



## Kevin's Korner

What a blessing we have received, having Joan Bell-Haynes, our Executive Regional Minister of the Central Rocky Mountain Region, join us for worship, Installation service, and meeting with our leaders on Saturday morning! She brings so much wisdom to the church!

It really feels great to be officially installed as pastor of First Christian Church (Disciples of Christ)! Let me emphasize *Disciples of Christ*! In recent weeks I have talked about our history and traditions as Disciples. We are truly blessed, at First Christian Church of Grand Junction, to carry such a rich tradition and to share it with our neighborhood and wider community. But we are much more than our rich history. Remember back at the beginning of Advent when I invited you to look around our congregation and note the tremendous gifts, talents and leadership that God has gifted us with? Think again of those who have been working hard to get us through some difficult transitions as a church. Think of those who took leadership positions. Think of those who continued to participate in church activities even during the challenging days of the pandemic.

Having just celebrated our Installation Service, I want to mention again, and thank again, the Search Committee and other leaders of First Christian Church who welcomed Shannon and me to Grand Junction and into this congregation. We can't remember experiencing so much love in a church. Of course, the rest of you have just continued that loving welcome since we arrived. Thank you!

And thank all you leaders who have continued to use your gifts, talents and passions to serve this church and help me get started in ministry here in Grand Junction! We may not be the largest church around, but we have a strong core of leaders (and followers) with whom we can build a solid foundation for ministry in the coming days and years.

Let me just say, these leaders can't do this by themselves! They are going to need

every one of us to offer our own gifts, talents, passions, and time. We all need to read, listen and learn about our community and the needs (opportunities for ministry) around us. We all need to ask ourselves how our own gifts and talents might be able to meet some of these needs. And as we start blooming in new ways, we all need to be sharing the Good News of what God is doing with us and through us. And this is important. We need to recognize that we can't do this alone. Only God can revitalize and grow a church. But I believe that God wants to do that very thing at First Christian Church and is already at work.

Why am I so confident? Because of the things I've been mentioning in recent sermons. God has already done amazing things through Disciples who were willing to step out and follow Jesus' leading. Disciples were the fastest growing American born denomination in the 1800's because we knew that God's Spirit was sweeping across frontier America and we joined in the effort, building new churches and ministries from coast to coast. Our belief in the centrality of communion in our worship offered a clear way for people to experience a vital relationship with God through Jesus, by gathering weekly around the Table. Our belief in the unity of the entire Body of Christ has, and continues to, enable effective mission and ministry by sharing resources and leadership with our brothers and sisters in other denominations, recognizing that God calls us all to work and share together as one church. Another of our great Disciple strengths is in recognizing the gifts and talents of our lay leaders who can do so much more than the clergy alone can accomplish.

highlight our Disciples heritage because I believe it is one of our great strengths as a church. We know that, with God's help, Disciples can change the world, one neighborhood at a time; because we've done it before.

Joan has helped us to begin the conversation about what the future of Disciple ministry might look like here in Grand Junction. If you haven't yet, I hope you will join in this conversation because God is calling each of us to bring our gifts, talents, time, passions and resources so He can show this community and the world what is possible when ordinary people let God take the lead.