

QUARTERLY NEWSLETTER OF THE ROCKY MOUNTAIN REGION
OF THE ECUMENICAL CATHOLIC COMMUNION

The Journey Shared





Ordination

DEACON JANE REINA OF MARY OF MAGDALA ECC

Jane's ordination to the Sacred Order of Deacons was held on January 19, 2020. Our community was honored to host this special event and honored by the presence of people from regional ECC churches to witness the ordination. If you have ever attended an ordination liturgy you know how special it is. Bishop Francis presided, assisted by our Vicar, Fr. Michael Nicosia. The reception provided an opportunity for MoM to spend some time with Bp. Francis in a social setting. We look forward to the **next ordination on March 22nd** as Dcn. Jane will receive her Ordination to the Priesthood.



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Editor

Fr. Michael Nicosia
nicosia410@yahoo.com



Mary of Magdala

ADVENT & CHRISTMAS

Mary of Magdala participated in the Wednesday evening Soup Suppers and Taizé services of our combined congregations for 3 weeks in Advent. All participated in the Taizé services while each church provided the food for one of the evenings.

A Giving Tree and A Giving Fair were two Advent activities in which Mary of Magdala participated with our partner churches. Each congregation had tables for causes they support. MoM received donations for Madonna Hospital in Umuahia, Nigeria, and for One Spirit, serving Pine Ridge Reservation.

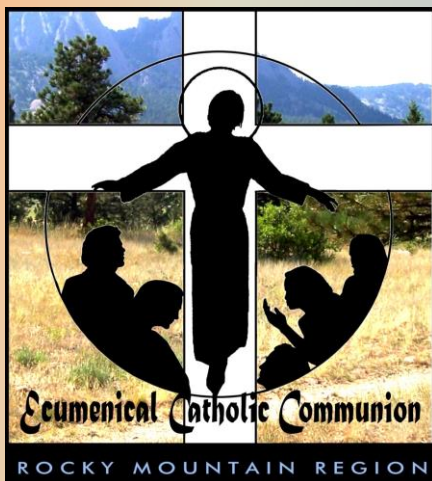
The Giving Tree supported a local organization helping Voices Carry Child Advocacy Center. The organization works to prevent and respond to child abuse.

FAITH PARTNERS VISION TEAM

The Faith Partners Vision Team began meeting in November. This team has a charge to see what our three churches, (Trinity Lutheran, St. Paul's Episcopal, and Mary of Magdala ECC), can envision on working together going forward. The ultimate goal is to become a true ecumenical center in Fort Collins and Northern Colorado. Our meetings have been focused on setting ground rules, operational processes, and our team vision. We hope to present that to our communities at the next joint service on Feb 23rd. Bill Smith, Yvonne Wootten, and Kerrie Anderson are the current members. We need to replace Jane Reina who is ineligible now that she is an ordained deacon. Stay tuned for more information as we work together.

FAMILY HOUSING NETWORK

Mary of Magdala supported this program (formerly Faith Family Hospitality) for families without stable housing the week of Christmas, a challenging time to give up personal family time to help make other families have a better Christmas. Volunteers do make a difference and continue to be Christ's hands and feet in this world.



REGIONAL COUNCIL

www.coloradoecc.org

REGIONAL VICAR

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For more about the
ECUMENICAL CATHOLIC
COMMUNION, visit
<http://ecumenical-catholic-communion.org>

MARY OF MAGDALA

CO-PASTORS AFFIRMATION!

Dcn. Rosean Amaral and Jane Reina (now Dcn. Jane) were formally affirmed by the MoM Community as co-pastors on January 5th. This affirmation by the community followed a 9-month period of the Call Committee setting forth the call process, job description, interview process, community input, and recommendation to the Leadership Council. Ruth Alexander facilitated our meetings and guided us through this lengthy process. Ruth Alexander, Jared Orsi, Jim Berry, Tom Moos, and Kerrie Anderson were committee members.

LENTEN SOCIAL JUSTICE PROGRAM

1st Sunday in Lent, March 1

Gun Violence Prevention and Migrant Justice in Mexico & Colorado,
2:30-4:30 presentation (*see page 13*)

2nd Sunday in Lent, March 8

focus on local homelessness,
with a collection for the Food Bank of Larimer County

3rd Sunday in Lent, March 15

collecting toiletries for the Family Housing Network

4th Sunday in Lent, March 22

Jane's Ordination!

5th Sunday in Lent, March 29

building non-perishable "Blessing bags" for Homeward

ASH WEDNESDAY, February 26

7pm Communion service with ashes

LENTEN WEDNESDAY NIGHTS

6pm Simple soup suppers followed by

6:30pm joint readers theater liturgy

HOLY THURSDAY, April 9 at 5:30pm

Liturgy with foot washing

GOOD FRIDAY, April 10

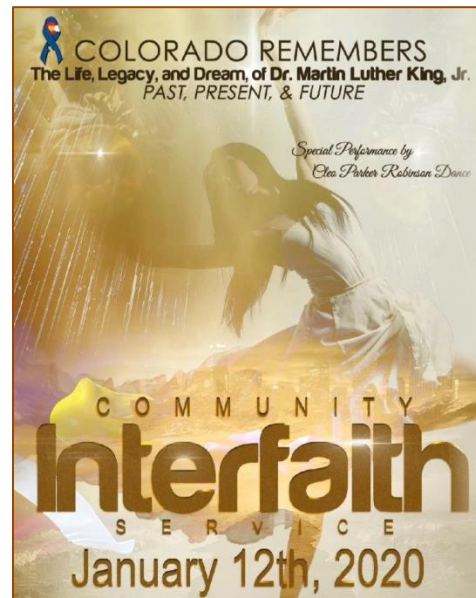
Noon "Seven Last Words of Christ"*

7pm Stations of the Cross*

*joint liturgy with Trinity and St. Paul's

EASTER VIGIL, April 11 at 7pm.

(No Easter Sunday service.)



VICAR MUSINGS

the challenge begins in each of our hearts

The Colorado Council of Churches was asked to collaborate with the City of Aurora and Aurora Faith Communities (a loose group of non-denominational pastors) on the inaugural Interfaith Service *Colorado Remembers the Life, Legacy and Dream of Dr. Martin Luther King, Jr. – Past, Present and Future.*

Being a resident of the City, when our Executive Director asked the Board for a volunteer to represent the CCC on the planning team I jumped at the chance to collaborate with other local faith leaders.



While it was an honor to be asked to give the Catholic Invocation (*text follows*), that presented the question:



CHURCH OF THE HOLY FAMILY

Pastoral Team:

Dcn. Mike Weil, Dcn. David Dunn
and Rev. Kathleen Gorman

www.churchofhollyfamily.org

Mass: 10:00 am Sundays
8811 E. Hampden Ave, Suite 101,
Denver, CO, 80231

(303) 369-9000

admin@hollyfamilyco.org



CHURCH OF THE BELOVED

www.churchofthebeloved-ecc.org

Mthr. Kae Madden, Pastor

Mass: 5:00 pm Saturdays

10500 Grant Drive

Northglenn CO 80233

303-489-7046

Mother Kae, 720-232-1562

pastor@churchofthebeloved-ecc.org

Fr. Paul Burson, 720-254-2083



LIGHT OF CHRIST ECUMENICAL CATHOLIC COMMUNITY

www.lightofchristecc.org

Fr. Teri Harroun, Pastor

Masses: 5:00 pm Saturdays

9:00 am Wednesdays

1000 W. 15th Avenue

Longmont CO 80501

303-772-3785

churchoffice@lightofchristecc.org

VICAR'S MUSINGS continued...

What to wear? The Planning Chair wanted liturgical garb that would visually speak of the diversity of the faith traditions represented. Bishop Francis said that a cope would be appropriate, and Fr. Don Sutton happened to have one that he had yet to use! It's curious how your Vicar, who obviously doesn't have any qualms about being over-the-top theatrically, was a little self-conscious wearing something so high church! I was glad Fr. Jim DeMuth was at my side for moral and spiritual support.

I also want to thank fellow CCC Board Member Roland Halpern of the Human Society for staffing our CCC/ECC information table with Fr. Jim.



CATHOLIC INVOCATION

✠ *In the Catholic tradition, this weekend we celebrate Jesus' Baptism by John in the River Jordan. The first reading appointed for the feast is from the prophet Isaiah; in part it reads: "I, the LORD, have called you for the victory of justice, I have grasped you by the hand; I formed you, and set you as a covenant of the people, a light for the nations, to open eyes that are blind, to bring out prisoners from confinement and, from the dungeon, those who live in darkness" (Is 42:6-7).*

God of Revelations, your servant Martin and his companions took up that mantle, as each generation must. This day we honor him—a prophet, a martyr, a saint who walked in our midst and intercedes for us as we face the challenges of our day.

This day we call upon you, God of Enlightenment, mindful that, if we are to carry his dream from past to present to future, the challenge begins in each of our hearts.

And so, echoing the words of St. Francis of Assisi, we pray (singing):

"Most High and Glorious God, bring light to the darkness of my heart. Give me right faith, certain hope, and perfect charity. Lord, give me insight and wisdom so that I always may do your holy and true will." Let it be so.

~ Fr. Michael J. Nicosia, Vicar

SPRING ISSUE SUBMISSION DEADLINE

MAY 15

...so take lots of Resurrection photos!



MARY OF MAGDALA COMMUNITY

www.marymagdala.fc.org

Pastoral Director candidates
being interviewed

Mass: 5:00 pm Sundays

301 E Stuart Street

Fort Collins, CO 80525

970-493-9536

Dcn. Rosean Amaral 970-692-4238

marymagdala.fc@gmail.com



ST. PAUL'S LUTHERAN AND CATHOLIC COMMUNITY

Rev. Barbara Berry-Bailey, Co-pastor

Fr. Don Sutton, Co-pastor

donaldsutton@gmail.com

Catholic Mass: 5:00 pm Saturdays

Lutheran Service: 10:30 am Sundays

1600 Grant St, Denver, CO 80203

303-839-1432

<http://saintpauldenver.com>

Also check out our friends of

BOULDER COMMUNITY IN DISCERNMENT

Mass: 1:30 pm

every first and third Sunday

Community United Church of Christ

2650 Table Mesa Drive

Boulder CO 80305

Mthr. Sheila Dierks 303-449-4302

sheiladierks1@gmail.com

Light of Christ

Light of Christ has decided that 2020 will be our "Year of the Family" and we kicked off the year with several fun events that remind us of our bonds to each other while letting the greater Longmont community know that we want to be family with them, too!



To emphasize that everyone is part of our family and that all families are welcome, we celebrated Epiphany with an intergenerational Epiphany pageant, creating our own nativity scene. We had several Marys and Josephs and lots of animals, shepherds, and angels. There were no rehearsals, just enthusiastic time together proclaiming the Good News of Jesus' presence among us.

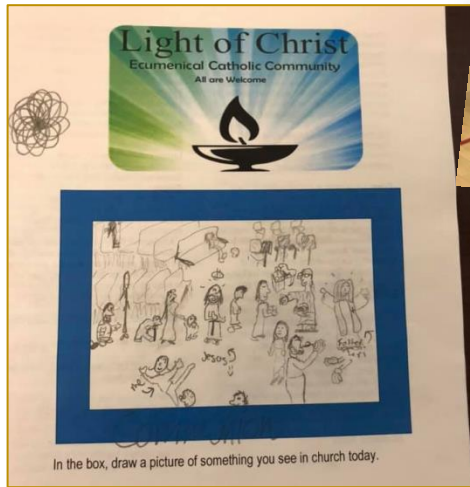
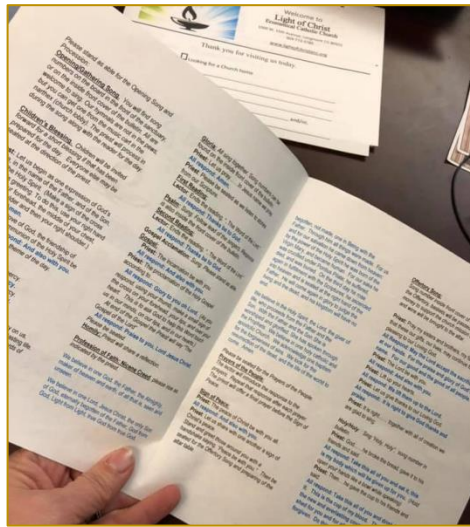


Our Adult Formation Committee collaborated with OUT Boulder to host a panel discussion about gender. OUT Boulder members shared their personal journeys and answered questions to help our members better understand gender. Our community felt this was an important first step for us to take to help us become an even more inclusive and welcoming community to all. →



LOC continued...

In January, Light of Christ's bread bakers worked with the youth from Growth Youp (our youth group) to make Communion bread together. It is good to share this ministry with one another and recognize that all hands can be hands of blessing.



To further highlight our Year of the Family at our weekly Mass and help make sure visitors to our community, especially those who may not be as familiar with the Catholic Mass feel welcome, we've created new missalette handouts. We made sure to make them kid friendly with a place on the front cover for children to draw images of what they see at Mass. On the weekend they were introduced, Fr. Teri asked the children to join her in blessing them before they were distributed.

In early February, Light of Christ hosted a booth at the City of Longmont's "Wellness Fair." While other groups at the fair were focused on physical and mental wellness, we emphasized spiritual wellness. We met many people who were intrigued and interested to learn about how our community offers an alternative way to

live out Christ's love in the Catholic tradition. We connected with several people who were raised Catholic, but had fallen away for one reason or another. It was a wonderful way to connect with people in the Longmont community who didn't know about us and were interested in hearing about our church family.



LIGHT OF CHRIST
PALM SATURDAY, April 4 at 5pm

PALM SUNDAY SERVICE
April 5 at 10:15am*

HOLY THURSDAY, April 9 at 7pm*

GOOD FRIDAY, April 10 at 7pm*

EASTER VIGIL, April 11 at 8pm

**joint service with Bethlehem Lutheran*

BOULDER COMMUNITY
IN DISCERNMENT ASH WEDNESDAY

To begin our fast from anger, technology, consumerism, distraction, judgment... we are gathering with our hosts at Community United Church of Christ for a soup supper and intergenerational, multisensory prayer service with ashes and communion from 5:30-7pm on Ash Wednesday, February 26. If you can provide a pot of vegetarian soup, contact Mother Sheila Dierks at sheiladierks1@gmail.com, 303-449-4302.



Deacon David Dunn, Mother Kathleen Gorman and myself came together to form a pastoral team to help lead Holy Family into the future. Our primary goal at that time was to make sure we could celebrate Eucharist on a weekly basis. With the help of many hands we were able to accomplish that goal.

The Strength of Holy Family has always been its members — a kind, generous, intelligent and committed group of individuals. It was this commitment that has sustained CHF for the last 21 years and will sustain it into the future.

After exploring our options with Christ the Savior Lutheran Church for a Sunday service, it was decided that we find a new home. A few of the members took up the task of finding us a home for Sundays.



Christ the Savior Lutheran Church was a wonderful host. We greatly appreciate their willingness to host us over the past year plus. It was unfortunate that we were not able to find a Sunday option that worked for both communities. We are grateful to them for their support.



Fr. Jim Demuth helped celebrate our last Mass at Christ the Savior. He did a beautiful blessing and thanksgiving of the space and then blessed the Holy Family Community and commissioned us to move forward. It was very spiritual. Thank you, Fr. Jim.

We searched exhaustively, for a space. We searched club houses, schools, hotels, church sharing options and store fronts for the better part of two months. Just when it seemed like there were going to be no more options, Melinda Seigle and →

Holy Family

JOURNEY ONWARD

by Deacon Mike Weil

Holy Family celebrated Mass **in its New Home** on Sunday February 2nd. This journey started at a congregational meeting back in the second week of November when the Church voted unanimously to continue forward by moving our mass times back to Sunday. With Thanksgiving, Advent and Christmas quickly approaching, we knew this was going to be a tall task to reorganize Holy Family and move to a Sunday Mass time. At that time

CHF continued...

Gayle Craun found our new home. It is an office suite in a building on the corner of Yosemite and Hampden in east Denver. After having an open house to view the opportunity, we decided to lease the space for a year.

The community leaped into action. They painted the walls and cleaned up the space. Carpets were cleaned; new chairs were bought and assembled. All of this was done in about a week and a half. God has always provided for this little community and continues to every day.



Holy Family is a church of Radical Inclusivity where all are welcome and worthy of God's love. We believe strongly in Laity and Clergy working together. It was the laity that found our new home. Our first Mass was such a blessing. Our Vicar, Fr. Michael was there with us to celebrate our new beginning. He blessed us moving forward.

We will be closing the office space on Iliff by the end of February and consolidating it into our new space at **8811 East Hampden Avenue, Denver CO, 80231**. We meet on Sunday Mornings at 10am.

It is amazing what is provided, when you trust in God.

CHURCH OF THE HOLY FAMILY ASH WEDNESDAY SERVICE

February 26 at 7pm

SOUP SUPPERS

6-7:30pm from March 4 to April 1

HOLY THURSDAY, April 9 at 7pm

GOOD FRIDAY, April 10 at 7pm

EASTER SUNDAY, April 12

10am Mass with brunch to follow

Church of the Beloved

BEING SALT AND LIGHT

On February 8, twenty-three adults and ten youth as a community got together and packaged 1,700 pounds of bulk rice and beans in one hour! Our fourth annual service project was tons of fun and productivity. The staples were purchased from our quarterly outreach tithe of membership offerings. We gathered to pray and consider current statistics in Colorado as many hands made light work.

Given a variety of estimates that 15 pounds of beans and 10 pound of rice can feed 100 people, we provided a food staple for 12,500 meals. We blessed the bags of food during our liturgy and distributed them to eight local food pantries. When asked about their experience, Lincoln responded, "What I most liked about our rice and beans project was knowing how much this was going to help people and where it was going to go." The Zamora family "loved working together as a family and watching our boys understand how to bring the light of Christ to others."

"Share your bread with the hungry... then your light will shine like the dawn" (Isaiah 58).



CHURCH OF THE BELOVED

ASH WEDNESDAY, February 26:

Ashes "On Your Way" 6-7:30am
at the Wagon Road RTD Park N Ride
and
11am-12noon at E B Rains Jr. Memorial
Park at 117th and Community Center
Drive in Northglenn

12:30pm and 7pm Contemplative
Prayer Services* at the church

**COMMUNAL RECONCILIATION
SERVICE**, March 13 at 6pm

PALM SUNDAY VIGIL, April 4 at 5pm
procession with palms

HOLY THURSDAY, April 9
6:30pm Tenebrae*

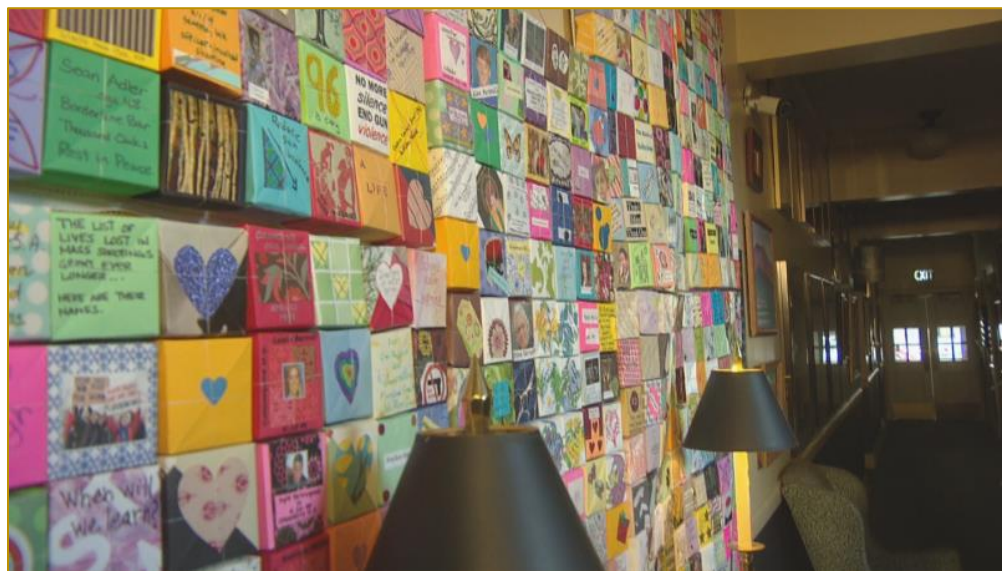
7:30pm Mass of the Lord's Supper*
with washing of feet, followed by
Eucharistic Adoration* until 10pm

GOOD FRIDAY, April 10 at 7pm

EASTER VIGIL, April 11 at 9pm

EASTER SUNDAY, April 12 at 8am

**shared services with Northglenn
United Church of Christ*



*Wall of Soul Boxes displayed at
1st Baptist Church of Denver*

Instead of gun violence being someone else's problem, we can each make a difference in raising awareness and finding small ways of impact to reduce violence in some area of life.

The Soul Box Project started in Portland, Oregon following the mass shooting in Las Vegas. Locally, we may connect with our sisters and brothers at First Baptist Church in Denver who are working to create more than 30,000 boxes by April. (Fr. Michael folded one there at the last general meeting of Colorado Faith Communities United to Prevent Gun Violence.) They'll carry the boxes to the Colorado capitol for a memorial service for victims of gunfire.



Folding at First Baptist

Folding a Soul Box can be a healing meditative act, whether done individually or as a group. Coming together to make Boxes provides a chance to share our stories. Folding a box is a way to add to a conversation without being confrontational. The founder said the goal of the project is not to lobby for gun control at a federal level. Instead, "the goal is for each person who sees the project to take one personal action," whether that's locking their personal guns away to keep them safer, speaking to local government about gun laws or reaching out to people in distress. "Whatever that one personal action is, that's what we want people to take," she said.

COB →

HUNGER & POVERTY IN COLORADO

updated: 10/19

- Nearly **1 in 11 Coloradans (9.1%) struggle with hunger**, not always having enough money to buy food. (U.S. Department of Agriculture, *Household Food Security in the United States in 2018*, September 2019)
- More than **1 in 10 Coloradans (10.3%) struggle financially**, living below the federal poverty line. This includes more than 1 in 8 kids (13%) with those under the age of 5 most likely to live in poverty. (U.S. Census Bureau, *American Community Survey: Poverty*, Sept. 2018)
- Nearly **1 in 8 Colorado kids (12%) may not always know when or where they will get their next meal**. (Colorado Children's Campaign, *2019 KIDS COUNT in Colorado!*, August 2019)
- About **21,000 veterans in Colorado live in households that participated in food stamps** at some point during a 12-month period. (Center of Budget Policies and Priorities, *SNAP Helps Almost 1.5 million Low Income Vets, including thousands in every state*, November 2017)

OPPORTUNITY FOR UNIFYING ACTION: THE SOUL BOX PROJECT

<https://soulboxproject.org/home>

by Mother Kae Madden

I recently participated in one of the kick-off gatherings for Faithful Thursdays that was held at the First Baptist Church of Denver across from our State Capitol. I was very moved by their display of Soul Boxes and plan to join them in this compelling action. The Soul Box project is a national community art project raising awareness of the gunfire epidemic by counting and honoring victims. In the tradition of the AIDS Memorial Quilt, the Project is collecting one hand-folded paper box – a Soul Box - for every person killed or injured by gunfire in the US since 2014. On average, over 100 people are shot every day in the U.S.

There are many facets that contribute to the complexity of gun violence. Contributing factors include depression, suicide desperation, gun safety, hate and racism, violence in speech, isolation and loneliness, domestic violence, gun storage, police shootings, access to quality mental health services, the glorification of violence in visual entertainment such as movies and games – to name a few.



COB CENTERING PRAYER/MEDITATION AND LABYRINTH

On the first Sunday of each month, we meet at 6:30 a.m. in the sanctuary for 20 minutes of silent Centering Prayer, then walk the outdoor labyrinth and return to the sanctuary for another 20 minute period of silent prayer. During wintry weather, we engage in a meditative walk around the sanctuary. **March 1st** is our next prayer opportunity. All are welcome.



Regional Chrism Mass!

EASTER MONDAY
7PM APRIL 13

AT CHURCH OF THE BELOVED

While Bishop Francis is in town for Dcn. Jane's ordination, all are invited to attend our Regional Chrism Mass. In addition to blessing and consecrating the Sacred Oils for use in our communities our lay leaders, deacons, priests and bishop will recommit to the ministries that continue to bless the local church.

St. Paul Lutheran & Catholic

CHRISTMAS JOY!



STP COMMUNITY COUNCIL

Congratulations to the Council members voted into office during our annual congregational meeting on February 2nd! Aaron Oberg, President; Andrea Arey, Vice President; Jeff Parrott, Treasurer; Karlene Burrell, member; Lin Holly, Secretary. They join Irene McCahill and Greg Yonker (whose terms were not up for election) on our council.

We are most grateful for outgoing Council members Maryann O'Brien and Lori Eastman for their tireless dedication to our community of faith.

ADULT FORUM

The three Sundays before Lent were devoted to discussions from *40-Day Journey with Dietrich Bonhoeffer*. Bonhoeffer was a Lutheran pastor and University Professor of Theology in Germany the first half of the 20th century. A prolific author and letter writer, he spoke out against the Nazi regime in the 1930s and met his death because of it. The series generated deep, probing discussions about who God is and what God desires from us.

Our Adult Forum during Lent will be like a patchwork quilt. Using the Lectionary as our guide, we will explore different topics such as white privilege (*Living Lutheran*, January 2020), the ELCA Living Simply Program, continuing with Bonhoeffer, and many other blocks that will make up our Lenten reflection quilt. Every piece will be a surprise, so please join us and our presenters, 9:15-10:15am in the lower level of the church on the six Sundays in Lent. Everyone is welcome. →





StP continues...

SHROVE TUESDAY-MARDI GRAS

Gumbo supper with King Cake and 3 semi-professional story tellers

ASH WEDNESDAY

Fr Don and Pastor Barbara take to the streets in what has become an annual custom. Because of the amount of foot traffic around the church, they will be stationed outside for "Prayer and Ashes" 11:30am-1pm.

DAILY ON-LINE SHARING

Fr. Don will shepherd a group for daily prayer and reflection during Lent, hosted online in a Facebook group which will use Joyce Rupp's *Jesus, Friend of My Soul*. It is the first time we have used a virtual group in this manner and hopefully it will enable more folks to participate regularly.

WEDNESDAY EVENINGS IN LENT

We gather for Soup Supper and Study for "Courageous Conversations" – talking about racism, led by Pastor Barbara and Pastor Rich Gianzero of Nativity Lutheran in Commerce City.

PALM SATURDAY, April 4 5pm

PALM SUNDAY, April 5 10:30am

MAUNDY THURSDAY, April 9 7pm

GOOD FRIDAY, April 10 7pm

EASTER VIGIL, April 11 8pm

EASTER SUNDAY, April 12 10:30am



Faithful Thursdays

NOON AT THE CAPITOL

Upcoming conveners include:

March 6: Denver Presbytery

March 19: Rocky Mountain Rabbinical Council

April 2: Colorado Council of Churches

April 16: Multi-Cultural Mosaic

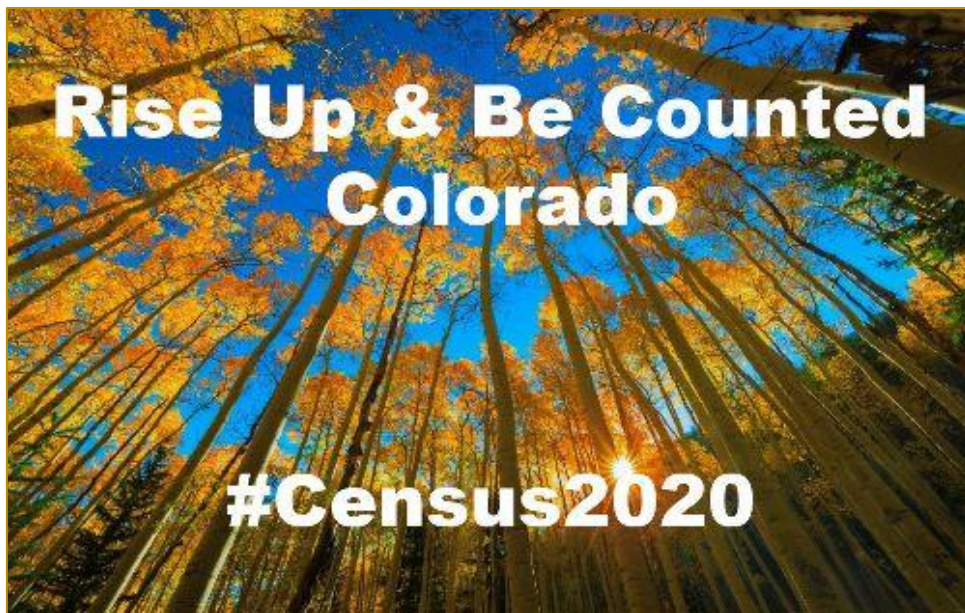
April 30: Closing Ceremony with All Coalition Partners

As a Covenanting Denomination of the CCC, ECC representation is particularly important at the red-fonted events above. Check on social media for location, sometimes in the Capitol Building, often across the street at 1st Baptist Church of Denver.



Nice thing about moving the event this session to Thursdays is that legislators can attend. Pictured above, Rep. Dafna Michaelson Jenet, a prime sponsor of HB20-1086 Insurance Coverage for Mental Health Wellness Exams (ensuring coverage similar to annual physical examinations).





Faith Census Sunday

The Colorado Council of Churches and Together Colorado are coordinating a Census 2020 educational push in our faith communities on Faith Census Sunday, **March 29**. Our ECC Vicar will be sending out CCC's information packets (sample sermons, bulletin blurbs) for our Region in order to support the outreach.

The count determines the number of Representatives our State has in Congress. Federal funding is also calculated using census numbers, so it's vitally important — not only to get our fair share of moneys for our roads, hospitals, schools, fire departments and other public services, but also ensures that our most vulnerable citizens have access to the social programs they need.

For that reason, immigrant populations are also counted. This can be a daunting task given the general mistrust some have of the government. The information is not to be shared across federal agencies, however, and census takers need not come knocking on anyone's door — 10 minutes to fill out 10 questions that

you can respond to online, by phone or by mail.

#Census2020
#EveryoneCounts

PLANNING COMMITTEE INVITATION

We invite you to our Faithful Complete Count Committee Kickoff meeting noon-1:30pm on Tuesday, **March 3rd**, at Montview Boulevard Presbyterian Church located at 1980 Dahlia Street, Denver CO, 80220. Lunch will be provided.

During our time together, we will share an overview of the 2020 Census, share information about current plans to educate around the Census, talk about the upcoming Census Faith weekend, and share resource information. We look forward to hearing about your efforts as well!

Please RSVP by Wednesday, February 26th by clicking on this link: <https://forms.gle/94TujDnQUmTeUblW9>. All are welcome, and please feel free to invite anyone who you think may be interested in attending this event.



Gun Violence Prevention & Migrant Justice

For those of you who can't make it up North to the presentation at Mary of Magdala / Trinity Lutheran / St. Paul's Episcopal in Ft. Collins on March 1st, AFSC & Coloradans For Immigrant Rights, Denver Justice & Peace Committee, and Colorado Faith Communities United to End Gun Violence will be presenting **Gun Violence Prevention and Migrant Justice in Mexico & Colorado — How We Work Together** on **March 3**, 5-7pm, at 1420 Ogden Street, Basement Conference Room, Denver CO 80218.

The crisis in migration is driven by a combination of anti-migrant racism and the proliferation of guns and militarism from the United States. John Lindsay-Poland documents the legal and illegal flows of guns from the United States that are bringing devastating violence to communities and migrants in Mexico and Central America. This event will explore the trajectory of trans-border U.S. guns and policies, how Mexico is responding, and what our communities can do to stop these vectors of violence and trauma.

For background info read *Where the Guns Go: US Arms and the Crisis of Violence in Mexico* www.afsc.org/resource/report-where-guns-go

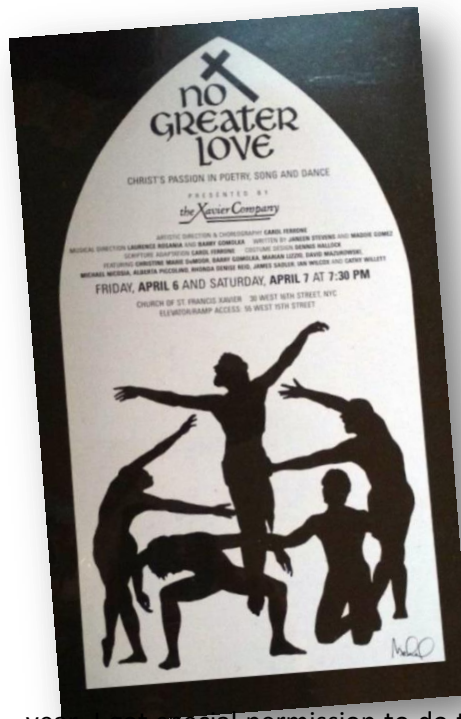
This series began as a way of getting to know our regional priests better and learn a bit about what they're up to. Guess the editor will jump in:

FR. MICHAEL J. NICOSIA

Exploring and expressing my faith through the arts has always been part of my life. In college at Syracuse University, I was the Newman Center's "artist in residence," coordinating a team of classmates who hand-painted a new banner for the altar every week; I also was able to introduce the community to liturgical dance. The latter led to membership in several dance troupes after graduation: *Hosanna Sacred Dance* in Rochester NY and *JazzEast* in New York City. (Yep, that's me in the foreground, below. Proof I was young and nimble once.)



When I moved to NYC I sojourned with an Evangelical Full-Gospel Episcopalian Church, serving as their Leader of Sung Worship. I also found *The Xavier Company*, a Christian performing arts company in Manhattan that toured the archdiocese every Lent with *No Greater Love*, a passion play told in poetry, song and dance. (I was Jesus for the last 4 of my 7 years with them.) The group also had a Charismatic healing ministry. The monthly healing Masses were so life-giving that I thought, maybe I could do this full-time, leading to my making simple vows with the Franciscan Friars of the Atonement. (During my Postulancy



year, I got special permission to do the passion play one last time... an exercise in humility, as I came back in the role of Judas!)

Well, as artists are stereotypically individualistic, though my charisms resonated with several other creative on-the-fringe friars the Order didn't think my vocation with them was the right fit. So I left to complete my Masters of Divinity at St. Bernard's School of Theology and Ministry back in Rochester.

I was hired as the Liturgy Coordinator for two parishes (I now qualify for a meager pension!) and was a member of the bishop's Liturgical Commission for two terms, serving on its Standing Committees on the Eucharist and on Art & Environment. I also worked as a freelance Liturgical Artist, Environment Coordinator and Ritual Consultant for a number of diocesan and national ministry conventions, transforming hotel ballrooms into worship spaces.

Before relocating to Denver, I became certified as a Christian Minister by the Federation of Christian Ministries and worked for 7 years as a Chaplain in an eldercare community; I also served for 12 years as Chaplain and Liturgical Advisor to Dignity-Integrity/Rochester, a community of LGBTQ Roman Catholics and Episcopalians, their

families and friends. It was in these lay ministries that I began composing my own liturgies and prayers. If you're interested in reviewing some of my early prophetic work, visit my website *STICKS & STONES / FLESH & BLOOD: Liturgical images and movements that speak to experience* at <https://mjnicosia.webs.com/>.

Most of my creative writing now is composing homilies, prefaces for Mass, and my regular social media posts.... oh, yah, and there's the newsletter editing.

I continue my music ministry as a freelance presider and performer through my original art and ritual company, *Spirit Songs*. My regular ministry includes a Sunday morning service in a local memory care community, planned around familiar hymns. Of course, I also jump at any chance I get to sing a few torch songs and Broadway show tunes in a Cabaret Show with friends.



My visual arts nowadays focus mostly on twitter graphics and fine art watercolors which I try to hock on my website <http://spirit-songs/square/site>. My color sense also comes in handy when my husband, Marc, is selecting fabrics for his quilts and Native American dance regalia. Promoting the arts with my colleagues in the Aurora Arts Guild, I've also taken on administration of their Facebook page @ArtGuildAurora.