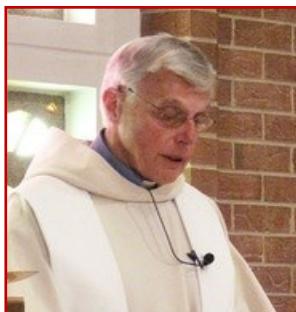




DECEMBER 9, 2020

EKKLESIA

FIRST LUTHERAN CHURCH



PASTOR HANK TO RETIRE

Pastor Hank is retiring....again. He came to First Lutheran a retired pastor and was quickly hired to assist with visitation and grief counseling. Through the years he has helped many of our members during the darkest times of their lives as they cope with the loss of lifelong partners. He has visited the homebound and brought comfort and the good news of the gospel to those isolated by illness. He became a regular preacher in the rotation

for the Saturday night service. In addition to his official duties he has offered counsel and example to the younger pastors still in the middle of their working years.

Pastor Hank has worked long beyond what anyone would have expected. He will continue to volunteer at First but wants the freedom to be even more active pursuing his hobbies and activities with his wife, Sally. We are sorry to see him go, but fully understand that the time has come. We are grateful he will continue to be seen around the congregation serving as we all do, at our leisure.

I asked Pastor Carrie to share some thoughts, and she writes of Pastor Hank, "Pastor Hank has always been one who is quietly productive, a straight shooter, willing to step in and take the lead whenever called upon. He and Sally often worshipped together at the Saturday evening service where they were loved by those who regularly attended. He is a gifted storyteller which made for easy listening to sermons that were often filled with depth and character from his years of experience in the parish and in the great outdoors. Pastor Hank has gifts in listening and hearing people; he is relational and combined with his education and intelligence he provided counseling which led many to relief in their lives and deep gratitude for Pastor Hank."

Pastor Hank will complete his work the end of December. I invite the congregation to send in cards with notes of personal appreciation prior to his departure. We'll set aside some time in worship to thank him and share these notes.

God has richly blessed First Lutheran with men and women of considerable talent and generosity in sharing their gifts. Pastor Hank is at the top of that list and for him we give thanks to God.

-Pastor Travis





FROM THE PASTOR

LESSONS & CAROLS

Sometimes I have to remind myself that this will only be my third Christmas at First Lutheran. The first one is a blur since I was really brand new to everything. But I remember last year's Lessons and Carols. I have an image of Deacon Joan standing high in the midst of the choir leading with her baton. I remember the choir descending and surrounding the congregation with candlelight and bathing them in song. And I remember the rows and rows of slices of pie of every imaginable flavor following the service. I think it was Pastor Carrie who remarked to me after the service, 'now it's Christmas.' Lessons and Carols is a marker in the life of our congregation of a turn within Advent towards Christmas.

We are having Lessons and Carols this year. It will be a holy and beautiful service shared on YouTube. We will take the best of the archives and add two brand new anthems. I've also added a short homily, too. We've mailed out the pie recipes so you can enjoy a little of the pie fest. And following the service we'll have a zoom meet and greet to see one another and hear more from the musicians about their experience of the service.

I hope you'll tune in on Sunday, December 13 at 3:30 for the service and at 4:30 for the meet and greet. I'm so grateful to our Minister of Worship and Music, Eric, for his creativity, leadership and passion that will make this possible. Thank you to our choir members and musicians who worked hard to deliver this milestone in the church year to us.

It will be different this year. But that's okay. We will still tune in and open our hearts to be warmed by the Holy Spirit. We will still think on the gift of God given at Christmas. We will still come and adore the Savior born in Bethlehem.

O come all Ye faithful.

-Pastor Travis





Sunday's Sermon

2 ADVENT 2020

ISAIAH 40: 1-11 , MARK 1: 1-8

Brothers and sisters in Christ grace, peace, and mercy to you from Jesus Christ, who was, who is, and who is to come. Amen.

Comfort is the name of the game in the beginning of “second” Isaiah. “Comfort, comfort o my people.”

Comfort is what so many in these later chapters of Isaiah, often called “second Isaiah”, longed for. Today's reading from Isaiah can be read as a prophetic response to outcries of pain like those voiced in Lamentations by Job, by so many in the Old Testament. Into this void of despair, the prophet speaks promises, which become the basis for Judah's new future. But this audience has been traumatized by war, by divisions, and by devastation they never thought they would see so the prophet also must work hard to convince his audience that Yahweh's words are trustworthy. Isaiah is grounded in proclamation and promise but shaped fundamentally by careful listening to those things that afflict the hearts of his audience. Perhaps the saying is true that “great preaching involves two ears and one mouth.” So how do we hear God's word and comfort when it might seem that God's hiddenness is more real than God's presence. I suppose that is the Advent question for all times as we wait for the coming of the Lord made flesh, and as we live in a time that could call for a little “comfort, o comfort my people.”

It's funny the things that bring us comfort. For the past two weekends my youngest, Callie, has said, “Mom, can we please go for a ride. Anywhere, just get some coffee?” So, we grabbed our masks and off we went. My plans were just to drive through Starbucks, get some coffee and go for a little drive, but my car just steered itself to Target. I couldn't fight the force, and that's where we ended up. We looked around the parking lot, assessed if it was too many cars, and then went on in. We just wanted to grab a few things and take a quick look at Christmas stuff. So, while we dodged other people and only went down the aisles that didn't have others, Callie looked so happy. She picked out Christmas presents and Jingle jammies for everyone, and her eyes lit up when she found the Lego set she had been eyeing up for her sister. Comfort for her was doing something that just felt normal. And so it is for 2020, much like it was 2000+ years ago; the people are longing for comfort.

Today in a world where we have been warned of the long, dark winter ahead with a surging pandemic largely out of control in the United States and throughout the world, we need the proclamation “Comfort, O comfort my people, says your God.”

Thanks to the unending efforts of scientists, there are effective vaccines in the works, but it will be awhile before they are widely available. And people are suffering from fatigue, fear, and loneliness. The situation bears some resemblance to that of the audience to the 40th chapter of Isaiah. The divine command comes during a situation of exile and despair. The people of Judah are in a strange land, far from home. There is hope, faint as it might be, on the horizon—the power of Babylon is fading—but the current situation is still one of displacement, anxiety, and suffering. If there was ever a time for comfort, it is now.

Where do we find comfort in the midst of a world that is unlike one most of us have known before? As we have entered this Advent season the hope that we see on the horizon is the coming of Christ; what will get us there? Where do we see God’s kingdom breaking forth for us as we prepare a highway, as we prepare a path for the Lord?

I hope that we look further into the text of Isaiah and can name the ways that comfort is upon us in the same way Isaiah proclaimed it to the people in exile. That we hear the prophet saying: “See, the Lord GOD comes with might, and

his arm rules for him ... He will feed his flock like a shepherd; he will gather the lambs in his arms, and carry them in his bosom, and gently lead the mother sheep.” This God we proclaim, the God we know most fully in Jesus Christ, fights against all that is death-dealing in us and around us. And this God like a shepherd cares tenderly for his flock, carrying them when they are weary, leading them when they have lost their way.

This is what Isaiah invites us into, not just in this strange Advent season of 2020, but for all Advent seasons through time. While this year we might need the comfort of God in more evident ways as we continue to face crippling fear and anxieties and heavy grief, it holds true that we need the comfort of the Lord always, and in this season of Advent we can claim comfort in the hope of Emmanuel, God with us.

Now is when we look to the horizon, and we see a quiet glimmer each day as hope rises, like the sun without fail, and this Advent hope, too, is not passive; it is not quiet. The prophets are not quiet, and neither is the message they bring. This hope is active and bold. Advent hope is not the same as platitudes of the good to come, that everything will be all right, and looking through rose-colored glasses at the hurts of the world. Advent hope acknowledges the pain of present reality and dares to see God’s presence in the midst of that pain. Advent hope, the hope of which Isaiah speaks, is grounded not in anything we can see, but grounded in the prophets’ promise that God will stand forever and

grounded in the gospel pronouncement that comes from John the Baptist as he tells us that God is decisively present and at work in Jesus who is with us already and not yet. John the Baptist reiterates from Isaiah that the highway is being prepared. It is that road that will lead us to the gospel. In Isaiah it clears a path for God to return, and John the Baptist tells of this path as the way for Jesus ministry to be presented as good news for the people in the ancient world, too. His ministry will be a homecoming for those who are alienated, dislocated, disenfranchised, and waiting for good news. And we, too, are waiting for a homecoming, waiting for the path to be set straight, and waiting for us to enter into a new path that leads us to unity in our world, bringing us to new life living in the gospel truth, sharing love and peace in ways that we hadn't known before.

Living in pandemic times, I do wonder what we are learning about ourselves and our culture. While we live expectantly into these days of Advent, waiting for the birth of a baby to change the course of the world, what can we do, here and now to change the course of this world for the good of our neighbors and at the call of our Lord?

Theologian Frederick Buechner comments on homecoming that, "No matter how much the world shatters us to pieces, we carry inside us a vision of wholeness that we sense is our true home and that beckons us." In this Advent season especially, I believe that Buechner is onto

something. We do carry a vision, I wonder where in that vision for us today we find the path of Jesus that promises good news. Where is the space for the Advent story to butt in, to offer a new perspective, to realize that wholeness comes as a part of the journey we are on, learning all the way, not just as we arrive home. And when we arrive at that place we call home, when we have been met with the good news of the gospel, when we set aside our longing for the place we vision as home and live in the world we are a part of today, it will lead us with the words of Isaiah to a place where "the glory of the Lord shall be revealed, and all people shall see it together, for the mouth of the Lord has spoken."

Today we prepare the highway remembering that it is God's faithfulness to walk with his people in exile and bring them out of the wilderness. That it is the message of repentance and forgiveness in baptism by John, and it is the promise of the Holy Spirit among us as we prepare the way of the Lord that brings us comfort in the message of Advent hope on which we stake our lives and the comfort that we need to stand firmly in our faith.

In the midst of darkness, light breaks in. In the midst of despair, hope erupts. After long waiting, a branch will sprout. The complete fulfillment of God's promises has not yet happened, but it is coming. Such is Advent faith, and Advent hope. Amen.

-Pastor Carrie



We are also collecting **new, unwrapped** toys for Christmas Unlimited. These are usually collected at the Children's Christmas program in early December and delivered soon after.

You can drop your items in the labeled bin located between the glass doors by the round desk.

We will accept donations of toys up until December 20.

STORY TIME WITH SAINT NICHOLAS

December 13, 1 p.m.

Get your hot chocolate ready and we'll all drink it together while we listen.

<https://us02web.zoom.us/j/86595198120pwd=Vi93SGxVR3Flc1VvTkp2ToozaKlKdz09>

Meeting ID: 865 9519 8120

Passcode: 855939



DECEMBER YOUTH CALENDAR

10 - Minecraft Game Night, 6-7 p.m. for grades 3-5 & 7-8 p.m. for grades 6-8

13 - Youth Group Zoom Online: 2-3 p.m. for grades 6-8

Topic: Was Mary really a virgin? (MS only)

17 - Game Night with Kristi, 6-7 p.m. for grades 3-5 & 7-8 p.m. for grades 6-8

20 - Youth Group Christmas Party*, Middle School and High School 1-3 p.m.

27 - Youth Group Ice Skating at Acacia Park*, Middle School and High School 1-3 p.m.

*Should the weather or the pandemic restrictions not allow us to meet in person, an online alternative will be offered. Examples: Netflix or Disney+ Watch Party, Virtual Escape Room, or Trivia-Game Nights.



Children & Youth OF FIRST



SUNDAY SCHOOL ANNUAL TREE OF WARMTH

Please consider helping us to 'Love Our Neighbors' by keeping them warm! Due to Covid-19 we can only accept new (or handmade) mittens, gloves, hats, scarves, and socks. This year we are accepting donations until Dec. 31 and will make multiple deliveries as the bin fills up.

You can drop your items in the labeled bin located between the glass doors by the round desk.

Thank you!

BECOME INVOLVED

SUNDAY ADULT SEMINAR

ADVENT SERIES:

SEEING AND HEARING

Led by Michaela Eskew

December 6 – December 20th

10:30 a.m. via Zoom

This Advent, let us learn about the faith and symbolism behind our Sunday morning services and church buildings. In our first week, we will explore the liturgical seasons and colors, unpack the symbolism and gestures we find in our churches and in our services, and finally talk about the scriptural basis for the different parts of worship. In our second



week, we will break down some of our favorite Advent

hymns and look into the theology and scriptures buried within. In our third and final week we will explore images of the Virgin Mary and Child from throughout art history and the Christian world.

Join Zoom Meeting

<https://uso2web.zoom.us/j/84364439242>

Meeting ID: 843 6443 9242

THE BOOK OF ACTS PODCAST

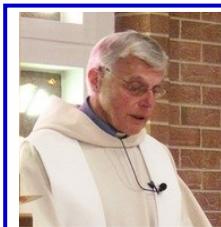
Uploaded to the website every Monday

Through December 14

In this time of Pandemic, I couldn't think of a more relatable text than the Book of Acts. Join me in a weekly podcast, as we put ourselves into the shoes of the First Apostles. Let us learn from the disciples who began their ministry cowering behind locked doors only to be called by Jesus Christ to continue his ministry and to heal and proclaim their witness to a broken world.

<https://flccs.net/ministries/adult-education>

You may also access previous podcasts on the book of Acts at the above address.



A PLACE TO TALK

An online community

10 am on Thursdays, via Zoom

<https://uso2web.zoom.us/j/209040388pwd=d29YcGVrcGtrc2VTKoVknWZsdoshUT09>

Meeting code: 209 040 388

Passcode: 845080 (Zoom is increasing security, so you need this)

Or call in: 1-346-248-7799

ALZHEIMER'S ASSOCIATION

VIRTUAL CAREGIVER

SUPPORT GROUP

SECOND TUESDAY GROUP - 1:30-3 P.M.

Colorado Springs Region

These virtual support groups meet once a month using the Zoom video conferencing platform. Once you have registered, you will be sent information to join the Zoom meeting. To register or find out more, visit www.alz.org/crf or call our 24/7 Helpline at **800.272.3900**.

MORE FAVORITE PIE RECIPES

Rhubarb Pie

3 c. cut rhubarb
1 c. sugar
1/2 t. grated orange peel
3 T. flour
1/2 t. salt
2 T. butter

Combine rhubarb, sugar, and orange peel, flour, and salt. Fill 9" pastry lined pie pan. Dot with butter and adjust top. Bake in 450-degree oven for 10 minutes, then 350-degrees about 30 minutes.

Helen Gragert

WAYFARER'S GROUP

THIRD TUESDAY EACH MONTH, 1:30 p.m., Luther Hall

First Lutheran has a support group for women who have experienced the loss of a husband. Meeting now on Zoom. If you would like to be part of this group, please contact Marlis Olson at 719-596-4593.

Coconut Custard Pie

Preheat oven to 350 degrees.

Combine in a bowl 1+1/2 cups sugar, 1 T flour. Stir in 6 T melted butter, 1/4 cup milk, 1/4 cup half & half, 4 large eggs and 1/2 cup flaked coconut until completely combined. Add 1 T vanilla and pinch of salt.

Pour into an 8" homemade or store-bought pie crust. Cover rim of crust with strip of aluminum foil to prevent over-browning. Bake 50-60 minutes or until table knife inserted in center of custard comes out clean. Cool completely before serving. Top with whipped cream, if you wish.

Jan Doyle

INVOLVEMENT OPPORTUNITIES FOR ADVENT



CHRISTMAS POINSETTIAS

If you would like to designate a poinsettia in memory of or in honor of a loved one, you may do so by going to this link <https://fccc.net/ministries/christmas-poinsettia>.

Complete the form and follow the instructions to pay online. You may also mail your requests to the church along with your check. A dedication list will be published in the Ekklesia on December 23 and also posted on our website. **The cost is \$9.00 per plant.** Designations must be received no later than Thursday, December 17. Your poinsettia(s) will be available for pick-up Monday, December 21 through Wednesday, December 23, from 9 a.m. to 3 p.m.

MISSION MARKETPLACE



Gifts that
Give Back

*Unique hand-crafted items from the
Christian Olive Wood Project*

The sale of these items provides a source of income for Palestinian Christian woodcarvers who are struggling with poverty. These unique olive wood carvings make lovely and meaningful Christmas gifts. To view the available items, please visit our [Blog at fccc.net](http://fccc.net). To order, please call the church office with your selections, Monday - Friday, 9 a.m. to 3 p.m. There is a limited supply, so place your orders early. Sale ends December 11.

Advent & Christmas Offerings



In your offering envelopes you'll notice four Advent envelopes and a Christmas envelope. All gifts given in those envelopes will be designated to help our Lutheran camps. We are hoping to collect \$20,000 for Rainbow Trail Lutheran camp this holiday season. This past summer Rainbow Trail committed to hiring all their summer staff at a steep loss, and next year will prove challenging as well. But we believe in camp and we know that camp is as much for the faith formation of young adult counselors as it is for the children and youth who attend. Please consider a gift in these envelopes.



SPECIAL PROGRAMS FOR ADVENT

Lessons & Carols: Adore This King of Kings

Sunday, December 13 • 3:15 p.m. on the lawn; 3:30 p.m. on YouTube, with an optional Zoom component

A special video presentation blending the best of Lessons & Carols past with new recordings of the First Lutheran choir, instruments, and readers. Join us afterward on Zoom for a chance for (virtual) fellowship.

Live from First Lutheran! – Live Christmas Caroling

Sunday, December 20 • YouTube, 3:30 p.m.

An opportunity to worship through the beautiful hymns and carols of Christmas, led by Eric and Elisa Wicks, and Trista Guthrie.

ONLINE WORSHIP



WORSHIP OPPORTUNITIES

Sunday Afternoon Watch Parties

On the Lawn (or on YouTube)
December 15 & 20

- Begins at 3:15 p.m. with words from the pastor and holy communion.
- Video for the day starts at 3:30 p.m.
- See front page for this week's program



SIGN UP

Please let us know you are coming for any of the above services by signing up on the Connection card, emailing Marcia, marcia@flccs.net, or by calling the church at 719.632.8836.



PLEASE CONTINUE TO
SEND IN YOUR
OFFERINGS

Suspending worship might threaten the financial well-being of the congregation. We still have a large staff to pay as well as other bills. We want to continue to support those agencies that help those hardest hit during times like this. Please continue to support this ministry with your offerings.

Thank you for your faithfulness!

CONNECTION CARD

Please remember to complete the Connection card after you have watched the weekly church services. This information is recorded weekly in the church records that you attended the service.



Please email any prayer requests to flc@flccs.net, or call the church office at 719.632.8836.

FINANCIAL UPDATE

Year-to-date Budgeted Income through
November 30 \$1,811,789.00

Year-to-date Income through November 30 -
Final \$1,619,095.00

Amount behind for the year \$ **192,694.00**

Benevolence Contributions made in the month of November:

Rocky Mountain Synod/ELCA Mission Support
\$4,917.00

Rocky Mountain Synod Missionaries
\$2,000.00

Family Mentor Alliance \$ 233.00

Family Promise \$1,344.00

Habitat for Humanity \$ 303.00

Hanifen Center/Soup Kitchen \$1,588.00

Mission Medical Center \$ 571.00

Open Bible Pharmacy \$ 583.00

Rainbow Trail Camp \$ 361.00

Total Benevolence in November \$11,900.00

PRAYER VENTURES

- The Spirit is at work in times of anticipation and yearning, reminding us of God’s promises and activity, helping us stay calm and patient, and redirecting our attention from ourselves to our neighbors in need nearby and around the world.
- What do you anticipate and watch for during this season of Advent? Pray for what you yearn and hope for, and give thanks that God is faithful to God’s promises, especially through the gift of life to the world through Jesus Christ.
- Pray for patience, caution and concern for our neighbor during the continuing COVID-19 pandemic; pray that the Spirit and our siblings in Christ will help us cope with and adjust to the implications of the pandemic for this season in which we are accustomed to gathering in person for meals, celebrations, worship, family gatherings and community events.
- Pray that God will help us lead lives of holiness, godliness, peace and active engagement with the world as disciples of Christ who wait patiently for the day of the Lord.
- Pray that we might passionately witness to the light of Jesus Christ and boldly invite others to believe and to be baptized into the body of Christ and the community of all believers.

BIRTHDAYS & WEDDING ANNIVERSARIES

December 13

Bob Blecher
Paul Galido
Corby Meyer
Brad Olson
Janet Romsos
Natalie Timco
Patricia Untz
Dennis Warnecke

December 14

Mary Benson

December 15

Mary Auten
Mike Bigelow
Cara Chafetz
Chloe Deeba
Jackie Gibson
Cyndi Hale
Robert Hart
Riley Walsh
Cliff Wright

December 16

Tom Iverson
Don Kusulas
Ed Weaver

December 17

Gwen Auten
Lorraine Dickey
Jennifer Goode
Rich Lans
Spencer Lemkuhl
Carolyn McDole
Trond Ostrem
John Peterson

December 18

Rolf Jacobson
Lauren Keenan

December 19

Griffin Briggs
Joe Cole
Jason Coleman
Jackie Coleman
Robert Gully
MaryLee Lane

December 14

Katie & Chris Ackerman - 7 years
Gary & Patricia Atkins - 46 years
David & Suzanne DuBois - 51 years
Vern & Lori Kapu - 29 years

December 15

Glenn & Karen Frank - 58 years

December 16

Steve & Anita Iskra - 53 years

December 18

Bob & Barbara Larsen - 65 years

December 19

Mark & Mary Buchanan - 44 years
Don & Sherry Hoerl - 44 years
Dale & Kathlynn Jackson - 28 years
Shawn & Shelley Murray - 23 years
Jack & Judy Peterson - 61 years

THANK YOU!

Many thanks for all of the volunteers who helped deliver Advent bags a few weeks ago. The bags have been such an inspiration to our members and visitors during these COVID days!

Also, a HUGE thank you for all who participated in the Christmas Gift Cards for our Outreach Ministries of Lutheran Family Services, Family Promise and MOSAIC. They were SO appreciative of the cards and of our generous congregation. The children, families and clients will be smiling for weeks!

-Marcia Foret, Director of Lay Ministries

PRAYER REQUESTS

Please keep these members of First Lutheran, their family and friends, in your prayers this week.

Cliff Allen	Diana Keys
Cheri Anderson	Carlin Kielcheski
Wanda Anderson	Ezra Kleinsmith
Joyce Arneson	Brenda Kuker
Dean Arnold	MaryLee Lane
Carmen Ash	Jay McCoy
Hans B.	The Gwendolyn Michal Family
Philip Baylis	Brandon Miller & Family
The Beauchamp Family	Hannah & Jeremiah Miller
Jacque Bokelman	Debra Mills
Jerry Brunet	Mark Mueller
Sue Beyer	The Muniz Family
John Braden	Patrick Murphy
Monika Cline	Sam Norton
Kylee Collins	Patricia O'Halloran
The David Cunningham Family	Dan & Danielle Ohl
Leslie Crowley	Betsy Plante
Dana & Hayley	Sue Raabe
Bob DeBates	Don Reed
Sharon deHala	Phyllis Robbins
Julian Denny	Linda Samuelson
Lola Dixon	The Family of Sylvia Sandner
Marcine Durham	Roger Schomber
The Bill Duven Family	Ron Scott
Shane Fross	Ruthann Sielken
Chris Gerbig	Joan Sparks
Tom Gosch	Evelyn Spencer
Andy Grasmick	Cathy Stanley
Harry Green & Family	Gwen Stein
Lee Gross	Lori Stevens
Tom Guenther & Family	Cliff Stoker
Ellen Haase	Russ Stott
Angelika Hackel	Pastor Peter Swan
Michael Hahn & Family	The Swearingen Family
Lindsay Hart	Aaron Thorson
Doug Hering	Don Trowbridge
Eleanor Hjelmstad	Jim Underwood
Jutta Heberer	Marie Vicars
Marianne Hill	Wanda Wade
Ginger Hipzsky	Susan Warden
Beverly Hodges	Margaret Wilson
Martin & Gina Hunt	Martin Winkler
Chris Huston	Gil & Linda Winter
Marie Johnson	Greg & Carolyn Young
Josh Jones	Micheal Zoughbi



FROM THE ARCHIVES - FIRST LUTHERAN IN THE '20s

From the church bulletin, July 31, 1927. It is a matter of some interest to us as Lutheran that the first woman to swim the English Channel, Gertrude Eberle, and the first aviator to fly from New York to Paris, Col. Chas. Lindbergh, were both products of Lutheran homes. It also happens that Lieut. Lester J. Maitland, who made the first successful flight to the Hawaiian Islands, is a Lutheran and one whose faith stood him in good stead in trying places.

CHURCH OFFICE HOURS are from 9 a.m. to 3 p.m.,
Monday - Friday.

Devotionals may be picked up by either of the alley
doors.



1515 N. CASCADE AVE., COLORADO SPRINGS, CO
80907

719.632.8836 flccs.net



New windows being installed



New hallway to the upstairs bathrooms and the new elevator

Plumbing & electrical work in the kitchen

