



# FCC CONNECTIONS

## Under the Fig Tree ~ Poem

*So many have requested the poem I used Sunday, so I'm printing it here so y'all may have it. I don't know the author or a title. But here is the rest of the poem:*



I think every human being  
eventually has a moment  
where they are standing outside in  
sweatpants  
that have lost the will to be pants,  
holding a trash bag, a divorce, a parking  
ticket,  
or some other receipt from the universe  
that says, "surprise, this too is part of it."

And then the sky bruises purple.

And the air touches your face  
like it knows your whole story.

And suddenly you realize:

all the real is actually unreal.  
The dirt.  
The breath.  
The weird little bones in your hands.  
The fact that we are here,  
on a floating rock with pollen counts,  
paying bills,  
missing dead people,  
loving living people  
who say "leaving now"  
while still fully naked and looking for socks.

And still,  
the moon clocks in.

No applause.  
No benefits.  
No note from management saying,  
"Great work being ancient and luminous  
again."

Just the moon,  
working nights  
like a single mother with no applause,  
packing silver lunches  
for every dark thing  
that still has to rise.

Tell me that isn't holy.  
Tell me there is a better word

than sacred  
for the way light keeps returning  
with no guarantee  
we will actually stop and take note.

I know people who believe in therapy,  
probiotics,  
tarot,  
twelve-step meetings,  
manifestation journals,  
and waiting exactly eleven minutes  
before texting back  
so they do not appear emotionally available,  
even though their whole nervous system  
is standing in the driveway holding flowers.

And underneath all of it,  
every ritual,  
every doctrine,  
every smoothie with chia seeds,  
the prayer is the same:

Please let me be loved.  
Please let me be forgiven.  
Please let this strange little life  
mean something  
before my lower back  
submits its formal resignation.

What is going on?

For real tho—What is this place?

This unbearable tenderness  
of being alive long enough  
to watch steam lift from coffee in winter  
like a soul practicing leaving.

To see your friend laugh so hard  
they slap the table  
as if joy is a mosquito  
they are trying to kill.

To hear a child say "pisghetti"  
and, for one shining second,  
realize language  
has finally been improved.

## Worship August 23, 2026

Welcome  
Prayer & Lord's Prayer

Praise Song— "Jesus Messiah"

Scripture: Hebrews 12:18-24

Sermon: *And the Mountains*

*Tremble*

Pastor Lew Champ

Worship Song— "Any More"

Intercessory Prayers

Communion Song— "Breathe"  
Eucharist

Thanksgiving Prayer  
Offering  
Doxology

Announcements

Closing Song— "Death Was  
Arrested"

Benediction





## Lectinary Readings

13th Sunday After Pentecost

**August 23, 2026**

Exodus 1:8-2:10

Psalms 124

Isaiah 51:1-6

Psalms 138

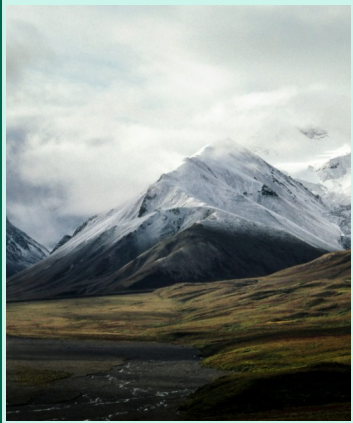
Romans 12:1-8

Matthew 16:13-20

## *This Sunday, August 23*

Scripture: Hebrews 12:18-24

Sermon: And the Mountains Tremble  
Pastor Lew Champ



**Prayer  
Intercessors**  
Meet every  
Sunday morning  
at 9:00 am



## NEW CONCERNS -

**Julia Chen Chou** still in a lot of pain and struggling to sleep. She is not going to do any more chemo. Her cancer is stage one, meaning it is contained to the pancreas. She misses everyone and is quite lonesome.

**Carla** was in the ER. A huge thank you to Sue and Julie, they both were there as soon as she called. Carla is doing much better and will have a follow up with her primary doctor to see what caused this and to avoid it happening again.

**Tom** is having knee and back pain.

**Bill & Sharon Spicer.** Bill has cancer and Sharon has dementia. Bill's elbow cancer is aggressive. They got the cancer out, and he is doing chemo, and doing well with it. Bill is not a believer. Please pray for healing and salvation.

**Phil Holland** was back to work last week, but has to wear a wrist brace and welding glove to protect his arm, but he's glad to be back!

**Shaye Champ-Correll** is home and feeling a lot better.

**Jim McBride** had a pine tree fall on him home during one of the bad storms.

**Maxine McFarland** is in Memory Care in Topeka. A note from her daughter: She seems to be happy, she still knows who I am and the grandkids. August 19th is her 90th birthday. This last weekend all the kids and grandkids came and we celebrated. I will post pictures on Facebook tomorrow. Her number is 785-221-9427. The best time to call is 9:30 to 10 because staff will be getting her up. She will love the call.

**Ron Tatman**, Linda Champ's brother, will be having open heart surgery. The surgery is yet to be scheduled.

**Spencer Green**, Reverend at Christ United Methodist Church, has been in the hospital with health issues.

Keep watch and **pray**, so that you will not give in to temptation. For the spirit is willing, but the body is weak!"

## CANCER -

Please pray for all those fighting cancer.

Julia Chen Chou, Bill Spicer, J.R. Coberly, Christina LaBlanc, Jessie, McGrew, Mike Kerker, Malita Mahali, Nora Fanelli, Emerson, Kelly Rae Churchill, Michelle, Wade Gandee, Jeanne Klemt, Gracie Dixon, Alizar Chavez Mendoza, Lew Champ, Keith Hobson, Darren Campbell, Gary Mix, Kyle Bean, Dean Meharg, Randy Richards

## DEMENTIA & ALZHEIMER'S -

Please pray for everyone who is dealing with declining memory and Alzheimer's.

## WORLD -

The fires & floods in our state and across America.

The loss of life in China and Venezuela.

Those affected by tornadoes and strong winds, loss of property and crops.

Please pray for rain for our land. Pray to end this drought, for the farmers, for the crops, and for the livestock.

## COMMUNITY -

**Students and teachers** returning to school.

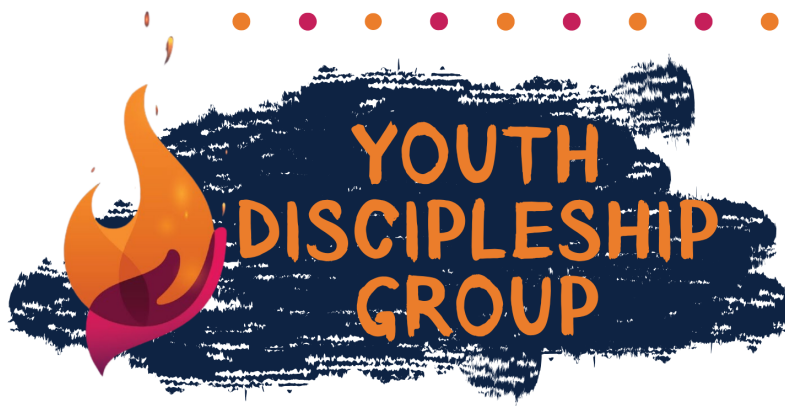
Thank you to the ones who went to and prayed for each school.

## JOYS -

**Bill** got a shot in his hip. Pain went from an 8 to a 1!

## CONTINUING PRAYERS -

Neil & Jessica Lovell  
George Lulf  
Christa Barber  
Abby (Lisa Hedlund's niece)  
Padilla Family  
Brenda Palmer  
Gordon Felzien  
Steve Firme  
Kay Gentry  
Coy  
JR Coberly  
Ellie Beede  
Frances Mason  
Leo, AJ & Sarah Sonnenberg  
Carol & Myron Graybill  
Renee (Sue Lovell's friend)  
Wade Pelton  
Carole Wohlers  
Tim (Lovell's friend)



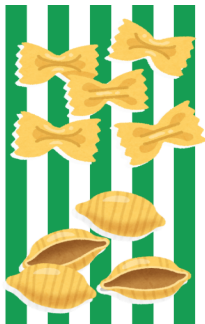
Starting Monday, August 24th Lew will start a youth group for Elementary aged youth. We will meet from 10-12 on Mondays. More information in future Newsletters.



Sunday, August 30, 2026

## Helping Hands Offering

August 30<sup>th</sup> is the 5<sup>th</sup> Sunday of the month which means we will be collecting offerings for our Helping Hands Fund.



**We're collecting pasta to help support the Family Resource Center! Every box or package donated is a simple way to help provide meals and support to local families in need.**

**Thank you all for your generous hearts and for helping us make a difference in our community! Your kindness truly adds up and means so much.**



## LINKS TO LAST SUNDAY'S SERVICE

**Facebook FULL Service — Available for a few weeks:**

<https://www.facebook.com/fccsterlingcolorado/videos/1380340537409547>

**YouTube ONLY Sermon — Always Available:**

<https://youtu.be/BdW8e1iaruQ>

## First Christian Church

**Our Mission**—To make more and better Christians for the sake of the world.

**Our Vision**—We seek to be a faithful Christian community with a deep love for God and others.



08/25 Wanda Vallejos

08/26 Nena Russell

08/27 Ayden Padilla

08/29 Gene Russell

I know the Lord  
is always with me.

**Psalm 16:8a**

## CONTACT US

Pastor Lew Champ  
pastor@fccsterling.com  
(970) 238-0615

Bobbie Brekel  
secretary@fccsterling.com  
(970) 576-1970  
Mailbox in Church Library

Dana Palmer  
(970) 520-4350

Church Phone Number  
(970) 522-3353

Website  
<https://www.fccsterling.com/>

YouTube  
[@FCC100BroadwaySterlingCO](https://www.youtube.com/channel/UCFCC100BroadwaySterlingCO)

## SERVING SCHEDULE

| Date      | Usher            | Preparing Deacon | Elder           |
|-----------|------------------|------------------|-----------------|
| August 23 | Tammy Sonnenberg | Elissa Karg      | Bill McReynolds |
| August 30 | Tammy Sonnenberg | Elissa Karg      | Gene Russel     |

I know I already noted this in the first  
piece,  
but the older I get,  
the less use I have for certainty.

Certainty has never made me pull over  
because the sunset looked like God  
dropped a jar of peach jam  
across the whole midwestern sky  
and decided to be lazy  
and not clean up.

Certainty has never made me gasp  
at rain on hot pavement.

Certainty has never found me  
in the cereal aisle,  
holding Captain Crunch,  
suddenly remembering  
that everyone I have ever loved  
was made from stardust,  
hunger,  
and a series of decisions  
we probably should have slept on.

No.  
It has always been awe.

Awe was the first church.

Before steeples.  
Before committees.  
Before men got involved  
and started making rules about skirts.

Awe was there  
with its wild hair  
and muddy feet,  
saying:

Look.  
Look again.  
Look until looking  
becomes love.

Awe, and soup.

Awe, and someone rubbing your back  
when you are sick.

Awe, and old couples at Target  
arguing gently about avocados,  
as if marriage is not one vow  
but ten thousand errands  
performed beside the person  
who knows exactly  
how you like the cart pushed.

Maybe gratitude  
was never meant to sound elegant.

Maybe gratitude sounds like:

“Damn.  
That woodpecker is trying  
to beat that tree from itself.”

Maybe gratitude sounds like:

“Thank you, body,  
for continuing to drag me through this  
world  
despite the many slim jims  
I have done to you  
at gas stations.”

Maybe gratitude sounds like:

“Thank you to the dogs  
who lose their entire minds  
when we come home  
as if we have returned from war  
and not Walgreens.”

For me, that might be my gospel.

That joy that does not wait for us  
to be impressive but only needs us  
to come through the door.

Because the truth is,  
this life is devastating.

And ridiculous.

One minute you are 22 and invincible,  
driving too fast,  
eating gas station nachos  
with the confidence of a Greek god.

The next minute you are googling,  
“Can sneezing cause a hamstring injury?”  
and the answer is,  
apparently,  
“Welcome to the second half of your life.”

But even now—

even tired,  
even grieving,  
even emotionally held together  
by iced coffee, playlists,  
and one very specific wolves hoodie—

we keep finding reasons  
to stay soft.

We plant tomatoes  
even though grief is real.

We bake bread  
even though the news is on fire.

We send photos of the sky  
to people we love  
with captions like,  
“LOOK,”  
as if beauty is an emergency  
and we are all volunteer firefighters.  
We keep saying,  
“You have to see this,”  
because wonder  
is the oldest form  
of resurrection.

So here’s to the believers  
and the atheists  
and the agnostics  
and the people whose entire theology  
is just trying not to cry  
in the DMV line.

Here’s to the people clinging to faith.

Here’s to the people clinging to Xanax  
and oat milk  
and the one group chat  
where nobody pretends to be okay.

Here’s to the tender-hearted weirdos.

The accidental mystics.

The ones who can contemplate mortality  
for six straight hours  
and then become emotionally attached  
to a perfect peach.

The ones who know  
despair has a mouth,  
but so does laughter.

May we never stop being drop-kicked by  
beauty  
in the middle of a Sunday afternoon.

May we never become so polished  
that we forget how to stand  
in the Starbucks line of existence  
with our dumb, gorgeous hearts open,  
feeling the enormity of it all  
rattle around in our bones  
like thunder  
looking for somewhere to laugh.

And may we remember:  
whatever else this is,  
whatever mess,  
whatever miracle,  
whatever cosmic group project  
no one was prepped for—

all’ve it is astonishing.  
that we are here.  
that we have loved enough to be ruined.  
that the moon keeps showing up.  
that bread exists.

So pass it on.

Tear off a piece  
with your bare hands.

Take it in as you take it down.

And then go outside and look at that  
moon.