



The Creede Community Church

CANDLE

Fall / Winter 2011

Reverend's Ramblings

Thin Places Indeed!

Churches are renowned for publication of their cookbooks that feature local recipes. But how many of you have heard of a congregation's "*Experiences with Thin Places*"? This is a book we are going to make. Thin Places can be times in our life when we have felt God close to us and caring for us even more than we feel on a day to day basis: critical times in our lives such as grave illness, a challenge we do not know how to handle, a time when we look back at happenings in our life where years later we grasp the profound guidance of God in the direction of our life, changes that we were unable to comprehend at the time. Thin Places may be the unexpected beauty of nature that we are led to recognize, perhaps in a spot we've been before and did not fully appreciate, or perhaps some area that is new to us and where we see and feel the presence of God. We find many such places in and around Creede or other places of extraordinary beauty.

Perhaps a little background for this idea would be helpful. The term "thin places" is an expression which finds its roots in ancient Celtic spirituality. It describes sacred places or times when the veil between the heavenly and earthly realms seems uncommonly thin. This can be experienced most predictably in the serenity of the created order but also in times of mystery, suffering, and transformation. The Bible is replete with such instances. Witness Jacob's reflection on his dream at Bethel (re: ladder) where he makes the ultimate "thin place" proclamation; "surely the Lord is in this place..." (Genesis 28:16) So, documenting the Thin Places in our lives and sharing those times with others will open our lives and experiences with God in our own Thin Places. Understanding that Thin Places are not unique just to us but are gifts of grace to all may inspire others to fully realize that the sovereign God is also available to us in an amazingly close way. We can become more aware of God as the Spirit who works within each person when we are open to letting Him in – to realizing when we are experiencing a Thin Place.

Anyone who has been in Creede or the Southern San Juan region need not be told of the majesty and the mystery of this place. Many of us can't help but be "explorers" in our own right and can testify to the many places and times when the Spirit of God has been a felt presence. Many of you have told me as much when you've excused yourself graciously from worship, saying "I'm headed to the outdoor chapel this morning" That could mean Ruby Lake, Bristol Head, a stretch of the Rio Grande. Many of us can testify to the realization that "God is in this place", not only as a physical place of beauty or mystery, but also in the awareness that God is moving within us to offer his love and grace.

This summer, I offered a sermon on the subject. We were also treated to an evening of what I call "the spirituality of photography" where parishioner Jim Johnson offered a multi-media presentation entitled "on seeing nature". Following both occasions, several of us got talking and were inspired. "Why not get the word out and ask members of the congregation to submit written accounts and/or pictures of the thin places or times they have experienced?" The places could be in Creede or in this region. The times when God has been so close to us could be in any time or event in our lives, whether recent or many years ago. Collect them, publish them, and bless one another with them in booklet or CD form." Many of us can point to the very moment when we witnessed God's hand; sensed Christ's felt presence, or the tug of the Spirit in these places or times. I think each of us has a story to share. And if our story is about a physical place, we might have a picture to share as well as our story.

"Experiencing the Thin Places Guide" - Instructions

(Please see page 5 for an example)

Karen Tempfel has generously offered to collect, edit and organize stories and photos. So, if you are interested in contributing, Karen will collect submissions over the course of the winter. You may send them by email to karentempfel61@msn.com or by mail to Karen Tempfel at 12795 Summit Dr, Warsaw, MO 65355. Use your name or you may stipulate that you want your submission to be anonymous. Instructions are simple but please feel free to deviate:

- ◇ Send your description of a Thin Place you have experienced with photos, if applicable
- ◇ Try to keep it to one page
- ◇ You may send more than one submission
- ◇ Make your description as simple as you'd like or expand on it in the following ways:
 1. When did it take place, how did it change your life or change your relationship to God.
 2. If you experienced a physical place, give directions, if you like, for others.
 3. What happened there or what did you experience? Why was it meaningful to you?
 4. Is there a godly message in it all that has blessed you and many others?



Creede Community Church

2011 WINTER CALENDAR

November

6	Sunday	10 am	Choir Practice
		11 am	All Saints Sunday Worship Sunday School Daylight Savings Time Ends
		12 am	Potluck
10	Thursday		Ladies Aid meeting
		6:30 pm	Bible Study - location TBD
11	Friday	11 am	Veteran's Day Service in Memorial Park
13	Sunday	10 am	Choir Practice
		11 am	Worship (Pentecost 22) Sunday School
15	Tuesday	5 pm	MO / HH Italian Night dinner
16	Wednesday	6 pm	Community Choir Practice for Christmas service
17	Thursday	6:30 pm	Bible Study - location TBD
18	Friday	12 pm	Community Thanksgiving Dinner Setup at Community Center
19	Saturday	6 pm	Community Thanksgiving Dinner at Community Center
20	Sunday	10 am	Choir Practice
		11 am	Worship Thanksgiving Sunday Reign of Christ, Sunday School Start decorating the Sanctuary
24	Thursday		Thanksgiving
26	Saturday	10 am	Finish decorating the church
27	Sunday	10 am	Choir Practice
		11 am	Worship Hanging of the Greens 1st Sunday of Advent Sunday School
30	Wednesday	6 pm	Community Choir Practice for Christmas service

December

1	Thursday	6:30 pm	Bible Study - location TBD
2	Friday	10 am	Board meeting
4	Sunday	10 am	Choir Practice
		11 am	Worship (2 nd Sunday of Advent) Sunday School
		12 am	Potluck
6	Tuesday	6:30 pm	Blue Christmas Longest Night Service, Communion
7	Wednesday		Pearl Harbor Remembrance
		6 pm	Community Choir Practice for Christmas service
8	Thursday	10 am	Ladies Aid Cookie Exchange for shut-ins
		6:30 pm	Bible Study - location TBD
11	Sunday	10 am	Choir Practice
		11 am	Worship (3 rd Sunday of Advent) Communion & Sunday School
12	Monday	5 pm	Lamb Elementary Holiday program
14	Wednesday	6:30 pm	Community Christmas program at Creede Community Church
15	Thursday	6:30 pm	Bible Study - location TBD
16	Friday	5:00 pm	Christmas Tree Walk and Community Christmas Dinner
18	Sunday	10 am	Choir Practice
		11 am	Worship (4 th Sunday of Advent) Children's Christmas Program
24	Saturday	6 pm	Christmas Eve Service Lessons, Carols & Communion Helping Hands Offering
25	Sunday	10 am	Choir Practice
		11 am	Worship Christmas & Sunday School

January

1	Sunday	10 am	Choir Practice
		11 am	Worship 1 st Sunday after Christmas New Year's Day & Sunday School

Moderator's Moment

I'm a closet Country Western fan. I enjoy hearing stories told through songs with a distinct twang. One that keeps coming back to me is George Strait's song, *I Saw God Today*. "His fingerprints are everywhere, I just look down and stop and stare, open my eyes and then I swear, I saw God today."

Living in Creede and worshiping at CCC gives all of us opportunities to see God. In this beautiful time of the year with trees glowing golden in the peaks and valleys with shadow and light surrounding us, in the hug of a friend, in the line of a hymn sung with enthusiasm, in the face of child as they light the altar candles, in the simple phrase "How can I help?", in the light shining through our beautiful stained glass windows—we see God. "His fingerprints are everywhere...I saw God today."

Whether you have attended the Community Church all your life or you have just stopped by for a visit it is our prayer that you see God. Please feel free to contact us if you have any needs or questions.

Jenny VanRy & Stan Lentz

Stewardship 2011

The theme for our summer stewardship season was "Count Yourself Blessed" and we did!

Each Sunday in July, various members and friends stepped forward and gave moving testimonies and mission moments. A common theme was "how the various ministries of the church have touched me; how I have been empowered to pass on those blessings." We at CCC are ever mindful of our unique connective family of seasonal and year-round supporters, and we thank you all. Our "welcome back" brunch last June to thank summer returnees, and our recent brunch and worship for year-rounders, are a small but personal way to affirm this. Your care for this church and its ministries is vital and appreciated! Financially, the most recent figures indicate we are \$10,000 ahead on pledge commitments for 2012 over 2011 (\$44,000) with somewhat fewer pledging units to date.

This is a reminder and a challenge to help us finish strongly in the next few weeks, with any remaining commitment cards sent in for 2012.

The work of the church on various fronts continues. Just last week the church was able to approve distribution of our entire mission funding for programs and entities in Creede and the region. We are embarking on a several energy tightening improvements on the church and parsonage. The installation of new windows is being handled with volunteer labor. Mission Outreach has held regular suppers since last winter, in support of planned mission trips. They are a hit! So, may we continue to be good stewards as we "count ourselves blessed"!

- in you and in Christ. JS

Mission Outreach

Since February, we have sponsored several dinners with Love Offerings for future mission trips. These include 4 Potato Bake Dinners in February, April, June and August, and, so far, one Italian Night Dinner in September, with another planned for Tuesday, November 15. To date, these dinners have earned approximately \$1884 for mission trips! Mission Trips for 2011- 2012 are pending and being formulated. Thank you to all for your support and participation!

Two Church Camp Scholarships were awarded in May to allow 2 "church kids" to attend Camp Red Cloud near Lake City. Ladies Aid Society matched these funds which sent 2 more Creede children to church camp!

Mission Outreach continues to visit La Puente Homeless Shelter in Alamosa. With several volunteers per trip, we prepare and serve lunch for 25-40 at the shelter. This has been a very rewarding experience! Next La Puente Trip will be Thursday, December 1.

In August, the "Fill a Bag" Food Drive provided hundreds of non-perishable items to the Mineral County Food Bank.

Mission Outreach promoted several special offerings this summer and fall. The Christmas Fund for retired UCC personnel was held in August, the East African Drought and Famine Relief Offering was held during September, and the Neighbors in Need Special Offering was held in October. Thank you for your generous contributions!

Helping Hands

Ladies Aid Society recently donated \$1000 to Helping Hands. Thank you so much, Ladies! This money allows Helping Hands to continue providing financial support for local families and individuals. Some of the help provided included:

1. October - travel expenses for a local family after surgery, financial aid for a local woman who needed a refrigerator
2. September - propane for a local family
3. July - exterior paint purchased for a local homeowner
4. July - oxygen set-up for a local woman and a rent payment for a local family
5. June - travel expenses for a local family visiting a grandchild hospitalized in Denver.

House

1. In June, we sponsored the "Welcome Back Summer Brunch", a fabulous event!
2. In August - we completed a successful Church Work Day; with window washing, weeding and painting. Thank you to all who participated!
3. In October, we organized the "Welcome Back Fall Brunch and Worship", another fabulous event!
4. Also in October, Jeff worked hard on window replacements in the church and the parsonage with some help from Stan Lentz and Mark Tiley.
5. We plan to help with the City of Creede's new Code Enforcement Officer for clean up projects

Judith Blanch, Chairman

Sunday School & Beyond!

Once again, about twenty children participated in Vacation Bible School in June. The Baptist Church used the same theme, Shake It Up Café, so the children were able to continue the experience in July. Fun was had by all. Thank you to all the volunteers who helped lead the children.

The children will also continue to participate in the upcoming Advent services: Hanging of the Greens and the annual children's program, which is tentatively slated for our December 18th service. Stay tuned for more information on rehearsals. For information, contact Johanna Gray, 658-2879, johannajgl@hotmail.com.

Ladies Aid Society (LAS)

LAS is open to all women, and, although we function under the umbrella of the Community Church, you do not have to be a member there. Many of our members are summer people who contribute greatly to the Bazaar/Rummage Sale and other summer events. We welcome everyone!

All members are reminded that LAS dues are due now and are just \$5. If you have not already paid, please send your \$5 to Kay Wyley. Your dues must be received in order to continue to be a member.

LAS is currently helping the group known as the Snowbirds. They meet at the Fellowship Hall on Wednesdays from 1pm to 4pm to play cards and visit. This provides social time for permanent residents to get together in the long winter months. For further information, contact Delma Dooley.

The new LAS officers are:

President -Teri Smith, Vice Pres - Rita Odom

Secretary - DeAunn Lowe

Treasurer - Karen Tempfel, Asst Treas - Kay Wiley

Assistance Committee: Judy Blanch, Carol Pierce,

Ann Mobley, Karen Tempfel, Kay Wiley

Christmas Corner

Ladies Aid will set up their "Christmas Corner" in Mid November in the old fellowship hall for your holiday browsing and shopping. A variety of gift items, crafts, cookbooks, quilts of various sizes, afghans, and brass ornaments of our church will be for sale by honor system. Thank you for your purchases and support of our mission to help our townsfolk in times of need.



Deacons' Dialogue

We've discussed the duties of a Deacon and reminded ourselves of tasks each of us needs to be mindful of in the coming weeks as we move into Advent. We need help with scripture readings and ask for volunteers to please sign up. We will be passing around sign-up sheets shortly and encourage all to select a Sunday to be a reader.

We plan to decorate the Christmas tree on Sunday, Nov 20th after services and continue with the church decorations during the week.

We do want to extend an invitation to all to join our church family in worship, and we will continue to seek out new members in the community. The deacons are committed to reaching those in need through the Card Ministry and visits to the homebound.

Gea Wyley, Chairman

Birthdays!			
Phil	Lack	Oct	3
Joe	Grigsby	Oct	4
Margaret	Lamb	Oct	8
Ed	Hargraves	Oct	10
Warren	Hemphill	Oct	10
Rene	Benham	Oct	13
Cameron	Nelson	Oct	15
Danny	Rogers	Oct	17
Lonnie	Rogers	Oct	20
Luciana	Branda	Oct	29
Tom	Basler	Oct	29
Arletta	Fairchild	Oct	29
Dane	Smith	Oct	29
Carla	Branda	Nov	7
Genny	Basler	Nov	13
Sofia	Branda	Nov	19
Bob	Knox	Nov	23
Katie	Kurtz	Nov	26
Jesse	Stroh	Nov	29
Susan	Grigsby	Dec	5
Jan	Johnson	Dec	7
Chuck	Barnes	Dec	8
Jody	Stroh	Dec	8
Nancy	Rogers	Dec	24
Caleb	Nelson	Dec	28
Ben	Sims	Dec	29
Leslie	Dustin	Dec	30



The Tangible Love of God + Mountain Air + Beautiful Vista = Solace and Contentment

We all search for solace and contentment in this wacky world. Lord knows I have tried all sorts of things and have been left wanting and judged lacking. One thing that age has taught me, other than to stop eating so much, is don't be afraid to step outside your comfort zone and take a chance; Take the road less traveled that will make all the difference; Commune with God and all He has to offer.

This attitude is what brought my wife, Nancy, and me to Colorado. Lucky for me, I think God created Colorado so that we could have a substitute for comfort food and alcohol. Breathing in the clear mountain air, while taking in a majestic view, is better than a country ham biscuit and a shot of bourbon any day. The vast, beautiful vistas are humbling in a way that helps me to truly appreciate the Creator, which then is followed by a sort of peace that flows over oneself like a cool waterfall on a hot day. Any discontent I am feeling at the time seems to evaporate while taking in this view, so I thought I would share it with my friends. Oh yes, sharing is also a part of the equation!

*by Phil Miller on Wednesday, June 1, 2011 at 10:46am
(Phil and Nancy are Summer worshipers at CCC. Thanks for the article!)*

Example Thin Places submission

We look forward to an abundant and blessed response! Jeff Scott

Chama "thin place" – Invitation to Wonder and God's New Perspective

A journey to one of my favorite camping and canoeing spots (10 miles out and off the grid) on the Chama River on the Rio Chama Road in New Mexico just above Ghost Ranch on Rt. 63, a short 3.5 hours from Creede. A journal entry that I wrote, early one morning camping at my favorite thin place on the banks of the Chama.

Arrival: Last evening we arrived late to camp after 9pm and God's providence allowed, ever present in this place, that apparent angry skies, visible to the south, and gully washers had moved through earlier in the day. Providence seemed to make ready for our arrival and had lit up the sky for us with a full moon rising. No flashlights or stumbling around necessary in setting up camp, an unforeseen blessing. The smell of damp earth and sage moved on the ever so slight breeze that moved through us and caressed us - the temperature was a balmy 55 degrees. No fire was necessary as we ate and turned in. There was only one other camper here.

Bedtime: Fell asleep within one page of reading. Annie, our dog, was a bit wary for a few minutes but fell asleep also. The moon was special. Almost every time I've camped here, often throughout the night, because the sky is panoramic in all directions.

5 AM: Annie, unlike any time before, insisted on licking my hand and protruding kneecap for over an hour before daybreak. What was going on? She seemed more anxious for me to be up and perhaps see something. Then I saw what she might have: The moon through the tent flap – this awesome wonderful convergence of the still dark sky with the moon over the cliffs with a shimmering path of light on the water in the west, with the red rock cliffs and pink light of dawn to the East. It had me up and out of the tent to take a look. I did. Annie, like never before bounded and raced around, excited by all of the smells and possibilities.

Someone and something were up beside me. There was this sense that all this was God-initiated. Each time I took a look there was a different perspective of moonset and sunrise dancing together in harmony. Senses also of: "Well, you think that's something, let me show you this." I have seen thousands of moonlit mornings in my camping days but this was different. I felt the Presence. My camera could not keep up with the unfolding display. It was a personal invitation to God's grace and wonder and abiding love. A momentary sense of "all is ok with the world" a window of peace in a troubled world. A sense of playful innocence acted out on a grand stage. As if saying, "Why don't you get up early and do it differently today." You see I like to sleep in till 8 at least in fall camping, and I was up around 6 walking around the high desert in my underwear. So, "here I am Lord"!

Reflecting back on all this: It was evident that this was a God-with-us moment. As I mentioned with the miracle of Jesus, it was an early morning invitation not to doubt or question or over-analyze but to awe at the all surrounding love and grace of our Creator. A God moment, thin place, you name it. In that invitation to wonder and surprise – the result: I just wanted to give thanks for the grace of this moment, this provision, go and share the good news. Open the tent flaps to God's perspective on things!

CCC Website, Facebook & eMail update

www.creedecommunitychurch.org

We are pleased that Sandy Wagnon has continued to maintain the Creede Community Church web site. She posts newsletters and any current information and photos passed along to her. She was also maintaining our facebook presence but needed to pass this responsibility back to the church at the end of the Summer. So, now, Carla Branda, our administrative assistant, maintains the facebook page with the same types of updates.

We hope you enjoy the web site and / or the Church's facebook page. These new forms of communications continue to help the church be more effective at reaching our members and visitors. If you have a facebook account, and haven't already done so, please "Like" us!. Just log in and search for our page by using "Creede Community Church" or type in the url <https://www.facebook.com/CreedeCommunityChurch>. When our page appears, click "Like" button at the top of the page, and you will be included in our status updates.

Finally, please send the church an email to creedecommunitychurch@gmail.com so that we have your email address. By utilizing email, our website, and Facebook for announcements, mailings and newsletters, we hope to save the church money by not having to spend money on paper, toner and postage. Thank you!

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No matter who you are, or where you are on life's journey, you're welcome here.