



First Congregational Church United Church of Christ
An Open and Affirming Congregation

The Epistle

February 2024

“Grace and peace from God our Father and the Lord Jesus Christ.”

(Paul’s Epistle to the Philippians 1:2)

God is Still Speaking



Pondering Pastor and Pondering Congregant

The local people showed us unusual kindness. Since it had begun to rain and was cold, they kindled a fire and welcomed all of us around it. Acts 28:2

This month, I can’t just call my column the *Pondering Pastor* because the idea I am sharing with you this month really comes from our very own Penni Harden. She has given this some thought and shared it at the most recent Mission Board meeting. She is calling it The Kindness Project. The idea is to offer us all an opportunity to grow in our spiritual disciplines by practicing kindness.

This year the season of Lent starts on February 14th and runs until Easter on March 31st (yes, mark your calendars!). Traditionally Christians have fasted or given something, of their choosing, up as a form of penitence during Lent. The forty days of Lent do not include Sundays, because Sundays were traditionally feast days when no one should fast. I have often thought it might be better to take up a spiritual practice to expand the spiritual life, rather than deprive it, during the season of Lent. This is becoming a trend in many Protestant churches.

So this year the Mission Board and I are inviting you all to embark on the Kindness Project for Lent. Like any spiritual muscle, kindness has to be exercised or it becomes weakened. The Kindness Project asks us all to do random acts of kindness each day. Each week we will have colored paper in the sanctuary where you can write down your act of kindness. We’ll collect these in a jar on the Communion table. We may even pull random papers from the jar to share during our worship for thought for all ages.

We all know what kindness is but it never hurts to get new ideas when you are trying a new practice. Elsewhere in this Epistle you will find a little acts of kindness calendar, that you can use throughout the season of Lent to help you exercise kindness! Elsewhere in this Epistle you will also find information on a special adult education series for Lent.

Be of Good Courage,
Pastor Kelli



1275 Adams Ave
Rock Springs, WY 82901
307-362-3530
Office Hours: Mon 2:45-4:30 Tues-Thurs 12:30-4:30

Church Email: churchfirstrock@gmail.com
www.firstrockucc.org
Twitter: [@ChurchFirstRock](https://twitter.com/ChurchFirstRock)
Worship: Sunday 10:30 a.m.

CHURCH OFFICE HOURS:
 MONDAY 2:45-4:30 PM, TUESDAY-THURSDAY 12:30-4:30 PM

February 2024

Sun Mon Tue Wed Thu Fri Sat

WEEKLY CHURCH USE: LA HERMOSA– TH 7:00 PM, SAT & SUN 3:00 PM BOYSCOUTS– TUES 6:00 PM CUBSCOUTS– WED 5:30 PM MIA's LEARNING TREE: Mon-Fri 8 am-2 pm					1	2	3
					<hr style="border: 1px solid purple;"/> Pastor Kelli On Vacation		
4 WORSHIP w/ Levi Powers 10:30 AM GROWING FAITH SUNDAY NOISY CHANGE	5	6	7	8 MEN'S FELLOWSHIP 6:00 PM	9	10	
11 DEACONS 9:15 AM WORSHIP 10:30 AM	12 BIBLE STUDY 2 PM WOMEN'S FELLOWSHIP	13	14 Ash Wednesday Service at MOO 6:30 PM	15 Fellowship Dinner 6 PM @ Marty's	16	17	
18 WORSHIP 10:30 AM MISSIONS 11:45 AM	19 BIBLE STUDY 2 PM	20 LENTEN SERIES ON ZOOM 6 PM	21	22 PUB THEOLOGY 6PM LOS CABOS	23	24	
25 WORSHIP 10:30 AM	26 BIBLE STUDY 2 PM	27 LENTEN SERIES ON ZOOM 6 PM	28 TRUSTEES TBA COUNCIL 6 PM	29			

Little acts of kindness for Lent

<p>1. Start a giving jar Fill your jar with loose change or Post-it notes of ideas of ways you can give later on. <i>Pray for the work St. Christopher's Highway</i> Reading: Luke 6:38</p>	<p>2. Compassion Note down two or three people who you know are struggling at the moment and commit to pray for them daily. <i>Pray for the Wyoming Dept of Health</i> Reading: Colossians 4:2</p>	<p>3. Share a smile Do something today to make someone else smile or laugh. <i>Pray for our church family</i> Reading: Galatians 5:22-23</p>	<p>4. Write a letter to a friend It's always nice to get some happy mail. Write a letter or a card to send to a friend. <i>Pray for those who are feeling lonely or isolated</i> Reading: Proverbs 25:25</p>	<p>5. Get an early night We all feel better for a good night's sleep. Make sure you get an early night tonight. <i>Pray for faith leaders</i> Reading: Matthew 11:27-29</p>
<p>6. Sticks and stones Are there words that you need to hold back at times? Make a conscious effort today to keep unkind words in check. <i>Pray for those facing discrimination</i> Reading: James 3:9-10</p>	<p>7. Pray through the news Take a few minutes to focus on the news and pray for the areas of need that arise. <i>Pray for areas where there is conflict</i> Reading: Philippians 4:6</p>	<p>8. Do something creative Write a poem, paint a picture, do some crafts. Take a few moments to do something creative today. <i>Pray for our government</i> Reading: Hebrews 10:24</p>	<p>9. Re-use and recycle Can you reduce your waste by reusing items or ensuring you are recycling as much as you can? <i>Pray for those facing redundancy</i> Reading: John 6:12</p>	<p>10. No complaints Can you go a whole day without complaining? <i>Pray for those who are struggling with their mental health</i> Reading: Proverbs 16:24</p>
<p>11. Comfort Is there someone you know who could do with a few words of comfort today? Let them know they are in your thoughts today. <i>Pray for those who are bereaved</i> Reading: 2 Corinthians 1:3-4</p>	<p>12. Tread lightly Find one way that you can reduce your carbon footprint and help to slow down climate change. <i>Pray for areas affected by climate change</i> Reading: Psalm 24:1-2</p>	<p>13. Go meat-free for a day Reducing our meat consumption is one way we can help the planet. Can you go meat-free for a day or commit to doing so regularly? <i>Pray for those who produce our food</i> Reading: Matthew 6:25-26</p>	<p>14. Encourage others Our words have immense capacity for good. How can we use them to encourage someone today? <i>Pray for Southwest Counseling Service</i> Reading: 1 Thessalonians 5:11</p>	<p>15. Listen to something uplifting Put on some music that you love or listen to an uplifting radio show or podcast. <i>Pray for carers</i> Reading: Psalm 57:7</p>
<p>16. Switch off Switch off the phone or the TV and take the time to really focus on the people and things around you. <i>Pray for those who work for the emergency services</i> Reading: Luke 10: 38-42</p>	<p>17. Under the weather Send a text or a card to someone who is ill to let them know that you are thinking of them. <i>Pray for those who are in hospital</i> Reading: Matthew 25:37-40</p>	<p>18. Think before you shop Consider shopping from local businesses, ethical traders or from small online sites where possible. <i>Pray for shop workers</i> Reading: Matthew 6:21</p>	<p>19. Listen Make a conscious effort to remove distractions when someone is talking to you and really listen. <i>Pray for those in the armed forces</i> Reading: Proverbs 18:13</p>	<p>20. Be still Take a few moments to sit quietly in prayer or meditation. <i>Pray for those seeking to grow in faith</i> Reading: Luke 5:16</p>

This is a little acts of kindness challenge for Lent featuring 40 acts of kindness (including acts of self-kindness) with a Bible verse and a prayer focus for each.

Each act is numbered, however, they do not have to be done in any particular order.

Women's Fellowship



FEBRUARY 12 TBA

Please watch your email for an update on location and time for Women's Fellowship February meeting. All women welcome!



**Thursday
February 15th
@ 6pm @ Marty's.**



**Pub Theology
FEBRUARY 22ND
@ 6PM**

Join us with our friends
from Holy
Communion for a night at
Los Cabos, 6pm.



**Maundy Thursday-March 28th
Good Friday-March 29th
Easter-March 31st**

Lenten Series 2024

People Who Inspire By Living Their Faith

This Lent we are going to be looking at how faith has inspired people throughout the world to impact the world around them for good. Each week we will start by hearing a biographical sketch of an individual or community who was driven by their faith to improve the world. Then we will have a guided discussion about their lives and work. Additional reading materials will be made available to those who want them. We will end each hour together with a prayer and question to contemplate as we continue our own spiritual journey through Lent. This is intended to be a no prep class.

Because the weather in Rock Springs can be so unpredictable during Lent, this series will be held on Zoom. Tuesday evenings at 6pm in Lent: February 20th and 27th, March 5th, 12th, and 19th.

Please sign up at church or call the church office, so we know who to send the zoom link and handouts to.

FOOD PANTRY

Our food pantry has been in good shape for a few months. We continue to give about 25 bags of groceries a month. If you would like to contribute you may do so with a monetary donation or by bringing in a few items from the store. The items that would most benefit the pantry now are pastas and soups (pop tops are great for people staying in motels).



SPACE TO RENT

Did you know that people can rent our Fellowship Hall or Pilgrim Room for family or non-profit events? They can! So if you know of someone looking for space for a gathering, contact RayChelle in the church office.



EQUAL EXCHANGE

The Mission Board will make Equal Exchange olive oil, chocolate, coffee, and tea available for purchase during Fellowship Hour on the first Sunday of the month. These are fair trade products and add a very small amount to the budget of our Mission Board.

Do you want a chance to win up to \$500?!

We are doing a Superbowl Board to raise funds to help people in our community who are struggling with basic needs. Please contact the church office for a square. The QR code will take you to a PayPal link to pay or you can bring money to the church. No squares will be fully claimed until they are paid for. We'll post an updated board Sunday afternoon on our Facebook page.



FIRST CONGREGATIONAL CHURCH ROCK SPRINGS UCC SUPERBOWL FUNDRAISER 2024



NFC TEAM:

**\$20
PER
SQUARE**
All proceeds go towards helping people in our community who are in need of assistance with gas, food, rent, prescriptions, etc.

	1 GR	2	3	4	5	6	7	8	9	10 ANON
	11	12	13	14 SP	15	16	17	18	19	20
	21	22	23	24 Jan Z	25	26	27	28	29	30
	31	32	33	34	35	36	37	38	39	40 Jane Z
	41	42	43	44	45	46	47	48	49 GR	50
	51	52 Jane Z	53	54	55	56	57 SP	58	59	60
	61	62	63	64	65	66	67	68	69	70
	71	72	73	74	75	76	77	78	79	80
	81	82	83	84	85 Jane Z	86	87	88	89	90
	91	92	93	94	95	96	97	98	99	100

AFC TEAM:



SMALL FEES WILL APPLY FOR PAYPAL TRANSACTIONS

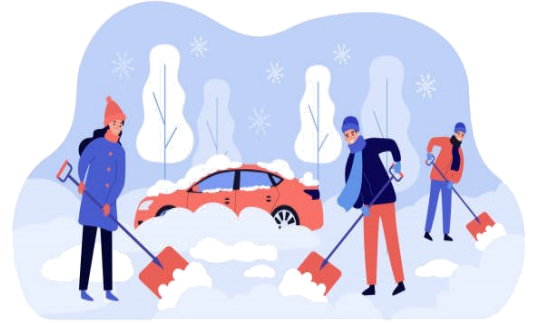
PAYOUTS- Q1: \$50 Half: \$100 Q3: \$50 Final: \$300

TAKE THE LAST NUMBER OF EACH TEAM'S SCORE AT THE END OF EACH QUARTER. IF IT MATCHES YOUR SQUARE YOU WIN!

If an unsold square wins, money will be given to discretionary fund.

Please sign up to shovel snow!

Sooner or later we will need help shoveling snow at the church. We shovel seven days of the week when needed to assist the preschool and other groups using the building. It works best if the office knows who to call when it needs to be shoveled. Please sign up for a week when you might be able to shovel snow from the walks at church, if needed.



**Pastor on vacation is coming.
Pastor Kelli is planning to leave the snow for a week!
Dates have been set for February 1-7th!**



Ronald McDonald
House Charities®

Pick up the tab for the
Ronald McDonald House
Intermountain Area!

Your donation of pop tabs helps provide a home away from home for families of seriously ill or injured children receiving treatment from local medical facilities.

Please drop tabs off at the church.

St. Christopher's Highway

PO Box 567 Rock Springs, WY 82902

307-922-2380

Travel Assistance
Rock Springs & Green River



Type of Assistance:

Lodging Food
Transportation Clothing

Volunteer on call
7:00am - 9:00pm

In order for our Sunday worship to run smoothly we need your help! Please sign up to be a worship leader, coffee hour host, or show us your beautiful art work.

You can find the sign-up sheets in the lobby or call the church office.

Thank you to all of our volunteers. You are greatly appreciated!



COLLECTING CANS AND BOTTLES

We continue to collect cans and bottles for recycling. The funds from this collection are add to our discretionary fund.

Remember to take your tabs off the cans and bring them to the office for the Ronald McDonald House.



SCRIPTURES FOR FEBRUARY

- February 4- 1 Corinthians 9:16-23; Mark 1:29-39
- February 11- 2 Kings 2:1-12; Mark 8:27—9:8
- February 18- Mark 10:17-31; Isaiah 41: 17-20
- February 25- Mark 10:32-52

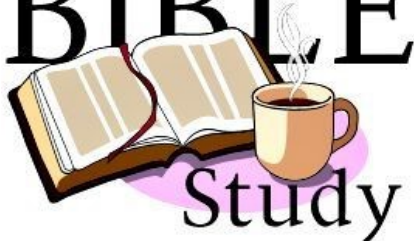
THANK YOU, THANK YOU!

- To Cheryl, Rie, and Sharon for teaching Sunday School
- To John A. for sharing his art
- To Rie, Joy, Linden, Michele, for hosting Fellowship
- To our youth, Mary Ruth, Jan, and Terry for serving as Worship Leaders
- To Bill for shoveling snow
- To Paul L. for fixing things around the building



COME JOIN OUR

BIBLE



Study

PLEASE JOIN US!

We are meeting Mondays at 2 PM. We are currently reading The Gospel of Luke.



MEN'S FELLOWSHIP

February 8th
AT 6:00 P.M.
AT THE CHURCH.
ALL MEN ARE
WELCOME TO JOIN!



NOISY CHANGE SUNDAY IS NOW THE 1ST SUNDAY OF THE MONTH!