



THE KIRK of Bonnie Brae

December 2025

From Your Pastor

Dear Kirk,

Do you remember my 10th Anniversary Service at the Kirk, when Greg sang “O Holy Night” in the middle of August? That is my favorite song. I can’t tell you what makes it my favorite – it’s not the notes or the words, per se, but the feeling of the notes and the words and the confidence with which the song holds the pain of the world with the unrelenting impact of the light of the world being born among us.

We could have chosen a number of lines from this song to reflect on during Advent:

How does a soul feel its worth?

Is hope always a thrill?

How do we hear the angels’ voices?

These are all good questions, and someday we might look at them as well (or the third verse, which was written in 1847 and is a powerful call to the abolition of slavery).

For this year, however, we are asking, “How does a Weary World Rejoice?” We know that our world is weary, but we also know and trust that a light shines in the darkness, and the darkness will not overcome it.

And so I invite you, and I encourage you to invite your friends and neighbors to be with us this Advent. When you hear people speaking of their weariness, that is the perfect time to say, “Me too, us too. Actually, our church is talking about just that this Advent.”

There is meaning and wisdom here for more than just us as we live in the hope, the peace, the joy and the love of a question that is honest about the pain and about the power of God in our world.

With Gratitude and Hope,

~ Selena

Christmas Eve at the Kirk December 24, 5:30 p.m.

Every Christmas, we gather as the Kirk community to welcome the Christ Child with Carols, Communion and Candlelight. As your holiday plans take shape, be sure to remember our Christmas Eve Worship. Feel free to invite friends and family for this spiritual and meaningful Christmas service!



Worship in December

Every year on Christmas Eve we sing, “O Holy Night” which includes the lyric, “A thrill of hope, the weary world rejoices...” But how? How does a weary world rejoice? Throughout the season of Advent, we will ask this question and we will not be overwhelmed by the weariness of the world; we will indeed rejoice! Through stories, candles, art, a new prayer station and more – we will ask, answer, and rejoice as we wait for the Christ Child!

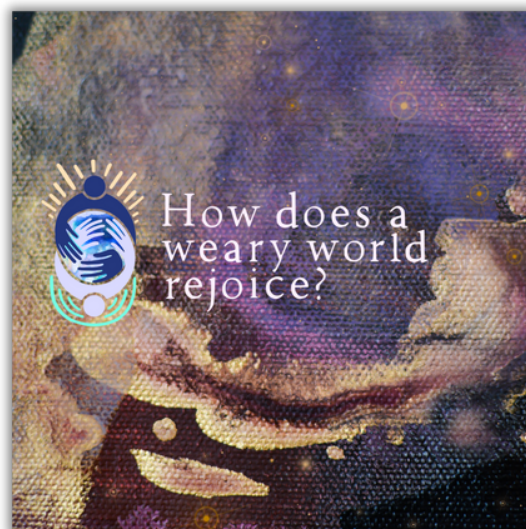
December 7: How Does a Weary World Rejoice? We find Peace in Connection. Luke 1:24-45, Isaiah 40:1-11.

December 14: How Does a Weary World Rejoice? We find Joy in our children, children’s Christmas Play!

December 21: How Does a Weary World Rejoice? We find Love in Singing, Choir Cantata.

December 28: How Does a Weary World Rejoice? We root ourselves in ritual. Luke 2:21-38.

January 4: Epiphany Sunday. Be sure to bring your star word from 2025 back with your name or initials on the back as we share the guidance and wisdom into a new year and receive New Star Words!



♥ Tentatively Scheduled Loving Servants

DATE	HOSTS <small>For changes, contact Ellen Campos</small>	COFFEE <small>For changes, contact Lisa Kipp</small>	LAY READER <small>For changes, contact the office</small>
December 7	Don Zimmerman & Patty Hummert	Erica Thompson	Riss Kostelnick
December 14	Jeannie Mitchell & Sharon Snyder	Beth Sherry	Gwen Wright
December 21	Bill & Eve Harrigan	Elli Wright	Camilla Short-Camilli
Christmas Eve	Ann Karlberg & Robert Bowles Greg & Beth Sherry	<i>not applicable</i>	<i>not applicable</i>
December 28	Lee Trujillo-Lopez & Ashley Lopez	Beth Sherry	Eva Gebel

Children’s Ministry Update

We invite all of the Kirk to be in prayer for our volunteers and children as we continue to step into our new Volunteer Model for the StoryRoom. Here’s our Volunteer Schedule this month:



December 7: Josh Pele, Christmas Play

December 14: Christmas Play in Worship, *no Godly Play offering this day*

December 21: Wyndol Furman, Meeting the Christ Child

December 28: Wyndol Furman, The Boy Jesus

January 4: Jackie Augustyn, Epiphany!



Kirk's Bell Choir

Our Kirk bell choir is practicing for the holidays, to make our spirits bright! They will have their final rehearsals after worship on December 7 and 21. All are welcome regardless of experience.

Youth Group!

All teenagers (and friends) in grades 6-12 are invited to join us on Sunday nights from 6-7:30 p.m. We share a meal together, play games, check in about our weeks and engage in discussion on issues of life and faith! We use the GroupMe app to communicate. You can join that group [HERE](#).

December 7: Youth and Confirmation – The Trinity

December 14: Youth Christmas Party!

December 21: No Youth Group, All are Welcome to the Blue Christmas Service at Park Hill UCC at 4:00 p.m.

December 28: No Youth Group



Youth Group Meals



This year, we are looking for volunteers to provide dinner for our weekly youth group! We usually feed 20 people and need an option for three vegetarians, two who don't eat red meat, and one who is dairy-free. (All meals don't need to meet these dietary requirements; we just need an option for these.) The kids so appreciate the food, and it will give you a chance to get to know our youth and see what happens on Sunday nights.

We ask those providing the meal to stay, eat with us, and after the kids bus their own tables, to help clean up so the kids can engage in their meeting. We eat promptly at 6:00 p.m. and cleanup is at 6:30 p.m. To volunteer, please sign up [HERE](#)!

Confirmation

We have 7 youth participating in our Confirmation Journey! Last month, they learned about the History of God and the Bible, attended a Shabbat service at Temple Emmanuel, and then met with Rabbi Hyatt to learn more about our Jewish siblings. Please continue to be in prayer for our confirmands and their mentors – represented by the stones on the baptismal in the sanctuary.

Here are upcoming Confirmation Dates:

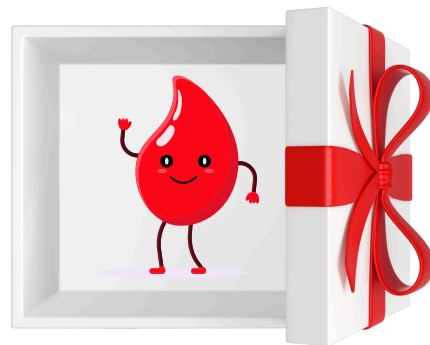
December 7: 6-7:30 p.m. Session 5: Trinity (during Youth Group)

December 21: Blue Christmas Service at a **NEW LOCATION**, Park Hill UCC, located at 2600 Leyden St, Denver, at 4:00 p.m. *This service is encouraged but not required for confirmands and mentors.*



Kirk Blood Drive

As you consider all you will give at Christmas, please think about giving the gift of life! We are hosting our next blood drive on Wednesday, **December 3**, from 12-4 p.m. in the Narthex. To schedule an appointment, call 303.363.2300 or just click [HERE](#) to go straight to the schedule!



Poinsettias!



It is a tradition of the Kirk for Christmas and Easter to purchase “flowers” or “flours” in honor or memory of loved ones. You may order a poinsettia that will be in worship on December 21 and available for you to take home after worship on Christmas Eve. Or you may designate your “flours” to provide food to those who are in need through Metro Caring. The cost is \$17 per order, and the deadline is December 14. Please place your order and submit payment using the form on our website [HERE](#).

LOVE Offering for Staff

This year as always, our ministers and staff have been outstanding in leadership and support of our many ministries. To show your appreciation, please consider donating to our annual Love Offering. It will be collected through Sunday morning, December 21, and given to them on Christmas Eve. Those who will receive this bonus are Selena, Greg, Tim, Riss, accompanists Matt and Christine, and custodian Ed Pressley. Bonuses are proportional to their income during 2025. You can donate:



1. Online under the Donate section of the Kirk's website [HERE](#).
2. By check or cash during in-person worship (please mark for LOVE).
3. By mailing a check to the Kirk office, and please write LOVE on the memo line.
4. By text to 833-262-8879 (enter the amount without a dollar sign, [space], enter LOVE, then Send).



Holiday Schedule

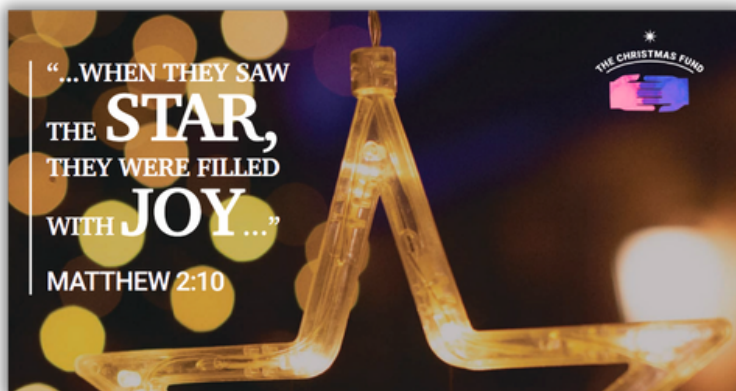
- Children's Christmas Program - December 14, at 10:00 a.m.
- Choir Christmas Cantata - December 21, at 10:00 a.m.
- Blue Christmas Worship at Park Hill UCC - December 21, at 4 p.m.
- Christmas Eve Worship - Wednesday, December 24, at 5:30 p.m.

UCC Special Offering: The Christmas Fund

For over one hundred years, The Christmas Fund has provided direct financial assistance to the healers in all our lives: retired and active UCC ministers, church workers, and their families. You are part of the community of The Christmas Fund, whether you donate at Christmastime, benefit directly from our grant or leadership programs, or simply believe in our mission to help secure the financial foundation of those engaged in the

life of the church. Please consider donating to ensure more healers receive the loving support of the Church in their moment of deepest need. The Christmas Fund was here for them. And regardless of who you are or what brought you to the United Church of Christ, The Christmas Fund is here for you. Your gift is more than just a testament to your belief in the values of the United Church of Christ; it is a critical lifeline for those who depend on our grant programs for care and support.

The Kirk will collect offerings for the Christmas Fund on Sunday, December 21.



Blue Christmas (Longest Night Service) December 21, 4 p.m. at Park Hill UCC



On the longest night of the year, the Kirk is joining with our sister churches for a service that takes seriously the shadows of our individual and collective lives, and yet knows the light of Christ that will not be overcome. This service is not only for those who are experiencing grief, but for all of us to honor all that is difficult in this season, and to know God's love and the power of community in our midst. Park Hill UCC is located at [2600 Leyden St, Denver, CO 80207](https://www.google.com/maps/place/2600+Leyden+St,+Denver,+CO+80207).



Hope & Home's annual toy drive is designed to help make Christmas magical for children and teens in foster care within our community! However, it's not just about making sure a child gets a Christmas gift; it's about making sure that a child knows that they are truly special and deserving of love and care. Many foster parents also reflect that seeing the gifts received from the toy drive reminds them that they are not alone and that there are many others out there who are supporting them! Click [HERE](#) for this year's requested toys on Amazon. You can have your gift shipped directly to the Kirk's mailing address, care of Hope & Home. Thank You!



Christmas Spirit Gathering, December 13

Come one, come all! Please share our flyer (click [HERE](#)) and this information with your neighbors, coworkers, and friends for our Christmas Spirit gathering on Saturday, December 13, from 3 to 6 p.m. at the Kirk. We will be selling hot cocoa and cider, singing Christmas carols, and enjoying holiday performances. Attendees will also have the opportunity to purchase Alternative Giving Certificates, which support the construction of a family house and help for our youth travel to El Salvador in the summer of 2026. Consider giving meaningful gifts as you make your year-end donations!



Calling All Santa's Helpers!



Please help us with the El Salvador Fundraiser on December 13. We need volunteers who are willing to assist with set up, decorations (donate), running audio, singers and musicians to perform or lead carols, selling hot chocolate and cider, and helping guests make donations to the El Salvador trip and/or building the house by purchasing alternative giving certificates. Please sign up to volunteer for this El Salvador Fundraiser by clicking [HERE](#), or contact Laura & Corbin Tobey-Davis.

Holiday Alternative Giving Opportunity

During our Year of Resilience, we honor the villagers of rural El Salvador who strive to lead productive lives despite living in poverty. Next summer, a group of youth and adults from the Kirk will join a service-learning trip with the ESNA Village Network. They will travel to El Bebedero to help build a new house for a family in dire need. Our holiday alternative giving opportunity this year will provide the necessary materials for this home!

Homes in El Salvador typically consist of cement floors, wooden supports, and corrugated metal sheeting for roofs and walls. Though simple, these houses are a major improvement from the huts many people currently live in. They offer sturdy shelter from the rain, clean cement floors that protect children from dirt-borne diseases, and windows and doors that can be secured during storms. When a new house is completed, the entire community celebrates with the family at a ribbon-cutting / housewarming ceremony.



Your participation in the Holiday Alternative Giving project will help transform the lives of a family in El Bebedero and allow you to honor your loved ones with a meaningful gift. You can contribute any amount toward the home's cost or choose to provide a specific building material. Visit the table in the church lobby each Sunday during Advent to donate by cash or check, or go to the Kirk website to give electronically [HERE](#). With your donation, you will receive a handmade card to notify your honoree of the gift.

DIG Deeper

Faith Formation Hour



Sunday mornings from 9 – 9:40 a.m., adults gather in the Lower Level and on [Zoom](#) to DIG deeper into a book, faith and relationship with each other. During the month of December, we will be reflecting on Art Work in the style of Vision Divina – we will prayerfully reflect on the art for a few minutes and then enter into dialogue about how we see God working in this art and through this artist. The scriptures are tied to our worship and Advent's Theme, "How does a Weary World Rejoice?"

November 30: Advent 1: Luke 1:1-23, Psalm 80:1-7, 17-19

December 7: Advent 2: Luke 1:24-45, Isaiah 40:1-11

December 14: Advent 3: Luke 1:57-66, Psalm 126

December 21: Advent 4: Luke 1:46-55, Luke 1:67-80

December 28: No DIG gathering

In January, we will begin a study on the Gospel of John. You can join us in person or online at any time! All are welcome!

BIBLE STUDY EVERY TUESDAY @ 1.00 PM

IN THE KIRK'S OFFICE & ON ZOOM

Conversations with Scripture

- Casual atmosphere
- Join in or just listen
- Share insights and questions!



Connect Online!

- Click [HERE](#) for Worship livestreams.
- Click [HERE](#) for DIG, Conversations with Scripture and other ZOOM meetings.



Did you know you can connect to the Kirk anytime through our social media presence? Follow the Kirk on Facebook, Instagram and YouTube and share what inspires you with your friends and followers!



Would You Like to Be a Lay Reader?

If you enjoy scripture and storytelling, we invite you to become a Sunday Lay Reader. Don't let any fear of public speaking hold you back; the welcoming smiles from the congregation at the Kirk make it an incredibly rewarding experience! You will receive the scripture in advance and a guide for preparing a brief Stewardship Moment. To sign up, please add your name to the sheet in the Narthex or contact the office to secure your spot.



Coffee & Community

Each Sunday, a volunteer comes early and makes coffee (following a set of instructions found in the basement kitchen) and brings a treat for after church, and then cleans up. Thank you so much to all who volunteer to create this space for us to visit and build community! You can sign up [HERE](#).

Take a Sack, Bring it Back!

On the third Sunday of every month, the Kirk Mission Team puts out grocery bags with a list of Metro Caring needs. We ask that you bring these back the last week of the month, when people especially need food. We can do it the Kirk way—together!



Free Ways to Give During the Holidays



Remember for every King Soopers reward purchase you make, if you have selected the Kirk as your option, a portion comes to the church. Setting this up is easy!

Step 1 Log in to your online King Soopers account

Step 2 Search "Community Rewards"

Step 3 If you are not currently enrolled, search for Kirk of Bonnie Brae, and when you see it click enroll. Then log in to your account as much as you want to see how much of your grocery bill is coming to the Kirk. For more detailed King Soopers instructions, click [HERE](#).

Moderator's Report, by Donna Furman

Notes from the November Council meeting:

We began discussions about how we'll cover preaching and pastoral care during Selena's sabbatical next summer. The consensus was to rely primarily on internal resources, but also explore multiple options. An initial planning team was put together.

John Davidson reported that our stewardship campaign has exceeded our goal, so our 2026 budget should be in a healthy place! We'll be able to increase staff salaries to keep up with inflation and cover increases in property and liability insurance (an item that accounts for a large share of our budget). As a congregation, we're a very generous group – something we can all celebrate!

In our gratitude moment, Sharon Snyder praised the beauty of the sanctuary; Donna Luther-Adrian's beautiful tablescapes for the communion table, Tim Ward's technology, the candles, and more. Donna Furman recognized John Davidson for his work on stewardship and with the youth group.

Yours In Service,

Donna Furman



KIRK of
BONNIE BRAE

The Kirk's Annual Meeting



On January 25, 2026, after worship we will have our Annual Congregational Meeting. At this meeting, we will approve the budget for 2026, elect officers for the coming year to serve on the Kirk Council and hear a word from our outgoing and incoming Moderators as well as our Pastor on the state of the church.

The meeting will be in the sanctuary immediately following worship, and then everyone will be invited to stay and share a meal together! Please mark your calendars. All members have a vote. Non-members are welcome to join us for the meeting and the meal!

Planning For.... 2026

Worship & Potluck with Absolute Word Church at 10:30 a.m. – **January 18**

Kirk's Annual Meeting and Souper Bowl of Caring – **January 25**

Easter Sunday – **April 5**

Youth Sunday – **May 17**

Intergenerational Service-Learning Trip to El Salvador – **July 23 to August 1**

Calling All Recycling Reindeer!



It's that time of year again when the Hope & Home office turns into Santa's workshop! They are so thankful for all the generous donations to the Hope & Home Christmas Store, but those donations also generate a lot of waste. If you have extra space in your recycle bins at home, please consider taking some boxes home and help us all, help the planet! You can find the excess boxes in the long hallway on the main floor. Thank you!

De-Deck the Halls and Pancake Breakfast

Although we just put up the decorations, and we don't want to talk about taking them down, mark your calendars for **Sunday, January 4**. After worship, we will take down decorations and then the Men of the Kirk will serve up some pancakes to kick off our New Year right! Plan to stay after worship for all the fun!



Kirk Birthdays

1st Greg Sherry

2nd Doug Diebel

7th Ben Feiten

12th Mark Dutell

14th Ann Karlberg

23rd Leigh Plue

25th Jesus!

29th Willow Wright



If we have missed your birthday, please let us know by emailing kobb@kirkofbonniebrae.org.