morning we were close to finishing up our sorting and organizing. The church pastor had reached out to a coordinator working in another area who had plenty of projects lined up. We wrapped up, loaded up the vehicles and followed the coordinator for nearly an hour to the home of a family of five. There was debris from the house in the front yard. The parents were busy inside removing appliances and furniture,



while the children played outside chasing frogs. A tarp was thrown down in the front yard and we pitched in with pulling things out of the house. I noticed, while wrestling a refrigerator and a freezer to the front yard, that they seemed pretty heavy, so I decided to peek in the refrigerator. That got the cockroaches inside, feasting on all that was still there, really excited. That's what you can expect in a humid climate following a flood.

Our training says that sometimes listening is the most important job, so Jean spent time with the owner evaluating the situation and determining what plan of action he wanted to pursue.

Originally, he thought he'd be

able to tackle renovations himself since he had some experience in construction. He was able to replace some drywall, but he was soon overwhelmed and reached out for help. Even though the Ohio River was some five miles away, the home had flooded inside with more than two feet of water. Normally, the lower four feet of drywall would be removed so 4x8 sheets could be used to replace it, but Jean measured moisture above 4 feet, so the owner agreed to the removal of all drywall. They also determined that the floor in the utility room and bathroom would have to be pulled up since the wood was rotting. These weren't easy decisions for the owner. They fortunately had insurance, but the policy required the mortgage to be paid off first, so that left them with only \$5000 to make repairs.

We now had our objectives in place. I started by pulling up tiles in the kitchen and a bedroom that had been installed just days before the flood. I heard the pride in the owner's voice as he told me about laying the tile with his young son, but now it had to be removed so the sub-floor could be treated for mold. Once that was done, it was on to the drywall which was two layers thick in places. It was tough, hot work, but thankfully the May weather wasn't too humid and occasionally cooled us with a breeze. It took us through the next day to get the interior down to studs, after which Theresa volunteered to don a Hazmat suit, goggles and respirator so she could spray in and under the house for mold. We'd earned a well-deserved day off.



ERT guidelines limit trips to 3 days of work to avoid burn out and fatigue. Wednesday, four of our team members decided to spend their free time with a tour of Mammoth Cave National Park. Since I had visited the cave years back, I volunteered to take a couple on our team to the airport so they could return to their reservation where he needed to deal with a couple of deaths that occurred while he was gone (he's the pastor there). We made a couple stops in Nashville before heading to the airport: Grand Ole Opry, Harley Davidson,

and the downtown music scene. Before heading back, I decided to return to the "Honky Tonk Highway" to grab a bite to eat and enjoy some music. It's a great way to recharge your battery.

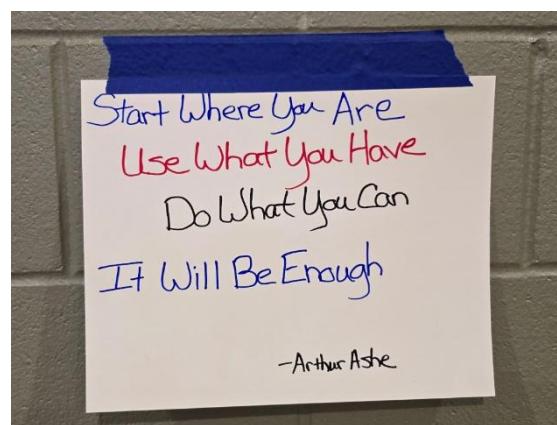
Since our team had been reduced to 5, it was decided that we'd join an ERT team that had driven down from Indiana. When we got there, furniture, clothing and knick-knacks were piling up on the back deck. Inside, there were people busy pulling drywall off the lower half of walls in nearly every room in the house. Soon we were enlisted in moving everything on the deck to an open frame metal carport. Rains were predicted for later that day, so leaving their things on the deck seemed unwise, which was why it was being moved. Since the sides of the carport were exposed, David and I got to work using the screws holding the carport together to secure and drape large sheets of plastic to protect the contents. When the wind started lifting the plastic, the owner directed us to concrete blocks (temporary home of a large snake!) which we used to anchor the plastic to the ground. The remainder of the day and the next one was spent inside pulling drywall so it could be treated and ready for repairs. This was the second time that their home had been flooded.

We said our good-byes Saturday morning. Jean gave us each a pint-sized Gumby to remind us of the trip and to remain flexible.

Would I join another ERT deployment? I guess I'd have to think about it. Sure, there's the cost involved, but I'm fine with that.

The bigger issue is my age since I'm not as strong and resilient as I used to be. Plus I don't have any construction skills to speak of. But the experience was gratifying working with a great group of people. And as the training emphasized, sometimes just showing up is all that matters.

Jean had the following quote from Arthur Ashe posted on the wall at church.



GET TRAINED

Our conference is in need of trained volunteers ready to respond in an emergency. If you are interested and at least 18 years old, contact Jim Robinson-Cox at jim.robinsoncox@gmail.com for more information or visit the Mountain Sky Conference ERT Program web page at <https://www.mtnskyumc.org/ert-program>.

Flood Cleanup Efforts in Montana and Florida, by Gary Small

The United Methodist Early Response Team (ERT) program provides a Christian presence and support in the early days after a disaster. ERTs are trained volunteers who assist in cleaning out flood-damaged homes, removing debris, placing tarps on homes, and preventing further damage. They are not first responders but play a crucial role in the disaster response process.

I traveled to Fromberg, Montana, in July of 2023 to help residents clean up after the devastating Yellowstone flood. I towed the Mountain Sky emergency response tool trailer from Denver to Fromberg. I then worked with an ERT team to remove damaged appliances, furniture, sheet rock, and old flooring. The team of eight Methodists from Colorado, Montana, and Utah cleaned up three homes.

Last November (2024), I joined a Mountain Sky ERT to clean up flood damage from Hurricanes Helene and Milton. The team flew to Tampa and stayed at Oakhurst United Methodist Church in Seminole, FL. The work involved removing flood-damaged furniture, appliances, clothing, trash, and spraying mold. Seven team members from Colorado and Montana cleaned up five homes in Dunedin, St. Petersburg, and Bayhaven, Florida.



Gary removing flooring from a Montana home.



Flood damage and mold in a condominium bedroom.

Speaking of Spanish, by Carolyn Bouchard

Hola todo el mundo! Hello, everyone! Speaking of Spanish will begin in-person classes on January 7th, 2026!

After taking a small break this past semester, I will be teaching beginner classes on Wednesday nights here at FUMC. Fun Fact: Previous students will continue to work independently, reading short stories and laughing all on their own!

Studies show that a foreign language can help keep your brain sharp. Most think of learning a language as conjugating over and over. Not true with *Speaking of Spanish*. Students receive comprehensible input. This means they understand everything they hear. It's like watching a movie.

Feel free to pop-in on the first night to observe! The show begins at 5:30 pm, January 7th (Wednesday night). *Nos vemos pronto!* – See you soon! Or reserve your spot by emailing Carolyn Bouchard at carabou50@msn.com.

Truscott Food Pantry Update, by Mark Elliott



This is the face of shock and gratitude for your efforts to help stock the new food pantry at Truscott Elementary. Members of the Mission Committee delivered donations November 17th and Michelle, the school secretary, was on hand to receive it. The food will be available for the families of students enrolled in the school. Thanks to everyone who made a contribution to keep our neighbors healthy and happy!

United Methodist Corner

In each issue, you will find a reprinted article or post connecting you to what's going on in the greater UMC. This month, Pastor Lee shares links to more information about Sand Creek and why this is an ongoing topic in the UMC, especially in the Mountain Sky Conference.

What is Sand Creek About?, by Rev. Lee Anderson-Harris

I recently had a conversation with Jeremiah about a member of the church he serves who asked him about Sand Creek. She was surprised she had not previously heard about the massacre and the UMC's connection to it, and we were too. But then, it occurred to us that while we are so entrenched in the history and the ongoing relationship with the event and the descendants, there are many who are not. We attend Annual Conference every year; we read the Mountain Sky news regularly. It is a constant part of our background. It's similar to when you have used an acronym or term for so long that you don't think about it, until someone who is unfamiliar with the jargon asks what you are talking about!

The importance of this, and why we should not forget, is that we must face our shadows in order to heal and grow. We are a confessional faith, meaning we are called to name our sins and brokenness. We then ask for God's healing and transformation. We are also called to reconciliation. When we have harmed others, we seek to repair that broken relationship. This conference seeks to continually learn from the lessons of Sand Creek, and continually repair the relationship with the descendants of those who were killed.

Therefore, for the curious, I am providing some information here. It has been in the news lately with the opening of the exhibit in Washington, D.C., so you may have already been wondering what it's all about. Below are links to articles to learn more. If you are reading this newsletter by hard copy and would like printed versions of these articles, please contact me at (970) 667-0876 or lee@fumcloveland.com.

- [Click here](#) for an article about the exhibit in Washington, D.C., or copy and paste this link into your browser:

<https://www.umcjustice.org/latest/sand-creek-massacre-exhibition-opens-in-partnership-with-history-colorado-cheyenne-and-arapaho-tribes-and-the-united-methodist-church-8227>

- [Click here](#) for an article that provides more information on the Mountain Sky Conference's efforts in particular, or copy and paste this link into your browser:

<https://www.unitedmethodistbishops.org/ecumenicaldetail/church-restarts-response-to-sand-creek-massacre-18719833>

- [Click here](#) for even more resources shared on the Mountain Sky Conference's website. You'll find links to further reading and reflection. Or, copy and paste this link into your browser:

<https://www.mtnskyumc.org/newsdetail/gcorr-sand-creek-19498784>