

# THE MESSENGER

| NEWS FROM FIRST PRESBYTERIAN CHURCH FORT COLLINS |



**HOPE,  
FAITH, &  
LOVE  
FOR CHILDREN  
IN NEED**

**BELLS  
RING,  
ANGELS  
SING**

**SURELY THE LORD  
IS IN THIS PLACE**

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Is in This Place
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# From the Editor | COME AND WORSHIP

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Our Advent theme this year is *Come and Worship*. Admittedly, this seems rather ordinary to me. We are a church—of course we worship, especially at Advent. And Advent is certainly the time that brings many new faces to worship. If worship is such an obvious concept for both a church and the Advent season, what makes it special as a focus this year?

In creating all the marketing pieces for our Advent season at FPC, it hit me: worship requires me to let go of self and focus on the coming of Christ. That's far easier said than done when I have lights to put up, cookies to bake, events to attend, presents to buy, clothes to donate...I'm sure you can add to the list! But what if all those things, instead of being busy "holiday prep," became acts of worship in expectation of the coming Savior? Just like the wisemen rode their camels toward the star overhead, just like the Drummer Boy played, "Pa rum pum pum pum" on his drum, just like Mary birthed a newborn baby, just like the shepherds cared for their sheep—all performed their tasks anticipating the coming of Christ.

Join us this Advent as we worship in the vein of our nativity family, giving to children in need (p. 4), hearing the bells in concert (p. 6), giving thanks (p. 8), praying for hard-working committees (p. 9), singing for joy (p. 11), donating a little extra (p. 12), and having compassion on others (p. 13).

Come and worship! Come and worship! Worship Christ the newborn King!  
—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](mailto:crichardson@firstpresfc.org). Contact Editor Cathy Richardson for more information, (970)482-6107.





# SURELY THE LORD IS IN THIS PLACE

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“Surely the Lord is in this place...and I did not know it!”

This was what the Old Testament patriarch, Jacob, said when he woke up from a dream in which he saw a ladder between heaven and earth with angels ascending and descending and in which he heard the Lord speaking to him, renewing the promises given to his father, Isaac, and grandfather, Abraham.

It seems like this phrase could be said by many of us at so many times in our lives, so often in retrospect. We go through difficult times—times of great loss; seasons of confusion, full of unknowns or feeling like we're in limbo; challenging transitions; seasons of hopelessness, maybe with respect to our marriage, our children, our loved ones; times of feeling isolated or feeling crowded in upon. Often in those times, we might not see or sense the presence of God; we only feel the difficulty, the hopelessness, a sense of aloneness through it all.

But so many of us who have come to the other side of those difficult seasons have story after story of how we can now see how the Lord was in that place with us even though we did not know it at the time. We see how He gave us the strength to get through, how He brought people into our lives to help and encourage us. We can later see how God was working in the background, maybe working out the circumstances, working in our heart or in the heart of the person we were concerned about, or providing wisdom and bringing about personal and spiritual growth in us. On the other side of those difficult times, we can look back and say, “Surely the Lord is in this

place; surely the Lord was with me through this, even though I didn't know it or didn't feel it at the time.”

In this season of Advent, we think back to the people of Israel who were at one of the darkest times in their history. As a people they were occupied and oppressed, and to make it worse, God had been silent. God had not shown up. They waited and hoped and waited and hoped for the coming of the Messiah—for the Lord to show up again and help them.

## **And then God came down. Jesus was born. Emmanuel—God with us.**

The Lord was now present with them, and only a few knew it: a woman who had gotten pregnant out of wedlock, some shepherds, and some foreign wisemen. All along, God had a great and universal plan to reverse the effects of the fall and bring about restoration and redemption. The decisive event had now happened through the birth of Jesus. God was again on the move in His biggest move yet. God was dwelling among His people, and yet so many did not know it and so were still in despair.

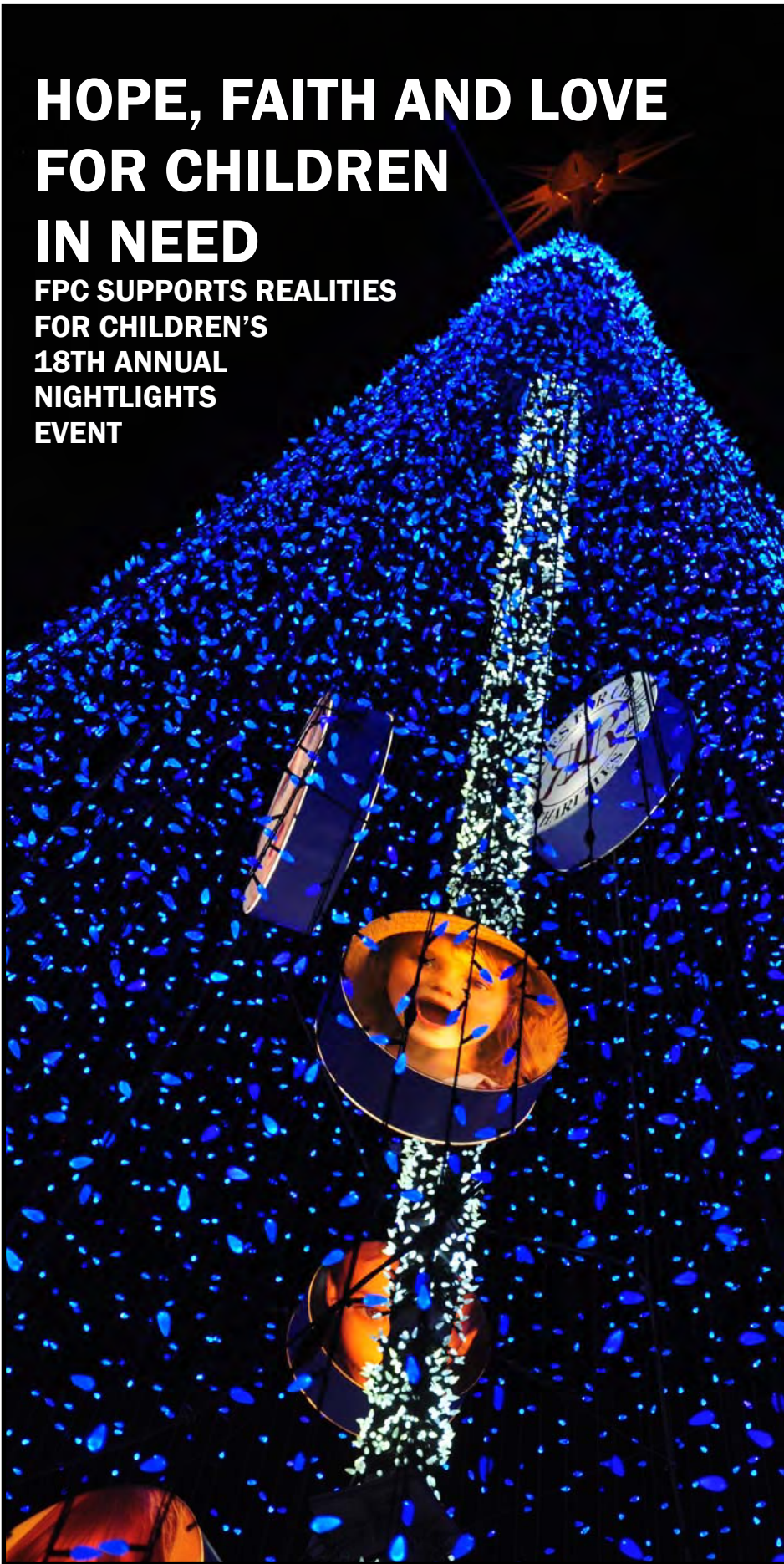
Whatever you are going through this Advent, the season reminds us that even when things seem at their darkest, the Lord is present and actively working in our world and in our lives and everywhere in between. We can take hope that we are not alone in our difficult seasons. We can seek to recognize the presence of God through people who love, encourage, and support us during the dark times. We can sense the Lord stirring in our souls through the beauty of the music of the season. As we start an Advent sermon series about Christ-centered worship, we can learn from the worship of those who went through similar times of dark hopelessness. And we can be reminded of the Good News of Christmas—that Jesus Christ, the Light of the World, has entered into our world and continues to shine his light into all the darkness that he finds here.

My Advent prayer for us all is that we would take hope, no matter what we're going through, that there will be a time when we will be able to look back and say with conviction, “Surely the Lord was in this place—and I did not know it.”

—Cindy Frost

# HOPE, FAITH AND LOVE FOR CHILDREN IN NEED

FPC SUPPORTS REALITIES  
FOR CHILDREN'S  
18TH ANNUAL  
NIGHTLIGHTS  
EVENT



Children are truly a gift from God. As we learn from Mark 9, receiving a child into your arms is a way to receive Jesus. And receiving Jesus is a way to receive God. Therefore, how we deal with children speaks to our relationship with God. It's hard to imagine the darkness involved in hurting an innocent and vulnerable child. Yet even here in our idyllic Larimer County, this abuse and neglect exists, wreaking havoc on so many little lives to an extent many of us may not be aware of.

Talk to Craig Secher, the founder and president of the non-profit Realities For Children Charities, and he'll praise God for "the light" that is the counterpoint to the heartbreak and horror he has witnessed as a former case manager with Larimer County Child Protective Services. This "light" refers to all those people and agencies within our community joining together through Realities For Children to bring attention, money, and services—and hope, faith, and love—to children who are abused, neglected, or at-risk.

One of FPC's local mission partners, Realities For Children serves the needs of severely abused, neglected, and at-risk children in Larimer County—as such, the support and partnership of FPC is essential to the services it provides. Partnered in service with 28 local affiliate youth agencies, Realities For Children is able to create an effective and efficient safety net for the most vulnerable members of our community. Realities' four core services include:

- **Emergency funding** to abused, neglected, and at-risk youth in Larimer County. Funding is available on a case-by-case basis for children's needs when there are no other resources available.
- **Support for youth agencies** to help increase community awareness of their services. To assist in the success of these agencies, Realities For Children is a primary underwriter for virtually every major outreach event for abused children in Larimer County.

- **Community awareness** to help educate people about child abuse right here where we live—to prompt as much community engagement and involvement as possible.
- **Youth activities** held monthly for the children served by Realities For Children. The importance of a child simply being able to enjoy being a child is the goal here. Although these youth activities are designed to provide creative outlets and fun, exercise, and entertainment opportunities that these children may not otherwise experience, they also offer cathartic healing. In addition to allowing youth who have experienced such hardship to laugh and play during difficult times, it often teaches them to trust, communicate, and work together. Activities include bowling, theater, ice and roller skating, pumpkin patch visits, Christmas and holiday parties, Bikes for Tykes, ropes course, and movie nights.

FPC has been blessed to offer support to Realities For Children on many different levels. We have been honored to host the annual NightLights Celebration and 50-foot illuminated tree, and our members have volunteered their time and resources at special youth activities, Christmas parties, the Bikes for Tykes annual drive, and even by directly providing needed items like handmade blankets, diapers, and warm winter clothing on the Tree of Warmth we sponsor each year in our church. This support spans many generations of our members and touches most every aspect of the services provided by Realities For Children, all in the name of bettering the lives of our local children who have endured unthinkable abuse and neglect. Whether time, talent, or treasure shared, in the end it translates to a single message of hope, faith, and love for thousands of children.

As the end of the year draws near and we begin planning Christmas celebrations, we remember that this is also a time of great sadness and need for the abused and at-risk children served by Realities. In December alone, Realities will help to provide services for over 1,500 children. It is this huge demand that spurred the creation of NightLights 18 years ago.

Today the NightLights tree, hosted on our church lawn, stands nearly 50 feet tall, decorated with the faces of children and featuring over 30,000 blue lights, the international color for child abuse awareness and prevention. It is one of the single largest fundraising events in Larimer County for abused children and continues to brighten the lives of those in need,

helping to reach ever further into the darkness of child abuse in our community.

For more information about NightLights or to sponsor a light on the NightLights tree, visit [www.GiveaNightLight.com](http://www.GiveaNightLight.com) or call (970)484-9090.

Realities for Children is also accepting donations of the following items through December 14 at 5:00 p.m.:

- NEW toys: books, puzzles, games, sports, art, music, stuffed animals, and more!
- WARM clothing: hats, gloves, scarves, long sleeves, long pants, (new) socks, boots, and more!
- BIKES: new or used to be distributed at the 18th annual Bikes for Tykes distribution at FPC.

Items may be dropped off at the Realities For Children office at 1610 S. College Ave., Ft. Collins. Clothing can be placed on the Tree of Warmth in the Grand Hall at FPC.

On behalf of the children we have been able to serve through the loving reach of the body of Christ, thank you!

—Audrey McDill

**“He sat down and called the twelve....And he took a child and put him in the midst of them, and taking him in his arms, he said to them, ‘Whoever receives one such child in my name receives me, and whoever receives me, receives not me but him who sent me.’” —Mark 9:34–37**





# BELLS RING, ANGELS SING

## WORSHIP, MUSIC & ARTS PREPARES FOR CHRISTMAS



Bells will ring and angels will sing as we celebrate the Advent and Christmas seasons at FPC. The various musical ensembles that make up the Music and Arts Ministry have been getting ready. We are thrilled to invite the congregation, community, family, and friends to two very special presentations featuring the music of Christmas this December.

First, the **30<sup>th</sup> Annual Bells of Christmas Concert** will take place on **Sunday, December 6 at 7:00 p.m.** The concert will feature the Chancel Bell Choir, Jubilate Ringers, Exquisite Brass Quintet, Alice Crawford, Paul Chubbuck, Dawn Grapes, and Joe McConathy. The doors will open at 6:15 p.m. for this wonderful evening of Christmas music for bells, brass, and organ. An extended prelude featuring Alice Crawford playing the hammered dulcimer and Paul Chubbuck

playing recorder will begin at 6:15 p.m. The evening will include a tribute to Ethel McMillan McCurry and the 50<sup>th</sup> anniversary of her gift to FPC, which was used to purchase the first set of bells. Because of the popularity of this concert, early arrival is encouraged in order to obtain the best seating.

Then, Sunday, December 13, the choirs and orchestra of FPC will join forces to present the annual Music Ministry Christmas presentation **A Christmas Festival**. The Sanctuary Choir, Jubilate Singers, Celebration Singers, Chancel Bell Choir, Exquisite Brass Quintet, and FPC Orchestra will proclaim the message that Christ is born using the beauty and power of music to share the special message of Christmas at two identical services at 9:15 a.m. and 11:00 a.m. Come, and experience afresh the angels' song, and hear the promise

foretold by the prophets through the power of scripture and song.

Finally, FPC will have three Christmas Eve worship services in the beautiful sanctuary at FPC on **Thursday, December 24**. Services include the 3:00 p.m. Family Service, 5:00 p.m. Traditional Service with choir, brass, and organ, and intimate 7:00 p.m. Lessons and Carols Service with communion.

On behalf of the singers, ringers, and instrumentalists in the Worship and Arts Ministry at FPC, I extend a warm invitation to you. Please join us for these special musical offerings during this season of Advent and Christmas. Glory to the Newborn King!

—Marvin Crawford



# THE POWER OF A SHOEBOX

**FPC PROVIDES OVER 260 GIFT-FILLED BOXES TO SAMARITAN'S PURSE'S OPERATION CHRISTMAS CHILD**

A small shoebox can have a big impact. What goes into the box is fun, but what comes out of it is eternal. Once again this year, FPC helped in changing children's lives all over the world in Jesus' name through the power of a simple gift with Operation Christmas Child. This mission brings good news and great joy to children all over the world through simple gifts.

People like you pack shoeboxes with a special toy (such as a doll, stuffed animal, or games), school supplies, hygiene items, and other gifts, sending them off with prayer that God would bless a child in need.

This year we were blessed to make this powerful mission even more incredible during our Wednesday Midweek eXperience with empowering videos and discussion. Alice Crawford of the Children's Ministry organized volunteers to help children here in our church create and stuff owls as an extra special gift to Operation Christmas Child. Volunteers and children were able to work side by side to create a lasting gift while learning to give to those less fortunate. Finally, we were able to pack over 100 boxes on site with the generosity of organizations in our community.

Every gift-filled shoebox is a powerful tool for evangelism and discipleship—transforming the lives of children and their families around the world through the Good News of Jesus Christ. A Gospel booklet in the child's language accompanies every shoebox gift, and many boys and girls go on to participate in a follow-up discipleship program, The Greatest Journey.

With special thanks to several key organizations this year, including Tooth Zone, Caring Smiles Dentistry, Wal-Mart, King Soopers, The Youth Clinic, Canino's Italian Restaurant, and MOPS-FPC, we were able to fill 262 boxes, doubling our goal and increasing the number of boxes sent over the last two years.

Since 1993, Samaritan's Purse has collected and delivered more than 124 million shoebox gifts to children in more than 150 countries and territories through Operation Christmas Child. No matter where we go or what we do, we can offer more than help. We can offer hope. To suffering children in a broken world, we share the news of the only One who can bring true peace—Jesus Christ, the Prince of Peace.

—Michelle Riesel



# COUNTING BLESSINGS

## A PRAYER OF THANKS

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I have shared this before—several years ago possibly—but you may see me share it every year. I wondered if it was “too late” to share it as I missed it in the November *Messenger*... but then I realized, “When is it too late to give thanks?” Read it again (or for the first time if you did not read it before), and you will find a part of you in here somewhere. I know I did. Some of it may seem “outdated” as I have had this tucked away for years...only to bring it out and read it every November and December. I shall keep it out now—as every day is a good day to give thanks.

—Marge Rice

### Counting Blessings

As we gather together to count the Lord’s blessings at our holiday table, we are grateful, God, for economic indicators that are rising and interest rates that are falling, for peace-keeping forces and for natural resources, for families and fantasies, farmers and fawns.

For refunds and rebates and political debates, we give thanks this holiday season Lord, and for chapels and apples, for histories and mysteries, for unicorns and peppercorns, French horns and firstborns. Our gratitude too, for Doonesbury and donors and doodads and doodles, for giraffes and gin rummy, for homes and homecomings, and homers.

Eternal Father, strong to save, we are grateful for ET and ETAs, for ethics and ethnics, for etudes and etchings. For “Dearly beloved, we are gathered here in the sight of God to unite this man and this woman in holy matrimony” and “You’re hired” and “It’s benign” and

“Yea, though I walk through the valley of the shadow of death, I will fear no evil,” we offer thanks, O Lord.

Safety nets and safety pins, safety belts and safety valves we list as blessing this day, Dear Lord and Father of Mankind. So, too, smokers who quit and dieters who don’t, pizza to go and Christmas to come, anything low-calorie and everything chocolate, windfalls and waterfalls, and landfalls and overhauls, baseball and snowballs and southern draws.

O Lord our God, when we in awesome wonder consider all the worlds thy hands have made, we give thanks for the miracle of conception and the promise of eternity, for daughters and dawn after dark, for immunization and imagination, for chromosome and honeycomb. Microscopes and stethoscopes and kaleidoscopes, we call blessings, Lord, along with antelope and cantaloupe, heydays and payday, gymnasiums and geraniums, cranes and crayons and cradles and crash pads.

For unions and reunions, for creation and recreation, for fugues and refuges, for respirators, reveries, Renoir, renaissance, and resurrection, we give thanks, O God, our help in ages past, our hope for years to come. And for prairies and fairies and visionaries, for sons and soup and soul...and for Social Security.

For “’Twas the night before Christmas and all through the house” and for twilight and two-fers and twins, we are grateful, Lord. For 98.6 on the thermometer, anything over 650 on the SAT, for 120-80 on blood pressure and .300 batting averages, for 80 degree days and 20-20 eyes.

Our Father God to thee, author of liberty, we give thanks for amazing grace and American dreams, for brotherhood and neighborhood and livelihood and firewood, for silicon chips and chocolate chips, for apprenticeships and scholarships, for physicians, magicians, musicians, and peaceful transitions, for “We hold these truths to be self-evident” and “Give peace a chance” and “We shall overcome.”

God of grace and God of glory, we praise thee for daughters and dances and Danish, for meteors and memories and mothers, for arcades and archives, for secretaries and sanctuaries, for icicles and bicycles, casseroles and camisoles, for lagoons and lampoons and bassoons and honeymoons.

For healing and halfway houses, for Halley’s Comet and Handel’s “Hallelujah” we are grateful, O King Eternal. Thank you too, for fathers and forefathers and foster fathers and grandfathers and founding fathers, for a port in the storm and a bridge over trouble and healing after hurt and “Come unto me, all ye that labor and are heavy laden and I will give you rest.” The decrease in heart-attack deaths, gasoline prices, and infant mortality we count among our blessings, Rock of Ages. So too, the World War II Memorial and the Special Olympics, turkey and tax cuts and tacos and tailgate parties, pasta and pastrami and pilgrims and St. Matthew Passion, and as always, that “neither death, nor life, nor angels, nor principalities, nor powers, nor things present, nor things to come, nor height, nor depth, nor any other creatures shall be able to separate us from the love of God.”

Amen.



## PASTOR NOMINATING COMMITTEE UPDATE

The PNC would like to share with our FPC family a note that it received recently. Karen Halualani addressed the note to each member of the PNC; it reads:

*I wanted to let each of you know that I pray for this PNC daily—for physical and emotional strength, open hearts, careful listening for God's whisper, and patience. I also pray for FPC's congregation—we need to have confidence in the process and our PNC, patience, and understanding. My third prayer is for the family of the pastor we call—open hearts, understanding God's call, and confidence in this understanding. All three—PNC, FPC congregation, and our next pastor and family—have challenges in this process. But, as Paul reminds us, "God is still in charge."*

This note was just what the PNC needed at the time it was received. Meeting once and often more than once a week can be challenging, but everyone on the committee is anxious to respond to God's will and timing for the next senior pastor for FPC Fort Collins. Thank you for your continued support and prayers.

—Pam Pierce



Parents and grandparents, are you looking for great Christmas books to share with your little ones? Visit the church library for dozens of selections, including:

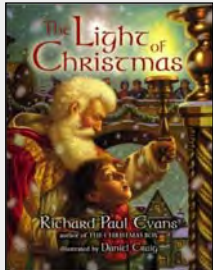


*Christmas is Love*, by Joan Walsh Anglund

*The Christmas Snowman*, by Margery Cuyler

*Christmas Trolls*, by Jan Brett

*The Wild Christmas Reindeer*, by Jan Brett



*The Christmas Day Kitten*, by James Herriot

*A Churchmouse Christmas*, by Barbara Davoll

*My Very First Christmas*, by Lois Rock

*Madeline's Christmas*, by Ludwig Bemelmans

*The Farolitos of Christmas*, by Rudolfo Anaya

*Jingle the Christmas Clown*, by Tomie DePaola



*The Light of Christmas*, by Richard Paul Evans

*A Child's Christmas in Wales*, by Dylan Thomas

*A Letter to Santa Clause*, by Rose Impey

*A Christmas Story*, by Brian Wildsmith

*A Shepherd's Christmas Story*, by Dandi Daley Mackall

*The Littlest Angel*, by Charles Tazewell



*The Third Gift*, by Linda Sue Park

*One Night in a Stable*, by Guido Visconti

*They Followed a Bright Star*, by Joan Alavedra

—Tammy Miller  
for the Word Source Library Corner

In October, the FPC staff volunteered with Fort Collins Habitat for Humanity in October. Marge Rice shared her thoughts on the day of service.



Fort Collins  
**Habitat  
for Humanity®**

*Fresh air for us....*

*But a fresh start for  
someone else.*

*Out of a comfort zone for us...*

*But creating a comfort zone  
for someone else.*

*We went to build a house...*

*Turns out we were building a life for someone else.*

It was a pleasure to represent FPC in helping local families who need a hand up, not a hand out.



**MARK YOUR CALENDAR NOW:**

***One Service (Traditional)***

***December 27, at 10 a.m.***

***Church Offices CLOSED***

***December 24, at noon***

***December 25***

***December 28***

***December 31, at noon***

***January 1***



# Caroling, Crockpots, Cookies, & Cocoa

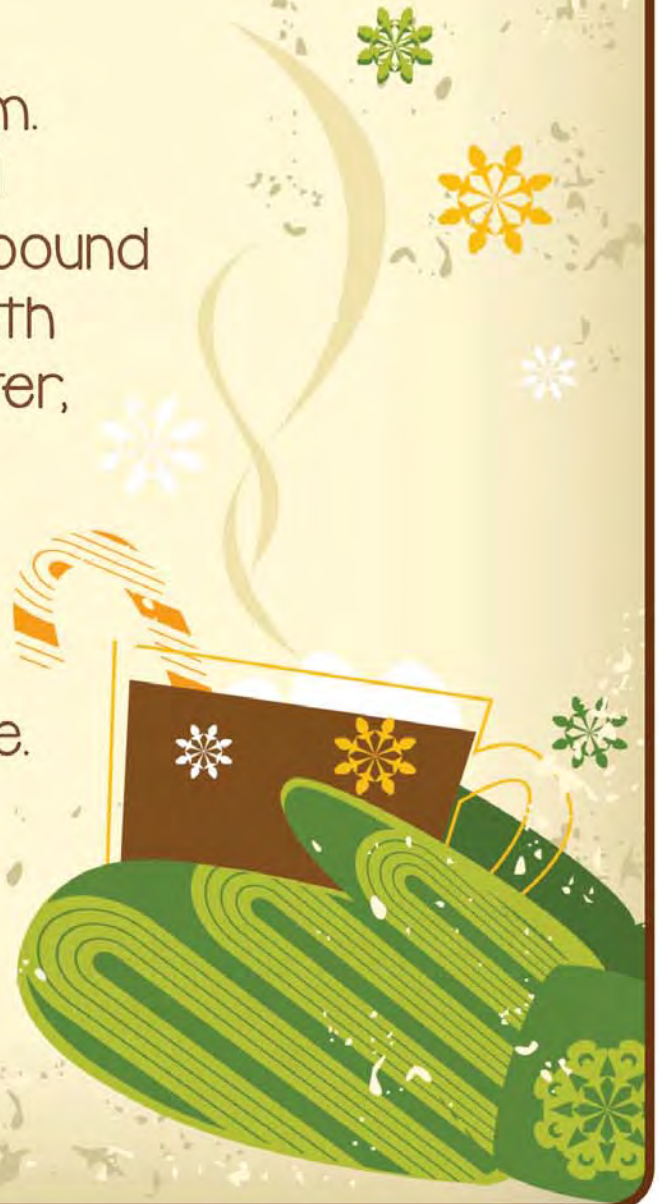
## Sharing Christmas Warmth & Cheer

Sunday, December 20, 2015

Meet at church at 4:30 p.m.  
Groups will go out to local  
nursing homes and homebound  
members to share warmth  
and Christmas cheer. Later,  
return to the church for  
festive fellowship.

Please bring a crockpot  
meal and cookies to share.  
Cocoa will be provided.

RSVP to Patty Baker, at  
(970)482-6107  
by December 18.





**“No one after lighting a lamp puts it in a cellar, but on the lampstand so that those who enter may see the light.”**

**—Luke 11:33**

During this season we are reminded that Jesus, the Light of the World is our focus throughout the year. We want this light to shine in our sanctuary on December 20 as a witness to our faith. If you would like to help bring this light to life, you may purchase a candle in memory of, in honor of, or in celebration of someone significant in your life.

**ORDER FORM: \$8/candle**

Please complete this form and return to the church office along with your check. Complete one form for each candle. **The deadline for this order is December 11.** Names of those being honored will appear in the bulletin on December 20.

Your name: \_\_\_\_\_

\_\_\_\_ In remembrance of      \_\_\_\_ In honor of      \_\_\_\_ In celebration of

Names (s) \_\_\_\_\_

**Check one:**

\_\_\_\_ I will pick up my candle *after* the 11 a.m. worship service on Dec. 20

\_\_\_\_ I will **NOT** pick up my candle

—The Caring Ministry Team, First Presbyterian Church



**CONSIDERING A YEAR-END GIFT?**

The deadline for your year-end gift to apply to the 2015 tax year is Thursday, December 31 before noon. Please drop your

gift in the offering plate, stop by the office, or give online by visiting [www.firstpresfc.org](http://www.firstpresfc.org) or scanning the QR code here.





## A CHURCH OF CHARACTER

# COMPASSION

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**“We will never know by experience God’s richest blessings of comfort and compassion toward others until we ourselves have had trials.”**

**—T.J. Bach**

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The character trait for December is COMPASSION (versus indifference). Compassion can be defined as investing whatever is necessary to heal the hurts of others.

Compassion is the result of discerning a deep need. Jesus saw both the physical and spiritual needs of the multitudes and had compassion. “And Jesus went about all the cities and villages, teaching in their synagogues and preaching the gospel of the kingdom, and healing every disease and every infirmity. When he saw the crowds, he had compassion for them, because they were harassed and helpless, like sheep without a shepherd” (Matthew 9:35–36).

There are many other stories of compassion in the Bible, both in the Old and New Testaments. Consider the compassion that Pharaoh’s daughter had when she first saw Moses or the compassion that the Good Samaritan had for the traveler who had been severely beaten by the thieves. Consider also the ending of the story that Jesus told about the father and his wayward son: “And he [the prodigal son] arose and came to his father. But while he was yet at a distance, his father saw him and had compassion, and ran and embraced him and kissed him” (Luke 15:20). All three of these stories clearly demonstrate the definition of compassion as given above.

How can we show compassion to those around us?

- God has blessed us in many, many ways. How can we pass along these blessings from God to others? Look for ways to do good to all people. Compassion is a practical expression of genuine love, and all believers are commanded to love others.
- Turn personal suffering into compassion for others. We all have times in our lives when we experience suffering of various kinds. Because of this, we can understand more effectively how others are feeling when they go through suffering. Such understanding provides us with compassion, and we can then provide others with some of the comfort that we all receive from God.
- Pray for others. Enlarge your heart with a prayer list. The larger our hearts, the more compassion we will have. Prayer is powerful, and we know that God wants to hear what is on our hearts. Praying for others is one way that we can all live a life of compassion every day.

# BUILDING EACH OTHER UP IN LOVE

## MIDWEEK EXPERIENCE SESSION TWO STARTS IN JANUARY

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“Rather, speaking the truth in love, we are to grow up in every way into him who is the head, into Christ, from whom the whole body, joined and held together by every joint with which it is equipped, when each part is working properly, makes the body grow so that it builds itself up in love” (Ephesians 4:15–16, ESV).

The church body matters to God! As we read in this verse, the Lord calls us together to carry out His work here on earth. Each of us, with our respective gifts and touch points, has a role to play. It’s a beautiful, interdependent arrangement. Through our place in the Body of Christ, we mature as believers, deepening our understanding of God as we encourage and love one another. And so, our Midweek eXperience (MX) was born.

### What is MX?

Conceived at the direction of Session, MX is an intentional step our church is taking to meet each Wednesday night to deepen our connection to God and to each other. Dinner, childcare, and classes for adults and children are offered. Through God’s grace and the hard work of many people, the first session of MX was a success!

On September 9, the MX kickoff, more than 100 people streamed into Shepardson Hall, where they shared lively conversation and laughter over a mouth-watering meal of brisket, au gratin potatoes, and homemade desserts (thank you Carl Maxey and team!). After dinner, everyone dispersed to their class of choice, selected from a range of thought-provoking topics. Children of all ages headed to their respective gatherings: little ones to the nursery, kids through 5th grade to the children’s program with Mrs. Crawford, and 6th–12th graders to Youth Group with Taylor and Casey Kiser. Since that first night, MX continued to average about 100 people each week, with dedicated teams of volunteers bringing it all to life for the faithful participants. How exciting to see our church family join together to experience encouraging friendships, loving acts of service, and engaging classes...in other words, a growing Body of Christ!

### MX Session Two Starts January 6, 2016

Perhaps you’ve been a regular MX participant who is now excited for more. Or maybe you could attend only a few evenings in the fall. Or maybe you missed the first MX session entirely. Well, there’s good news! MX will continue on Wednesday nights throughout 2016, with Session Two

beginning January 6 and continuing through March 9, 2016. While we hope you can carve out time to be a regular attendee this winter, all are welcome to drop in to MX at any time. In fact, there is a “drop-in” adult class for this very reason!

Please note that on January 6 (Epiphany) and February 10 (beginning of Lent), we will have special worship in lieu of regular classes. On these nights, all ages will stay in Shepardson Hall after dinner for worship.

### New Classes

Offerings are still being firmed up (if you have an interest in teaching an MX class, please contact Laura Reid), but here is a taste of classes for Session Two:

- Caring for Creation and Loving our Neighbor: Discussing the book *Tending to Eden* (taught by Dean Biggins and Plant for Purpose Mission Team)
- Drop-In Class: The Prophets taught by Paul Parsons (first four weeks), then Lenten-themed content (teacher TBD)
- Teach Me to Pray: Exploring prayer (teacher TBD)
- The Book of Acts: Taught by Lee Gray

Youth Group and children’s programs will continue meeting on Wednesday nights as well, and we pray that families with kids will make MX a priority—you are such an important part of our church family!

Keep an eye out for new MX Session Two information cards in the literature racks, as well as the MX table in Shepardson Hall (on December 20 and January 3), where you can sign up for classes and learn more.

This is a profound time in the life of our church as we move beyond turbulent times, through the transition with Pastor Paul, and toward the arrival of a new senior pastor. The participation we’ve seen with MX reflects a sense of healing, hope, and expectancy among our members. Praise God for that!

Many thanks to all who have served, cooked, cleaned, prayed, taught, studied, learned, and participated in MX. We look forward to the start of a new year and a new MX session where we can grow our faith together. As Pastor Paul often says, we hope you’ll come along.

—Audrey McDill



# 30th Annual BELLS OF CHRISTMAS

Sunday, December 6,  
at 7 p.m.

at First Presbyterian Church

Admission is free. Childcare available.

For more information, visit [firstpresfc.org](http://firstpresfc.org).



## NATIVITIES AROUND THE WORLD

Back by popular demand, Global Village Museum presents Nativities Around the World, a showcase of more than 250 remarkable nativities of artistry and cultural value from countries such as Nigeria, Peru, France, and Nepal. Fashioned by hand or mass-produced with wood, stone, ceramic, fabric, copper, gourds, seeds, and other materials, the figures reflect the cultures of their creators. In addition to traditional nativities, renditions from Thomas Kincaid, Simpich, Goebel, and other rare collectible and antique sets grace the gallery. From miniatures to large-scale nativities, the collection is on loan from local individuals who generously share their treasures.



Invite your family and friends and community members to come to the Global Village Museum. We sincerely hope that people from throughout the region will be able to participate and enjoy the exhibit in expanding a community spirit of cultural understanding.

The Museum is located in Old Town at 200 West Mountain Avenue and is open Tuesday through Saturday 11:00 a.m. to 5:00 p.m. Nativities Around the World will be on display through January 23, 2016.





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*Worship* is written all over the story of Jesus' birth. In fact, almost every person in Scripture who awakens to that birth enters into worship. This Advent we seek to see and to hear through their faith that we might join them in worshipping the Lord Jesus Christ, and we hope you will come with us.

**COME  
AND  
Worship**

A watercolor illustration of holly leaves and red berries, with a red musical note symbol integrated into the design.

*Advent and Christmas 2015*  
First Presbyterian Church, Fort Collins  
Visit [firstpresfc.org](http://firstpresfc.org) for more information.

*Sunday, December 6, 2015 - Second Sunday of Advent*  
Worship, 9:15 & 11 a.m.  
30<sup>th</sup> Annual Bells of Christmas Concert, 7 p.m.

*Sunday, December 13, 2015 - Third Sunday of Advent*  
Christmas Festival of Music, 9:15 & 11 a.m. (No Sunday school.)

*Sunday, December 20, 2015 - Fourth Sunday of Advent*  
Worship, 9:15 & 11 a.m.  
Caroling, Crockpots, Cookies, and Cocoa, 4:30 p.m.

*Christmas Eve - Thursday, December 24, 2015*  
Family Worship Service, 3 p.m.  
Traditional Worship, 5 p.m.  
Lessons & Carols with Communion, 7 p.m.

*Sunday, December 27, 2015*  
Worship, 10 a.m.  
(Note: only one service.)