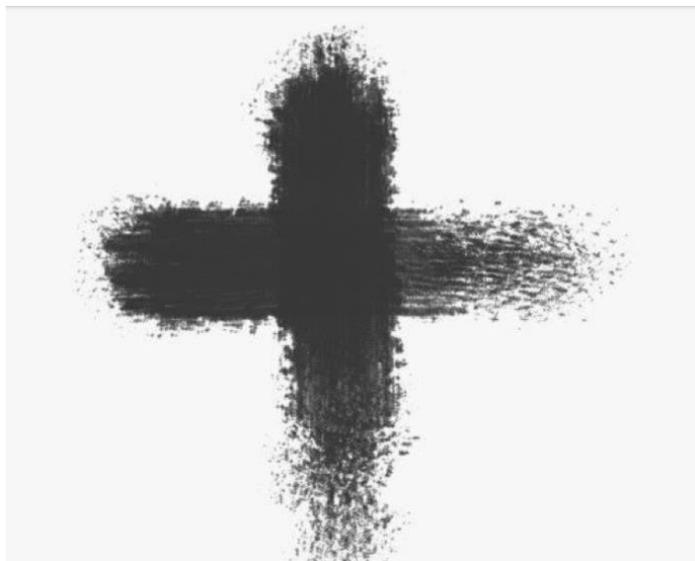


# Progressive Spirit News

FEBRUARY 2021 –  
VOLUME 12, ISSUE 2



*St. Paul's  
United Church  
of Christ  
Laramie, WY*

## Pastor's Post

It's almost time for our annual meeting. Can you believe that? Can you also believe that I have been here since 2016, so this will be my 5<sup>th</sup> annual meeting? How can that be. I came to St. Paul's on Easter, 2016. And can you believe that? It seems like I just got here. That must say a lot about the community that is St. Paul's, making Don and I feel welcome. Thank you St. Paul's, and I hope to see every member on-line for our **annual meeting at 11:30 am on Sunday, February, 28.** The zoom link is below in this newsletter.

Can you believe it, it's almost Lent? In just 17 days, we will celebrate Ash Wednesday. I would like to say we are having a pancakes for dinner type dinner on Shrove Tuesday, but that won't be happening. Nor will our traditional Ash Wednesday service. But, if you are a member of St. Paul's, check your snail mail, as you will be receiving ashes in the mail from me. I know what you just thought, what a mess, but when you get your 'ashes' you will be surprised. If you are not an official member of St. Paul's, then PLEASE send an email to [stpucc@gmail.com](mailto:stpucc@gmail.com), and request your ashes.

### February 2021

- February – Black History Month
- February 7
  - Mark 1:29-39
- February 14 – Valentine's Day
  - Mark 9:2-9
- February 15 – President's Day
- February 17 – Ash Wednesday
  - Matthew 11:28-30
- February 21 – First Sunday of Lent
  - Matthew 8:1-4:16-17
- February 28 – 2<sup>nd</sup> Sunday of Lent
  - Matthew 8:5-13
  - St. Paul's Annual Meeting

*All events held at Your Home, in the sanctuary, or on the church lawn unless otherwise noted*

This year I am using a worship series for Lent that is designed by Worship Design Studios, and it is focused on Healing and Recovery. What a great theme for Lent! I hope that you will join us each Sunday in Lent, as each Sunday will focus on a different aspect of healing and recovery. The graphics for the series are of beach glass, you know those glass things thrown in the ocean, that the ocean breaks up, and polishes. We will see some of this in the worship each week. I do need some worship leaders to come forward. It is not something that I wish to do entirely on my own, so please step up and offer to help by being the worship leader that reads and helps guide us through the services each week.

## February Birthdays



**There are no birthdays in Feb. Is this right? If you have a February birthday, please send the church an email with an update.**

I have planned our **Beatitudes study** for Tuesday evenings, every other week, beginning on February 16 at 6:30. I hope this time works for many of you. This was the time most often given to me when I asked for input. The class will meet every other week, as I will be attending a financial planning for churches class every other Tuesday. Crystal Ballard will be joining me for that class. We hope to gain some insights into stewardship, maybe on-line giving, and other areas that will be of interest to us as we guide St. Paul's into the future. I'm sure we will have some things to share with you.

I will be checking with other congregations in the Platte Valley Association, and maybe throughout the Rocky Mountain Conference, for a way that our members can attend a worship service, and I can take a week or two off.

It's hard for me to let go of worship planning each week, but I need to figure out a way to get some refresh and renewal in my life. Don is retiring at the end of April, so we will be taking a couple weeks

to travel and for both of us to decompress a bit. Look for information about that in the April newsletter, if I can get alternative worship services lined up.

I get my first COVID vaccination on Feb 1 (today, just got it, feel fine), the second one on March 1. I know that doesn't give me 'I can quit wearing my mask, and being cautious' immunity, but I will feel better about being able to go and visit and be present with members of the congregation. I hope that each of you gets in the line soon, so maybe soon we can return to service in the building. We will probably always continue with zoom, as we have invested in the technology that allows us to do so. That same technology also allows me to be away from Laramie, and to be with you. I think this will be great for those winter days when it's snowy, or cold, you know like Laramie tends to be in the winter. You can cuddle up and have church and coffee at the same time!

We have done a lot at St. Paul's while I have been here. The kitchen was finished. The sanctuary was reworked, and the technology was added. The windows, they look amazing and were the final big project. Hopefully this year we can just enjoy what we have done the last few years, and not have to worry about any construction projects.

***I have an appeal to make with each of you.*** I would really like it if you were to send to me a list of 3 things you would like to see in the next year. Please do this before the annual meeting, let's say by February 22. That way I can address where we are, and what direction and projects we might take up during 2021. I am sure that I am not the only one that has ideas. I have received a few, and they have been really good ones. As I gather a list, I will share them with the council, and we will begin our calendar for the year.

Speaking of the council, we are in need of at least two of you to step up to be on the council for the 2021 year. Our current council has mostly been on council since I got here, and if a couple of you could step up, we could let them have some time off council. See Carol Uhl, or write to her if you are interested. You can also send an email to [stpucc@gmail.com](mailto:stpucc@gmail.com) and let me know, I will let Carol know.

Things are still moving forward in the conference regarding a conference wide committee on ministry. I will keep you updated of important things and events that happen in the conference. Planning is currently underway for our National Synod Meeting this summer (virtually), as well as the Rocky Mountain Conference annual celebration (virtually). As moderator of the Platte Valley Association, I have begun planning our spring meeting (virtually). While I say we may not want to return to what was, meeting in person every so often is still something I think many of us do want to return to.

Here is a link to what is happening in the conference. There are many classes coming up. One that will interest a few of you is this

### **Sacred Conversations 2 End Racism**

Two-day Overview Study, March 5-6, 2021. This brief exploration into the extensive topic of racism offers an intensive historic overview, in-depth conversations, multiple media resources, and a unique, Spirit-centered community approach. To foster a deep connection, groups will consist of at least 8 but no more than 20. Participants will be expected to prepare "homework" one week before we meet to lay a foundation for this transformative work. [Learn more and register here.](#)

Here are The Beatitudes, hopefully you will join us on Tuesday evenings to discuss these together.

#### The Beatitudes

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**5** When Jesus<sup>5a</sup> saw the crowds, he went up the mountain; and after he sat down, his disciples came to him. **2** Then he began to speak, and taught them, saying:

**3** "Blessed are the poor in spirit, for theirs is the kingdom of heaven.

**4** "Blessed are those who mourn, for they will be comforted.

**5** "Blessed are the meek, for they will inherit the earth.

**6** "Blessed are those who hunger and thirst for righteousness, for they will be filled.

**7** "Blessed are the merciful, for they will receive mercy.

**8** "Blessed are the pure in heart, for they will see God.

<sup>9</sup> "Blessed are the peacemakers, for they will be called children of God.

<sup>10</sup> "Blessed are those who are persecuted for righteousness' sake, for theirs is the kingdom of heaven.

Rev. Ken

## **Returning to in-person Worship, but still doing zoom**

We are closely monitoring the governor's guidance for COVID gatherings. If at any time the governor tells us we should suspend in person worship, we will do so. If that happens, you will get an email, and a phone call telling you of the decision. In the meantime, as you prepare for attending church in the sanctuary, remember to stay home if you have any fears of coming to church, and to stay home if you have a cough or fever. Before you arrive at church, in the morning before the service, the sanctuary will be cleaned, and disinfected with Lysol. When you arrive at church, your temperature will be checked with a 'touchless' thermometer. Masks will be required at all times. Hand sanitizer will be available. We will continue to have music recorded by Sean. Feel free to sing behind your mask, but we will not have any choir or group singing. Together we are the body of Christ. I encourage each of you to contact me if you have questions.

**Here is the link to our weekly worship service:**

**Topic: St. Paul's Sunday Worship**

**Time: This is a recurring meeting Meet anytime**

**Join Zoom Meeting**

**<https://us02web.zoom.us/j/4425252208?pwd=TGxyK2U3ZUxFUUVWWWdFRHptMEFsQT09>**

**Meeting ID: 442 525 2208**

**Passcode: 602602**

**One tap mobile**

**+16699009128,,4425252208#,,, \*602602# US (San Jose)**

**Annual Meeting Zoom Information**

## **On-line Music Depository**

Every week, someone lifts up the music that Sean is giving to us. He is saving it all for us to enjoy at any time.

The link to the depository of music is [here](#).

And I'll give you another link, this one to our you tube channel, so you can see updates from Rev. Ken and our worship services (if all goes well). [St. Paul's You Tube Channel](#).

## Here is the zoom link for the annual meeting:

Topic: St. Paul's 2021 Annual Meeting

Time: Feb 28, 2021 11:30 AM Mountain Time (US and Canada)

Join Zoom Meeting

<https://us02web.zoom.us/j/4425252208?pwd=TGxyK2U3ZUxFUUVVWWWdFRHptMEFsQT09>

Meeting ID: 442 525 2208

Passcode: 602602

One tap mobile

+16699009128,,4425252208#,,,,\*602602# US (San Jose)

## Laramie Suicide Prevention Hotline

The Laramie Suicide Prevention Hotline is a 24-hour crisis line that you can call or text if you are feeling scared, depressed, alone, angry, or any other painful feelings that are hard to deal with by yourself. Call or text. 307-977-7777. Sometimes the last thing you want to do is talk about the way you are feeling, but often that is the one thing that will help you feel better.

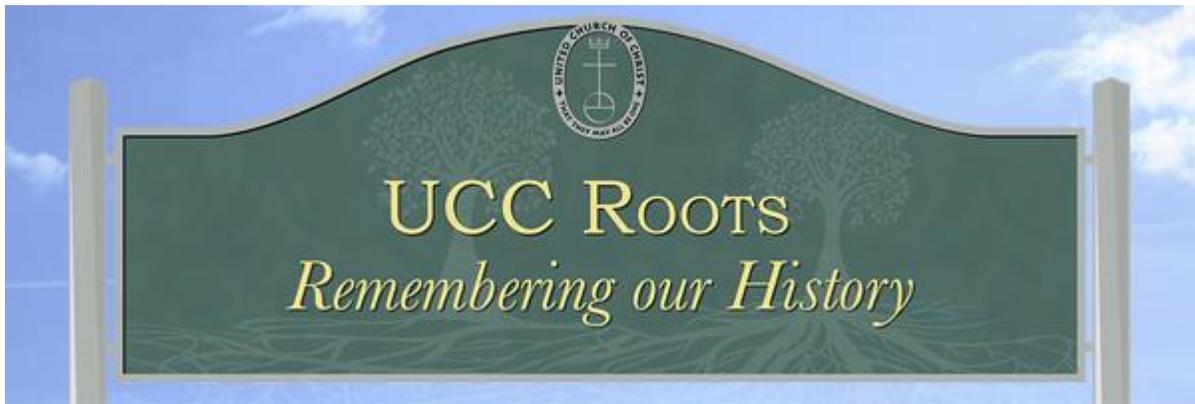
Calls are free and you will be connected with someone in Laramie who is trained to talk or text to those in crisis.

## General Synod

Here is a SAVE THE DATE video to remind you about General Synod this July 11-18. This time around, Synod will be held virtually, so everyone can attend all or part. Give this a look:

[General Synod Save The Date](#)





## Committed to Church and Education



Charles Shelby Rooks (1924-2001) was a well-known African American United Church of Christ leader. When he died people celebrated his life in the Amistad Chapel at the UCC “Church House” in Cleveland. As far back as 1879 the Rooks’ family had been involved with Congregational churches in North Carolina. Rooks graduated from Virginia State University and Union Theological Seminary in New York. In 1953 he was ordained and became the pastor of a small church in Orangeburg, NY.

Rooks became a well-known leader in high profile positions committed to church and education. From 1967 to 1974 he led the Fund for Theological Education in Princeton, NJ. In 1974 he became president of Chicago Theological Seminary, becoming the first Black president in theological education leading a predominantly White seminary. Finally, in 1984 Rooks became executive vice president of the United Church Board for Homeland Ministries, retiring in 1992.

Rooks cared deeply about churches and people. He was on the staff of First Congregational UCC in Washington, DC—a White church that played a key role in founding Howard University after the Civil War. In DC he also served as a pastor at Lincoln Memorial Temple UCC. Rooks was always identifying, encouraging, and assisting African Americans to join the UCC and enrich their ministries.

One story from James Forbes illustrates how Rooks changed lives. Forbes, who later became an important preacher and progressive Christian leader, grew up in a strong Pentecostal family that frowned on seminary education. Forbes, however, did not want to give up his seminary dream.

Fortunately, Forbes was introduced to Rooks, who helped Forbes enroll and finish seminary. People said that Forbes was poor. He agreed, saying “. . .poor people usually have a little something. But I did not have anything until I was introduced to Charles Shelby Rooks.”

*Contributor: Kwame Osei Reed*

February 2021



### **Registration for Summer Camp at La Foret is OPEN!**

Kids grade 2-12 can experience a fun, Spirited summer with friends in the forest, while families can rest assured that we are doing everything we can to cultivate a "Culture of Care" and keep kids safe. Camp will be a little different this year, but it is so exciting to be together! Here are [all the essentials you need to know about camp this year](#). Go straight to [La Foret's website](#) to save your spot right away and read more. **Space is very limited, don't wait!**

### **Individual & Family Camping**

Have your vacation plans been canceled or maybe you just need a change of scenery? Families can book a cabin getaway at a low fixed rate; Indian Paintbrush, Willow, and Kinnikinnick are available. Enjoy the labyrinth, sports courts, trails, etc. There is plenty to see and do!

Email [mail@laforet.org](mailto:mail@laforet.org) or call 719-495-2743 to book!

# St. Paul's

United Church of Christ

602 Garfield St.  
Laramie, WY 82070

## Sunday Morning Worship at 10:00 a.m.



### St. Paul's UCC

#### Our Mission:

*To be an emphatically inclusive,  
progressive community  
on the Path of Christ,  
seeking justice and peace for all Creation  
through creative ceremony and celebration,  
soulful questioning,  
and acts of compassion and service.*

**Rev. Kenneth Ingram**

**720-289-2394**

**[revken1957@gmail.com](mailto:revken1957@gmail.com)**

**Rev. Ken's hours:**

**Tue, Wed, Thur, Fri and Sunday  
mornings – call first to confirm**

IF YOU KNOW OF ANY  
ACTIVITIES AROUND TOWN  
THAT YOU WOULD LIKE  
MENTIONED IN THE WEEKLY  
UPDATE OR THE NEWSLETTER,  
PLEASE SEND THE  
INFORMATION TO REV. KEN AT  
STPUCC@GMAIL.COM