

# Progressive Spirit News

JANUARY 2021 –  
VOLUME 12, ISSUE 1



Photo by Rev. Ken

Click this link to hear  
[God Created Heaven and Earth](#)  
Performed by Sean Stone

## Pastor's Post

It's 2021! While I keep saying we don't want to go back to what was, but we want to move forward with what can be. There is now a vaccine, hopefully they will figure out a distribution plan, and we will be able to move forward with some abilities in our lives that we have had to do without in 2020. Can we all say that 2020 has been a bit of a challenge for most of us. My prayer for all you reading this is that you, like me, rejoice for the future.

I know that many of us have given up some plans that we had made for 2020. I finally was able to go see my dad in September, having missed his birthday in April. I was able to go spend a couple weeks in the New Mexico mountains, at a friend's home. It was a relaxing time, and I really needed to have some time where I could sit and read, while looking at some beautiful scenery.

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

## JANUARY

- January 3
  - Worship provided by UCC Conferences
- January 10
  - Mark 1:4-11
  - Worship Leader:
- January 17
  - John 1:43-51
  - Music Sunday
    - Special Music by Sean Stone and Don Denham
- January 20
  - Mark 1:14-20
  - Worship Leader:
- January 31
  - Mark 1:21-28

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

## January Birthday



● 19 – Amy Krist

I am going to return to New Mexico after our Sunday worship. I will join via zoom on the 10<sup>th</sup>, and deliver the sermon. On the 17<sup>th</sup> of January, we will have a music Sunday, with Don Denham and Sean Stone doing a couple of virtual duets. Sean would like to do this with the entire choir soon, so if you are interested please get in touch with me, and Sean will coordinate this for us. Our Advent study of the daily devotional has given way to some very good conversations. I am planning to start a Beatitudes bible study in February. I am soliciting times and days that are best for you. I would really like to have a few more of you attend. Bible study is really a great way to not only learn the bible, but it gives us a chance to really delve deep into what the bible says to us. Remember, God is Still Speaking, and through

bible study can speak to you, and to each of us through you.

Our annual 'giving council meeting' was December 1. We were able to give out much to our community partners, and to some wider church ministries. Our camp, La Foret was one of the recipients, and they were most grateful. With COVID, their bookings and donations were down, so the small gift from us was what they needed. We also gave the Christmas Fund, for retired ministers, a couple of donations this year, one in the spring, and one in December. Their request for help had more than tripled, so we are happy and glad that we can give to those who have ministered in the UCC for many years. And of course, our local groups, Climb, Family Promise, Downtown Clinic, Soup Kitchen, Interfaith Good Samaritan, and others around time. A complete list is available if you want to see the list.

I am going to start now, with a reminder that we have to have an annual meeting in February, and at that time we will approve a budget, and elect members to our Administrative Council. Please think about volunteering to the council this year. We are a church that does not need a lot of time commitment by council members, so if you are interested, but want to talk with a current member, please let me know and I will facilitate that. PLEASE consider being a part of the guidance for St. Paul's.

I have been making visits to folk's homes. If you would like me to come by, let me know. We can also zoom or facetime. I really enjoy seeing you! Speaking of visits, I am over my COVID illness. Lucy is up and about after her COVID illness. Others that have COVID are also feeling better, so overall, we are doing well again, health wise. We have to give thanks that we have been pretty lucky regarding health and illness from COVID.

An update from the Rocky Mountain Conference is that we are moving forward with the job description for the additional Associate Conference Minister, and my team (the nominating committee) will be meeting in January to begin our work of recruiting members for the Racial Justice Special Ministry (name to be decided upon later). What this means is that I have been busy, and seems it will stay that way for the next couple months. It is work that I find very rewarding.

At the end of December, I traveled to Greeley and preached at St. John's UCC. This gave pastor Juvenal a chance to just watch on Zoom, and take a small break. St. John's is a beautiful church, and later, after COVID, we may plan a picnic or some other gathering of our

two congregations. Maybe a combined worship and then a picnic. In attended a three day class put on by MESA, the team from national that puts together our manual on ministry, and provide guidelines for committees on ministries. It was about the future of ministries and the church. As our conference moves towards a conference wide committee on ministry, it was a good meeting for me, and there were many others from our conference and association in attendance as well. More will be coming about the conference wide committee on ministry this year.

As with so many other things, the annual meeting of the Rocky Mountain Conference, which will be in June, will remain virtual this year. And, as we on the conference board of directors has discussed, will probably remain a combined on-line and in person meeting after 2021. The same is happening with the general synod of the UCC. It will be virtual this year, but may go to on-line and virtual in the future. Marcus is one of the representatives to Synod this year. Unfortunately, there will be no travel, but he will still get to attend and be a voting member of the Rocky Mountain Conference at Synod.

Don and I will be away from Jan 24 until Feb 5. I will be available by phone, and will be conducting Sunday worship via zoom. You all remain hopeful as we begin a new year. I hope to see you all in person in the coming year, without masks. Here's to giving hugs in the near future!

*“Let your steadfast love, O LORD, be upon us,  
even as we hope in you.” Psalm 33:22*

Rev. Ken

## On-line Music Depository

We are surely blessed to have Sean as our resident accompanist. He is creating beautiful music for us. And the really cool thing is that he is recording it all, so when he takes a vacation, we will still have quite a number of songs to use for our worship, if we cannot get someone to fill in. 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](#).

## 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. You will be asked the common questions, the same ones asked when you go to school, or to the Dr. You will be then sit where your name is, guests will be escorted to a place to sit, so that we can make sure everyone is spaced out. The furnace will be set to heat the space until 9:45, then turn off, so we do not have the airflow across the entire congregation (our vents are at the back). We will continue to have music recorded by Sean, or Sean will sing for us. Feel free to sing behind your mask, but we will not have any choir or group singing. The hymnals and bibles are put away, we will be utilizing our new projector to show slides like we have been utilizing while meeting on the lawn.

Together we are the body of Christ. I encourage each of you to contact me if you have questions.

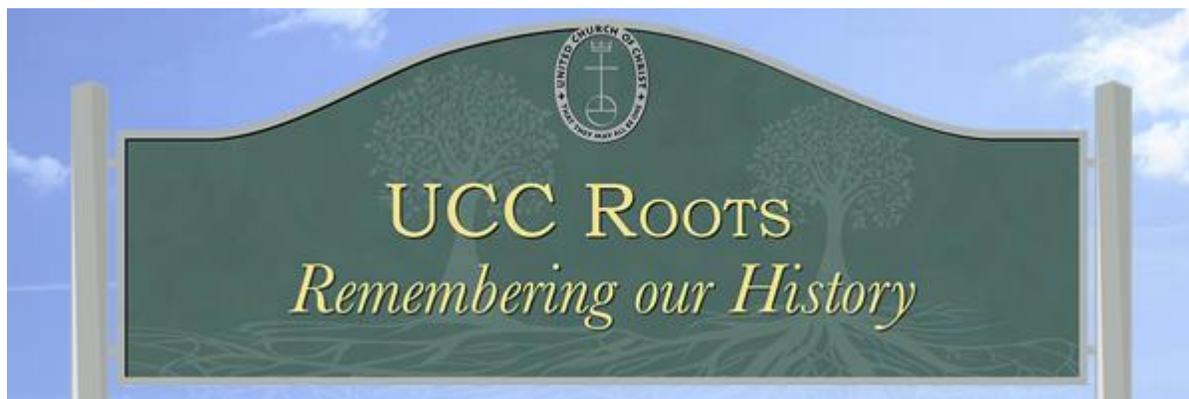
## Laramie Suicide Prevention Hotline

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.

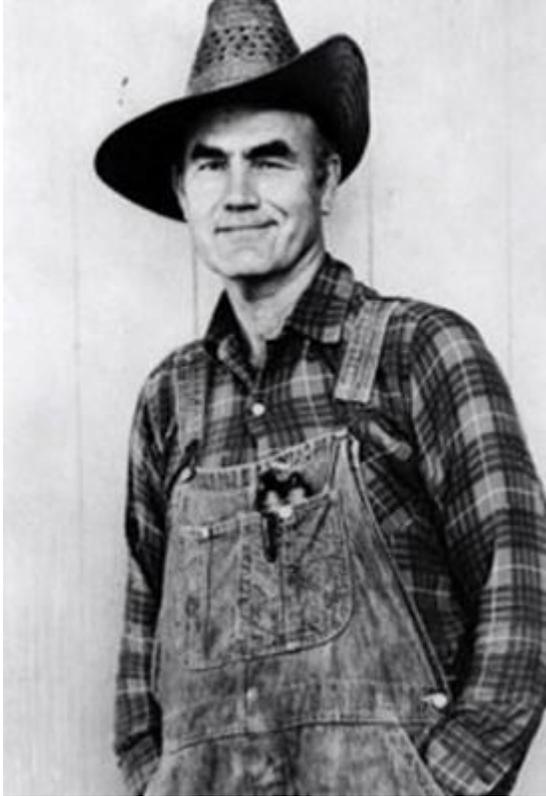
Calls are free and you will be connected with someone in Laramie who is trained to talk or text to those in crisis.



Some of the carolers from Christmas Eve and St. Paul's at night.



## Don West: "An Agitator"



*Jesus was a common man, able to slip through a crowd unseen, and often not recognized by religious authorities.*

Don West (1906-1992) could as well. The son of Georgia sharecroppers, he was a poet, editor, professor, teacher, coal miner, farmer, pastor, labor organizer who immersed himself in the lives and stories of "peasants, slaves, and workers." During High School he led a protest against the showing of the racist film, "Birth of a Nation."

Inspired by the Danish Folk School Movement, he is perhaps best known as co-founder of the Highlander Folk School in Tennessee. It was begun to "teach Appalachians about their progressive history and to train activists and union organizers." It helped train and support the non-violent work of Rosa Parks, Martin Luther King, and John Lewis.

Deeply rooted in the social gospel, and an ordained Congregational Christian and United Church of Christ minister, West developed a curriculum that affirmed the heritage of Appalachian kids, published the songs of

Kentucky miners, and defended those who were falsely accused. Hounded by newspapers, he once had to flee a lynch mob, and the KKK burned down his home. In later life he and his wife organized the Appalachian South Folklife Center in West Virginia.

West was an extraordinary writer, and although he studied at the University of Chicago and Columbia, he chose to write in a common vernacular. His activism was controversial and in the 1940s the House Un-American Activities Committee went after him. His family had to hide and serious academic work and his ministerial standing were laid aside in a difficult time. Later, however, he reconnected with the UCC and its social justice.

Here is one of his poems:*I was raised on a hillside farm*

*Where my Daddy's sweat  
Salted down the red clay.  
I'm the son of my mother  
The woman who plods between  
the cotton rows--  
And I'm an Agitator!*

*Contributor: Richard H. Taylor*

# 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