

FEBRUARY 2026

Newsletter

“Blessed be the God and Father of our Lord Jesus Christ, the Father of all mercies and the God of all comfort, who comforts us in our pain, so that we may be able to comfort those who are in any pain with the comfort we ourselves have received from God.” (2 Corinthians 1:3-4)

Dear Church Family,

In just a few weeks we will be commissioning 6 men and women to serve as Stephen Ministers and Stephen Ministry Leaders. After 50 hours of training, these men and women will provide Christian caregiving to people at First Pres and beyond. As they meet one-on-one with their care receivers – usually weekly – they will also receive monthly training and supervision from our two Stephen Ministry Leaders: Rhonda Motsko and Ron Makela. Stephen Ministry is a high and holy calling; one of the ways the Church can comfort others with the comfort we have received from God. But let me go back.

Forty years ago, Pastor Skip Herbert and leaders from First Pres went to St. Louis for Stephen Ministry Leader Training. They came back and started a robust ministry. Others joined in at First Pres. Stephen Ministry partnerships developed with several churches in the valley. When First Pres helped plant Monument Presbyterian in 1999, a handful of Stephen Ministers became part of the new church. When I arrived in 2005, there were leaders in place and an active number of people serving in this amazing ministry.

Over the years, as both leaders and caregivers stepped away, moved away and/or could no longer continue with such a significant time commitment, more people stepped up; some of them offered leadership. This continued until sometime after 2015, when the number of leaders and caregivers began to decrease – without replacements ready to step in for training and service. By 2020, Stephen Ministry at First Pres officially and quietly ended. [Full disclosure: Grieving well and bringing closure to ministries that have been vibrant in the past, but come to an end, is a bitter pill for a pastor to swallow.]

Thank God He has a great track record for resurrection.

Fast forward to early 2025 when Sherrie Blake (a Stephen Ministry Leader and staff member at Monument Pres – and a great leader in our Presbytery) asked if First Pres would be interested in getting Stephen Ministers trained again. After holding interest meetings and answering questions, training began in early September. Our 6 men and women have now finished their required training and are committed to serving in this capacity.

Please join with us in commissioning them in church on Sunday, February 22. Join us in praying for them as they serve others. Pray that God would continue to comfort them as they comfort others with the comfort they have received from the Father of Mercies.

Faithfully yours,



Women's Afternoon of Encouragement

Say Yes! Please join the Women's Ministry Team on Sunday, March 1st, from 2:00 - 4:00 pm in Fellowship Hall! We will be enjoying snacks, fellowship, and hearing a great message from Sally Henry about her year of saying Yes! Please sign up in the Lobby or outside the MPR. Questions, please get in touch with Chris at the front office or email the church office.

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 that Sunday morning. 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, sign up sheets are available at the Information Desk in the Lobby or for more information contact Janet Young at 970-242-1923 or janetyoung@firstpresgj.org.

Exploring Musical Offerings in Worship

In the coming months, **we invite musicians of all kinds** to explore opportunities to offer music as part of the prelude and postlude in our worship services. These moments help prepare our hearts for worship and send us forth with reflection and joy. When special musical offerings are shared, we ask the congregation to listen attentively and prayerfully, receiving the music as an act of worship. If you are interested in participating, please contact Emily, Michael or David.



MAN CAMP

MEN - YOUR EPIC, DREAM WEEKEND IS JUST AROUND THE CORNER.

April 24-26, 2026 we're taking over Young Life's Trail West Lodge, a first-class, resort-like camp nestled in the Colorado Rocky Mountains. You can expect a weekend full of fun, adventure, relaxation, and all around manliness. This weekend always sells out fast, so register today!

REGISTER NOW

<https://co215.younglife.events/man-camp-2026>

DATES

- April 24-26, 2026
- Early arrival option for the night of the Thursday, April 23

COST

- \$289 for dorm-style lodging
- \$319 for deluxe lodge-room
 - 2-3 guys sharing one bathroom
 - Add \$76 for early arrival

Senior Adult Ministry Luncheons

Please join us for these upcoming luncheons! All luncheons are from 11:30 am-1:15 pm in Fellowship Hall. Check the bulletin closer to each luncheon for details. If you have questions, please contact Charity Finnigsmier at sam@firstpresgj.org or by calling the church office 970-242-1923.

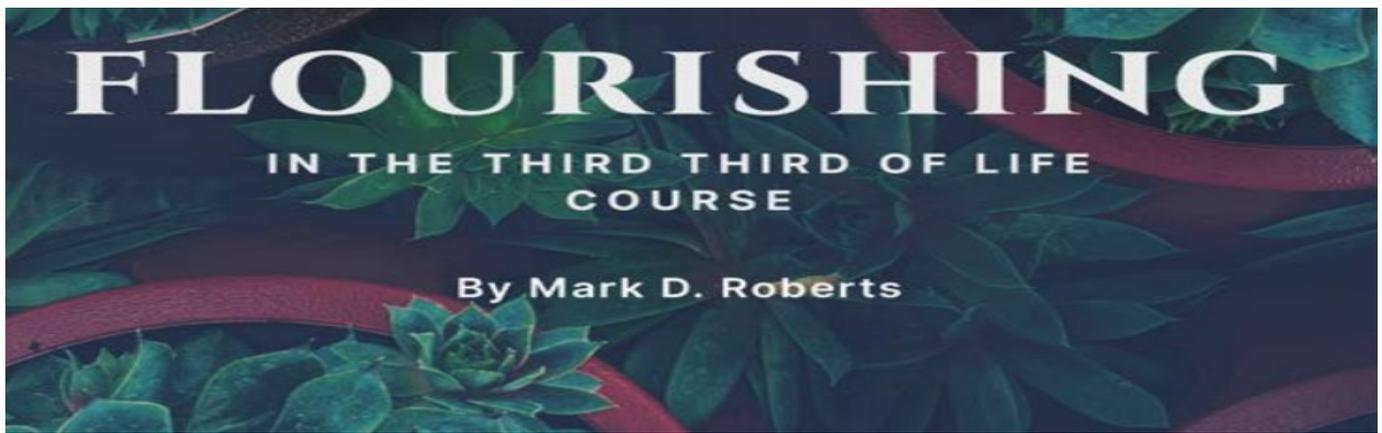
Monday, February 9: This month we welcome Claudette Moore who will share a program, *Butterfly Ecotourism in Central and South America*. “Come learn about butterfly basics and explore exciting opportunities for butterfly enthusiasts to travel south of the border and witness the amazing diversity of tropical butterflies. As interest in butterfly viewing and photography grows within the ecotourism industry, enthusiasts—much like birders—can now join expert guides on unforgettable trips to Central and South America.” This month’s meal will be a sandwich bar. Bread, a variety of meats and cheeses, and condiments will be provided. Please sign up to bring toppings, a side dish, or a dessert to share. Sign up at the Information Desk to attend.

Monday, March 9: This month we welcome Debby Rapozo co-founder of Collar of Duty. “Collar of Duty was established in 2023 to assist any Veteran in need of a service dog in Mesa County Colorado. We pair Veterans with dogs, train them, and our goal is for the Veteran to regain a sense of hope.”

Monday, April 13: Join us as we hear about PACE at HopeWest. “PACE is a comprehensive health care program created over 30 years ago. PACE provides an integrated approach with medical and supportive services designed to help individuals meet their health care needs in the community.”

Pathways Family Shelter Birthday Parties

Like hosting birthday parties? FPC is looking for 5 people to host a monthly birthday party at Pathways Family Shelter, the **last Friday of each month, starting at 5:30 pm!** It is a one-hour time commitment, and you get to visit, play games, have dessert, and celebrate birthdays with the people at Pathways. Please sign up in the Lobby or outside the MPR. If you don’t want to party but would like to provide treats for the party, there is a spot for you to sign up! This was a kingdom assignment project that FPC is continuing! Please see Tasha Haley with any questions tashahaley@firspresgj.org



Flourishing in the Third Third is an invitation to explore faith, purpose, and meaning in the final “Third” of life. Rather than treating this season as a slow fade into retirement or mere maintenance, this six-week small-group experience reframes later life as a time of deep wisdom, renewed calling, and intentional fruitfulness. Scripture consistently portrays later years not as an ending, but as a season uniquely suited for discernment, blessing, and faithful presence—years rich with perspective, patience, and spiritual depth.

This resource creates space for honest reflection on questions many of us carry quietly: *What is God still calling me to? What do I need to release—and what am I being invited to receive? How might my life bear fruit now in ways it could not before?* Through guided readings, thoughtful prompts, and shared conversation, participants are encouraged to listen carefully—to God, to one another, and to the wisdom already forming within them through lived experience.

Flourishing in the Third Third is designed for conversation, not lectures; for curiosity, not pressure; and for depth, not easy answers. It honors both the gifts and the complexities of this season of life, making room for gratitude, grief, hope, and holy uncertainty. Whether you feel settled, uncertain, hopeful, or restless about this stage of life, you are welcome.

If you are interested in learning more about this six-week small-group experience, please sign up at the Information Desk, or call/email the office. A variety of meeting times and formats will be available once groups are formed.

