

# THE MESSENGER

| NEWS FROM FIRST PRESBYTERIAN CHURCH FORT COLLINS |

**SIGNS AND  
WONDERS**



**HUNGRY TO WALK**

**RUNNING WITH  
PERSEVERANCE**

**A DEEPER MEANING OF HOME**

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# From the Editor | RUNNING

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I've never been a runner. A rapid heartbeat makes me anxious. The day we ran "The Mile" in school, felt like fleeing a rabid grizzly and losing by choice. Running doesn't clear my head. It makes my head pound, my knees creak, and my legs hurt. Yet, I look at marathoners with admiration, wonder, and maybe a little envy. Even if I don't run, I want to persevere like that.

At FPC we are running a different kind of race—the race of a lifetime. We're lacing up our shoes, stretching out our muscles, and eyeing the course ahead. Pastor Corey's fall sermon series, "Running the Race," has us considering the "Rs" of training: Receptivity, Resilience, Reconnection, Reconciliation, Risk-Taking, Recommitment, Reformation, and Relay-Race. Our fall programming is a workout with that race in mind. Adult classes give us the discipline for the contest. At Midweek eXperience, kids gnaw on the Fruits of the Spirit—sustenance for their race ahead. Our middle school youth will exercise service, and our high school youth will be hydrated with guidance on tough issues. We even have the chance to step foot on a literal course during the CROP Hunger Walk on October 1.

So, get ready. Grab those shoes. Turn up your playlist. Let's run our race with perseverance and thanksgiving.

—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 vision and mission will be accepted. 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](mailto:crichardson@firstpresfc.org). Contact Editor Cathy Richardson for more information, (970)482-6107. Check [www.firstpresfc.org](http://www.firstpresfc.org) for specific issue deadlines.



# PASTOR'S CORNER

## RUNNING WITH PERSEVERANCE THROUGH ACTIVITY AND CHANGE

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Back in June I mentioned that while the summer is ordinarily the quieter season in the life of the local church, we anticipated that this summer at FPC would not slow down. That reality has proved true even in ways that we had not expected. We had more staff transition that we didn't expect, and we explored and initiated more new ministry ideas that we couldn't have imagined. That being said, I'm thrilled with the staff that we now have in place, the thoughtful and creative work that so many leaders have done, and the directions that our church is going this fall. In the last edition of the Messenger, I mentioned some of the new directions that we are taking in regard to worship. Here are a few wonderful highlights from other areas in our church life.

**Staff Update:** Our new Office Manager, Kim VanWinkle, is an extraordinary addition to the team. She brings a wealth of experience, great instincts for the job, and wonderful people skills. We also hit a home run this summer with the hiring of Pam Armstrong, our new Director of Children's Ministry, for whom you received a biography in an earlier newsletter. Finally, we will welcome a talented new pianist, Alaina DeBellevue, to accompany worship at the 11:00 a.m. worship service beginning on September 10.

**University Ministry:** One of the first questions I was asked on the Sunday of my candidating sermon last July was about how I hoped to restore a deeper connection with the CSU community in general and reach out to students in particular. This summer we had two brainstorming meetings for people interested in University ministry and had over two dozen people attend. We realized that it would be wise to proceed with modest steps this year as we continue to learn from and listen to those who are already doing ministry on campus and, of course, from students themselves. Two initial partnerships we will support include the **International Friends** program, an

opportunity for our church families to adopt an international student for a year of hospitality and friendship, and the **Food 4 Thought** forums for community-building and dialogue at **The Geller Center**, a historic campus ministry center founded by Presbyterian pastor Bob Geller. You will be hearing more about these ministries and others, as well as opportunities to connect and serve in the weeks ahead.

**Neighborhood Partnerships:** Another priority for FPC that we have identified is the calling to use our campus to more fully serve the community around us—a part of the “open and welcoming” portion of our vision statement. This fall we will making a significant step in that direction as we welcome three new programs to share our space. The first is a partnership with the **Thrive Music Studio**, offering early childhood music education and meeting twice a week. The second is the **Young People's Learning Center**, which will run its after-school program here from 3:00 to 6:00 p.m. every school day and full day programs when school is on holiday. The YPLC approach states, “*While our teachers work hard to put together all learning centers and all activities to meet our nine learning objective areas each week, children experience all learning as play and excitement. Children leave our preschool classrooms with all the skills they need for kindergarten, but also with an amazing sense of wonder and a deep belief that school is fun! Kids receive a love for learning.*”

Finally, I am particularly excited about our third new partnership, **La Cocina**, CSU's critical initiative to offer much-needed support to Spanish-speaking families in our community. Born of our community's expressed concerns for the stability and wellbeing of the Latino community, La Cocina is CSU's landmark program, providing “kitchenable” mental health and wellness services that promote community resilience and family wellbeing. Our

support of La Cocina's services will go a long way in sustaining Spanish-language community support groups, community meals, children's programming focused on prevention, and bilingual-bicultural therapy services focused on stabilizing families in need. Led by the caring faculty and students of the Department of Human Development and Family Studies, La Cocina is wholly unique in its approach to deliver trauma-informed services that destigmatize mental healthcare. By delivering a welcoming bilingual and bicultural space where Latino families may process current challenges and heal from past stressors, La Cocina, in partnership with FPC, is cultivating community wellness.

We are currently anticipating that La Cocina will begin meeting here on Wednesdays beginning in early October. I believe that this ministry will not only meet a deep need in our community, but also present us with unique opportunities for relationships and shared ministry in the months and maybe even years ahead.

**Buildings & Grounds:** Many of you have seen the remarkable progress that Jack Miller and his team have made to completely refurbish our main courtyard in preparation for a beautiful fellowship space and our new columbarium. In addition, we are seeking ways to upgrade our campus, including the replacement of the projector and screen in the sanctuary, numerous cosmetic improvements both in the sanctuary and throughout the rest of the building, enhanced signage for better wayfinding, some new coats of paint, and general clean-up and clean-out of our most utilized spaces.

The goal of these projects is to create an environment that is clean, attractive, safe, and functional for the ministry to which we are called. My hope is that these modest improvements in the short term provide a better launching off point for our future growth.

**CONTINUED ON PAGE 4.**

**Programming:** Each of our ministries has been hard at work this summer to get ready for the new program year. In addition to a new worship schedule, we are off and running (to coin a phrase from our fall sermon series) on programs for all ages. Our kids will be using *The Lorax* to learn to be “Kids who Care.” Meanwhile, our youth will be asking tough questions, taking on tough subjects, and focusing on service. Adults have the opportunity to jump into some deep new adult classes as well. Take a look at all we have going on:

### **SUNDAY MORNING...**

#### **Children’s Sunday School—9:00 and 11:00 a.m.**

- Infants and Toddlers—Nursery
- Preschool—Room 203
- PreK (entering K by 2018) to 5th Grade  
All children are welcome to join their family in the Sanctuary for the beginning of the service. Activity bags are available in the Narthex. During the Passing of the Peace, children PreK–5th Grade will be dismissed to Sunday school. Teachers will meet children in the Narthex and escort them to their classrooms on the third floor of the Education Wing. Children will finish the morning in Room 304.

#### **Youth Sunday School—9:00 a.m.**

- Middle School—Student Lounge
- High School—Student Lounge, then Room 207  
In two separate classes, the middle schoolers and high schoolers will look at the Bible to learn what God has to say to us today and how to apply that to our lives. After prayer and announcements, high school will go to Room 207.

#### **Confirmation—10:00 a.m.**

- High School—Room 106  
Explore the Christian faith and the Presbyterian Church with a group of peers under the leadership of our pastor.

#### **Children’s “Hang Time”—10:15 to 11:00 a.m.**

- Infants and Toddlers—Nursery
- PreK to 5th Grade—“Hang out” in Room 304

#### **Adult Education Hour—10:15 to 11:00 a.m.**

Session 1: September 17–October 15

Session 2: October 22–November 19

- **Contemporary Champions of Our Christian Faith**  
Leaders: Drs. Michael & Nancy Smith (Sessions 1&2)—Room 209  
In these chaotic days, whom do you turn to for Christian inspiration and learning? This interactive class will offer opportunities for you to be inspired by Christians such as Maya Angelou, Craig Barnes, and several others, who speak from both head and heart and have served Christ in remarkable ways.

- **Prayers of the Apostle Paul from the Epistles**

Leader: Rhonda Blinne (Session 1)—Room 204  
Under the inspiration of the Holy Spirit, Paul’s writings were his letters to the various churches that he had either planted or intended to visit during his ministry. Although Paul’s prayers were penned over 20 centuries ago, their value for spiritual instruction to the Christian Church throughout the ages has never ceased. This interactive study will include a selection of Paul’s prayers contained in his letters.

- **Christian Ethics**

Leader: Rev. Ron Sisk (Session 2)—Room TBD  
Join Rev. Sisk in an exploration of various ethical issues facing Christians today.

### **...AND THROUGHOUT THE WEEK**

#### **Jubilate Ringers Rehearsal**

- Sundays, 4:30 to 5:15 p.m.—Room 102  
This handbell choir has spots for 10 ringers who are ages 6th–12th grades. Students must have the ability to read music. Regular attendance at rehearsal is a must!

#### **Sunday Supper Book Club**

- 3rd Sunday of the month, 5:00 to 7:30 p.m.  
Leaders: Charles May and Penny Hillman-May  
This monthly small group aims to nourish ties within the FPC community and facilitate personal discovery and growth through discussion and exploration of Christian books. Group is limited to 14 participants. Contact Penny Hillman-May for more information, (970)518-3260 or pjhillman@earthlink.net.

#### **Jubilate Singers Rehearsal**

- Sundays, 5:15 to 6:00 p.m.—Choir Room  
Is there a more joyful sound than a sanctuary filled with the energy of youth voices singing praise to God?! This choir for 6th–12th grades sings regularly in Sunday worship and also participates in our Christmas concert.

#### **High School Youth Group**

- Sundays, 6:00 to 8:00 p.m.—Shepardson Hall  
High schoolers (9th–12th grades ) begin with a dinner (provided) and follow-up with lively discussions and a bit of fun.

#### **MOPS (Mothers of Preschoolers)**

- 2nd and 4th Mondays of the month, 9:15 to 11:30 a.m.—Shepardson Hall  
MOPS is dedicated to helping moms become better mothers by providing a caring atmosphere where they can meet other moms to share successes, failures, questions, concerns, and laughter of motherhood. MOPS opens doors and lets women know that mothering and mothers matter. Meetings include breakfast, guest speakers, crafts, and childcare so you can enjoy a little “Mom-Me time!”

### **Veterans of the Armed Forces**

- 1st and 3rd Wednesdays of the month, 8:00 a.m.—Parlor  
*Leader: John Nick*  
Veterans are invited for coffee, conversation, and prayer.

### **Scripture for Lunch**

- Wednesdays, 12:00 to 1:00 p.m.—Room 103  
*Leader: Becky Echeverria*  
Please bring a brown-bag lunch and join us as we consider the texts that will be preached in upcoming sermons. This is designed to be a drop-in class.

### **MIDWEEK EXPERIENCE (MX)**

Wednesdays, September 20 to November 8

#### **Celebration Ringers Rehearsals—4:14 to 5:00 p.m.**

- 3rd to 5th grades—Room 102  
Children do not need to read music, but regular attendance at rehearsal is a must!

#### **Children’s Sacred Chorus Rehearsals—5:00 to 5:45 p.m.**

- 2nd to 5th grades—Room 308  
The Children's Sacred Chorus is an outreach initiative open to children in 2nd–5th grades from our church and our community.

#### **MX Family Dinner—5:15 to 6:00 p.m.**

- All ages—Shepardson Hall  
Enjoy a delicious home-cooked meal with others.

#### **MX Adult Classes—6:00 to 7:00 p.m.**

- **How Religion Makes Maps Messy**  
*Leader: Dr. Merrill Johnson—Room 209*  
Throughout history, various aspects of culture have caused geographers and decision-makers to struggle as they constructed political maps. This has been especially true of religion. In other words, religion can make maps messy! In these sessions, we will look at what the mess is all about, focusing on Louisiana, the Middle East, the Balkans, Switzerland, Lebanon, and South Asia.
- **Missions at FPC**  
*Leader: Varies—Room 204*  
Have you wondered how and why FPC partners with certain organizations through our Mission and Outreach Committee (MOC)? Then plan to attend to attend this class, as each week a representative from various organizations will provide information about his/her respective agency. Jennifer Kenyon, chair of MOC, will provide an overview of our mission involvement during the first class.
- **Women’s Bible Study**  
*Leaders: Allison Humphries and Carlie Hoskins—Library*  
Open to all women, this study will look at “A Lineage of Grace” by Francine Rivers, the five-novella series about five courageous women named in Christ’s lineage.

#### **MX Children’s Activities—6:00 to 7:00 p.m.**

- Infants to PreK—Nursery
- K to 5th grades—Education Wing  
Children’s activities will include games, crafts, free-time, and other supervised activities.

#### **MX Middle School Youth Group—6:00 to 7:00 p.m.**

- 6th to 8th grades—Student Lounge

#### **Chancel Handbell Choir Rehearsals**

- Wednesdays, 7:00 to 8:30 p.m.—Room 102  
This choir is an active part of worship services and concerts at FPC. Highlights include the annual Bells of Christmas concert in December and participation in a handbell festival in the spring. Participation is by audition/invitation only and is capped at 14 ringers. Ability to read music is required. This group is always looking for backup substitutes.

#### **Sanctuary Choir Rehearsal**

- Thursdays, 7:00 to 8:30 p.m.—Choir Room  
This passionate and dedicated group is the resident choir for our 9:00 a.m. Sunday worship service. This choir also prepares music for our Christmas and spring concerts, as well as other special services. New members are always welcome! No audition, but an interview is required.

#### **FPC Festival Chorus Rehearsal**

- Thursdays, 6:30 to 8:30 p.m.—Choir Room  
This choir is for adults who are unable to make an ongoing weekly commitment but desire an opportunity to sing. Music is provided in advance of the first rehearsal for outside preparation. Christmas rehearsals begin October 26.

#### **Parent’s Night Out**

- Third Friday of the month, 6:00 to :00 p.m.—Second floor of the Education Wing  
Fun for kids (age 0 to 10), free-time for parents! Drop-off children fed and in their PJs (if you want!) for a night of snacks, games, and movies in a safe environment. Childcare cost is \$13/one child; \$7/additional child (\$27 maximum/family).

#### **Youth Game Night**

- Specific Fridays, 6:00 to 9:00 p.m.—Shepardson Hall and other locations  
An evening of active games and fellowship with dinner provided.  
**All Youth** May 18  
**HS Only** Nov. 17, Jan. 19, Mar. 23  
**MS Only** Oct. 20\*, Dec. 15, Feb. 16, Apr. 20  
(\*Middle School Lock-In Oct. 20–21)

There is much more happening that I could share, but for now, I’ll conclude with a quote from Bill Hybels, pastor and founder of Willow Creek Community Church and the Global Leadership Summit, who says:

“The local church is the hope of the world.”

I believe that—and I am grateful for your leadership, participation, and partnership as our church shines out Christ’s light of hope and love to our world today.

Peace,  
Corey

# A DEEPER MEANING OF HOME

## MISSION TRIP WITH HABITAT FOR HUMANITY BUILDS MORE THAN HOUSES



In June 2017, FPC sent a team to the Dominican Republic with Fort Collins Habitat for Humanity. Team members included Erin Agar, Jennifer DeMario, Mark and Erika Nossokoff, Jason and Karen Restad, Jean Tonoli, and Ranae Willer.

Some commitments were made by individual team members as a result of this trip:

- Be more prayerful in general toward the needs of others in this country and abroad.
- Look at not just the outcome of a non-profit (mission) but the true long term processes they use—do they hurt or help the recipients?
- Try and stop worrying about finances by taking an honest account of my circumstances (in comparison to the rest of the world) and then give generously.
- Be more aware/on the lookout for opportunities to help locally or from home.
- Have my knee-jerk impulse to “help” (most all people and circumstances I come upon) now include the thoughts about how my helping actions or words might be received. Is my help offered in a “building up and self-respect maintaining” manner?

Karen Restad, with help from the team, wrote a poem about their experiences.



**House slabs assembled like Lego pieces.**

## Home

by Karen Restad, with help from the Dominican Republic Mission team

I've heard it said, home is where the heart is.  
To the Dominican Republic we took off like a wizz.

All eight of us to a land foreign and strange,  
to help a family never seen, not in our range.

Got together to help build a house not of wood,  
we all worked very hard as much as we could.

The Greeley team before us  
lifted heavy panels to put them in place;  
they did the heavy lifting  
so back injuries we wouldn't have to face.

We made concrete slabs, mortared seams and floor trim,  
sponged joints, mixed concrete and painted—  
all for the win.

Mortar like grout was shoveled,  
then pressed in the cracks,  
forced with tools, smoothed, next to walls in the tracts.

Temps in the 90s, humidity high,  
sweat dripping in our eyes,  
contrasting green trees heavy with mangos  
against light blue skies.

We were dependent on the locals, us to take care,  
gave them four days of work,  
helping without hurting; we hope it was fair.

Juan Carlos who was our builder wise,  
encouraged us with: "Come on, guys!"

Nathalie so energetic, knowledgeable, tiny and sweet,  
whose grandmother taught her that her team must eat.

Lujielle with fanny pack and by our side,  
our Mufongo chef and break-taking guide.

Our teacher Janice, our Crossfit queen,  
taught us history of the San Juan scene.

David who drove our van through a needle's eye,  
with mad skills that could make the van and trailer fly.

So many good and wonderful friends we met.  
My idea of home, on just the building, now not set.

We laughed and joked and had a good time,  
left a piece of our hearts with our friends in mind.

But we saw the face of the home owners  
and their voices heard.  
Our suffering was worth it;  
everyone's dignity moved closer to the Word.

How much can we get out of a week of our time?  
A deeper meaning of home, more than we can rhyme.

**Team with Dominican staff  
and Habitat homebuyer (hers  
is the blue house on the left).**



# HUNGRY TO WALK

## FPC HOSTS THE 2017 CROP HUNGER WALK OCTOBER 1

Our summer sermon series emphasized that the “What” of worship, including joining with others in participatory actions that reflect the goals of our church. Some of the great community connections of our downtown church are times when we not only join our hands in church, but we also “look outside the church windows” and “as a church, we leave the building” and carry our church experience out into the community.

Can you leave the building with us on October 1 to participate in a three-mile walk to benefit the Food Bank of Larimer County and Church World Service?

Our city’s 2017 CROP Hunger Walk will be headquartered at FPC. The three-mile walk (about one hour) will start in our parking lot at 12:45 p.m. on Sunday, October 1. It’s an afternoon of good fellowship combined with helping the hungry.

The rain-or-shine route will go north from FPC to the Discovery Museum, then along

the Poudre Trail, and finally south back to our church.

Walkers from many Fort Collins churches will participate in this interfaith event. Donations are shared between the Food Bank of Larimer County (local hunger relief efforts including the McBackpack program run out of FPC) and Church World Service (food, shelter, water wells, and crop irrigation equipment in third-world villages). Last year we had a record number of walkers and generated over \$5,000 for the Larimer Food Bank. We hope to pass that mark this year.

There is no cost to simply join the group that Sunday; all are welcome. However, most walkers make an online donation or bring cash or check donations on walk day. Participants are also encouraged to gather sponsors for their walk. Relatives and friends can support walkers online—it’s quick, easy, and secure!

To register your name as a walker so that sponsors can add donations: Go to

[www.crophungerwalk.org/fortcollinsco](http://www.crophungerwalk.org/fortcollinsco) and enter your name and a password. Once you are registered, anyone can go to that same website, type in the walker’s name, no password needed, and then securely donate any amount in that name.

Last year the FPC Youth Group (pictured below) won the city prize for most youth walkers and donations. CROP Walk is a very good way for youth and teens to contribute to local and world hunger relief by walking and gathering supporters. One can donate to students who walk with Kalista by going to [www.crophungerwalk.org/fortcollinsco](http://www.crophungerwalk.org/fortcollinsco), click on “Donate,” then click on “Donate To A Team,” and in the drop-down team list click on “First Pres Youth.”

CROP Hunger Walk is a fall fellowship event for the Simply Social group, too. Won’t you join us as we walk to end hunger in Larimer County and the world?

—Tom Tonoli





As I sit down to write today, images that shake our fundamental sense of order are coming through the media. Hurricanes, earthquakes, and fires. Briefings and hearings and attacks. Hatred, insecurity, devastation. Our atmosphere seems to be charged with stress and pressure, and it affects us all.

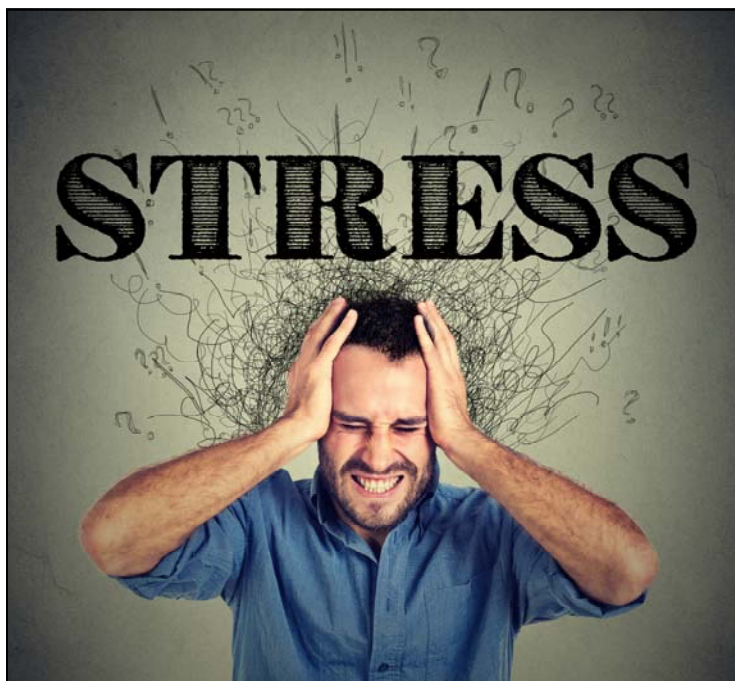
Challenges are out there for sure: growing up, social media, finishing school, employment, debt, marriage, parenting, health, caring for aging parents, retirement, failing health, death . . . There are cancers, divorces, decisions on divorces, money issues, alienations from family members, overwhelming losses, loneliness, attacks on who we are and on and on. These stressors are in our own family here at FPC as well as around the world!

Although stress feels like the pervasive scene right now, we must remember that Jesus didn't promise that we'd never have to deal with stressful situations. In John 16:33 he said, "In the world you have tribulation and trials and distress and frustration, but be of good cheer, for I have overcome the world." Because Jesus has deprived the world of its power to harm us, it has given us courage to approach the challenges we face in life in a more calm and confident manner.

There *are* stresses we can't control, and there are difficult life events we know we'll have to get through. Perhaps that is the lesson

we learn in the Prayer of Serenity: "God give us grace to accept with serenity the things I cannot change, courage to change the things I can change, and the wisdom to know the difference." Ah . . . the wisdom.

I believe we can lower our stress in a stressful world, but it requires us to make some choices.



**Be flexible.** One lesson I have learned is to "bend so I will not break." The Bible says, "readily adjust yourself to people, and if possible as far as it depends on you, live at peace with everyone." In the same vein, although the following quote is not from the Bible, it's true: "Blessed are the flexible . . . for they shall not be bent out of shape."

**Treat good health and feeling good as a valuable gift.** Don't waste the energy God has given you on stress. Save it for living and

enjoying life. When I had my second cancer and was bemoaning my bad luck, my favorite aunt said to me, "Marge, make a decision. Either get busy dying or get busy living." I decided to get busy living!

**Stop some of the rushing around.** The Creator of the universe wants a word with you, but how can He really talk to you if you're always

comes from the **support we give one another**. When our children must learn about the realities of life, let us be a place that they can land softly. There are people who come in and out of the church doors having overcome obstacles that we may never know about. Appreciate them. Many of us are doing things outside of the church walls to help create a peace in this world, and we must continue to remember and appreciate the fact that we can start those things inside the church walls as well.

**Listen.** When in doubt of knowing what to do in these times of stress, listen. Listen to the voice of another here who cannot carry the load, who has not found the courage yet that you have found. What I know about so many of you reassures me that we are a decent, a compassionate people, a people of faith, and believers in a just and loving God.

And finally, **give**. Give a gift of comfort to someone else or give of your time—to someone else or even to yourself to sit down, sit still, and *be still* . . . listen for God's guidance.

And tape this scripture on your mirror or in a book and read it faithfully: "For God does not give us a spirit of fear, but of power, of love and of a sound mind" (2 Timothy 1:7). Let all that you do be done in love.

—Marge Rice

on the go? Be still (Psalm 46:10) Listen for His voice on a regular basis.

**Look on the bright side.**

Sometimes it is hard to find the good that comes from bad, but I think if we look around we can often find ourselves doing just that. Everyday, I see people being a part of creating a positive environment—for ourselves, for others, for guests coming through the doors, for our children.

There is also a great deal of comfort and optimism that

# LIBRARY CORNER

## THE WORD SOURCE

### **New Library Reading for Martin Luther's 500-year anniversary**

Five-hundred years ago Martin Luther expressed his beliefs in a manuscript entitled "Disputation on the Power and Efficacy of Indulgences," also known as "The 95 Theses," a list of propositions intended for theological debate. According to popular legend, on October 31, 1517, Luther defiantly nailed a copy of his 95 Theses to the door of the Wittenberg Castle church.

Luther is widely credited with starting the Protestant Reformation. What elements of 16th century theology provoked Luther's reformist zeal? What changes did he call for? What were reactions among his European contemporaries? What caused his reformist path to take hold?

Are modern reform issues and trends qualitatively different now, 500 years post-Luther?

You can read about those matters via your FPC Word Source Library. We've added new titles in celebration of this year's 500th anniversary of Luther's 1517 action. Our OPALS system lets one browse the collection online with any computer or mobile device via <http://fpcfc.scoolaid.net>.

New titles in our library collection include *Reformers in the Wings* by David Steinmetz, *Women and the Reformation* by Kirsi Stjerna, and a biography of William Tyndale by David Daniell. Brief reviews of two other new books follow.

—Tom Tonoli

### **A Simple Way to Pray**, written by Martin Luther in 1517

Today's Christian often gets advice on how best to pray. However, the meaning of "best" in this context may not be clear. One day last week I was reminded by one Christian friend to "pray without ceasing" and by another to set aside regular prayer times in both the early morning and the late evening hours.

Luther's "simple" way to pray was first written as a letter responding to a friend's request for advice about how to pray. This friend was also Luther's barber, a man named Peter. The greeting in Luther's letter was as follows: "Dear Master Peter, I will tell you as best I can what I do personally when I pray. May our dear Lord grant to you and to everybody to do it better than I. Given the complexities of life, there may not be a single simple way to pray that is appropriate for all situations." But Luther was willing to share his own approach, based on the Lord's Prayer, the Ten Commandments, and the Apostle's Creed. The prayer structure did, in fact, sound fairly simple, but applying Luther's advice required time for both Bible study and meditation. For each of his "guideposts," (the Prayer, the Commandments, and the Creed), Luther suggested first to study the complete relevant Bible reference and then to meditate on its application to life. When the overall study is completed, it is time to apply the same approach to the obvious components of the guideposts (petitions, commands, articles) individually in the same way.

Simple? Maybe! Lengthy? Yes!  
Interesting? Certainly! Useful? Of course!

### **Brief Introduction to the Reformation**, by G. Sunshine

Christians of the 21st century have little time for in-depth study of the Reformation that occurred in the 16th century. Most likely, Christians of today recognize the name Martin Luther, remember the posting of the 95 Theses, and are still moved by Luther's famous declaration: "Here I Stand."

Martin Luther grew up in Germany and planned to attend law school. That plan was quickly abandoned when Luther, having just escaped death by lightning, prayed to St. Anne, "Save me! I will become a monk." And so he did. As a monk he diligently studied Scripture and was seriously concerned whether his own life as well as the practices of the Church measured up to the dictates of Holy Scripture. Luther was particularly upset about the payment of indulgences to avoid purgatory and gain immediate entrance into heaven. As a doctoral student at Wittenberg University, Luther became more active in the Reformation movement. As a last resort, he posted 95 Theses on a door of the Wittenberg Castle. Numerous debates followed, including the one at the Diet of Worms where Luther stated his conclusion: "I am bound by the Scripture I have quoted and my conscience is captive to the Word of God. I cannot and will not retract anything . . . HERE I STAND. I CANNOT DO OTHERWISE. MAY GOD HELP ME. AMEN."

Dr. Sunshine continues to write more about the Reformation throughout Europe. His writing is clear, informative and spiced with wit and humor. He even connects 16th and 21st centuries by naming one chapter *The Empire Strikes Back*.

—Ann Thomas

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