



Loving God. Serving others. Changing lives.

January 18, 2023

God's Beloved--

As 2023 begins, I am mindful of the wisdom of Quoheloth, widely accepted as the author of Ecclesiastes: "For everything there is a season, and a time for every matter under heaven" (Ecc. 3:1). In addition to entering into a new year, we are entering into a season of celebration and change at Heart of the Rockies Christian Church.

We're celebrating our **30-year anniversary** as a congregation with videos capturing some of the journeys we have been on as a church. We're also inviting YOU to share your reflections and stories on how Heart of the Rockies has shaped your life. We've also been working on how we tell our story beyond our walls, which will include an updated logo and upgraded website.

We're preparing for our next **capital campaign** which will allow us to reconfigure, renovate, and update our current church building while also adding space for our use in the Heartside Hill community building. Speaking of-- we anticipate **breaking ground on the first phase of Heartside Hill** in the year ahead, too!

We're looking forward to a **time of renewal** (yes, we! sabbaticals are not just for pastors...) as a congregation while I am on my second sabbatical, which will begin with a send off after worship on Sunday, April 16.

I'm getting ahead of myself here. Before we look too far into the future, **let's pause to give thanks for what God has done in us and through us over the final quarter of 2022.**

We provided **warm, safe, stable housing for families experiencing homelessness** in October by serving at Plymouth Congregational UCC. As our **Faith Family Hospitality (FFH)** coordinator, Lynnette Thayer, always reminds us: no matter how many families we serve on any given week, we are there when families need us most. FFH guests consistently thank us for the calm, team-work vibe of the volunteers; the kindness of each person who serves; and the one that gets us every time... **"Can we stay here instead of moving on to the next church?"** That's when we know we've truly created a hospitable space.

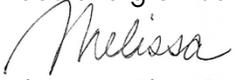
We went all-in on Advent with what's become a new tradition (if you can put those words together!)--**Advent Music Sunday**: a beautiful liturgy of Advent poems, sermons, and readings woven together with moving music that settles us into the season offered up by every one of our musical groups. It's a tremendous effort on the part of our Music Director, Ruth, and all our talented musicians. We laughed...and hard...through the annual **Christmas Pageant** that's become an intergenerational opportunity to engage both in-person and on-screen in telling the Christmas story. This year's pageant was written by our own Minister of Children & Community, Erin Tyler.

As most were turning their attention toward the holidays, Larimer County was **welcoming nearly 60 migrants from South America**. We partnered with other faith communities in Fort Collins to make "room in the inn" for folks who spent over a week here after arriving with nothing but the clothes they were wearing. Thanks to Erin Tyler and Donna Greene and other local faith leaders and volunteers, basic needs were met, housing and transportation were secured, and everyone was fed.

You generously responded to this year's **Christmas Eve offering**. Our Outreach Team designated 100% of this **\$2,030 special offering** for the **Hogback Chapter of the Navajo Nation** to support their greenhouse project, which promotes food security and supports those who are most vulnerable on the Shiprock Navajo Nation Reservation.

We ended the year **right on target**--our 2022 mission and ministry was fully funded, and we received 98% of all that was pledged to our General Fund--a remarkable testimony to our congregation's faithfulness! Thank you for being an important part of that ministry.

Grace and gratitude,


Melissa St. Clair, Pastor

thank you!