

Tower Chimes

January 2012

First Congregational U.C.C.
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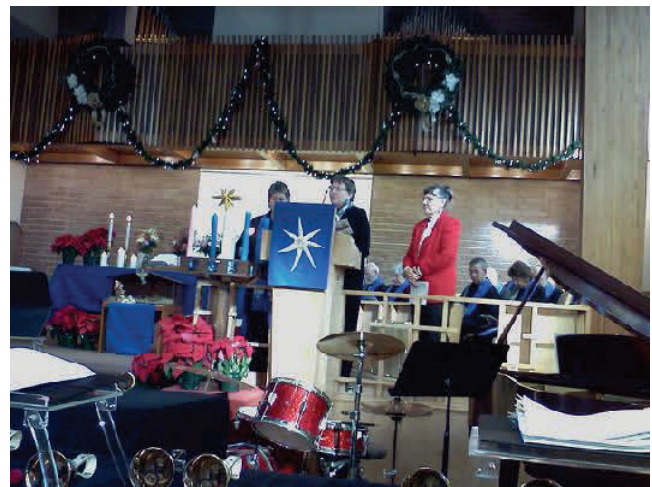
First Congregational
**UNITED CHURCH
OF CHRIST**



***Whoever you are, wherever you are on life's journey.
You're welcome here!***



Our Choir Director, Karen Caton



Our Church Musicians

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A little known fact!

This issue of the *Tower Chimes* may be on-line *IN COLOR* at our website before you could receive it by mail!

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Pastor's Page

Happy New Year! I hope every one of you reading this had a wonderful Christmas, and got to spend some time with people you love, and who love you. And, I hope you all enjoyed our special Advent and Christmas worship, and have shared words of appreciation with the many people who helped make all of it happen. It's always sad when our beautiful decorations come down and go into the West Attic storage once again, but it has been one of the most glorious Advent seasons I can remember here.

As we all know, this is the time of year when many of us make what really Biblical folks might call "vows of repentance" (they are, after all, about turning around and living our lives in a different way) – and that instead most of us call "New Year's Resolutions." In keeping with that tradition, I am going to make what I'll qualify as a "New Year's Experiment" Resolution. I am going to try to function without using e-mail for an entire month, and see how it goes! While it seems almost unimaginable to take such a drastic reverse-technology step, I also think it's a good idea.

This means that if you want me to have a written copy of something (like Team meeting minutes, or whatever), you'll need to either physically leave it with our Church Secretary, or e-mail it to her and have her print it out and put it in my box. And it means if you have something on your mind, and would like to chat about it, we'll actually meet in person to do that – great idea, yes? And if you just want to share a joke ... alas, either you'll need to leave that on my mail-box, or we'll need to cut back on them, although I admit I'll miss some of the chuckles that some of you send me.

My overall goal is to reduce the amount of time I spend reading stuff, so I can spend more time actually seeing people ... making home-visits, if possible, visiting in the office or even over the phone if up-close-and-personal visits aren't possible. I'm betting that cutting out e-mail will free up one to two hours a day that can be better used for lots of other ministerial purposes!

So, I'll need your help with this. If you do e-mail me something, simply know that it won't get read or responded to by me. The one exception is, if we're trying to schedule a small-group meeting, sometimes that is more efficient via e-mail, and I'm willing to keep doing that. As a hint: please don't e-mail me a request to call you – just call me directly, okay? Or, call Michelle and schedule an appointment – she keeps my calendar. Let's see if we can share more face-time, and spend less keyboard-time – I think it'll be good for all of us!

I think the "new light" we reflected on all during Advent can come in many ways. And nourishing our lived relationships may be one of the best ways of all.

Blessings,
Pastor Sharyl



Reflections and Ramblings

On Sunday, December 11, during Sharyl's greeting and welcome she asked us to look around the sanctuary and think of things that brought us joy. I looked up at our beautiful stained glass windows, and I thought about the many volunteers who worked to make this happen (like Harold Hamel), then I looked around the room at so many people who have been incredibly active members in the past and cared so much for others, who now need care, love, and support themselves. I looked at all of our new members and visitors, some of whom came from other faith traditions and churches where they were made to feel unwelcome, who now feel welcome and loved and have made this their church home.

Then I thought about how much of a difference this church has made in my own life in the almost thirty years I have been here. I realized that the lessons my children learned here have helped to shape their lives and the kinds of adults they have become. Lessons which they are now teaching to their own children. I think about the love shown to me and our family through a very difficult divorce and how no one took sides but loved us all. I think about the fact that Mary and I first met here through a mutual friend and then eventually were married here, and have shared many blessings and a few challenges here.

I also looked at the blessings that have come to me as I have been your Assistant Minister. I think about the journeys many of us have walked together, the struggles and joys we have shared and the many lives that have touched me, and I hope I was able to touch some of yours as well.

I also had some time to reflect on the amazing presence our church has in the community. All the time people ask me what church I belong to. When I tell them First Congregational, I usually hear the response, "That one, the one that is so involved in the community and caring for others?" And we do, many groups use our church for meetings. We had the first Veterans' Stand Down here this fall, (and the VA wants to have it here again next fall), we take care of others during the coldest months with the shelter overflow program, look at our Gathering Space and all the Angel Tree Gifts, we supported Catholic Outreach in their building of St. Martin's place with proceeds from the Shrimp Boil. We also hosted a community World Aids Day Service in our chapel.

Folks, the reason I share this, is that we are an amazing place...this church is healthy.....vibrant....alive and growing — a true blessing in so many ways. These things don't just happen; it takes many people filled with inspiration, compassion, love, and the gift of God's Grace. People like each of you, pastors like Sharyl and myself challenging, inspiring, teaching, it takes worship teams, music teams, congregational life teams, mission teams, justice folks, and finance folks, and leaders like Moderators, and Vice- Moderators, and SCR team members and office staff, and financial staff, and custodial staff...whew, I get tired just trying to think of everyone.

The point to all of this is that we are the church, each of us as individuals, as couples, as young, as more seasoned, as not so seasoned, joyful, not so joyful, but loved by God no matter who we are. So I pray that in this New Year, we remember our blessings and that we are called, each of us, to be a blessing to others in word, action, and deed.

So may each of you have a happy and blessed New Year.

Blessings,
Pastor Dan

Martha's Musings: "An Agreeable Possibility"

*Well, so that is that. Now we must dismantle the tree,
Putting the decorations back into their cardboard boxes –*

During Advent we reflected on the many images of light in our world and the coming of the light. The Solstice, on December 22, marks the reversal of the gradual lengthening of nights and shortening of days. So why is it that the nights of Christmastide – December 26 to January 6 – seem the coldest and darkest? Following the previous weeks of sometimes frantic preparation for the grandest of celebrations – both in our church and in our culture — just when we think we can't contain it any more, the season is over. The decorations are put away. The cold light of January once again reflects on bare walls in our homes and church.

W.H. Auden, in the *Christmas Oratorio*, has his narrator express the challenge of this time. It's a dark and rather unhopeful conclusion:

*Once again
As in previous years we have seen the actual Vision and failed
To do more than entertain it as an agreeable
Possibility . . .*

In our Living the Questions classes this fall we explored what it might mean for us to embrace a living Christianity that is more than an "agreeable possibility." What does it mean for us to dedicate our lives to bringing justice into our world: economic justice that no one would go hungry or lack for basic needs, social justice that accepts and cares for all persons, Earth justice that leads us toward stewardship of the resources that have been left in our care for our short tenure here.

Our church continues to give us many opportunities to assure that our faith can be more than just an "agreeable possibility." I continue to challenge each one of us to find those opportunities in our church and community where our passions and the needs of our world coincide, and get involved!

Council Commentary

Your Council reviewed a draft budget in December. Discussion continues as we try to develop a budget that is faithful to our sense of mission, to our responsibilities to care appropriately for our members, our staff, and our facility, to deal faithfully and responsibly with the funds that our friends and members have committed to the work of this church this year.

Following the Council meeting on January 8, this budget will be available for anyone to review prior to being presented at our Congregational Meeting on Sunday, January 22.

Reminders:

Council - January 8 – the 2nd Sunday
Semi-Annual Congregational Meeting - Sunday, January 22, following worship. Includes pot luck lunch.

ROOM AT THE INN
(EMERGENCY SHELTER OVERFLOW PROGRAM)

We were reminded during Advent that God sent Jesus into the world as a light in the midst of darkness. Our responsibility, as Christians, is to carry that light out into the world, especially to those whose lives are “in darkness.” One of the ways First Congregational UCC does this is with the Room At The Inn. Our church will be hosting Homeward Bound’s overflow program March 4 through March 18, 2012. We will be providing a warm and safe place to sleep, hearty snacks, hot breakfasts, and sack lunches (when needed) for 16 men who cannot be accommodated at the Homeward Bound Shelter due to lack of room.

There are service opportunities for everyone in our congregation. These include:

Overnight volunteers from 6:45 p.m. to 8 a.m. the next morning---2 people per night.

Provide breakfast—either cook/serve breakfast (no casserole) or donate a breakfast casserole to be reheated for breakfast (1 or 2 people per breakfast).

Donate money to purchase cold/staple breakfast items, snacks, and lunch ingredients (indicate Room At The Inn on check/envelope or give to Jo Ann Malone).

Donate “gently used” blankets, bath or hand towels, bath clothes, water bottles, and insulated coffee mugs with lids.

Remembering in your daily prayers the program, guests and volunteers.

Participation in a training session offered by Homeward Bound is essential for the overnight volunteers and is encouraged for other volunteers. Options for training are:

Saturday, January 7 from 9 to 11 a.m. at Homeward Bound (2853 North Avenue)

Wednesday, February 1 from 6:30 to 8:30 p.m. at American Lutheran Church (631 26 ½ Road)

Saturday, March 3 from 9 to 11 a.m. at Homeward Bound (2853 North Avenue)

There will also be a short orientation, specific to our church, immediately following worship on Sunday, March 4.

There will be an opportunity for volunteers in our church to sign-up starting Sunday, January 15. If you have questions, are willing to serve on the planning committee or need additional information, contact Jo Ann Malone (523-5782 or pjmalone@q.com.)

At the end of **November** (91.67% of our Budget Year), our Pledges Paid stood at **92.81%**. **Good job!**



INCOME		EXPENSES		NET INCOME	
Nov '11	\$20,769.07	Nov'11	\$19,370.72	Nov '11	\$1,398.35
YTD	\$232,389.65	YTD	\$227,847.51	YTD	\$4,542.14
Annual Budget	\$250,070.00	Annual Budget	\$250,070.00	Annual Budget	\$.00

JOYS

Wonderful World Wide AIDS day service on
12-01-2011 - in our chapel
Home-made Tamales for CMS
Julie Krueger's 50th birthday!
Sveto Djokic called 911 on house fire
Rose Ann Morey - Tyler (son) moving to
Grand Junction (needs job)
Kay Ragsdale repaired pulpit Bible with
new binding!
Thank you Linda Randolph for putting
up crismons
Justin Taddeo - faithful acolyte
Thank you to Dave Hoefer & Cal Bilger for the
improvements to the men's restroom & all the
other work you do
Al Inglis - back & well
Handbell concert at Redlands Methodist - thanks
to our choir for their beautiful music this season
Caroling & Chili supper
Kenneth Payne - 2nd AA birthday
Joe Graham - Celtic Singers made the news!
Pledges & Giving
Pastor Sharyl & our church's role in the opening
of St. Martins
Pastor Dan's sister, Carma doing really well after
surgery

...and Concerns

Betty Antonelli & Norma Bishop at St. Mary's
Al Inglis (Dorothy's brother-in-Law) - heart
attack in Indiana
Newborn, Dilland (Creta's extended family) -
problems
Bill Duncan died (lovely family memorial)
Norma Bishop - health
Mandy (Susan Lane's daughter) - Brain tumor
LaRue Wooters - health failing
Barbara Beth - dentist caused dental pain & problems
Charles Jones - cancer
Nancy Westbrook - died at Hospice
Ruth Moss - passed away

Thank yous

Your M&O team sends sincere thanks for purchasing "Gifts that make a Difference" through the Alternative Gift Fair, and especially supporting our sponsored project. Approximately \$1,100 has been collected for "Wholesome Meals and Nutrition for Haiti's Children."

Be sure and ask Vicki Brickey to share the interesting details of her daughter's recent trip to Haiti.

Thank You!

We owe special thanks to: Kay Ragsdale for finding a local bookbinder to re-bind our beloved big Pulpit Bible (which actually lives on the Communion Table, rather than on the pulpit), which was getting pretty shaggy, and to our Men's Coffee group for paying for the rebinding!!

Way to go, Women's Fellowship! At their beautiful Christmas luncheon, our Women's Fellowship took up a special offering, to help buy Welcome mats for the St. Martins (homeless veterans') apartments. As a group, they collected \$224, enough to buy a new mat for every single apartment!





January Birthdays

01/02 Claire Bush
 01/03 Dottie Merwin
 01/05 Jodi Wilsford
 01/08 Linda Randolph
 01/09 Janis Woodley
 01/12 Sveto Djokic
 01/12 Vicki Brickey
 01/13 Jennie Hemborg
 01/13 Jared Leak
 01/21 Sarah Downing
 01/30 Jack Roberts

Don't forget the **Finishing Touches Birthday Fund** to help with those "little" and important extra touches that are not otherwise in our Annual Budget.

Thanks!

PRAYER SHAWL MINISTRY

We continue meeting together in the chapel on the 2nd & 4th Wednesdays at 1:15 PM. We would enjoy having new members join us! Bring knitting or crocheting. We can supply patterns. All who are interested are invited! We talk, we make things, we catch up, and we enjoy each other's company! The shawls and lap-blankets we make touch many people's lives with great comfort and care.

MEN'S COFFEE TIME!

Come One, Come All Men!
 Join us for a hot cup of Joe!
 We meet now at 10:00AM
 in Mayflower on Fridays—YO!



Bagels & Books

Saturday, January 21st, at 9:00AM

...at the **COMMONS DINING ROOM**

625 27 1/2 Road

To learn more about this group,
 call Nancy Price (523-0133)
 or Susan Swift (243-9607).

New Addresses

Guy & Marian Bender
 13090 B South Road
 Glade Park, CO 81523
 (970) 270-7980

FINISHING TOUCHES

At the beginning of next year, I will retire from the Finishing Touches committee.

Working with this committee has been an inspirational highlight for me and I thank everyone for your "birthday year dollars."

Over the last 8 years, you have supplied over \$30,000 of unbudgeted items. You can see them all around our lovely church, from the kitchen floor mats, to our TV, some computers, many chairs, and on our windows and walls. You probably helped pay for most of them.

The whole Finishing Touches committee will continue as usual with the capable leadership of Linda Randolph.

Annie Albrethsen

Women's Fellowship
Thursday, January 19th
2:00 p.m.

Pastor Sharyl will be with us for this meeting, teaching us to make small books, Life Books. The materials for making the books will all be pre-cut, so that part won't take too long and will be fun. We will be making these books not so much to learn book-making, but as a spiritual practice for affirming ourselves. Are you concerned that your fingers aren't as nimble as they once were and this might be too difficult for you? Not to worry, help will be at hand for anyone who needs it.



Good Coffee for a Good Cause

Next sale day for fairly traded coffee, tea and chocolate bars will be Sunday, January 15th, following worship. **Thank you to all of you who donate to the coffee fund so that we can continue to serve fairly traded coffee.**



Women's Fellowship Bargain Books

Thanks to the support of our congregation through donations and sales of books. Women's Fellowship was able to purchase gifts for the Angel Trees and make a donation to the Kid's Aid backpack program.



First Sunday Night Spiritual Movie
SUNDAY, January 1st, 2012...Yes, New Year Day evening!
6:30pm, in Mayflower
"THE HELP"

"The #2 *New York Times* best seller by Kathryn Stockett comes to vivid life through the powerful performances of a phenomenal ensemble cast. Led by Emma Stone, Academy Award-nominated Viola Davis, Octavia Spencer and Bryce Dallas Howard, *The Help* is an inspirational, courageous and empowering story about very different, extraordinary women in the 1960s South who build an unlikely friendship around a secret writing project – one that breaks society's rules and puts them all at risk. Filled with poignancy, humor and hope...*The Help* is a timeless, universal and triumphant story about the ability to create change."

Popcorn will be provided as usual, but bring a drink to wet your whistle, as well as any suggestions for future DVDs we might consider for other First Sundays in 2012! Or, let a member of our Congregational Life team know your suggestions.



Meals at Homeward Bound

The 2nd Wednesday of each month's meal preparation will be led by Tom Hemborg, 257-0883 (**January 11th**). Please contact Tom to find out more or to join others in providing this valuable service. Many willing hands make fast work of a much needed task. All food preparation now takes place at the Shelter (per their request) followed by the meal service. Daytime helpers as well as evening helpers are needed and welcome.

FINANCE AND PROPERTY TEAM REPORT

The Finance and Property Team consists of Jack Roberts, Arlys Indergaard, and Brian Mahoney. We stepped into the former realm of the Trustees Committee, responsible for maintaining our properties and handling the administration of financial matters. Dave Hoefler joins us on matters relating to the Trust and Memorial funds. Carolyn Ramsey comes in as Treasurer.

This year we had a CPA review of our accounting system and all matters financial. The report concluded that we are in good shape with no items of major concern. We did agree that we have an inordinately large number of special accounts and funds. This results from the many charitable projects and events that occur annually. It was decided to streamline our Quik-Book Chart of accounts into a more standard accounting format. We have hired a consultant with Quik-Book expertise to help Jim rearrange our multiple funds into a more readable and simpler grouping. That process is under way now.

The CE Bldg ground floor was remodeled at the end of last year (thanks Dave, Cal, Brian & Linda, and Carolyn V.) to become available to rent after we lost the former tenant. The entire floor is leased at this time. We are now ready to lease some of the rooms upstairs. This is a nice flow of income for us. Brian handles those lease arrangements. If you know anyone who'd be interested in leasing space, they should contact him.

The Main Bldg. is functioning fine with the normal flow of aches and repairs that go with having a large building with active occupants. A special thanks to Dave and Cal for upgrading the sink and counters in the Men's bathroom. Additionally, Dave is always making little repairs everywhere as needed. Betty Hall and the Malone's handle the garden duties Spring and Fall. We are able to keep things up for very reasonable expenses thanks to all who volunteer their labor. They are all our unsung angels. Finally, we thank Carolyn Van Matre, our Facilities Coordinator. She is very competent and dedicated to making everything clean and functional.

Remember that this building is ours to enjoy and maintain. Chip in whenever you can to our Cleanup projects and Workdays.

Happy Holidays!

Congregation Food Pantry

Please be mindful that our church has a food pantry for anyone in our church needing assistance. If you are having to cut back on your food budget in order to cover your higher utility bills during this cold season, and you need assistance with food, please contact either Pastors Dan Wilkie or Sharyl Peterson. They will help you with items from our food and non-food pantry. Anyone needing assistance will be kept strictly anonymous.



Monday, January 16 is Martin Luther King Day

Join with others from First Congregational UCC as we participate in the Grand Junction Celebration of Martin Luther King Day at River of Life Alliance Church (rather than Mesa State). This year's theme will be on youth homelessness in the Valley. Everyone is asked to bring a small donation of some kind for one of the homeless shelters in town. There will be dancers, poetry, art, drum circles, and booths representing community homeless organizations. The time is tentatively scheduled from 5-8 and M&O will send out more information once the plans are firmed up.

JOIN US FOR A "MINI-MARCH" AND FORUM ON SUNDAY, JANUARY 15, TO HONOR MARTIN LUTHER KING, JR. DAY

After church service, the congregation will "march" from the sanctuary to the Pilgrim Hall for coffee in honor of Martin Luther King, Jr. Day. After coffee, please join us in the Mayflower Room for a forum on "What are Your Dreams for Fairness and Kindness in Our Church and Our Community?" We look forward to seeing you there!

Mission & Outreach

Most of us, at some point in our lives, come to the conclusion that we are not able to do (or help) all the deserving opportunities for service that we encounter. A long time ago someone quoted to me, "I can not do everything, but I can do something. Therefore, by the Grace of God, I will do what I can do."

Several people commented to me that we had "too many" opportunities spoken about during the 11-11-11 campaign. Friends, you don't need to adopt them all. Do what you are able. Our church's role is to challenge us to a greater vision of need and service. However, you need to choose what you are able to do.

Chuck Holmgren

January 2012

Monthly Planner

Sunday	Monday	Tuesday	Wednesday	Thursday	Friday	Saturday																																																																																																		
1 6:30 PM 1st Sunday Night Spiritual Movies (Mayflower) Communion Sunday New Year's Day	2 Office Closed	3	4	5 10:30 AM Women's Fellowship Brd. Mtg. (Mayflower) 12:30 PM Fellowship Potluck (Pilgrim) 4:30 PM -9:00 PM Spiritual Direction Program(chapel & library)	6 10:00 AM Men's Coffee (Mayflower)	7																																																																																																		
8 8:30 AM Choir Rehearsal 12:00 PM -1:30 PM Council Meeting	9 5:00 PM Cantabile Ringers	10 1:30 PM Shepherds (library) 3:00 PM Congregational Life Team 3:00 PM Finance & Prop. Team 6:00 PM Worship & Celebration Team (Marie's house)	11 1:15 PM Prayer Shawl Ministry (chapel) 2:30 PM -4:00 PM Lap-toppers (chapel) 5:30 PM -7:00 PM Living the Questions III (chapel) First Cong. serves at Homeward Bound	12 4:30 PM -9:00 PM Spiritual Direction Program(chapel & library)	13 10:00 AM Caregivers' Support Group (chapel) 10:00 AM Men's Coffee (Mayflower)	14																																																																																																		
15 8:30 AM Choir Rehearsal 11:45 AM Women's Fellowship Coffee Sales	16 5:00 PM Cantabile Ringers	17	18 5:30 PM -7:00 PM Living the Questions III (chapel)	19 2:00 PM Women's Fellowship (Pilgrim) 4:30 PM -9:00 PM Spiritual Direction Program(chapel & library)	20 10:00 AM Men's Coffee (Mayflower) Tower Chimes Deadline	21 9:00 AM Bagels & Books at Commons Dining Room																																																																																																		
22 8:30 AM Choir Rehearsal 11:45 AM Semi-Annual Cong. Mtg. (following worship with potluck lunch)	23 5:00 PM Cantabile Ringers	24	25 1:15 PM Prayer Shawl Ministry (chapel) 2:30 PM -4:00 PM Lap-toppers (chapel) 5:30 PM -7:00 PM Living the Questions III (chapel)	26 4:30 PM -9:00 PM Spiritual Direction Program(chapel & library)	27 10:00 AM Caregivers' Support Group (chapel) 10:00 AM Men's Coffee (Mayflower)	28																																																																																																		
29 8:30 AM Choir Rehearsal Fish Sunday (Food Basket)	30 5:00 PM Cantabile Ringers	31	<table style="margin: auto; border: 1px solid black;"> <tr> <th colspan="7">Dec 2011</th> <th colspan="7">Feb 2012</th> </tr> <tr> <th>S</th><th>M</th><th>T</th><th>W</th><th>T</th><th>F</th><th>S</th> <th>S</th><th>M</th><th>T</th><th>W</th><th>T</th><th>F</th><th>S</th> </tr> <tr> <td></td><td></td><td></td><td></td><td>1</td><td>2</td><td>3</td> <td></td><td></td><td></td><td>1</td><td>2</td><td>3</td><td>4</td> </tr> <tr> <td>4</td><td>5</td><td>6</td><td>7</td><td>8</td><td>9</td><td>10</td> <td>5</td><td>6</td><td>7</td><td>8</td><td>9</td><td>10</td><td>11</td> </tr> <tr> <td>11</td><td>12</td><td>13</td><td>14</td><td>15</td><td>16</td><td>17</td> <td>12</td><td>13</td><td>14</td><td>15</td><td>16</td><td>17</td><td>18</td> </tr> <tr> <td>18</td><td>19</td><td>20</td><td>21</td><td>22</td><td>23</td><td>24</td> <td>19</td><td>20</td><td>21</td><td>22</td><td>23</td><td>24</td><td>25</td> </tr> <tr> <td>25</td><td>26</td><td>27</td><td>28</td><td>29</td><td>30</td><td>31</td> <td>26</td><td>27</td><td>28</td><td>29</td><td></td><td></td><td></td> </tr> </table>				Dec 2011							Feb 2012							S	M	T	W	T	F	S	S	M	T	W	T	F	S					1	2	3				1	2	3	4	4	5	6	7	8	9	10	5	6	7	8	9	10	11	11	12	13	14	15	16	17	12	13	14	15	16	17	18	18	19	20	21	22	23	24	19	20	21	22	23	24	25	25	26	27	28	29	30	31	26	27	28	29			
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Email: office@firstcongregational-ucc.org

Website: www.firstcongregational-ucc.org

Non-Profit Organization

U.S. POSTAGE PAID

Grand Junction, CO

Permit No. 18

CHANGE SERVICE REQUESTED



January

Tower Chimes DEADLINE

Please help us out by submitting your *Tower Chimes* report or article you would like to have in the February 2012 T.C. **no later than Friday, January 20th.**

Please e-mail your submissions to Michelle no later than midnight on **Thursday, January 19th.** With Michelle's busy work schedule, **submissions received after the deadline will not be accepted.**

Thank You!