

# 2026 Newsletter

## January

Dear friends,

In my life, I have found great truth in the saying, “if you want to hear God laugh, tell Him your future plans.” When I was growing up in Spokane, WA, I had every intention of living the entirety of my life in the city of my birth, but God had other ideas. When I was a teenager, I had no desire to go to college, but again, God had other ideas. I started my undergraduate education with the vague idea of majoring in biology, but the combination of animal biology, plant biology, and infectious diseases was enough to change my plans. At the end of my first year of study, I took an introductory course on the theology of the Apostle Paul, and I felt an overwhelming sense of call to pastoral ministry.

Of course, I was not wise (or brave) enough to listen. I spent the entire next year of my studies trying to imitate Jonah by denying the call that God had placed on my life. Finally, I relented, and I prayed “God, if this is really what you want me to do, then make it happen!” To my great surprise, all the necessary doors opened for me to pursue ordination as a Presbyterian pastor. After graduation, this meant leaving the comfort and familiarity of Washington for the unfamiliar terrain of Princeton, New Jersey. During my time in seminary, I had the privilege of spending one year in Scotland as a full-time student minister. I didn’t know it at the time, but the decision to spend that year in Scotland would eventually lead to *ten more years* in Scotland, which profoundly shaped the course of my life.

As human beings, we love to make plans. We love to act like we are in control of our lives. While we can certainly make *some choices*, our lives are formed by so many things that are outside of our control. In my life, I often think about a passage from the book of James:

*Come now, you who say, “Today or tomorrow we will go into such and such a town and spend a year there and trade and make a profit”—yet you do not know what tomorrow will bring. What is your life? For you are a mist that appears for a little time and then vanishes. Instead you ought to say, “If the Lord wills, we will live and do this or that.”* (James 4:13-15)

This passage from James reminds us that we *can* make plans and express hopes for our lives, but such plans and hopes must always be submitted to God’s will. At this time last year, when we were beginning to search in earnest for new ministry opportunities, I had *no* idea that the Lord would call us to Western Colorado—but I am *so* glad that God did!

As we celebrate the Good News of Christmas and move into the New Year of 2026, I am reminded that we serve and worship the one true God, who does not abandon a confused, fractured, or fearful world. God does not leave humanity in darkness or sin, nor does God give up on creation when things seem beyond repair. Instead, now and always, God has other plans. God has come to us in Jesus, in whom we see God’s true and loving plans for us, in which life and light will have the final word.

This is the good news of the Gospel: even now, God is still at work. In Christ, we are given real hope—not because life becomes predictable or easy, but because God is faithful, near, and deeply committed to us. It is a joy to begin this season with you, and I look forward to discovering together how God is already at work among us.

Yours aye in Christ (“aye” is Scottish for “truly”),

Josh Mikelson



## 2026 Mission Fair

**The 2026 Mission Fair is coming up on February 15, 2026.** This is the **21st year** for the fair. The fair will be in the Multi Purpose Room, and coffee and refreshments will be available until 11:30. A list of the organizations participating in the fair will be available on Sunday morning, February 15. The fair will run from 8:30 am to 11:30 am. Please plan on stopping by the fair before or after the 8:30 and 9:30 services and before the 11:00 service. The fair will be going prior to the 11:00 service but not after the 11:00 service. If you would like to help with the fair on Sunday, your time commitment would be about 1 hour. For more information contact Janet Young at [janetyoung@firstpresgj.org](mailto:janetyoung@firstpresgj.org) or call 970-242-1923.

## Health Ministry Team

The Health Ministry Team is sponsoring a **6-week Healthy Living group starting in 2026**. This group will be based on The Daniel Plan by Pastor Rick Warren, Dr Daniel Amen, and Dr Mark Hyman. Two introductory, informational meetings will be held – one during the day and one in the evening. Date and time to be determined. If you are interested in learning more and want to attend one of the meetings, please contact Elizabeth Stead at 706-836-7830. Please join the Health Ministry Team on Sunday January 11<sup>th</sup> in the Fellowship Hall as we offer delicious and healthy samples of food from our new Congregational Cookbook from 8:30 am-11:30 am. Recipes will be available to take home of the foods you loved and there is an opportunity to take home a blank recipe form so you can include one of your own recipes. The cookbook is an ongoing project that is available on our website.

## Sam Luncheon

Please join us for the next SAM luncheon on Monday, January 12 from 11:30 am-1:15 pm in Fellowship Hall. **This month we welcome our new Associate Pastor, Josh Mikelson.** We will be having a potluck/soup buffet. Please sign up at the Information Desk to attend and please note if you are able bring a soup or something to accompany it. If you have questions, please contact Charity Finnigsmier at the church office.

## Pathways Family Shelter Birthday Parties

As part of our original Kingdom Assignment projects, the Hrubes family and Winfrey family put together a **monthly Birthday Party Event for people living at Pathways Family Shelter**. The event involves determining a date each month (with the staff of Pathways helping set that date), buying small gifts, having some fun games, getting some tasty treats, having people write birthday cards, and holding the event at the shelter. The cost of the event is covered by First Pres Outreach funds. We would like to see if there are some other families or individuals who would be willing to step up in 2026 and lead this event. In this trying time for our homeless population, this event is extremely uplifting for both the individuals at the shelter and the staff and we would like to see it continue in 2026. If you are interested, please talk to Robyn Winfrey at 970-812-4122 or Derek Hrubes at 970-589-4070.

## Youth Winter Camp

**Winter Camp for all 7th through 12th graders** will be January 23 through January 25 at Twin Peaks Bible Camp in Collbran, CO. We will leave after school on Friday and return around lunch time on Sunday. The cost for winter camp is \$75 per camper for the weekend. However, we have scholarships available. We always have a great 48 hours of snow, fun, and deepening our relationships with each other and the Lord. Questions? Email Sarah at [sarahqueen@firstpresgj.org](mailto:sarahqueen@firstpresgj.org). To RSVP, scan the QR code.



## Senior Adult Ministry Outing

Please join us for the next **SAM outing on Thursday, January 29 from 10:00 am - 12:00 pm** at The Business Incubator. The Business Incubator Center (BIC) is a 501(c)(3) non-profit organization that for more than a quarter century has been supporting the launch, growth, stabilization, and long-term success of business enterprises in Mesa County and the surrounding region. Their goal is to stimulate and diversify the local economy to retain and create the greatest number of sustainable jobs possible. We will meet at the Incubator, located at 2591 Legacy Way in Grand Junction. We will have a sign-up sheet available closer to the event where you can sign up to carpool if you wish. For questions, please contact Charity Finnigsmier at [sam@firstpresgj.org](mailto:sam@firstpresgj.org) or 970-242-1923.

## Giving Trees

**Thank you to everyone who participated in the Salvation Army Giving Tree and the Nursing Home Giving Tree gifts for 2025.** All 101 Salvation Army tags were adopted. The Nursing Homes were also blessed. We had 95 nursing home gifts adopted for Mesa Manor, Mantey Heights, Larchwood, and Peachtree Assisted Living. Again, thank you to everyone.

## Annual Meeting

**Join your FPC Family at our Annual Meeting on Wednesday, January 28 at 7 pm.** We are encouraging folks to bring a healthy snack or dessert to share. In addition to our regular items of business (2026 Budget, approval of pastors' salaries, etc.), we will also watch a 'yet-unseen' Kingdom Assignment video.

## Wednesday Night Dinners

This spring, we'd like to continue **Wednesday night dinners** for our children and youth. We're hoping to be able to provide dinner starting on January 14 through April. We know that providing dinner can be an important piece of the ministry we do on Wednesday nights. It allows leaders and kids to spend time in fellowship with a delicious meal. Can you provide dinner one Wednesday night? We would be glad to provide you with menu suggestions, recipes, and even shopping lists. Sign-ups are at either Information Desk, and we thank you in advance for your help and for loving the kids at FPC! Please contact Sarah Queen at [sarahqueen@firstpresgj.org](mailto:sarahqueen@firstpresgj.org) for more information.

# A New Year, A New Song... And Maybe a Little Extra Fun

January is a season of fresh beginnings, new calendars, new routines, and new opportunities to lift your voice in praise. Psalm 96:1 reminds us to “*Sing to the Lord a new song*,” and what better way to do that than together in choir? Whether you’ve sung with us before or have always wanted to join, now is the perfect time to share your gift. Singing in community is joyful, energizing, and yes, it’s one of the few places where raising your voice is both encouraged and celebrated!

If you’ve been away, we miss you and warmly invite you back. Life gets busy. Schedules change. Health concerns arise. Leadership shifts happen. All of these are understandable reasons to pause, but a new year offers a fresh start, grace, and the chance to experience the joy of music and fellowship once again.

Never sung in the choir? We hear so many wonderful voices in the congregation, and yes, we know who you are. **We would love for yours to join us too. The choir is a place to share your gift, grow in community, and enjoy making music together.**

Rehearsals are **Wednesdays from 6:30 to 8:30 PM**, filled with uplifting music, encouragement, and just enough lighthearted fun to make the evening fly by. Choir is family, real people, real moments, and plenty of grace when someone misses an entrance or a note (or two).

We ask members to sing at both services when possible, but this is **not a requirement**. What matters most is showing up and offering your voice in worship.

So, if you’ve been thinking, “Maybe this year,” consider this your gentle nudge. Come sing, come laugh, come belong. We need your voice and your heart to make the choir whole.

With joy and a song in our hearts,

David

