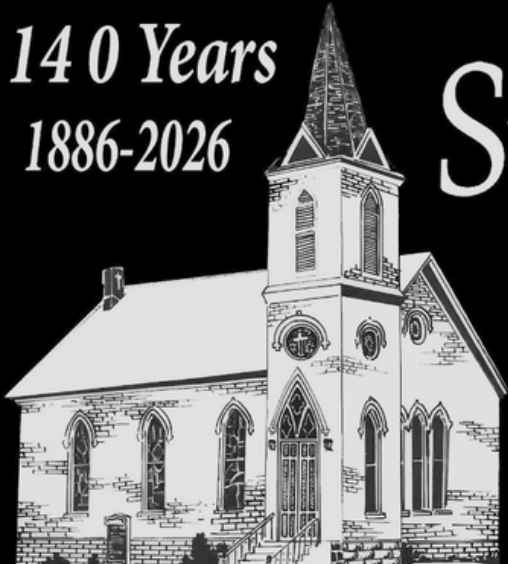


140 Years
1886-2026



St. Paul's

United Church
of Christ

THE PROGRESSIVE SPIRIT
JUNE 2026 EDITION

602 GARFIELD ST
LARAMIE, WY 82070

TALES OF PRIDES PAST

June, 1985, Chicago: My first Pride parade. I had just been kicked out of seminary over being gay, and my life was in scarcely controlled chaos. I lived in the suburbs, but made my way down to Chicago's "Boystown" to see the parade. I found a spot in the crowd along Halstead Street, and the atmosphere was electric. There were around 175,000 people there (Wikipedia); I, who had counted the guys in my school library and divided by 10 to figure out if or how many other gays there were there, couldn't wrap my mind around it. I could see and hear the marchers coming down the street. And then suddenly, zipping around ahead of the flag bearers, was a sight to behold! I didn't know what to make of it! There was a 7' tall drag queen on roller skates! In my mind's eye, I can still see her careening from one side of the street to the other, waving wildly, to the laughter and cheers of the crowd. Honestly, I don't remember hardly anything else from that day, other than thinking, "Wow, it takes all types!"

June 1987, Denver: I had moved to Denver the previous autumn to turn the page on everything seminary, Chicago, and my first lover. I lived in the gay district of Capitol Hill. There was to be a rally and march, from the state capitol to Cheeseman Park. I went down to the Capitol, expecting the crowds I'd seen in Chicago. There were around 50-75 people. After a few speeches, we walked on the sidewalks down 12th Street to the park. The neighborhood wasn't great then, and most of our audiences were curious eyes from the crack houses.

June 1988, Denver: Another rally at the capitol, this time with several hundred people. The community was being radicalized by our suffering from AIDS and the repressive

measures the state was taking regarding it. (I myself had tested positive a year earlier). After the speeches were done, we were again supposed to go down 12th St. But some of the ACT-UP guys yelled, "No more hiding! We're taking Colfax!" the main thoroughfare through the city. As the crowd surged onto the street, some guys started bouncing a couple of police cars. That lasted just a moment; another officer shouted, "Where are you going?" knowing that we were not going to be turned back. "Cheeseman!" people shouted back. "OK" he shouted, likely preventing a riot. We filled the righthand side of the street, and the police rode their motorcycles from intersection to intersection ahead of us, stopping cross traffic all along the way. I still have my "Silence = Death" t-shirt.

June 1992 (93?), Fort Collins: I don't recall if it was in the lead up to or the follow on from the Amendment 2 struggle (an anti-gay state constitutional amendment that precluded any gay rights ordinances, protections or policies in Colorado – that was my political baptism by fire). But gay and lesbian people from Fort Collins decided we needed to do something for Pride. There wasn't much gay/lesbian structure in the community yet, the bar Nightengales, a new PFLAG group, the campus Gay/Lesbian Alliance, a gay men's discussion group, and the new MCC church I pastored. I don't recall exactly who organized it, but we held a picnic in Legacy Park. Legacy Park was (and is) quite hidden, on the north side of the Poudre River, and at that time had no development other than maybe a few picnic tables and mown weeds (no real sod). We put a couple balloons out by College Ave to mark the dirt road turnoff, fired up a grill, ate burgers and drank pop and iced tea together. It was just so cool being out in the sunshine together with maybe 30 other people from the community!

Tales of Pride, cont.

(Now pride in Fort Collins is at Library Park – in the very center of town – on Saturday, June 6, 11 am – 6 pm, for a full event list see fortcollinspride.org).

June 2026, Laramie: Laramie Pridefest has organized events every day from the 1st through the 14th of the month! You can see the everything planned and the master schedule on laramiepridefest.com. Notably for the church are two events:

- **Saturday June 13, Pride in the Park:** This is one of our church's premier outreach events of the year. We have a booth that gives us the chance to have life-transforming conversations with a wide variety of people. This year we will give away faith-affirming LGBTQ+ stickers and other swag. Sign up for a time slot on Sunday, or just come by whenever you like and share the space with one another and our community.
- **Sunday, June 14, 10 am, Pride Service:** Our annual worship service devoted to honoring the lives and loves of LGBTQ+ persons, their families, friends and allies. Our choir will do a featured celebrating song: Lady Gaga's "Born this Way." Yes, all kinds of music can lift people's hearts with joy!

These stories of Pride past and present remind me of this parable by Jesus:

"Jesus told them another parable: 'The kingdom of heaven is like a mustard seed, which a man took and planted in his field. Though it is the smallest of all seeds, yet when it grows, it is the largest of garden plants and becomes a tree, so that the birds come and perch in its branches.'"

"He told them still another parable: 'The kingdom of heaven is like yeast that a woman took and mixed into about sixty pounds of flour until it worked all through the dough.'"

(Matthew 13:31-33, NIV)

Peace,
Pastor Mark

WEEKLY SIGN-UPS

In a small church, everyone has to share their gifts and talents to make it work.

Every week we need:

A Greeter – Visitor's first impression of the church, a friendly smile, a visitor's card, invitation to fellowship time and directions to the restrooms.

A Worship Leader – Make announcements, lead various prayers and readings, assist with communion, help worship run smoothly, secure the building at the end of the morning.

An AV person – Work with the worship slides, cue any special music or videos, adjust the sound board if needed.

A refreshment person/family – Provide snacks for after worship; set-up and clean-up.

There are sign up sheets for these on the bulletin board in the back of the sanctuary.

On occasion we need:

Weed pullers – if you see a weed and have a minute, you know what to do!

Building maintenance – Luke Ballard has a list of small projects that anyone with a penchant for hand tools can take care of.

Special cleaning – from disorganized cupboards to refrigerator science projects, there's a variety of small jobs someone with an hour to give can do.

STUDENT PREACHER

Again this summer, St. Paul's and Pastor Mark will participate in mentoring the next generation of authorized UCC ministers. As we did last summer with Beth Hendon from Wheatland (who has now been accepted as a "Member in Discernment" aka "MID"), we will open our pulpit to an up-coming preacher again this summer. Aliya Emita Santistevan is an MID based out of Plymouth UCC in Ft Collins. She grew up on a small farm/ranch north of Wellington, CO. She will preach one Sunday in each of June, July and August, with Pastor Mark in attendance to listen and coach. I'm sure the congregation will be supportive and constructive in their feedback as well. This is a great investment in the future ministry of the UCC!

MORE LA FORET CAMPS



La Foret Conference & Retreat Center in Colorado Springs still has open spots left to register for their adult camps! If you want to go back to your old summer camp days and connect with other UCC congregants from across the Rocky Mountain Conference, check out their camps!

- July 12th - 18th is their Contemplative Retreat, which focuses on learning, prayer, community, and connecting with nature.
- July 19th - 25th is their Community Camp, which is open to all ages! The camp focuses on connection, rest, play, and belonging.
- September 11th - 13th is their Wholeness & Wellness retreat, which focuses on connecting to your deeper self, the earth, and meaningful community. This event also features a concert that is open to the public.

For more information, or to register, please visit laforet.org

JUNE BIRTHDAYS

"I Thank My God Every Time I Remember You." (Phil 1:3)

In your prayers for these members and friends in April and May, please include thanksgiving to the Lord for:

Kate Vincent, our congregation musician, June 29th.

In all my prayers for all of you, I always pray with joy because of your partnership in the gospel From the first day until now, being confident of this, that God who began a good work in you will carry it on to completion until the day of Christ Jesus. (Phillipians 1:4-6)



LAY PREACHERS NEEDED

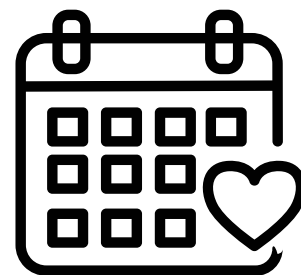
Through the next several months, Pastor Mark will be away a number of Sundays for vacation and his sabbatical. We have budgeted to fill this time with paid clergy and unpaid volunteers from within the church. Several members and friends of the church have indicated interest in filling in. We will slot those folk in and then set about recruiting clergy for the remaining Sundays.

Here are the key dates:

- July 9 (covered – Erik(a) Boss);
- August 16 & 23;
- October 11, 18, 25;
- November 1 (needs to be a clergy because it is a communion Sunday)

MARK YOUR CALENDARS!

UPCOMING CHURCH EVENTS



JUNE 2026

June 10th-13th: Rocky Mountain Conference Annual Meeting, Provo UT

For more information: <https://rmcucc.org/ac-2026/>

June 1st-14th: Laramie Pridefest events

For more information: <https://www.laramiepridefest.com/>

June 13th: Pride in the Park at Washington Park. **Volunteers needed!**

June 14th: Pride Worship Service at Saint Paul's, 10 AM

June 21: Student Preacher Aliya Santistevan, Member in Discernment from Plymouth

JULY 2026

July 4th: Freedom Has A Birthday at Washington Park. **Volunteers needed!**

July 12th, 11:15 AM: Outdoor Worship, St. Albans, Snowy Range. **Musicians needed!**

July 13th-21st: Pastor Mark vacation (staycation)

July 19th: Guest Preacher Erik(a) Boss

July 25th: Church Picnic at Pastor Mark's

July 26th: Student Preacher Aliya Santistevan

AUGUST 2026

August 9th: Outdoor Worship, Vedauwoo. **Musicians needed!**

August 10th-29th: Pastor Mark vacation

August 16th, 23rd: Guest Preachers TBD

August 30th: Student Preacher Aliya Santistevan

ST. PAUL'S UNITED CHURCH OF CHRIST

Worship every Sunday at 10:00 AM
602 Garfield St, Laramie, WY 82070



UNITED CHURCH
OF CHRIST

If you are involved in any organizations and would like to include their upcoming events in our newsletter, please email stpucc@gmail.com