



March Newsletter 2026

“When the days drew near for Jesus to be taken up, He set His face to go to Jerusalem.”

(Luke 9:51)

Dear Church Family,

Two weeks into the Lenten season, we find ourselves gazing even more deeply at our “Gentle and Lowly” Savior; marveling at the humility of Jesus. Knowing who He was (the eternal Son of God) and the excruciating pain awaiting Him (death on a cross), Jesus “sets His face to go to Jerusalem.” He is ready and willing to pay an unimaginable price: His certain execution.

Although we know His disciples weren’t fully tracking with the “yoke” (way) of their rabbi, this is what Jesus told them shortly before His final pivot to Jerusalem: “The Son of Man must undergo great suffering, and be rejected by the elders, chief priests, and scribes, and be killed, and on the third day be raised.” (Luke 9:22) They would know soon enough that He meant what He said. But if that was all Jesus said, we’d mostly be talking about His prediction of an event in the past that greatly benefitted us, without asking anything costly in return. Win-Win!

But Jesus went on; and here’s where following Jesus gets less vague and more costly. “If any want to become My followers, let them deny themselves and take up their cross daily and follow Me. For those who want to save their life will lose it, and those who lose their life for My sake will save it.” (Luke 9:23-24) On most days – including these days of Lent – denying ourselves, taking up our cross daily and losing our lives for the sake of Christ and His Kingdom are not what we signed up for; not on our ‘to do’ lists. Who would want to choose that?

What we have been discovering since the Fall is that our “Gentle and Lowly” Savior is exactly the kind of God and person – fully God and fully human – who would choose to deny Himself, take up His cross and lose His life. Again, that would be comforting and inspiring if it was only what Jesus did. But He also invites US to do the same. Was He out of His mind? Maybe a little, but remember where everything He said and did flowed from? His gentle and humble heart.

Maybe, just maybe, Jesus knew a thing or two about a life – Yoke, Way – that is truly unburdened and full of rest; a life that was light and easy. Not ‘easy, easy.’ There’s nothing easy about a cross. Maybe Jesus knew the ease of letting go and the accompanying freedom which stems from true humility and ultimate sacrifice.

What truly sets people free is the willingness to lay everything aside for the sake of others; to practice a kind of self-denial (not self-loathing or self-deprecation) that leads to less striving, less worrying, less performing. Less of us and more of Jesus. Less of our harshness and more of Jesus’ gentleness. Less arrogance and more humility. When we hear Jesus’ invitation – “Come to Me . . . Take My yoke upon you” – may we choose His “Gentle and Lowly” way.

Faithfully yours,



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.

Sports and Arts Camp

“Laws of the Game” Sports and Arts Camp is June 22-26! We don’t want you to miss this opportunity to play and serve! Camp will be held right here at First Pres, from 5:30 – 8 pm each day. The camp will feature instruction in soccer, cheerleading, flag football, drama, and art for 6 to 12-year-olds; basketball and volleyball for 8 to 12-year-olds. Four and five-year-olds can participate in Team 45, learning the basic movements of sport. Focusing on Matthew 28:19-20, kids will learn about the commands Jesus gave to love God and others and to make disciples of all nations. The cost is \$20 for the first camper in a family and \$15 for each additional child in the family. All campers will receive a camp T-shirt. **Both** volunteer *and* camper registration forms are available at the Information Desk or at www.firstpresgj.org. If you have questions? Contact Janet Young at janetyoung@firstpresgj.org or 970-242-1923.

ShareFest Weekend is Approaching

ShareFest Weekend is **April 25 & 26, 2026**. ShareFest is a weekend when we join with many churches in the Grand Valley going out into the community to serve people in very simple ways. Churches will be doing projects on Saturday and/or Sunday of that weekend. We will be helping people in the community and helping members of our own congregation. We will be baking cookies, starting up swamp coolers, doing projects for teachers at Orchard Avenue Elementary school, packing lunches to be distributed to homeless individuals, and making care packages for CMU students. The ShareFest website (www.gjsharefest.com) will be open Monday, March 23 for people to submit needs or to adopt needs. First Pres will have a table in the Lobby with projects that need to be adopted. The table will be up on March 29, April 12, and April 19. If you know someone who might need some help or if you, yourself, could use some help getting your yard ready for spring, or washing your windows, or many other things, you can go to the ShareFest website and click on “Needs” to submit a need. If you would be interested in helping man the ShareFest table on one Sunday in March or April, please contact Janet at janetyoung@firstpresgj.org

One Great Hour of Sharing

On Palm Sunday, March 29, we will take the One Great Hour of Sharing offering. A gift to One Great Hour of Sharing enables the church to share God’s love with our neighbors-in-need around the world by providing relief to those affected by natural disasters, providing food to the hungry, and helping to empower the poor and oppressed. Beginning March 1, envelopes will be available in the pews in the Sanctuary and in the Multi-Purpose Room.

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 Finnigmier at sam@firstpresgj.org or call the church office 970-242-1923.

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.”

Passion for Life Fine Arts Series



Passion for Life is a fine arts ministry of First Presbyterian Church dedicated to celebrating artistic excellence as a gift from God and a means of enriching the life of both church and community. Through recitals, concerts, and special presentations, the series highlights emerging and established artists while fostering worship, inspiration, education, and joyful participation across generations.

Upcoming Recitals & Presentations

Sunday, March 22 | 3:00 PM

A Festival of Hymns: The Writers Tell Their Stories

This unique festival service brings significant hymn writers—from the fourth through the twentieth centuries—to life as they tell their own stories in the first person, followed by the singing of a representative hymn. Written for and born of the church, this service places congregational participation at its heart. Come and raise your voices!

Tuesday, March 24 | 7:30 PM

Senior Recital – Grace Goodland, Trumpet

Join us as Grace Goodland presents her Senior Recital in completion of her Music Degree at Colorado Mesa University.

Saturday, May 3 | 3:00 PM

Praise Through the Ages: A Choral Journey Across Centuries

The Messiah Choral Society presents an inspiring program of outstanding choral works from the Renaissance through the twentieth century. The afternoon will be paired with a **Spaghetti Lunch Fundraiser and Silent Auction prior to the concert**, supporting the continued growth of the choral ministry. Join us for an afternoon of sacred music, fellowship, and celebration across the ages.

All events will be held in the First Presbyterian Church Sanctuary

FLOURISHING

IN THE THIRD THIRD OF LIFE

COURSE

"**Flourishing in the Third Third**" is an opportunity to explore faith and purpose during the final "Third" of life. If you are interested in finding out more about this 6-week small group experience, please attend any **ONE** of these **Informational Gatherings**:

- Sunday, March 8 at 9:30 in The Gathering Place
- Sunday, March 8 at 12:15 in Fellowship Hall (sub sandwiches, chips and drinks will be provided)
- Wednesday, March 11 at 1 pm in the Fletcher Room
- Wednesday, March 11 at 6:30 pm in the Fletcher Room.

FOR PLANNING PURPOSES, PLEASE LET US KNOW WHICH ONE YOU'LL ATTEND.
The sign-up sheets are at the Information Desk or outside the MPR.

Holy Week Dates

Palm Sunday Mar 29th:

8:30 Traditional in the Sanctuary

9:30 Contemporary in the MPR

11:00 Traditional in the Sanctuary

Good Friday:

April 3rd @ 7pm in the MPR

Maundy Thursday:

April 2nd @ 7pm in the Sanctuary

Easter Sunday April 5th

8:30 Traditional in the Sanctuary

9:30 Contemporary in the MPR

11:00 Traditional in the Sanctuary