

## Won't You Be A Neighbor?

First United Methodist Church, (FUMC) is spearheading a collaborative investment in our community to support improvements to Eastside Park. FUMC, located just North of Leshar on Stover, is celebrating its 150<sup>th</sup> anniversary as the first church in Fort Collins. To honor this legacy, the church has partnered with the City of Fort Collins to make a lasting investment in our neighborhood.

The park, northeast of FUMC and adjacent to Laurel Elementary School, needs revitalization to transform the area into a safe and meaningful neighborhood space. In its current state, the park draws negative activity as it lacks the infrastructure, lighting, and aesthetics to positively engage the community. Laurel School and businesses surrounding the park have been on lock-out several times over the years due to criminal activity in the park.

In February 2019, a community meeting was held at FUMC to give neighbors the opportunity to prioritize improvements to this space. The City of Fort Collins responded by providing a concept plan to include:

- Landscaped Greenways: enhanced landscaping and inclusion of soft-surface walking path, removal of existing T-ball backstop to create a "great lawn,"
- Safety & Signage: updated sign for both park entrances, additional lighting at key park locations to increase overall safety,
- Natural Play Features (phase 2)

In addition to physical improvements, \$20K of the funds raised will be used to provide non-sectarian programming in the park. According to park planners; this frequent increased use will lead to a positive culture- shift for Eastside Park.

FUMC is leading a collaborative fundraising effort to raise \$245,000 for the improvements and programming. Financial support has been rallied from church members, neighbors, local businesses, and community foundations. Donors can give through FUMC, or give directly to the City of Fort Collins. As of September 2019, over \$175,000 has been raised in support of Eastside Park. We our goal is to begin construction by the spring of 2020. [Click here](#) to learn more and to support the Eastside Park Improvement Project. .