

THE MESSENGER

A vibrant image of yellow forsythia flowers in full bloom, set against a clear, bright blue sky. The flowers are the central focus, with some in sharp focus and others blurred in the background, creating a sense of depth and natural beauty.

| NEWS FROM FIRST PRESBYTERIAN CHURCH FORT COLLINS |

**INEXPRESSIBLE JOY!
EASTER AT FPC**

**“ACTS-TION”—What
it takes to know
Jesus and share
Him with others**

**THE FACE OF
HOMELESSNESS**

**CHURCH OF
CHARACTER:
Truthfulness**

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From the Editor | SPRING

Spring is popping out all over. Outside, tulips and daffodils burst through winter soil. Barren trees are budding in pink and green. In our Sanctuary, eggs hatch, birds sing, flowers bloom, and butterflies flutter from cocoons with the promise of Easter.

The springtime signs of growth and renewal are all around FPC. This church will provide the soil of support for homeless families in our community through Faith Family Hospitality, (p. 6–7). Seeds of “ACTS-tion” are being sown with our middle school youth, (p. 8). New beginnings can be embraced and enjoyed, (p.5). And like the butterflies we see, our resurrection celebration will emerge with inexpressible joy on Easter Sunday (p. 15).

Spring is here—come bloom and grow with us.

—Cathy Richardson

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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.



UNTRAMMELED JOY

The other day I was preparing for our weekly Wednesday noon Bible study when I came across this statement in Gordon Fee's commentary on Philippians: "Joy, unmitigated, untrammled joy, is—or at least should be—the distinctive mark of the believer in Christ Jesus" (173, commentary on Philippians 4:4).

This sentence stopped me in my tracks. First of all I had to look up "untrammled" to find that it means unrestrained, unhindered, liberated. So, Paul is telling us that pure, unrestrained joy should be the distinctive mark of the believer in Christ Jesus. And I had to ask, "So, is it?" Is sheer joy what people think when they think of Christians? Or people from FPC? Or, closer to home, is joy a distinctive mark in my life???

I remember John Ortberg writing about joy in the book we studied for Lent several years ago. He writes, "Joy is at the heart of God's plan for human beings. The reason for this is worth pondering awhile: Joy is at the heart of God himself. We will never understand the significance of joy in human life until we understand its importance to God. I suspect that most of us seriously underestimate God's capacity for joy" (*The Life You've Always Wanted*, 65). Jesus tells his disciples in John 15:11, "I have said these things to you so that my joy may be in you, and that your joy may be complete."

Joy is something that gets mentioned in passing a lot in our faith but isn't something we regularly spend a lot of time reflecting on. It's part of the list of fruits of the Spirit. The call to "rejoice in the Lord" is part of many of the apostle Paul's exhortative passages. But if joy is at the heart of God himself and is at the heart of God's plan for human beings, it is worth reflecting more intentionally on joy. That's why I am glad that we have "camped out" on joy for the past six weeks of Lent. Here are some things I've been learning about joy.

It's about gratitude. The more we recognize and trust God's goodness, the more we internalize the good news of our salvation through Christ, the more we truly believe that God can work all things together for good for those who love God and are called according to his purpose (Romans 8:28)—then the more joy we will experience. The more we recognize how Christ is present in even the hardest situations, giving us strength and ability to do what we cannot do—then the more we can experience an abiding joy, even in pain and challenges.

It's about where we put our focus. If I focus on my wants and desires, joy will always remain elusive. This is more subtle than it sounds; often we can be other-oriented from selfish motives—some inner satisfaction derived from "people-pleasing" or playing the martyr role or maybe a self-protective defense mechanism—and all these will usually get in the way of joy. Jesus says, "Seek first the kingdom of God and his righteousness and all these things will be added unto you" (Matthew 6:33). Joy is one of those things that will be added to us when our focus is on seeking God's kingdom and not when we're seeking our own kingdom.

It's about being present. Ortberg writes, "I realized I tend to divide my minutes into two categories: living, and waiting to live. Most of my life is spent in transit: trying to get somewhere... standing in line, waiting for a meeting to end, trying to get a task completed, worrying about something bad that might happen, or being angry about something that did happen. These are all moments when I am not likely to be fully present, not to be aware of the voice and purpose of God" (*LYAW*, 64). When we recognize that God is present to us in this moment, even if we're driving or waiting in line, then we are more open to the joy that is available to us now and not some nebulous time in the future.

It's about perspective. There is something bigger than our day-to-day lives and that is the bigger arc of what God is doing in our world. When we recognize that we have parts to play in God's story (instead of just seeing God as a player in our own personal story), we will be more inclined toward joy. When we recognize that God can be doing powerful transformation in us through the trials of life, we can see something beautiful in life's challenges. As James writes, "whenever you face trials of any kind, consider it nothing but joy, because you know that the testing of your faith produces endurance... so that you may be mature and complete" (James 1:2-4).

I'd love to grow more in knowing and displaying "the joy of the Lord." I hope you do, too!

Blessings along the journey to joy!

—Cindy Frost

“I WAS HUNGRY AND YOU GAVE ME FOOD”

Matthew 25:35

Immediately following World War II, Protestant churches in the United States made appeals for aid for areas in Europe and Asia devastated by war. In 1949 several denominations organized a program called “One Great Hour,” which was broadcast over many networks and concluded with a request for a sacrificial donation the following Sunday. It was estimated that more than 75,000 churches participated. Since that time, One Great Hour of Sharing has grown to where aid projects are underway in more than 100 countries, including the United States and Canada.

The donations collected support three areas:

- Presbyterian Hunger Program
- Self-Development of People
- Presbyterian Disaster Assistance (PDA)

Here are some of the outcomes of last year’s offering:

- Presbyterian Hunger Program: 154,731 people living in extreme poverty now have increased food security and livelihoods through international development work
- Self-Development of People: 4,619 children/parents received improved educational opportunities
- Presbyterian Disaster Assistance: 40 countries and 24 states received help for natural and human-caused disasters

We encourage you to prayerfully, joyfully, and generously consider contributing to this offering. Use the envelopes available in the pews or the church office to make your special gift (above and beyond your normal giving), and bring it to the church office or place it in the offering plate during one of our services. Please make your check out to First Presbyterian Church and designate OGHS in the memo line. This offering was focused on Palm Sunday (March 29), but we will accept your contribution any time until the Sunday after Easter (April 12). You may also give directly online at www.pcusa.org/gift-oghs.


Thank you for your continued support of the Lord's mission work that enables us to give a powerful witness throughout our world to the great love of the One who came that all might have life more abundantly.




12138-15-101

Across the world, millions of people live on less than \$1.25 a day and have to survive on very little to no food. By giving to One Great Hour of Sharing, you're supporting programs working to provide those in need with food and safe water, relief for those affected by crises and catastrophic events, and the tools necessary to improve their lives.

THREE WAYS TO GIVE

 Through your congregation

 Text OGHS to 20222 to give \$10

 presbyterianmission.org/give-oghs

LET GO OR BE DRAGGED

9 RULES FOR TURNING ENDINGS INTO NEW BEGINNINGS

We are all familiar with the sometimes overused sayings, “tomorrow is a new day,” “the first day of the rest of your life,” etc. Although true, those sayings have never been terribly encouraging to me. My encouragement has come this spring from seeing the caterpillars and butterflies in the church Sanctuary this Lenten/Easter season, giving us the anticipation of the very real new beginning—Easter. This beginning we celebrate each year is the important beginning because it proved to us that Jesus was who he claimed to be. He was God in the flesh and came to save us. “In his great mercy he has given us new birth into a living hope though the resurrection of Jesus Christ from the dead” (1 Peter 1:3).

That IS the important “new beginning,” and while we celebrate that this season, new beginnings in our daily lives continue to happen as well. I see people selling homes they have lived in for years and buying new ones. People saying goodbye to a long-loved pet—and saying hello to a new one. I see people ending marriages and I see people beginning marriages. I see people having babies and I see people burying their loved ones.

A sign hangs in my kitchen: “Apparently there is nothing that cannot happen here today.” Truer words were never spoken. Anything can happen in any of our lives today. Change is the constant. We find ourselves fighting to hang on at times, and at other times fighting to let go. In my reading I came across an article titled *9 Rules for Turning Endings into Beginnings*. I’m no Pollyanna, but I do think that there are some things worth considering in this article as we face some of those new beginnings. Read what you want, take what you want from it, and perhaps, if you are interested, apply one or two of these suggestions to a change you might be making.

9 Rules for Turning Endings into New Beginnings

- 1) **Let the things you can’t control...GO.** Do not let what is out of your control interfere with all the things you can control (The Success Principles).
- 2) **Accept and embrace reality.** Life is simple. Pay attention to your outlook on life...rejoice or regret—those are usually our choices.
- 3) **Change your mind.** Change is like breath—it isn’t part of the process, it IS the process. Always, the first step toward positive change is to change your outlook.
- 4) **Hold tight to the good things.** When life’s struggles knock you into a pit so deep you can’t see anything but darkness, don’t waste valuable energy trying to dig your way out. Because if you hastily dig in the dark, you’re likely to head in the wrong direction and only dig the pit deeper. Instead, use what energy you have to reach out and pull something good in with you. Goodness is bright and may help illuminate the correct path to take you out of the darkness (Learned Optimism).
- 5) **Rest and regroup.** Rest... then begin again with what you know now from your darkness.
- 6) **Take chances.** Live your life so that you never have to regret the chances you did not take, the love you never let in, or the gifts you never gave out (Magic of Thinking Big).
- 7) **Keep climbing.** Every person who is at the top of the mountain did not fall there from the sky. One cannot enjoy the view without being willing to climb.
- 8) **Appreciate what you have learned.** In the end, it’s not what you have been through that defines who you are; it’s how you got through it that makes you the person you are today.
- 9) **Realize every step is necessary.** We learn from every single step we take. Whatever you did today was a necessary step to get to tomorrow.

(Chernoff, Mark. *9 Rules for Turning Endings into New Beginnings*. Marc and Angel Hack Life RSS. N.p., 2012.)

Mull over these things as you go about making changes in your life. I often have a hard time starting the next chapter in my life because I keep rereading the last one. Perhaps you are one of those people too. I did cut back on that rereading, though, when my son put a sign on my refrigerator that says, “Let go... or be dragged.” How appropriate! Think about letting go of what you can and save yourself being dragged.

New beginnings are here—some are by choice and some are not. For now, while you might mull over these above suggestions, do NOT mull over, but rather rejoice in the new beginning that Easter brings! “In his great mercy, he has given us new birth into a living hope through the resurrection of Jesus Christ.”

—Marge Rice

THE FACE OF HOMELESSNESS

FAITH FAMILY HOSPITALITY COMES TO FPC

The first Faith Family Hospitality (FFH) family that I met was Lance, Janie, three-year-old daughter Annabel, and two-year-old son Zander. Walt and I had arrived early at Peak Community Church for our first overnight hosting. The church was still locked, so we spent 15 minutes talking with Lance and Janie and watching the antics of the kids. Later, as we toured the church with the families, Zander came out of his bedroom with his Thomas the Train cap and said to me, “You don’t have a hat.” I looked around and everyone but me did have a cap on. Zander was offering to share his hat so I would not be left out.

Walt and I learned about FFH at an FPC class titled Christian Response to Poverty. There are 27 faith communities

involved in hosting or assisting with hosting homeless families. Families sleep at a church for one week, then are moved to the next church in the rotation. Dominations represented include Methodist, Unitarian, Evangelical Covenant, Mennonite, Disciples of Christ, Lutheran, Church of God, Episcopal, Catholic, Anglican, Jewish, Baptist, Community of Christ, United Church of Christ, Presbyterian, Quaker, and nondenominational Christian. These faith communities have found a common mission that transcends differences in beliefs.

Walt and I felt the program was a way to give a hand up, not a hand out. We wanted to get more involved but did not think we would feel comfortable being

overnight hosts. We attended volunteer training and learned that volunteer needs include preparing meals, providing breakfast foods, setting up the rooms on Sunday afternoon, taking down and packing up rooms on the following Sunday morning, and washing bedding and towels to be ready for the next rotation. After completing the training and hearing from those with experience hosting, we decided that we would feel comfortable in the overnight host role.

That first night, we shared a meal with the families, asked them about their day, and spent some time playing with the kids. The families went to their rooms early because they were tired from a day of work, school, or searching for support services. At other times since, parents have come down after the kids go to sleep to talk about the struggles they are having. We are not there to counsel, but just to listen.

The families are typical families: a single father who calls to his four-year-old daughter to “come to the table and eat with your family,” a mother who adjusts her son’s costume as the families head out for Halloween, a father who is late for dinner because he is a master mechanic and has gone out to help another family with car trouble, a parent who gets up early to read quietly before the children awaken. As Lance was heading off to bed that first night, he said to his wife, “I don’t have clean socks for work tomorrow.” We learned that there are laundry facilities at Catholic Charities, but people must take



a number and may or may not get to do laundry that day. There are also vouchers for some laundries, but try to imagine hauling your dirty clothes on a bus to a laundry that accepts those vouchers.

The next morning, our duties were to set out and serve breakfast. Although we were up at 6:00 a.m., one father had grabbed some coffee and was already off to work. The others came down as they got ready for their day, had a quick breakfast, and were on their way. By 7:30 a.m., all were gone and we were packing up our sleeping bags and heading home.

In addition to overnight lodging, FFH operates a Day Center. While volunteering at the Day Center, I often find children playing with the abundant toys while the parent uses the computer for their job search. A grandparent would bring his three-year-old granddaughter in for a much needed nap. An adult may request help with a computer or just want me to listen to the challenges they have faced that day. Laurie, a previous guest, was often on the phone looking for programs to support her special-needs son. Last week, a newly pregnant mother-to-be asked for help finding a book on a healthy pregnancy, and a father asked to borrow some children's books so he could read to his son later that evening. Most importantly, there are now washers and dryers where guests can do laundry and beautifully tiled showers for both current guests and those on the waiting list. FFH's Program Director gives guidance and support about services that are available. Families set goals with the help of the Program Director and must continually work toward achieving those goals in order to continue in the program.

Some families find housing quickly, like Jen and Nathan Salazar and their three delightful daughters, Ariana, Kylie, and Olivia, who recently moved into an apartment. The Salazars joined Bobby and his two sons and young daughter, as well as Tammy, Dan, and their special-needs son Jake, who had also recently



moved into their own homes with the help of FFH. There is celebration when a family moves into housing and also joy that there is now room for a new family within FFH.

The families give back to FFH and each other. Nathan continues to help keep other guests' cars running. Tammy volunteers at the Day Center and helped paint the Program Directors' office. Brett has a construction background and helped with the construction and tile in the showers. Bobby is a plant specialist at a local garden center and arranged the donation of flowers for centerpieces at the annual volunteer dinner.

FPC will have an opportunity to be the host for families the week of May 24, 2015. Members of the congregation will have the opportunity to meet and interact with these families. You will find that they are much like your friends and neighbors, but circumstances have caused them to be temporarily homeless. There will be training at FPC on Sunday, May 3 so that all volunteers can feel as comfortable in the role they choose, as Walt and I did the first night that we hosted at Peak Community Church.

But there still are unmet needs. There is a shortage of rooms for homeless families in Fort Collins and a perpetual waiting list at FFH. Sadly, there are

families sleeping in their cars or on the streets. A dream of FFH is to find the funds, volunteers, and facilities to increase the number of families that can be hosted. We at FPC could help make that happen!

—Janet Schuchmann

FPC will host FFH families May 24–30. Volunteer opportunities include:

- preparing meals
- providing breakfast foods
- setting up and taking down rooms
- overnight hosting
- washing bedding and towels

FFH Volunteer Training Session Sunday, May 3 3:30–5:30 p.m.

“

ACTS-tion:

What it takes to know Jesus
and share Him with others.

”

The middle school youth have been studying the Book of Acts. This book encourages us as Christ followers to take action—or what we might call “ACTS-tion”—to share Jesus with others.

It is exciting to have this opportunity to let you know how we, the ACTS-tion leaders of FPC’s middle school youth group, have been using the Book of Acts to bring to reality how the apostles, after Jesus’ death, met in the upper room to plan their strategy to teach the way of Jesus. I invite you to take a moment and look back with love and appreciation on those who took ACTS-tion to help you know Jesus.

My own experience started with my loving grandmother Rankin, who taught and read Bible stories,

sang hymns, and took us to church and Sunday school. We also sang in the youth choir. Another influential experience was visiting my Greek grandmother Ellen, who was devout in her belief. We attended the Greek Orthodox Church with her, and I was shown how Greek family life centers around Jesus.

When I moved to Fort Collins as a senior in high school, many people at FPC took ACTS-tion in my life, and I became a member and joined the choir. The ACTS-tion has not stopped since. There have been Bible study groups, Vacation Bible School, Sunday School, committees—all ACTS-tion groups.

We as the leaders of the middle school youth group are taking ACTS-tion to study and take to heart what the apostles did then

and what we can do now. It has not changed. It continues.

It is a blessed moment to watch the eyes of a middle schooler light up with understanding and inspiration about our loving Savior, Jesus Christ, and how even they can take ACTS-tion to teach and spread the love of Jesus.

In closing, we the humble leaders of the middle school youth group pray that you who are reading this article will find your own source of ACTS-tion to have an impact on another person’s walk with God.

May God bless each of you in this endeavor.

—Tina Dunn

GETTING STARTED

PASTOR NOMINATING COMMITTEE

The Pastor Nominating Committee (PNC) met for the first time on Thursday, March 12. Bob Bardeen—our liaison from the Committee on Ministry (COM)—Cindy Frost, and representatives from the Church Nominating Committee (CNC), Pam Genson and Lee Gray, were also in attendance.

Once introductions were made and the passing of the torch was complete from the CNC to the PNC, Cindy, Pam, and Lee withdrew from the meeting. Bob Bardeen outlined the process that we will need to follow in order to start finding and interviewing candidates for the Senior Pastor position at FPC. Before the meeting was adjourned, Mike Rudd was installed as the

committee chairperson and Pam Pierce as the secretary.

The first order of business is to complete a Mission Study (MS) that will need to be approved by both the Session and the COM. We have been meeting weekly since the initial meeting to gather information for this study. There are a lot of data in the form of reports and surveys that FPC has collected from the congregation over the past three years that will be useful, and we are sifting through this wealth of information. We would appreciate help from the congregation in gathering more information for the MS from a brief questionnaire, which you should receive to your e-mail. If you don't have e-mail, a hard copy will be sent to your

home, or you can pick one up at the PNC table in Shepardson Hall on April 5 and 12. Questionnaires are due back April 17.

The PNC is also responsible for filling out a Ministry Information Form (MIF). This document will also need to be presented to Session and to the COM for approval. We hope to set a fairly aggressive schedule to get these first two tasks completed. Then we will be able to move forward in the search for a Senior Pastor with God's continued guidance and direction. We appreciate the support and continued prayers of the congregation during this process.



Welcome to the World!

Audrey Jane Humphries
daughter of Allison and Travis Humphries
born March 6, 2015

Evelyn Grace Smith
daughter of Julie and Chad Smith
born March 10, 2015

Are you expecting? We want to celebrate with you! If you are pregnant or expecting to adopt soon, we would love to share the wait with you. Expectations are posted on our bulletin board across from the nursery. Won't you share your happy news with us? Please contact the church office at (970)482-6107.

SPRING CLEANING

WORK DAY SCHEDULED FOR MAY 2

Spring cleaning—is this a yearly ritual for you? Somehow it never was a part of my thinking—and yet it has always been a part of my life.

My folks never called it “spring cleaning.” It was just an “uptick” in the normal process of life. The care of our home, vehicles, garden, buildings, livestock, fences, fields, etc. was an ongoing and never-ending task. I can assure you that the bedroom occupied by the “three little boys” was always in need. (And somehow, the slightly older girls were often tasked with the job!) But when spring came, along with daylight saving time, the long afternoons and evenings provided the time needed to really get things done.

One of my most vivid childhood memories is coming in from the garden well after sunset in late March. Our hands and feet (all the way to elbows and knees) were dirty from planting potatoes in the cold, moist soil thrown open by Dad and his little Ford tractor. Earlier we had prepared the seed potatoes: dumping them out of the gunnysack onto a

piece of plywood and cutting them into pieces—at least one “eye” per piece. Then we carried them down the furrow in a bucket, dropped the “seed,” stepped on it, dropped and stepped, (not so close together, Dale!). Repeat, repeat, repeat.... Behind came another kicking or raking the soil over the potato and making it firm. It really was too early to be barefoot, but the fresh soil felt so good between your toes that there just wasn’t any other way to do it. And the water from the hand pump in the backyard was even colder. But it was required to remove the worst of the dirt before we were allowed in the house.

Once cleaned up, we tramped through the back porch and into the kitchen. Looking at the clock on the wall,

someone exclaimed, “It’s after eight o’clock and we haven’t had supper yet!” I don’t remember what we had or when Mom managed to get it prepared, but as always we sat down at the kitchen table and shared it, just like the garden work—*together*.

And that is what spring cleaning is about. Whatever needs doing to move life out of winter and into spring, do it...*together*. There is nothing like getting a big job done, working hard with those you love to accomplish a task that is important to all.

So let’s join together on Saturday, May 2 to do some late spring cleaning at FPC. There are many tasks to help keep our facilities clean and in good repair. I can’t offer you a chance to go barefoot in the garden, but if you want to roll up your sleeves, join us! Many of the tasks are rather mundane: cleaning, sweeping, collecting, etc. Together they become times of fellowship and joy, laughter and caring. Inside and out, young and old, together we can help remove the stains of winter and bring out the freshness of spring.

Make a note of it: Saturday, May 2, 8:00 a.m. to noon. Coffee and donuts will be provided. Please sign up and let me know you’re coming (dhoerner@firstpresfc.org). The initial list of tasks and projects will be coming out soon.

May God’s sweet presence grace your spring, whatever it may bring,

—Dale Hoerner



VACATION BIBLE SCHOOL

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

“It is our prayer that your Hometown Nazareth VBS will allow God’s Word to come to life like never before...touching lives, changing hearts and drawing kids and adults closer to Christ...” And that is my prayer, too, for our children and volunteers for this year’s VBS, *Hometown Nazareth: Where Jesus Was a Kid*. I am so excited about this year’s theme! Our children can relate to Jesus and know he is real in their lives.

Children 3-years-old (entering kindergarten in the fall of 2016) through children finishing 5th grade will visit Hometown Nazareth, where they 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.

The Hometown Nazareth Marketplace will be open every day. Children will choose the shops they would like to visit to learn about authentic Hebrew culture. At the Hometown Nazareth Marketplace there will always be something new to make, taste, or see. We could be making something in the wood shop, mixing together ingredients to make a sweet-smelling hand scrub, beading some wonderful jewelry from stones, or having Hebrew snacks at the Food Market.

A very important part of Hometown Nazareth is the hometown huddle. Children will be grouped into one of the 12 Tribes. The Tribes will step back in time by looking at their “travel itinerary” (daily schedule), putting on their Tribe Banduras, and preparing to share God’s love throughout Nazareth. The Tribe leaders will help the children connect their experiences of the day to their lives and discuss how they see God’s hand at work today, what God means to them, and how they can share that love with others. And each day we start and end with celebration—a time of worshipping together.

Hey grown-ups, this is for you! VBS reaches out to children all over our community, and we have the opportunity to make a difference in these children’s lives with God’s help. VBS requires more than 60 volunteers. Please consider helping before the event or dedicate your mornings to the kids that week. Maybe you would like to be a Tribe leader and really get to know the 8 to 10 children in your tribe.

Or wouldn’t it be fun to be a shop keeper as the children visit your shop each day? If you would like to be a part of VBS in any way, please contact me—acrawford@firstpresfc.org or (970)482-6107. Registration will begin April 27, 2015, online or in the church office.

—Alice Crawford





DISCOVER

F.P.C.

The logo features the word "DISCOVER" in a large, black, sans-serif font. The letter "O" is replaced by a magnifying glass with a red handle. Inside the lens of the magnifying glass is a silhouette of a family: a man, a woman, and a child. Below the magnifying glass is a silhouette of a woman holding a child's hand, with a small dog on a leash. To the left of the magnifying glass is a red decorative flourish. To the right of the magnifying glass is the text "F.P.C." in a red, sans-serif font.

YOU ARE INVITED TO LEARN MORE ABOUT WHO WE ARE AS A CHURCH, WHAT IT MEANS TO BE A MEMBER, AND HOW YOU MIGHT GET MORE INVOLVED IN THE LIFE OF OUR CONGREGATION. MEET OTHERS AND GET TO KNOW OUR PASTORS, STAFF, AND CHURCH LEADERS DURING THREE CLASS SESSIONS OF DISCOVER FPC BEGINNING IN APRIL.

LUNCH AND INTRODUCTORY SESSION:
SUNDAY, APRIL 26, 12:15-2 PM

PLUS, WEDNESDAYS, APRIL 29 AND MAY 6, 6:30-8 PM

NOTE: THOSE INTERESTED IN JOINING THE CHURCH WILL BE ASKED TO ATTEND A SESSION RECEPTION MAY 10, AT 10:15 AM AND A CONGREGATIONAL RECEPTION MAY 17.

RSVP TO MICHELLE RIESEL, (970)482-6107. TRANSPORTATION AND CHILDCARE AVAILABLE WITH RSVPS BEFORE APRIL 20.

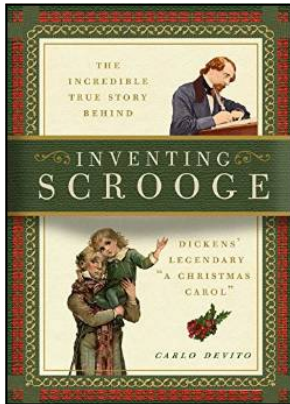
LIBRARY CORNER

NEW BOOKS IN THE LIBRARY

Inventing Scrooge

by Carlo Devito

The drama of a *Christmas Carol* is not just for the Christmas season. It is a timeless message of a sinner's redemption to a better life more in touch with humanity.



How did Charles Dickens come to write this tale? While traveling by train from London to Manchester for a speaking engagement, Dickens passed through areas of his childhood that recalled memories of his own family's poverty. He had long had a gnawing concern for the working class, especially the exploited uneducated children forced to work in factories. He thought of writing a pamphlet on the subject, but realized a dramatic story would have more effect.

By the time he got back to London, a story was swirling in his head. He had the lesson, the moral, the theme, and some characters, but just not how to tell the story. Long night walks through London streets and alleys excited him with thoughts and places for his plans. Earlier in an Edinburgh graveyard he had come across the name Ebenezer Scroggie (1792–1836); pulling that from his memory got him on his way.

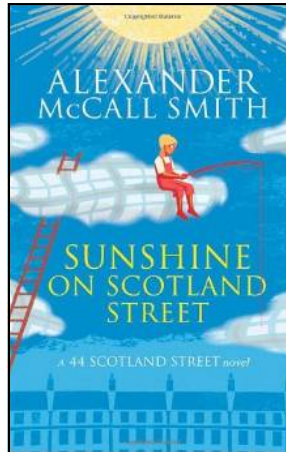
For lovers of Dickens, this is a book not to miss. It is not a biography, but rather a focus on the writer, his progress, and his creation.

Sunshine on Scotland Street

by Alexander McCall Smith

Alexander McCall Smith has given us in his 44 Scotland Street Series the 8th book, entitled *Sunshine on Scotland Street*.

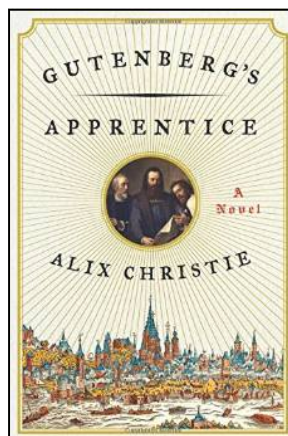
Opening with the preparation and lack of preparation for the marriage of anthropologist Domenica MacDonald and artist Angus Lordie and closing, as usual, with an original thought-provoking poem by Angus, the narrative carries his well-known characters in their usual roles. Amid all the events Alex McCall Smith inserts his wit, wisdom, and Scottish philosophical thoughts. The series has been described as addicting.



Gutenberg's Apprentice

by Alix Christie

Pete Schoeffer, a master scrivener or scribe in Paris was ordered by his father to return home to the Cathedral City of Mainz,



Germany to meet a most amazing man. The man was Johann Gutenberg. Peter resisted the pressure to give up his skill as a scribe and work with the man who was inventing a printing press; he considered such copying crude and ugly and less sacred. The church-controlled world regarded such tampering as blasphemous.

But the information revolution of the 15th century continued to become one of the most important events in Western history. Alix Christie in a Book Page review writes, "Peter lived at a time much like our own; he stood on the unsettling edge between the old ways and the radically new.... I hoped that Peter's story would help us to think our own way forward, balanced as he was between the wonder of the truly new and rejection of those crude words crudely wrought of metal type.

Christie masterfully depicts the time and energy required to print the first Bibles all against the catastrophic backdrop of plague, the fall of Constantinople, the violent superstitions of the peasantry, and a vested intelligentsia fearing the press would generate crude words crudely wrought...smut and prophecy, the ranting of anarchists and Antichrists" (Kirkus Reviews).

Note: The language cited in the book is often crude and not in line with Reformed theology of the Reformation.

A CHURCH OF CHARACTER

TRUTHFULNESS

The character trait for April is Truthfulness (versus deception). Truthfulness can be defined as communicating by life and word what is genuine and accurate. It could also be defined as earning future trust by accurately reporting past facts.

In one of the *Peanuts* comic strips, the students went back to school after vacation. They were told to write an essay about returning to class. Lucy wrote, "Vacations are nice, but it is good to get back in school," and then she continued to extol the advantages of having to go to school. Of course the teacher was pleased and commended her for the essay. Lucy then turned to Charlie Brown and whispered, "After a while you learn what sells." However, we need to always tell the truth, whether it sells or not! (c.f. William Nieporte, in *Leadership*.)

Truth is a very important issue to God, as indicated by the many, many times it is referred to in the Bible. Just a few passages are:

"These are the things you are to do: 'Let everyone speak truth to his neighbor, and judge with truth and justice,'" (Zechariah 8:16).

"You shall not give false testimony against your neighbor," (Ex 20:16).

"The Lord detests lying lips, but he delights in men who are truthful," (Proverbs 12:22).

"Therefore, putting away falsehood, let everyone speak the truth with his neighbor, for we are members one of another," (Ephesians 4:25).

WHAT DOES THE TRUTH DO?

There is power in truth because it is the very essence of God and it is the means by which he carries out his work in the world.

1. **Truth brings us to Christ.** "He chose to give us birth through the word of truth, that we might be a kind of firstfruits of all he created," (James 1:18).
2. **Truth makes us free.** "Then you will know the truth, and the truth will set you free," (John 8:32).
3. **Truth leads us in the right way.** "Send out your light and your truth; let them guide me," (Psalm 43:3).
4. **Truth allows us to worship God.** "Yet the time is coming and has now come when the true worshippers will worship the Father in spirit and truth, for they are the kind of worshippers the Father seeks. God is spirit, and his worshippers must worship in spirit and in truth," (John 4:23-24).
5. **Truth brings us to the light.** "But whoever lives by the truth comes into the light, so that it may be seen plainly that what he has done has been done through God," (John 3:21).
6. **Truth purifies our soul.** "Now that you have purified yourselves by obeying the truth so that you have sincere love for your brothers, love one another deeply, from the heart," (I Peter 1:22).

"Lord, who may dwell in your sanctuary? Who may live on your holy hill? He whose walk is righteous, who speaks the truth from his heart..."

—Psalm 15:1-2



INEXPRESSIBLE JOY

9:15 and 11 a.m.

Sunday, April 5, 2015

Our resurrection celebration will emerge from the chrysalis of Holy Week with inexpressible joy this Easter Sunday! Join us for one of two identical worship services at FPC. The Sanctuary Choir, FPC Festival Chorus, FPC Worship Team, Exquisite Brass Quintet and Percussion, Organist Joe McConathy, and the Chancel Bell Choir will lead the musical majesty. An extended prelude will begin at 9 a.m. and 10:45 a.m. allowing all to find a perfect seat in the sanctuary or overflow seating in Shepardson Hall. Interim Senior Pastor Dr. Paul Parsons will conclude our Lenten series on JOY with an Easter sermon, "Joy Inexpressible." As always, Easter services will be live streamed on the FPC website. Children age pre-K–5th grade are invited to a Resurrection party in the Education Wing at 9:15 a.m. And, special activity gift bags will be available in the Narthex for children worshipping with their parents at 11 a.m. Celebrate the Inexpressible Joy of Easter April 5, at FPC.



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Holy Week

**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**