



Volume 13, Number 12



Presbyterian  
Community Church  
of the Rockies

## December 2025 Newsletter

Estes Park's historic mainline Protestant congregation founded in 1907.

Mission Statement: Presbyterian Community Church of the Rockies is a welcoming community united by faith in Jesus Christ; we seek to serve others, share God's love, and engage all people.





## PCCR Directory

**Office Hours:** Monday through Thursday, 9:00 am to 3:00 pm; closed Fridays

**Office Phone:** 970-586-4404

**Church Website:** [pccrusa.org](http://pccrusa.org)

### Church Staff

**Pastor:** Rev. Dr. Christine Dempsey,  
[pastor@pccrusa.org](mailto:pastor@pccrusa.org)

**Financial Manager:**  
[finance@pccrusa.org](mailto:finance@pccrusa.org)

**Office Administrator:**  
Brenda Dixon, [office@pccrusa.org](mailto:office@pccrusa.org)

**Handbell Director:** Patti Dolezal,  
[music@pccrusa.org](mailto:music@pccrusa.org)

**Choir Director:** Rich Dixon

**Organist:** Larry Gillum



**Paper copies of the newsletter are available in the narthex.**

Thank you to everyone who has contributed to this issue of the newsletter—whether it be your service in this church or providing a written article or photo.

We appreciate your input!

**The January Newsletter deadline is Tuesday, December 16. Please send your pictures and stories to: [office@pccrusa.org](mailto:office@pccrusa.org) Thanks!**



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## Worship Schedule

**Sunday Worship in the Sanctuary:**

**December 7—10:00am** Communion; Bell Choirs  
**December 14 —10:00am** Chancel Choir, Bell Ensemble  
**December 21 —10:00am** Chancel Choir, Bell Ensemble  
**December 21 —5:00pm** Blue Christmas Service  
**December 24 —5:00pm** Christmas Eve Service with Chancel Choir, Combined Bell Choirs and the Highland Brass  
**December 28—10:00am** Congregation Carol Sing

**The Rev. Dr. Christine Dempsey, pastor**  
**Larry Gillum, organist**

### View through Livestream service on our website:

Open the website, <https://pccrusa.org> on the Home page. The livestream player is to the right, below the opening pictures.

The player will automatically start when the service begins.

**Sunday Bulletin:** The current worship bulletin appears directly below the livestream and video recordings box. Simply click on "View Bulletin".

**Congregational Meeting following worship Sunday, December 14**

**December 2025**

**Message from Pastor Christine Dempsey ...**

This Christmas holiday marks a transition for Mike and me, as it is the first year that we are oldest generation in our respective families. The way we “do Christmas” is gone, and we both carry a sense of melancholy and uncertainty as to the future. I know we are not alone, as many of you are navigating the holidays in a new way – perhaps coping without a spouse, recovering from a broken relationship, realizing the inability to see loved ones, or feeling lonesome without a beloved pet. It seems like we put a lot of stock in “the way we were” and in holiday traditions that brought us together as family. And why? Because these traditions root us in Christ, they bring out the best of who we are, and they remind us that our love of one another comes from the love that God has in us.



One of the beautiful parts of our faith is that it often transcends the faithful, and even non-believers find hope in Christmas. For a time, we tended to be critical of those who did not understand the “reason for the season” and wanted to whitewash the holiday by judging who was fit to celebrate and who was not. But Jesus would not mock or deny those the space to celebrate Christmas, he would see it as an opportunity to spread God’s love. For even in those who do not believe, or believe yet, they have found hope in the Christ child. Think about this! The promise of Christmas transcends the race, nation, gender, and religious background. Instead of deriding those who don’t know the full story, let’s invite them in! This is our chance to share with them why we hold our faith close to our hearts, and why we come to gather at the Christmas tree year after year.

This advent, I am taking a walk through the gospel Christmas narratives. It is chance to think about the words from our gospel writers, their experience of Christ that brought them to share the good news. They wrote after hearing the stories and experiencing the sacrificial love of God. Like them, we too share in that experience of Christ transforming our lives, and we remember this as we reflect on lives, our history and our faith. It is both a memory and a projection. My theme the “Memory of Love” - (yes, If you picked up on the words, this is from John Denver’s lyrics) expresses this sentiment. It is why we long for Christmas past and hunger to share this experience with the future.

To prepare, we will be looking at each gospel writer and their unique approach to this story of Jesus. On November 30, we looked at how Matthew entered the story, and looking forward: December 7<sup>th</sup> will be Mark, December 14 will be focused on Luke and December 21 will be John. Then, on Christmas Eve, we will celebrate Christ’s birth with our favorite Christmas carols, themes of Christmas joy, a candlelight welcome for the Baby Jesus and Joy to the World. And, after that celebration, we will enjoy cookies after worship. And, for those, not quite up for the evening, we will have a chance to come together quietly for a Blue Christmas. This will be a celebration with quiet contemplation of the deep December night.

I invite you all into Christmas this year with the anticipation of a child and the wisdom of an adult. Once again, or perhaps for the first time, we have the chance to welcome Christ into our lives. Bring your friends and your families – this is an invitation for all! For as we read Luke’s retelling of the story, “Do not be afraid; for see – I am bringing you good news of great joy for all the people.”

Grace and Peace,

Christine



# PCCR in November



All Saints Day &  
Honoring our Long-time  
Members



Thanksgiving Donation to  
Crossroads





**PRESBYTERIAN  
DISASTER  
ASSISTANCE**  
OUT OF CHAOS, HOPE

### 2025 Mission and Outreach Disaster Relief

One part of our church Mission and Outreach program is to support relief activities for emergencies such as wildfires and floods that happen during the year. The church includes funding for this in its yearly budget. The congregation also gives additionally through special collections during the year as needs arise.

Earlier this year, the congregation did this following the fires in California and the floods in Texas. Mission and Outreach also contributed from previously budgeted funds. Combined, we gave approximately \$5,750 to these relief efforts.

In November, Mission and Outreach donated \$1,300, divided equally to assist with recovery from hurricane Melissa in Jamaica, and from earthquakes and typhoons in the Philippines, and locally to Crossroads Ministry for extra support of those in need in the Estes Valley.

Our contributions are managed through Presbyterian Disaster Assistance (PDA), a global relief and recovery branch of our Presbyterian Church (USA) denomination. PDA uses contributions such as ours to supply drinking water and hygiene and sanitation items, as well as shelter, medicines, food and other provisions. Presbyterian Disaster Assistance also continues with long-term recovery projects and assistance.

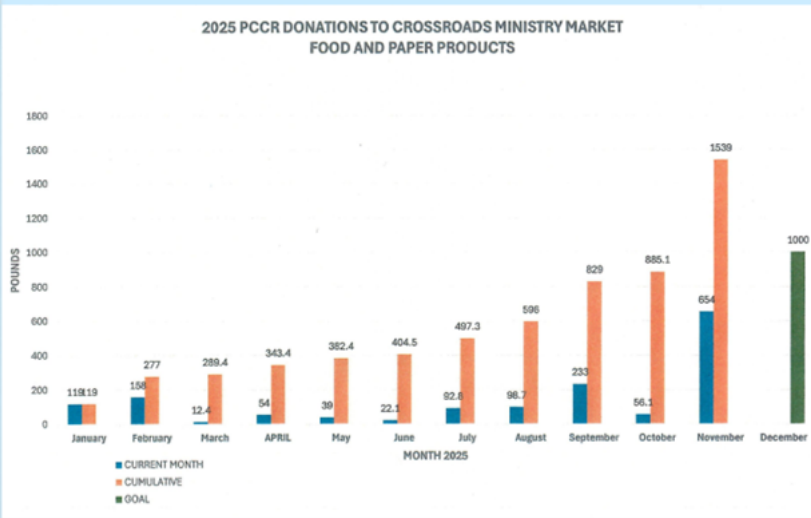
### Crossroads Donations Update



#### DID YOU KNOW?

The staff and volunteers of the Crossroads Market are beyond grateful for PCCR’s overwhelming response to Crossroads’ Thanksgiving food drive! Because of your generosity, our neighbors in need were blessed with full pantries and the assurance that God is present in their lives.

So far this year, we have donated 1,539 pounds of nutritious food and necessities, far surpassing last year’s total.



Members of our community are still struggling with insecurities in this time of Advent. Let’s fill our shopping cart to the brim in December so that the light, hope and peace of the birth of Christ will fill the hearts of the least of us.

Thank you, Your Mission and Outreach Committee



### **Columbarium Charges To Increase January 1, 2026**

PCCR offers a beautiful Columbarium secluded on our grounds here in Estes Park. Church members and their families are offered sites either in the ground or in a stone wall. Due to increased charges from our Suppliers of Markers and Urns, the charges for families planning to purchase spaces in the Church Columbarium will also increase. Starting Jan 1, 2026, the cost of a double space will increase to \$1,900.00; current cost is \$1,800.00. The cost for a single space will increase to \$950.00. Charges include Urns, engraved markers and the Right of Inurnment. For more information or to arrange a visit, contact Bill Smith. 970-420-1033 or [billsmithbronx1956@gmail.com](mailto:billsmithbronx1956@gmail.com).

### **Report on the Donation for Blankets and its Impact:**

On behalf of our entire community we serve, we extend our deepest and most heartfelt gratitude for your generous donation of MK3,619, 830.00 which was received early this year for the blankets activity. Included herein is a report which serves to detail how the blanket funds were utilized to illuminate the profound impact it has made on the lives of the widows, the elderly, orphans and other vulnerable individuals in the wider community and the witness of Christianity.



Firstly, your compassion and incredible generosity were directly channeled into our "Warmth in Winter" initiative, which aimed to provide essential warmth and comfort during the recent cold season. With your support, we were able to purchase and distribute 185 quality blankets to vulnerable members in the communities. The blankets were bought at Mk19,500.00 each.

Secondly, the primary impact of your donation was felt immediately by the individuals and families who received the blankets. The beneficiaries included the elderly living alone, children from child headed households and individuals with chronic illnesses. The blankets are providing critical protection against the cold, directly reducing cases of hypothermia, pneumonia and other respiratory illnesses. For an elderly woman, like Gogo Naphiri, who has arthritis, the blanket meant she could sleep through the night without painful stiffness. For the children, it meant a warm, secure sleep, replacing the thin, worn-out rags they previously were using.

Thirdly, beyond the physical warmth, the blankets carried a powerful message to recipients; "You are not forgotten." Many beneficiaries were moved to tears, expressing that the gift restored their sense of dignity and gave them hope during a difficult time.

Fourthly, the ripple effects of your donation have strengthened the fabric of the entire community. It has strengthened the community resilience. A healthier community is a more resilient one. By safeguarding the health of it's most vulnerable members, your donation has reduced the strain on local healthcare centers and allowed families to remain productive.

Fifth, the most profound impact of your donation has been on the spiritual life and witness of the Christian community. Your gift was a tangible demonstration of Christs command to " love your neighbor as yourself"( Mark 12 v 31). It moved faith beyond words and sermons into concrete. The blankets were distributed with a simple message: "This is a gift from God, given in love by a fellow believer."

Your donation given in the spirit of Christ, transcended denominational lines. It served as a powerful reminder that the body of Christ is one, united in it's mission to serve and bring God's love to a hurting world.

Lastly, the blankets are not just pieces of fabric; they are daily reminders to recipients that they are seen, valued and loved by God and by His people.

We are extremely grateful for your partnership in this vital work. You are truly making a lasting difference. May God richly bless you, your friends and your church for your open heart and generous spirit. Included are photos of some the recipients.

With sincere gratitude,

Yours

Leman Kayira



## Habitat now accepting applications in Estes Park year-round!

By Dave Thomas

With the first of five houses being built in Estes Park almost finished, Habitat for Humanity of the St. Vrain Valley has expanded the window of opportunity for applications. Previously, there was a very limited period of several months - June to August - when applications were accepted. But now, Habitat has opened the process to receive applications throughout the year.

For many years, PCCR has supported Habitat for Humanity. In years past, many volunteers from this church participated in construction teams to build homes in the Estes Park area. For decades, Habitat has received annual financial support as a line item in the church's Mission & Outreach budget. In 2025, PCCR provided \$1,000 to Habitat for Humanity of the St. Vrain Valley, which includes the Estes Park area.

Habitat is currently completing a home on Raven Avenue (near Ace Hardware and the Expedition Lodge). During the application process for that home, only six applications were submitted. Habitat for Humanity of the St. Vrain Valley provides the opportunity to purchase a home through an affordable mortgage, for qualifying households. Habitat offers a free counseling session to review the applications and guide applicants through the process, considering their income, credit, residency, and first-time buyer status.

As local volunteers with Habitat, my wife Sue and I have brochures available in both English and Spanish, which provide the QR code for obtaining the application forms. Please reach out to us ([mexdauet@gmail.com](mailto:mexdauet@gmail.com)) if you want a brochure or if you know of someone who may be interested.





## Christmas Joy Offering

The theme of the 2025 Joy Offering is rooted in Isaiah 40 which says “Prepare the Way,” giving instruction for making a path for the coming of the Messiah. The Joy Offering gives us the path to celebrate and honor the past, present, and future leaders and workers of the church who have unexpected financial distress and need help. These workers have guided many people to

finding the love, peace, and grace of Jesus. With our giving we can make a path for God’s work to assist them. In the year 2024, 261 retired church workers received income supplements; 1,366 individuals received housing assistance to remain in their homes, afford assisted living, or receive long-term care; and nearly 200 individuals received emergency grants due to great financial need because of unforeseen circumstances.

In addition to serving the church workers, half of the funds go to support Presbyterian-related schools offering educational grants to diverse schools and students such as the Menaul School in New Mexico, Presbyterian Pan American School in Texas, and Stillman College in Alabama. These schools help provide education and leadership development skills for communities of color.

Since the 1930’s thousands of congregations have united to support the Joy Offering to help support church leaders and future leaders. If all of us give a little, it amounts to a lot.



## Presbyterian Women’s Bible Study—December 15th Finding Resilience, Joy, and Our Identity in Jesus Christ 11:30am—1:00pm (Snacks Provided)

This year’s study, *Finding Resilience, Joy, and our Identity in Jesus Christ*, has fostered some interesting ideas and discussions about how we find resilience in our lives and how we survive the difficult challenges we face.

The December lesson is on the familiar parable of the prodigal Son, lead by Betty Meyer. We will go deeper into this story with a different telling of it. All women of the church are welcome to join us in the Church Library at 11:30am. Books are available. It’s not necessary to have attended previous lessons. We learn, snack, gab, and have fun. Join us!





# Groups and Events

## Estes Valley Chamber Singers Christmas Concert



PCCR Sanctuary  
Saturday,  
December 6  
2:00 pm

## Estes Park Chorale Concert



PCCR Sanctuary  
Saturday,  
December 13  
2:00pm

## Christmas Eve Candlelight Service Thursday, December 25th 5:00pm

Invite your family and friends for this poignant time of worship. The service will feature the Chancel Choir, Combined Bell Choirs and the Highland Brass, along with organist Larry Gillum.

Afterwards, the Hospitality Committee invites you to share a Christmas Eve tradition as they serve cookies to celebrate together the miracle of Christ's birth.



## Blue Christmas Service

Sunday, December 21st  
at 5:00pm

On the longest night of the year, we are sometimes overcome by cold, loneliness and an anxious world. Even with the coming of Christmas, the bleak winter seems to win. If you are in this space, come and worship in this quiet experience of the coming of Christ where we can warm our hearts and anticipate the Christ child who came for the poor in spirit; for those who mourn, for the meek and for all seeking hope this year.

## The Season of Advent "The Memory of Love"

Throughout Advent Pastor Christine will focus on the warmth of Christmas memories and the anticipation of welcoming Christ again this year. It will be filled with wonderful music of the season, singing many of the hymns that we all hold so dearly in our heart and minds. And as usual we will be treated to Larry Gillum's improvisations on Christmas carols at the end of each service.



## Wednesday Bible Study with Pastor Christine

Of course we are going to continue to study Genesis during Advent. What a beautiful way to celebrate the working of God in our lives by studying those of the distant past. Our journey in December takes us to the heart of Canaan where we will study the complicated family relationship of Jacob's heirs.

December 3—"Joseph" Genesis Chapter 37

December 10—"Inappropriate Relationships" - Genesis Chapters 38 & 39

December 17—"Dreams" Genesis Chapters 40-41

No Class on December 24 or 31



### SAINT AUGUSTINE CONFESSIONS



## Six-Week Study: Augustine's Confessions

Sundays at 3:00pm starting January 18 in the church library—  
All Are Welcome!

This winter, we'll journey together through Augustine's *Confessions*—the most influential Christian spiritual autobiography ever written and one of the most beloved books in church history. Augustine gave voice to many of the core concepts we still use today when we speak of our faith: grace, sin, free will, creation, desire, and the restless heart that seeks God. Yet his writing is personal, vivid, and surprisingly relatable.

We'll read the book together at a gentle pace, with plenty of time for reflection, discussion, questions, laughter, and shared discovery. No prior experience or background is needed—just curiosity and an open heart. *Confessions* is truly one of my favorite books, and I'm excited to explore it with you.

Everyone is invited. Come discover why Augustine's voice continues to shape Christian spirituality, and why his story still speaks so powerfully to our own.

Please contact me for more information. Make sure to add the *Confessions* to your Christmas list!

Rebecca Chopp

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610-425-0565

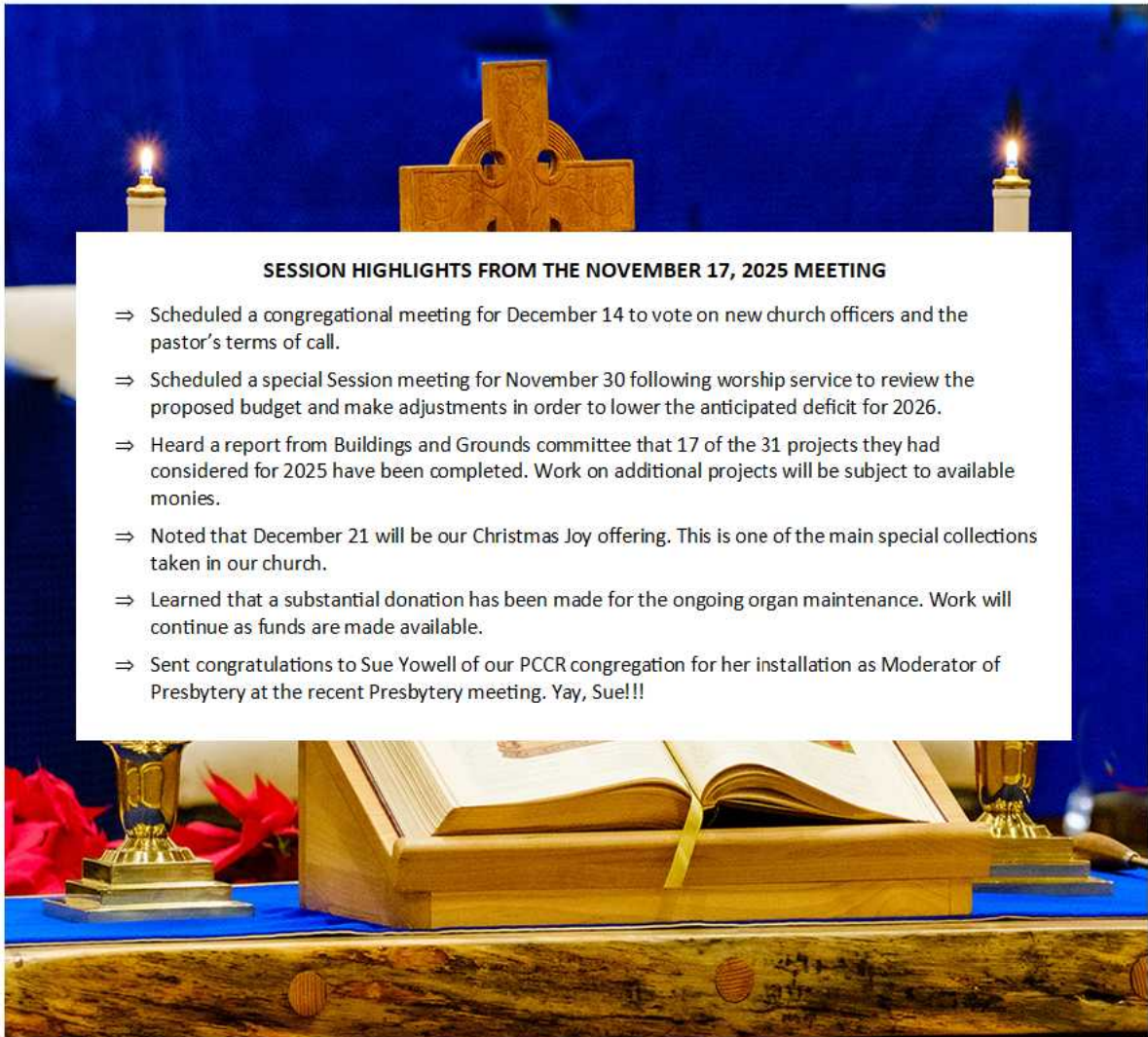
## Adult Study Group

The Adult Study Group (a.k.a. Not Your Mother's Sunday School) continues with various studies on Fridays at 10:00am in the Church library. Recently we have been "chasing rabbits" in chases triggered by our basic study of the Book of Matthew, roaming off into looking at some of the Biblical translations and why some appeal to us over others:

a chance comment led to a look at the Dead Sea Scrolls. Who knows where we might wander next – come join us and add your thoughts to ours!

There will be NO classes on December 19 or 26. January 2 is uncertain – keep an eye on the bulletin for that decision.





**SESSION HIGHLIGHTS FROM THE NOVEMBER 17, 2025 MEETING**

- ⇒ Scheduled a congregational meeting for December 14 to vote on new church officers and the pastor’s terms of call.
- ⇒ Scheduled a special Session meeting for November 30 following worship service to review the proposed budget and make adjustments in order to lower the anticipated deficit for 2026.
- ⇒ Heard a report from Buildings and Grounds committee that 17 of the 31 projects they had considered for 2025 have been completed. Work on additional projects will be subject to available monies.
- ⇒ Noted that December 21 will be our Christmas Joy offering. This is one of the main special collections taken in our church.
- ⇒ Learned that a substantial donation has been made for the ongoing organ maintenance. Work will continue as funds are made available.
- ⇒ Sent congratulations to Sue Yowell of our PCCR congregation for her installation as Moderator of Presbytery at the recent Presbytery meeting. Yay, Sue!!!

<b>Financial Information October 2025</b>			
	<b>Oct</b>	<b>Jan-Oct</b>	<b>Year to Date—Budget</b>
Total Revenues	\$52,798	\$521,167	\$345,979
Total Expenses	\$61,927	\$560,783	\$422,647
Net Total	-\$9,129	-\$39,616	-\$76,668

\*Revenue  
 State of CO Grant \$85,250  
 Carpet in Basement \$19,295  
 Family Changing Room \$20,000  
 Employee Retention Tax Credit \$38,310

\*Expense  
 Repayment of ERTC Fees to Foundation \$6,850  
 Carpet in Basement \$19,895  
 Grant Vendor Payments \$89,272  
 Family Changing Room \$18,212

