

Lenten Newsletter

THE GAZE OF GOD
Seeing and Being Seen Through Art



FIRST UNITED METHODIST CHURCH - COLORADO SPRINGS

Entering the Sacred Gaze

As we stand on the threshold of Lent, the noise of our fractured and exhausting cultural landscape can feel overwhelming. In a world that often demands we mask our true selves, we find ourselves asking how to truly love our neighbors—and ourselves—amidst such complexity. This season step away from the chaos and into the light of Christ through our theme, *The Gaze of God: Seeing and Being Seen Through Art*. For forty days, we will use the medium of sacred art to explore the fundamental truth that before we ever attempt to "find" God, God has already found us. By contemplating specific paintings together, we will peel back the layers of how we perceive the world. We will explore how God sees us—moving past our curated masks to the heart of our belovedness—and how we might find the Divine in the unexpected and the broken. This visual journey is designed to transform our perspective,

teaching us to look at our neighbors not as "others" or "strangers," but as living reflections of the Creator. Art has a unique way of bypassing the intellect and speaking directly to the soul, offering us a fresh vocabulary for faith when words alone feel insufficient. Whether you come carrying weariness, questions, or hope, know that you are welcome here. In this sacred space, you are not just a face in the crowd; you are seen, you are known, and you are loved. Let us walk together into the Gaze of God.

See you Sunday,

Rev. Eric Strader

In this newsletter
you can expect:

Ash Wednesday

A Walk Through
Holy Week

Connection
Opportunities

Ongoing
Ministires

Share Your Eyes,
Share Your Light



We're creating new visual art around the church — and we'd love your help. If you're willing, please see Ciera in the Courtyard or Entry Hall to have a photo taken of just your eyes as we reflect the gaze of God in and through our community.



18 February 2026
6:30PM | Sanctuary

Ash Wednesday

Ash Wednesday marks the beginning of Lent—a season of reflection, repentance, and renewal. This year, we enter through our theme, “The Gaze of God: Seeing and Being Seen Through Art.” Like art, Lent invites us to pause, to notice, and to consider how God sees us—and how we see ourselves.

The ashes remind us of our humanity and our need for grace.

They invite us to be fully known by a God whose loving gaze meets us even in our brokenness. Join us as we gather for prayer, reflection, and the imposition of ashes. Come begin this Lenten journey ready to be seen, renewed, and transformed by God’s mercy.

Blooming Flowers for Easter



Help us decorate our worship spaces with blooming plants for Easter (April 5). Plants may be given in honor or memory of a loved one, or “To the Glory of God.”

The first and second plants are \$15 each; additional plants are \$10 each. All orders must be received by **Monday, March 30**.

Plants may be picked up after the 11:00am Easter service. Unclaimed plants will be placed in the columbarium garden.

To place your flower order, visit go.fumc-cs.org/give, select the fund “**Other**,” and note “**Flowers in Memory of ...**”. You may also pick up an order envelope at the information desk.

I REMEMBER MAMA

FEBRUARY 27 — MARCH 8

[GO.FUMC-CS.ORG/IREMEMBERMAMA](https://go.fumc-cs.org/iremembermama)

- Free Childcare Available for the March 1st Show Only -
Registration Required visit go.fumc-cs.org/childcare

A Walk Through Holy Week

Join us as we journey through Holy Week, reflecting on Christ's love and sacrifice. Guided by our Lenten theme, The Gaze of God, we will explore how God sees us and how we are called to see God and one another. Each service offers space for worship, prayer, and meaningful reflection as we prepare for Easter.



29 March 2026

Palm Sunday

Begin Holy Week with a celebration of Jesus' triumphant entry into Jerusalem. On Palm Sunday, we remember the joyful shouts of "Hosanna" and reflect on how the crowds saw Jesus as He entered the city.



3 April 2026
6:30PM | Sanctuary

Good Friday

The Good Friday service will remember the death of Jesus through John Rutter's Requiem. As tradition, we will conclude by extinguishing all candles, entering into the darkness Christ faced on our behalf.

After his father's death, Rutter shared that "he wanted to find a way to remember his father through music." He later reflected, "When people listen to a Requiem they are weaving their own thoughts and memories and experiences into the music... It is very much a two-way piece." Inspired in part by Fauré's beloved Requiem, this service invites us into a deeply personal and meaningful time of reflection.



2 April 2026
6:30PM | Fellowship Hall

Maundy Thursday

The Maundy Thursday evening meal is a cherished tradition at FUMC-CS, offering a meaningful way to remember Jesus' final night through shared meal, foot (or hand) washing, and Holy Communion. This sacred gathering invites us into moments of humility, reflection, and deep connection as we enter the heart of Holy Week.

- **What:** A shared meal, foot washing, and communion.
- **RSVP Required:** To ensure we have plenty of food for everyone, please let us know you're coming! Visit go.fumc-cs.org/maundythursday.



5 April 2026
8AM | 9AM | 11AM

Easter

Celebrate the joy of the Resurrection with us on Easter Sunday. We gather to proclaim that Christ is risen and to give thanks for new life, hope, and God's unending love. Through worship, music, and Scripture, we rejoice in the promise of renewal and the victory of light over darkness.

Easter Egg Hunt 10:30 AM



Faith and Connection: Around Downtown

Spring is a season of renewal, and we are taking that spirit into the heart of Colorado Springs! Join your FUMC-CS family for a series of "intentional mix-ups"—events designed to help us cross the

aisles, meet new faces, and enjoy the vibrant culture of our downtown community.

To **RSVP** to any of these events please visit go.fumc-cs.org/connection.



Jazz at the Mining Exchange

February 19
5:00PM - 8:00PM
8 S Nevada Ave.

Start your evening with the soulful rhythms of live jazz. This is a "come and go" event—perfect for easy conversation and a relaxed mid-week reset with church friends in one of downtown's most beautiful historic settings.



Community Tea at Toodles Tea Room

February 28
110 E Boulder St.

Let's stir things up! This "intentional mix-up" is designed to bring people from different worship services together. Join us on Boulder Street for a spot of tea and a chance to get to know someone you usually only see in passing.



First Friday Art Crawl

March 6
5:00PM
FUMC Parking Lot

Experience the local art scene with FUMC. We'll meet in the church parking lot and meander through downtown galleries together. It's a great way to enjoy the creativity of our city while building community.

Paint & Sip in the Courtyard

March 13
Time: 6:00PM - 8:00PM
The Courtyard



Unleash your inner artist! We're gathering in the FUMC Courtyard for an evening of painting and refreshments. No experience is necessary—just a willing spirit and a love for fellowship.



Children will have their own Paint and Sip. Same time, same place. Italian sodas for sipping.

Lent & Holy Week for Young People

Join us for a special Holy Week journey designed just for young people as we explore the story of Jesus' love and sacrifice in creative and hands-on ways. Guided by our Lenten theme, *The Gaze of God*, young people will discover how deeply God sees and loves them, and how they can learn to see God and others with kindness and compassion. Through interactive experiences, play, and meaningful moments, we'll prepare our hearts together for the joy of Easter.



ALL SUNDAYS IN LENT
10:10AM - 11:00AM

Children are Precious in His Sight

Both children's and youth Sunday School lessons will mirror the weekly art piece of the worship series, but we won't just look at art, they will do art. From lying on their backs to paint in a "Sistine Chapel style" to creating empathy murals, we are moving beyond the classroom and into the gallery of life. We are also excited to welcome a few artists from the congregation to paint with us and share what art has meant to them.



29 March & 5 April 2026
10:00AM - 11:00AM

Palm and Easter Sunday The Game of Life

Palm Sunday marks the beginning of Holy Week and invites us to see what mattered most to Jesus. Children will step into a life-size board game and journey through the events of that first Palm Sunday. With each roll of the dice, they'll discover how celebration, humility, and courage shaped the road to the cross, turning powerful biblical moments into hands-on learning.



5 April 2026
10:30AM

Easter Egg Hunt

After walking the path of Holy Week, it's time to celebrate the victory! The playground will be covered in hundreds of colorful eggs, hidden for every age group. Don't forget, the 3rd-5th graders get to help hide the eggs! Bring your basket and your running shoes—we'll provide the eggs and prizes!

RUNA
IRISH CONCERT
MARCH 25, 2026
7:00PM

GO.FUMC-CS.ORG/RUNA

FIRST UNITED METHODIST CHURCH | 420 N NEVADA AVE.

RUNA: An Irish Concert

Do you all remember the wonderful "Celtic Christmas" Lessons & Carols that was led by our own musicians and our guest Celtic ensemble? Many people shared with me how much they enjoyed that music, so we are hosting our own Celtic concert with the Irish music group RUNA co-founded by Shannon Lambert-Ryan who was the dancer, bodhran player, and vocalist from our 2024 Celtic Christmas Lessons & Carols. RUNA is a celtic music group that combines the traditional music of Ireland and Scotland with modern music such as folk and jazz.

The internationally acclaimed and GRAMMY nominated band members come from Canada, Ireland, and the USA. Bring a friend and come prepared to enjoy a fantastic evening of Celtic infused music and fun.

You have the chance to hear them here in Colorado Springs on March 25 before they travel down the road to the Durango Celtic Festival the following weekend.

[Read more about RUNA's acclaim here.](#)

FIRST UNITED METHODIST CHURCH
CHANCEL CHOIR & FESTIVAL ORCHESTRA

Present

REQUIEM
BY JOHN RUTTER

APRIL 3, 2026
- 6:30PM -

COME SING WITH US!
CONTACT
DOUGLAS GROGAN AT
DOUGG@FUMC-CS.ORG
(719) 471-8522 EXT. 111

Ongoing Ministries



SheBrews

March 4
6:00PM
222 N Tejon St.

This is a fun gathering of women of all ages, whether new to the church, visiting, or a long-time member. go.fumc-cs.org/shebrews.



SheBrews 2.0

March 27
6:00PM

A small-group study for women exploring theology and the female experience of God through Womanist Theology. Sign up at go.fumc-cs.org/shebrews2



Find Your Place Here!

March 22
12:30PM - 2:00PM
Fellowship Hall

I am very proud of the positive difference our hospitality team is making at FUMC. Over and over, I hear how people are experiencing the open door, hot coffee, a warm handshake, and a friendly smile. Yet there are still ways we can refresh and improve. This invitation is not only for our existing hospitality team but also for new teammates we hope to welcome, adding an enhanced layer of greeting and relationship-building within our worship spaces. That means everyone has the opportunity to make a positive impact in growing our community. Please look in the "**Count Me In**" section on the back of your bulletin to **RSVP**. In the meantime, if you have questions, reach out to Douglas Grogan at dougg@fumc-cs.org.



Wherever Theology

March 6
6:00PM - 8:00PM
RSVP for Location

This is a men's theology group. All are welcome to join us. Sign-up at go.fumc-cs.org/whenevertheology.



Introducing the New Testament

Starting March 2
Monday Evenings
5:30PM | N2 Rm 204

Jesus is the central figure of the New Testament and this third volume in the popular Exploring the Bible series examines Jesus in three distinct ways: A man like other men, a Jewish rabbi, and the Christ of Christian faith. Then it's on to the cantankerous Paul, the other New Testament authors, and the wild and baffling book called Revelation. Learn what Nazareth was like in the first century, discover what scholars know and don't know about Jesus as a historical figure, and explore how Paul really wrote all those letters. And who is the Antichrist anyway? Led by Rev. Carrie West. Sign-up at go.fumc-cs.org/newtestament



Justice League Meeting

March 22
12:15PM | N2

Justice League is about turning awareness into action. This group works together to plan and carry out meaningful social justice efforts that move FUMC forward.

Ongoing Ministries



NOAH

March 9 | 9:00AM
March 25 | 11:30AM

NOAH is a group of folks who meet monthly for breakfast and/or lunch at a local restaurant.

If you would like to sign-up or RSVP you can go to go.fumc-cs.org/noah.



March Food Collection

Westside CARES food pantry is a vital resource for neighbors facing food insecurity. Each month, we share their most-needed items.

March donations: small peanut butter, small jam or jelly, canned chicken, canned pasta and sauce, canned soups, juice or shelf-stable milk, and canned fruit. We are also collecting paper grocery bags to help transport food. Please donate only unopened, unexpired non-perishable items. Drop donations in the marked bins in the new Mission Depot (next to the first-floor elevator).

Thank you for your continued support!

Contact: Lynda Reid | jlynreid@yahoo.com



The Welcoming Journey Part 3

March 7
First Tuesday's of the Month
6:30PM - 8:00PM
The Courtyard

Choosing a spiritual home is an important step, and at First United Methodist Church, we invite you to discover a community rooted in grace and service. On the first Tuesday of each month, we host an introductory gathering to help you learn who we are and where we come from. After attending three sessions, you may join on any Sunday that is convenient for you.

We don't just want you to fill a pew; we want you to find a place where your gifts can grow. Whether you're seeking deeper theology or hands-on ministry, we invite you to become part of the First United Methodist story. Sign up at go.fumc-cs.org/newmember



Parents Night Out!

March 14
4:00PM - 7:00PM

Enjoy a few hours off while your kids have a fun and supervised evening. Registration is required. go.fumc-cs.org/pno



UMCOR Sunday Special Offering

March 22

UMCOR Sunday raises awareness and support for the United Methodist Committee on Relief, the disaster response and humanitarian agency of our church. When crisis strikes—whether from disaster, conflict, or hunger—UMCOR responds quickly and compassionately. Gifts given on UMCOR Sunday cover administrative costs, allowing 100% of other donations to go directly to relief efforts in the U.S. and around the world.

UMCOR serves vulnerable people without regard to nationality, race, religion, or status because we believe every person has God-given worth and dignity. Please prayerfully consider a special gift during the Offertory or online at fumc-cs.org/give (note UMCOR on your donation).



No School Camp

March 19
8:30AM - 4:30PM



No school? No problem! FUMC offers fun, engaging days to support families and keep kids active and learning. Sign-Up at go.fumc-cs.org/noschool
