**2015 Lay Servant of the Year**

**Sharon Roness, Newcastle UMC**

Sharon offers her service to her congregation and community in a variety of ways, including: serving as Lay Leader to Newcastle UMC and Lay Member to the Rocky Mountain Annual Conference; willingness to be available as Lay Speaker; providing support and guidance for both the Staff/Parish Relations and Finance Committees; and often ‘wo-manning’ the sound mixing board and the laptop that projects lyrics, prayers and images used in the weekly worship service. She does it all with a joyful and humble spirit, demonstrating faithfulness and fruitfulness.

Two recent examples of Sharon’s commitment to ministry involve: #1. Her, almost single-handed, initiation and implementation of the congregation’s involvement in the *United In Orange* canned goods collection during the week of the Denver Bronco’s victorious Super Bowl performance. Sharon was the true driving force behind a successful collection. #2. Her earnest desire to involve and engage others to be in service, and having the foresight to disciple that- regardless of age or experience- especially among the youth members of our congregation, some of whom are now receiving training and experience in running the a/v equipment.

Sharon is a gentle, selfless advocate for the poor and disenfranchised in both the local and global setting. She is a constant presence of charity in every meeting, class, worship, and mission in which she participates. She also continually nudges Newcastle to take the lead role in achieving a healthier connection. She has really helped the congregation on a number of past, critical occasions. She is always a positive and constructive voice of reason, embodying one of my favorite passages of scripture:

*Summing it all up, friends, I’d say you’ll do best by filling your minds and meditating on things true, noble, reputable, authentic, compelling, gracious- the best, not the worst; the beautiful, not the ugly; things to praise, not things to curse. Put into practice what you learned from me, what you heard and saw and realized. Do that, and God, who makes everything work together, will work you into his most excellent harmonies. – Philippians 4:8-9, The Message*

Submitted by Pastor Mark Thurman.