

THE MESSENGER

| NEWS FROM FIRST PRESBYTERIAN CHURCH FORT COLLINS |

**UNDERSTAND JOY
UNDERSTAND SORROW**

**NEWS OF
MISCELLANY**

**NOMINATIONS
FOR THE
PASTOR
NOMINATING
COMMITTEE**

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From the Editor | COMMUNITY

Community. At FPC, we use that word a lot. So I will use it a lot in this editorial (in every following sentence in fact). Community is our neighborhood, our church, our people. Community is positive, uplifting, and holds a high value here.

This month, we are strengthening the FPC community by building relationships, worshipping, and serving together. In addition to holding the traditional Lent activities of Ash Wednesday and Maundy Thursday worship services, we are experiencing the *Joy of Community* on Wednesday nights with dinner and fellowship activities. On March 1, the *Joyful, Joyful, We Adore Thee* breakfast will be a delicious gift to the FPC community (p. 16). And in the business sector of our church, nine people have been nominated to represent us as a community in recommending a new senior pastor (p. 8–9).

Outside our congregational community, we often wonder what our impact is in Fort Collins as a downtown church. So once again during Holy Week, FPC will host noon worship services and open our sanctuary to pastors, and congregants from around the Fort Collins community (p. 12). Congregants will also have the opportunity to provide an Easter food box to those in our community working on self-sufficiency (p. 10). And we're contributing financially and physically to building healthy community in Loma Verde, Dominican Republic (p. 6–7).

Community. As we approach the cross this Lent, may we find new ways to build community at FPC, in Fort Collins, and around the world.

—Cathy Richardson

THE MESSENGER

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PUBLISHING GUIDELINES | THE MESSENGER is a publication for the people, passions, and mission of First Presbyterian Church Fort Collins. The newsletter seeks to inspire, inform, instruct, challenge, and motivate its readers to become engaged in the ministry of FPC. We pray that adult readers in all life stages will aspire to be faithful disciples for Christ.

Articles that support FPC's purpose and mission will be **accepted on the 15th of each month**. All articles must be sponsored by one of the church's five Centers and are subject to the approval of the Editor. Submissions will be edited for length and suitability.

Article submissions will be accepted via e-mail to crichardson@firstpresfc.org. Contact Editor Cathy Richardson for more information, (970)482-6107.



PASTOR'S CORNER

SURPRISE

If it weren't for the signs along the highway, you wouldn't know that the Black Canyon of the Gunnison exists. There's no visual evidence of it, not from US 50 nor 550 nor from any vantage point in the nearby town of Montrose. One's attention is continually drawn to the stunning views of the San Juan Mountains to the south that dominate the landscape. Even when one follows the signs out of town and up the spare side road, long and lonely, some 16 miles to the South Rim, there is simply no clue that tips one off about what awaits. But then, coming up to Tomichi Point, the earth falls away at a sudden, staggering gash in the earth, 2,000 feet straight down, riven with extrusions of igneous rock pushing up through some of the oldest rock on the earth's crust. The surprise is unnerving, surreal, as if the scene cannot possibly be there, out in the middle of nowhere. The entire rounded ridge on which one stands seems utterly untouched by human hands, and, for me, the outside, human-dominated world fades away. The Black Canyon elicits *joy over the wonder and beauty of God's heart*, from which this magnificent formation comes.

The season of Lent is like that. The Church enters into Lent knowing that it is to be a time of self-examination, sorrowing over the reality and costliness of our sins and preparing for the death of Jesus that addresses our great need. There is no visual evidence that there's more than the hard work of penitence ahead. If you're like me, most of your attention is fixed on the human-dominated world we live in, filled to overflowing with sorrow upon sorrows and with our own sins contributing to what's wrong with that world. The surprise, then, is the sudden, staggering realization that here, in the middle of the wilderness of Lent, God's joy awaits us. Grabs our attention, fills our hearts, takes our breath away. The journey to the cross is for us, as it was for Jesus, meant to elicit *joy over the wonder and beauty of God's heart*. He has

supplied the most magnificent formation—the incarnation, suffering, crucifixion, and resurrection of Jesus—which is the occasion of all joy. *That* is our destination—not the long, lonely road that takes us there.

The journey to the cross is for us, as it was for Jesus, meant to elicit joy over the wonder and beauty of God's heart. He has supplied the most magnificent formation—the incarnation, suffering, crucifixion, and resurrection of Jesus—which is the occasion of all joy.

FPC has been on a spare, lonely road for a long season. There has been much to face, much to grieve, much for which to take personal responsibility. All of this fits well with the traditional heart of the season of Lent. But the beauty of Lent was never meant to be remorse. Rather, for all the Church worldwide and especially for us at FPC, the beauty and wonder of this journey is to arrive at and enter

into joy. We are emphasizing joy this year because we believe that it is the goal of the Christian life and is the destination to which Lent leads us. We are preaching through Paul's letter to the **Philippians** because in no other book of the New Testament is joy such a dominant theme, even in spite of his imprisonment at the time of writing. We are enjoying the **Joy of Community events** on Wednesday nights, in which we celebrate being family together. We are rejoicing that a **Senior Pastor Nominating Committee** (PNC) is about to be launched, marking our entry into the wonderment and joy of God's plans for our future. We are beginning to have permission to believe that "God is crazy about us," as Brennan Manning would say.

It's a surprise. Who would have expected it? But that's what grace is like. He has taken the entirety of our past, our sin and sins, our losses and failures, our guilt, our shame, our brokenness, our loneliness, our discouragement and sadness...and he has borne all of that to death in his death on the cross. And all of that, that we might enter into his joy. That's where I'm going, and I hope you'll come with me.

—Paul Parsons



Sometimes there are a host of things that gather, needing to be shared. This month is one of those times. Here are a widely scattered collection of important things I'd like you to know:

1. The Church Nominating Committee (CNC) process is being handled fairly, with all propriety, without personal agendas, and with moral integrity. They are dedicated to present a slate of nominees for election to a Senior PNC that is representative of our congregation. Pray for them in their process.

2. A **special congregational meeting** for the purpose of electing that PNC is set for **Sunday, March 8**, between worship services in the sanctuary. Nine names will be presented, the number that the Session set as optimal. At the meeting, the congregation has the right and privilege to nominate a person or people from the floor, and opportunity will be given for that. However, this will only be allowed if

- a. the person placing an additional name into nomination has asked for that person's willingness to serve;
- b. the person being nominated is an active member of FPC in good standing; and
- c. appropriate concern has been given by the nominator and nominee to the careful discernment process undertaken by the CNC to arrive at the nine people to whom they believe God has led them.

A nomination from the floor means that one of the CNC-nominated nine will be eliminated from the possibility of serving on the PNC. Thus, there is a gravity that everyone should weigh carefully. If having done this, the will of God is that a nominee from the floor should serve on the PNC, then so be it.

3. The newly elected PNC's first order of business will be to write a Mission Study examining who FPC is, what has happened in its recent past, where it is going, and what kind of pastor it needs. They may utilize people outside the PNC to help develop that Mission Study, but only insofar as the PNC limits those outside contributions to research and information, not prejudicing the conclusions of the Mission Study.

4. Prospective nominees for the PNC have been oriented to what they should expect if chosen by the congregation to serve in this way:

- Sacrifice: averaging 5–7 hours per week
- Confidentiality: what gets talked about in the PNC needs to stay in the PNC
- Community: every PNC tends to become a close family over the many months together

- Order: the PNC chooses its own moderator, will have close connections and guidance from its Committee on Ministry (COM) liaison (Bob Bardeen, interim pastor at Yuma Presbyterian Church), and must be kept safe from outside lobbying or prying
- Hospitality: the PNC becomes the face and voice of FPC and should approach all potential candidates with FPC's grace, courtesy, and generosity
- Discernment: the PNC's primary job is to discern the will of God regarding the next pastor of FPC—it is so very much about listening for God's voice
- Surrender: members of the PNC must be willing to set aside any agenda they might have and be willing to support what God is clearly doing within the PNC, including what is best for FPC

5. Please pick up the brochure *Helping the Homeless* and read it. If you didn't receive one in your bulletin on January 25, pick one up this Sunday or any Sunday from a pew-back, take it home, study it, reflect on it, and hopefully memorize it. This brochure states concisely and simply how we as a church want to respond to those who walk into our building on Sunday mornings or at any time, especially those who are living in poverty and who are hoping for a helping hand. We long for FPC to be prepared to respond consistently with the same heart and philosophy and care. We long for each of us to carry the same message so that the *whole congregation* is equipped to help, not just a few "experts" on hand on a Sunday morning. PLEASE invest in this tool and let it help you help others.

6. I have been asked by various people if my reduction in hours (from 40 to 35) and resultant reduction in salary was at the request of the Session. The answer is *no*. I offered freely, with no prompting from anyone in this congregation and without the knowledge of anyone in this congregation, to take a reduced time and salary arrangement. It offers two benefits: 1) to help balance the budget and avoid having to release anyone from our staff; and 2) to help Nicole and me take a first gradual step into retirement mode, which we imagine will be a shock to our system when it comes. Thank you for your trust in the Session and for your trust in me.

—Paul Parsons

PLANT WITH PURPOSE

LOMA VERDE, DOMINICAN REPUBLIC

February's Mission Story was a chance for me to update you on what's happening with Loma Verde, the village in the Dominican Republic that our congregation sponsors through the organization Plant with Purpose (PWP). I was part of a group of six who went on a vision trip with PWP in March 2012 and who were so inspired by the incredible, empowering work PWP is doing.

When we were visiting Loma Verde, we witnessed their Village Savings and Loan Association (VLSA) meeting. These VLSAs are an incredible opportunity for the rural poor to have a mechanism for saving money, as well as a way to borrow money at reasonable interest (versus loan sharks that gouge them with high interest rates). We also got to sit in on an adult literacy class that a local church had started with the support of PWP connecting them up with curriculum and training their volunteer teachers. It was amazing to watch the many ways that the Dominican PWP staff was empowering and supporting community leaders and individuals—truly giving hands up instead of handouts!

Here are stories of three individuals from Loma Verde and the surrounding community benefitting from the work of the PWP staff, whose efforts in this community are sponsored by FPC's partnership.

FEDERICO PIÑA

Federico is a farmer and local leader who has experienced firsthand the impacts of positive transformational development. "PWP has helped us with the planting of citrus, avocado, cocoa, and mango trees," he says. "This is helping us to protect and improve our environment and also to earn an income....Previously we did not have the habit of saving money. But through the formation of the VSLA, we now save every week." As a result of VSLA groups, many people in Loma Verde, including Federico, started their own small businesses. "I borrowed money to invest in my business to buy and sell organic cocoa," he says. "With my earnings, I bought a generator to supply my family with electricity 24 hours a day. This has helped our family to withstand power outages that affect us on a daily basis and greatly improve our lives." Federico adds, "Thanks to the partnership with PWP, my family has greater economic security, my home has electricity, and I'm able to continue investing in my business." Federico asks for the following prayers from his international partners: "That God allows us the successful construction of a chapel where we can worship God and that crime will decrease in the community."





ALEJANDRO CASTILLO JIMÉNEZ

Alejandro is a 40-year-old father and husband who serves an important leadership role in Loma Verde. Alejandro says his life improved by 70% after learning money management skills through a PWP savings group. “With loans taken in the group I’m building my home; I have also invested in my business of pottery and selling fish,” he says. Alejandro feels that the benefits of saving money go far beyond business development. “The benefits are investing in my family and improving my quality of life in regard to food, shelter, and education for my children.” He adds, “I have been able to improve the roof of my house and get out of debt with high interest.” Most importantly, Alejandro and his family are experiencing God’s provision in their lives as they work to build a better future. “I thank God because the crops planted are producing and are generating revenue that is improving my life today. I thank God for everything that He has given me.”

GREGORIA SUERO

In her own words, Gregoria Suero says, “When I was a girl I was unable to study. My parents never let me go to a school; their only concern was taking me with them to the farm and I was not allowed to attend a study center. I spent nearly all my life longing to study but I could not. Then I began living with a man I wasn't married to and this made my life more difficult still. My identity card had three crosses in the place of my name. I know that most people don't know the feeling of having a card with three crosses instead of their name, but the few that have experienced this know how ashamed we feel when we have to show our card. I felt so ashamed every time I went to a center or a place where I needed to use my identity card that sometimes I wanted to hide underground to avoid doing so, but it was inevitable.

When I heard about the literacy project, I thought that this is the opportunity that I never had. I approached professor Magali Lebron and I told him that I wanted to enroll. I started to learn and this was one of my best decisions. When I learned to read and write the first thing I did was to go to the Central Electoral Board and change my identity card. When I was changing the card I couldn't wait for the person in charge to tell me, ‘Madam, write your signature here.’ When they called my name I walked quickly with joy to the desk and said simply, ‘Now I can.’

Now I can read the Bible, I can write a list for my grandchildren or children to take to the grocery store, and there is no shyness in my life. I would like to thank my God for this wonderful opportunity, my professor Magali Lebron for his patience, PWP for their support and the notebooks they provided, the National Literacy Plan, and Pastor Teodora Sanchez who helped me a lot. Thank you everyone for making my dream a reality in my life.”



These are just three stories of how lives are being impacted through our partnership with PWP! Please let me know if you might be interested in going on a vision trip this summer to witness these approaches to empowering the rural poor in the Dominican Republic. Thanks to all of you for your support of this congregation to reach out to “the least of these” in Fort Collins and around the world!

—Cindy Frost

NOMINEES FOR THE PASTOR NOMINATING COMMITTEE

After weeks of hard work collecting suggestions, holding meetings, performing interviews, praying, and discerning God's will, the CNC presents to the FPC congregation its nominees for the PNC, who will seek out and recommend a new senior pastor. We believe God has led us to these well-informed, well-equipped, faithful individuals as representative of our pastoral needs as a congregation. Please read through these biographies, pray, and attend the special congregational meeting between services on March 8 to vote on these nominees.

Allison Humphries (Member since March 2011):



Allison and her husband Travis moved to Fort Collins from Houston in 2010 and have been members of FPC since spring 2011. They have been actively involved in church life ever since. In 4 years, Allison has served with the high school youth group, led junior high Sunday School, filled food boxes, packed for Operation Christmas Child, managed communications for VBS, built sheds for High Park Fire victims (while 6 months pregnant), visited homebound members, and participated in church workdays. In 2013, she worked on staff as the administrative assistant to the music director and four separate pastors, during which time she also took on many responsibilities of the clerk of Session.

Currently, Allison helps lead the young adult ministry in its Lent study, edits *The Messenger* each month, organizes traditional communion service, and worship-assists when convenient.

She has a degree from Texas A&M in English Rhetoric and works part-time from home as a freelance writer/editor. Travis and Allison have a 15-month-old daughter, Claire, and will welcome their second one in mid-March. Although very busy in the early years of building her family, Allison feels that the call to serve on the PNC is far too important not to take on. She and Travis know that God will supply grace (and time) for this critical service.

Marla Maxey (Member since May 1994):



Marla is the wife of Carl and mother of two sons, Clayton (20) and Caleb (16). She is a native of Fort Collins and has been a member of FPC since 1994. Marla has a degree in Human Development and has worked in Case Management at Foothills Gateway for 22 years. As a member of FPC she has been part of many small groups, has been a deacon and a Sunday School teacher and currently is a hospital visitor. In her free time she enjoys spending time with her family, skiing, and riding her horse Pearl.

Thaine Michie (Member since April 1965):



Thaine is the fourth generation of his family to attend FPC. He and his wife Marilynn are both elders and deacons and have served in most areas of the church. They have sung in the choir for many years, and Thaine has served on two PNCs. Thaine is an electrical engineer and spent his career in the power industry. He retired

as General Manager of Platte River Power Authority (PRPA). He has served on boards of directors of national, state, and local corporations. He received the National Power Manager of the Year award while at PRPA. Thaine and Marilynn have three grown children and operate a small ranching operation near LaPorte.

Sharon Miller (Member since September 1993):



Sharon, a Nebraska native, moved to Fort Collins with husband Jack and daughters Jill and Jackie from Muncie, Indiana in 1991. The family joined FPC in 1993, and since then, Sharon has been involved in various areas of the church. She has served as a deacon, taught Sunday School and VBS, and was part of a team bringing Operation Christmas Child to FPC as an outreach project for all ages. She has served on the CNC and was also a member of the recent Ministry Analysis Steering Team (MAST).

Her current favorite position is working with young mothers and their children as a mentor mom for Mothers of Preschoolers (MOPS). This role matches her skills and interests as a former high school teacher. As a member of the Women in God's Service (WINGS) circle, Sharon treasures the time to grow through group Bible study, along with sharing in numerous service projects.

Her favorite out-of-town travel is now to Denver, where she is known as "Gigi" to four lovable little boys: Charlie, Henry, Evan, and Carter.

Monte Peterson
(Member since November 1971):



Monte and his wife Pat moved to Fort Collins in 1970 and have been members of FPC ever since. As an elder, Monte served on the

administrative team. He is a retired Poudre School District administrator, and he has worked in education for over 30 years. Monte has served various roles as teacher, principal, and assistant superintendent. He has been married to Pat for 47 years, and they have two children and six grandchildren. His enjoyments are spending time with grandchildren, traveling, golfing, biking, working in the yard, and supporting our Colorado State University Rams.

Pam Pierce
(Member since December 2000):



Pam was fortunate to grow up in a Christian family in the Washington, DC area. She went to Indiana University in Bloomington, where

she married Jim Pierce and earned a graduate degree in Math. Until her first son Jimmy was born, she taught undergraduate courses at Eastern Michigan University. Pam then worked at home and they had their second son Austin. When they moved to California, she continued to stay at home with the boys and volunteer in their schools. The family moved to Colorado in the fall of 2000 and became members of FPC. After Austin left for college, Pam became a certified equine massage therapist and enjoys her business with horses.

She feels fortunate to have been able to serve in the church through visitation volunteering, Habitat for Humanity

home builds, food boxes for Christmas and Easter, going to Mississippi for Katrina relief, serving as a deacon for two terms, and helping with the shed builds for the High Park Fire victims

Judy Robison-Bullard
(Member since February 1995):



Judy is a native Coloradoan and a long-time member of FPC. She is retired from Colorado State University and the Health District of

Northern Larimer County. She is a non-serving elder and has served on the Stewardship & Resources team for many years, first as an elder and then as a member of the Personnel Committee.

Married to Steve Bullard, they enjoy serving the church as communion coordinators, usher coordinators, Chancel Guild coordinators, and Team Taco coordinators. They also participate in the Senior Servant Small Group and Faith Family Hospitality. Judy is also a long-time member of the 5:15 p.m. Presbyterian Women Bible study group.

Mike Rudd
(Member since September 1990):



Mike Rudd and his wife Kathryn started attending FPC in the fall of 1988 and joined about a year later. They have two children, Amy, a

senior Interior Design major at Iowa State University, and Austin, a freshman Sociology/Criminology major at Colorado State University. Over the years, Mike has served as a deacon, an elder, and 15 years as a Sunday School teacher in the two-year-old room. Currently, Mike is on the Foundation Board and the Generosity Team, and

during most services can be found running the slides in the sound room.

Grant Sherwood
(Member since December 1968)



Grant and his wife Pat are originally from Ohio and moved to Fort Collins in 1968, where he accepted an administrative/

teaching position at Colorado State University. He joined FPC that same year and has been an active member ever since. He holds a BA from the College of Wooster, an MA from Michigan State University, and a PhD from the University of Northern Colorado.

Grant has previously served four different terms as an elder and one term as a deacon. Other positions he has held are co-chair of the Building Committee; Center Leader for Stewardship & Resources; Stephens Minister; MAST Committee member; and CNC member. He currently serves on the Generosity Team and Outreach Communion Team and ushers on Sunday mornings.

He retired from his position of Assistant Vice President/Associate Professor at Colorado State in 2005 and continues to serve the Fort Collins community in a number of volunteer capacities. Grant and Pat will celebrate 49 years of marriage in August and are blessed to have their three children and seven grandchildren all living in Fort Collins.

A very big thank you to the Church Nominating Committee that sacrificed time and energy to connect with all of our nominees and guide them on this journey: Mike Bohart; Pam Genson, Elder; Lee Gray, Elder and Chair; Mark Nossokoff; Maryrose Preston; Kathryn Rudd; and Tom Tonoli.

EASTER FOOD BOXES

SUPPORTING PROJECT SELF-SUFFICIENCY

As we move toward spring at FPC, we again have an opportunity to make a difference in a family's life within our community. The Easter food box program at FPC gives us the chance to prepare a box of food items that will support a family making the transition from dependence to independence. Fourteen percent of families live in poverty within Colorado, and single-parent families have to struggle even harder to meet basic expenses, much less the ability to better themselves to become self-sufficient. Project Self-Sufficiency (PS-S) is a program in our community that partners with FPC to help these amazing individuals in their journey to better themselves and their families.

Two of the program's recent graduates have been able to earn a living wage, have regained hope in their lives, and are thriving families now. Lori is now happily employed full time at a local mortgage company as a Licensed Loan Origination Assistant. Lori comments that "PS-S was my saving grace at a time when I felt hopeless and lost." Jessica recently completed a BA degree, which helped her gain entry to a job as Special Education Paraprofessional with Poudre Schools. She was subsequently awarded a graduate study scholarship from the Colorado Retired School Employee Association and is making progress on an MA degree that will provide licensure as a special education teacher. She and her two children have a sustaining

income, benefits, retirement plan, and a future that holds an opportunity for Lori to be a licensed teacher in her own classroom. What a great program to be connected with here at FPC to help those helping themselves to achieve a better life!

The deacons will be preparing Easter food boxes this month for PS-S—and they need your help!

- 1) Please visit the Deacons' Table in Shepardson Hall on one of the following Sundays: March 8, March 15, or March 22.
- 2) You will be able to select a family from the PS-S list. We will give you a box and a suggested list of food items to place in the box. Return your filled box to the Deacons' Table on or before March 29.
- 3) All food items should be nonperishable. A letter from the deacons, including a grocery gift card for purchase of meat or produce, will be included in each box.
- 4) If you prefer to make a monetary donation, checks should be made out to FPC with *Deacons' Fund* in the memo line.

Be a part of the community effort to help these dedicated individuals succeed in their journey to a better life. May God bless us all for the support of this ongoing outreach within our community.

—Mark Ausbrooks



SPRING forward

Daylight Saving Time begins Sunday, March 8 at 2:00 a.m.

Don't forget to "spring forward" Saturday night before you go to bed!



UNDERSTAND JOY

UNDERSTAND SORROW

As we have traveled through our joy journey these last weeks, I found myself thinking about what joy really is. I long ago determined that joy and happiness are not the same, but wondered how I would clearly define joy. So I searched the Internet for a definition of joy. The first thing that popped up was "40 ways to be joyful during the day!" WOW... wrong Webpage for me. Finding joy is often a challenge for me—and I surely didn't want to go from 0 to 40 in one day! I'm not a naturally upbeat person, so I don't always seem to find or create joy in every day. However, I wanted more clarity on exactly what I was looking for to determine joy, and I think I found it in Kay Warren's book *Choose Joy*.

She writes, "Here is the definition of joy I have come up with. Joy is the settled assurance that God is in control of all

the details of my life, the quiet confidence that ultimately everything is going to be alright, and the determined choice to praise God in every situation."

She goes on to say that "We tend to think that life comes in hills and valleys. In reality, it's much more like train tracks. Every day of your life, wonderful, good things happen that bring pleasure and contentment to you. At the exact same time, painful things happen to you or those you love that disappoint you, hurt you, and fill you with sorrow. These two tracks—both joy and sorrow—run parallel to each other every single moment of your life. When you look down train tracks into the brightness of the horizon, the tracks become one. You can't distinguish them as two separate tracks. That's how it will be for us someday: our parallel tracks of joy and sorrow will merge into one. It will all

come together for us then, that day that we meet Jesus. Then it will make complete sense."

That explanation makes perfect sense to me now and perhaps explains the sign that I have put up in every office that I have ever worked in—it says *Understand Joy, Understand sorrow*. I've always felt that sign spoke something to me, and now I understand it more clearly.

Both joy and sorrow will always be a part of my life. This is a good time to make friends with them both as long as they are going on the same journey I am. Perhaps you might want to do the same.

—Marge Rice



Holy Week

at First Presbyterian Church

Sunday, March 29:
Palm Sunday Worship, 9:15 and 11 a.m.
children's Procession of the Palms at 9:15 a.m.

Monday, March 30–Friday, April 3: Noon Holy Week Services, 12 p.m.
featuring pastors from around the community

Thursday, April 2: Maundy Thursday Worship, 7 p.m.
marking the Last Supper with communion

Sunday, April 5: Easter Worship, 9:15 and 11 a.m.
a glorious celebration of the Joy of the Resurrection

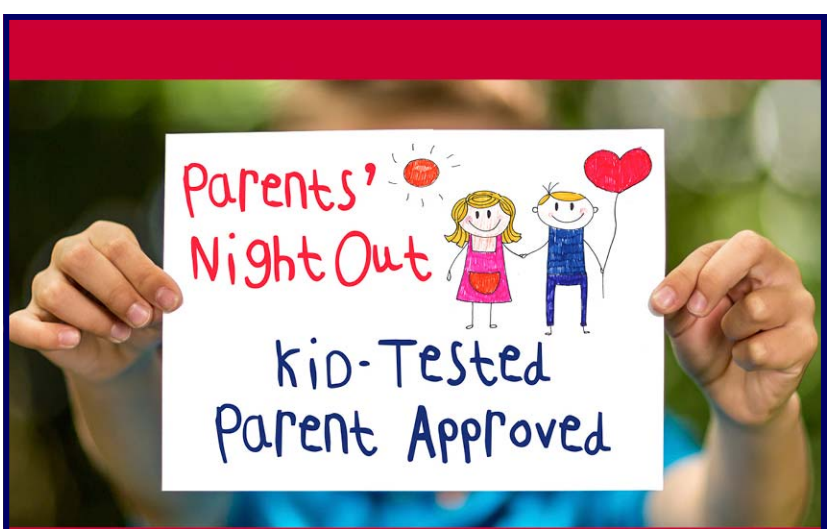


Eat Dinner at Chick-fil-A
Tuesday, March 17th
4 - 8 pm

Tell them you're with MOPS and
Chick-fil-A will donate 10% to us!



3605 S College Ave
(Corner of Horsetooth & College)



Parents' Night Out
Kid-Tested
Parent Approved

March 20, 6-9 p.m.

Fun for Kids = Free-Time for Parents

Register online by March 18:
firstpresfc.org

VACATION BIBLE SCHOOL

JUNE 8-12, 9:00 AM-12:00 PM

Children three-years-old (entering kindergarten in the fall of 2016) through children finishing fifth grade are welcome to visit *Hometown Nazareth* Vacation Bible School at FPC this June. At *Hometown Nazareth*, kids get to meet Mary, the mother of Jesus, and hear her stories of Jesus' boyhood. Mary must have lived side by side with many people who didn't believe that Jesus was the son of God. Children will hear Mary tell about how she knew that Jesus was God's son. Children attending *Hometown Nazareth* will explore how they can stand up for their faith in everyday life.

Save the date and watch for details and registration information in the April issue of *The Messenger*.



“Persuasion is helping people find out what they need and then showing them the best way to get it.”

– from *The Power of True Success: How to Build Character in Your Life*

A CHURCH OF CHARACTER

PERSUASIVENESS

The character quality for March is persuasiveness (versus contentiousness). Persuasiveness can be defined as convincing others to follow God’s ways because of how His ways are working in our lives.

God’s primary purpose for every believer is to be a witness of His truth. Persuasiveness is communicating truth to a person’s spirit through sound reasoning and convincing him or her to follow the ways of God. The more persuasive we are in talking to another person about the ways of God, the more effective we will be as witnesses. Paul is a wonderful example of a persuasive person.

Consider the **SECRETS OF PERSUASIVENESS:**

The authority of a clear conscience

Paul continually worked to have a conscience void of offense toward God and men. He also associated a clear conscience with persuasiveness: “Therefore, knowing the fear of the Lord, we persuade men, but what we are is known to God, and I hope it is known also to your conscience” (2 Corinthians 5:11). If we do not have a clear conscience, we will not be able to speak convincingly about the work and ways of a Holy God.

The authority of scripture

Persuasiveness is based on the authority that is behind it, and there can be no greater authority than the Bible. The use of scripture was the key to the persuasiveness of Paul, Apollos, and others: “...for with power he publicly refuted the Jews, proving through the scriptures that Jesus was the Messiah” (Acts 18:28). In order to have this authority, we must learn how to skillfully use the Word of God.

The authority of personal testimony

Paul often used his own testimony to convince his hearers of the power and truth of God. He even used his testimony in talking to King Agrippa and almost persuaded him to become a believer (see Acts 26). Personal testimony can often be very convincing in talking to others.

The effectiveness of using gracious words

God gives us grace, which produces the desire and power to do His will. In the same way, we must use gracious words to persuade others to do what is right. “Let your speech always be gracious and so well reasoned out that you will know how to reply to each individual” (Colossians 4:6).

LIBRARY CORNER

NEW BOOKS IN THE LIBRARY

British theologian and biochemist Arthur Peacocke taught biochemistry at the University of Birmingham and at the University of Oxford. He was an ordained Anglican priest (1971) and winner of the 1983 Lecomte du Noüy Prize and later the 2001 Templeton Prize. Peacocke was a significant contributor to opening the understanding of DNA structure and later became the proponent/advocate of the symbiotic role of science and religion—that the human quest of both intelligibility and meaning could intersect and live compatibly. Peacocke developed five arguments for such intersection: process as immanence, chance optimizing initial conditions, random process of evolution as purposive, natural evil as necessity, Jesus as pinnacle of human evolution, and relationship between theology and science typology (taken from *The Disguised Friend*). Intrigued? Check out Peacocke's book and peruse the other new books on science and religion in the FPC Library:

Theology for a Scientific Age: Being and Becoming—Natural, Divine, and Human by Arthur Peacocke

Alone in the World: Human Uniqueness in Science and Theology—the Gifford Lectures by J. Wentzel Van Huyssteen

Creation and the World of Science: the Re-shaping of Belief by Arthur Peacocke

The 5th Miracle: the Search for the Origin and Meaning of Life by Paul Davies

The Human Factor: Evolution, Culture, and Religion by Philip Hefner

Human Nature: Reflections of the Integration of Psychology and Christianity by Malcolm Jeeves

Moral, Believing Animals: Human Personhood and Culture by Christian Smith

On the Moral Nature of the Universe: Theology, Cosmology and Ethics by Nancy Murphy and George F.R. Ellis

Our Cosmic Habitat by Martin Rees

Paths From Science Towards God: the End of All Our Exploring by Arthur Peacocke

Playing God? Genetic Determinism and Human Freedom (2nd ed.) by Ted Peters with foreword by Francis S. Collins

Religion and Science: Historical and Contemporary Issues by Ian G. Barbour

Seven Glorious Days: a Scientist Retells the Genesis Creation Story by Karl W. Giberson

—Bethany Fisher





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Joyful, Joyful, We Adore Thee

an all-church breakfast gift for the FPC family



**Sunday,
March 1**
at 10:15 a.m.
in
Shepardson Hall

Join us between services
for breakfast and a time of fellowship.

Your presence is the only gift we seek; however, donations will be accepted.