

# THE MESSENGER

| NEWS FROM FIRST PRESBYTERIAN CHURCH FORT COLLINS |

**STEP INTO  
THE NEW**

**FINDING A  
NEW  
PASTOR**

**new  
year**

**HOW  
DID  
YOU  
KNOW  
MY  
NAME?**

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# From the Editor | STEP INTO THE NEW

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"A journey of a thousand miles begins with a single step," Chinese philosopher Laozi said. A new year always makes me think of the journey ahead. Like many people, I wonder, "What new goals will I make?" and "What steps will I take to get there?" At First Presbyterian Church, we embark on a new year's journey together. A challenging journey where we are called to step in, down, up, and out.

It's guaranteed, new faces will step *in* our doors in 2015. Discover FPC will bring new members to our congregation (p. 9). Diverse faces will step *up* where Center Leaders, Elders, Deacons, CNC Members and staff have recently stepped *down*. Others will step *up* to service, too. A new Pastor Nominating Committee will come together (p. 4). Our Nursery, Sunday school, youth ministry, and Vacation Bible School will need loving hands and passionate team members (p. 6-7). And, perhaps our Annual Meeting and Dinner (p. 12) may encourage us to step *out* of our comfort zone in a new way.

At FPC, our journey into 2015 begins with a step. Although our individual steps may not always feel sure-footed, we will take them side by side — with each other and with the One who leads the way.

—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.



SHARING THE HEART OF CHRIST  
WITH THE HEART OF THE CITY  
...AND THE WORLD.



The sun was throwing winter gold rays across the Utah sky, crafting a once-in-a-lifetime sunset. Nicole and I sat by our campfire, reflecting on the astonishing solitude and beauty into which we had been absorbed the previous two days – hoodoos, serpentine arroyos, slickrock, joints, slot canyons, caves, pinyon pines growing out of solid rock. On the grate over the fire a small pot and three pouches in aluminum foil lay heating – our dinner of turkey, carrots, sweet potatoes, and green beans. It was Thanksgiving Day 2014, in Canyonlands National Park, Needles District. It was one of the most extraordinary, reflective, and contented days we could remember. There was so much for which to give thanks.

As your interim pastor, I'm sitting at the equivalent of that campfire today here in Fort Collins, reflecting on the beauty of what I have seen in the last year in this congregation. There is so much for which to give thanks. The worship at First Presbyterian Church has been as rich and wonderful this year as any worship in which I have taken part over a lifetime – just remembering the

Christmas Festival on December 14 fills me once again with wonder. You have allowed God to work within you the willingness to agree to disagree, in spite of a highly controversial General Assembly—no small matter when you consider the hard times of recent years. Although many good people have left our church over the past two years, we have by the grace of God survived without layoffs financially—more than that, your financial promises for 2015 giving have been wonderful, strong, and faith-filled. You have gathered around the families of those who have lost beloved ones in death, being a congregation faithful to the Gospel in the face of grave losses. My heart is flooded with memories: forgiveness given and received during Lent, a Liberia mission trip before Ebola broke out, a new Vision and Mission adopted, testimonies from people of all ages in late August of how God has led them, the wonder and glory of how God has used the parables of Jesus in so many of your lives. There is so much for which to give thanks.

As the sun set on that beloved day in

the Utah desert, Nicole and I turned our attention to what lay ahead. The next morning we would pull up camp and travel to Arches National Park, new territory, new risks, new challenges. Just as was true on that November evening, we as a congregation have no guarantees that our new year will be easy or risk-free. This year will be marked by a Pastoral Nominating Committee's earnest search for a new senior pastor, someone whose coming marks a new beginning like this congregation has not had for 25 years. In spite of your wonderful financial promises undergirding our coming year, our Session has taken several actions of financial austerity out of necessity, in order to put this congregation on the most stable and healthy financial foundation possible upon which that new pastor can build (see p. 5). The yearning to welcome and embrace young adults, young marrieds, and young families greets us with daunting choices.

And yet... and yet, that cold evening under a crystal, deep blue sky, darkening by the minute, we were emboldened by something Edward Abbey wrote about the very turf we were sitting on, the very reality we found ourselves in, some 50 years earlier:

"May your trails be crooked, winding, lonesome, dangerous, leading to the most amazing view... where storms come and go as lightning clangs upon the high crags where something strange and more beautiful and more full of wonder than your deepest dreams waits for you... beyond the next turning of the canyon walls." Edward Abbey, *Benediction*

That's where I'm going in 2015. I wouldn't miss out on it for anything. And I hope you'll come with me.

—Paul Parsons

## THE RIGHT STUFF

Seeking PNC members to nominate a candidate for Senior Pastor

The 2015 Church Nominating Committee will continue to accept recommendation forms for candidates for the Pastor Nominating Committee (PNC) until January 15. The Pastor Nominating Committee's sole purpose is to nominate a candidate for the Senior Pastor position at First Presbyterian Church Fort Collins.

The PNC will consist of nine members who will include one current ruling elder (selected by Session) and one current deacon (selected by the Deacons). The PNC is to be representative of the congregation in age, gender, length of time at FPC, and other ways that represent the breadth of the congregation.

The elected Pastor Nominating Committee will do the work of bringing a candidate for Senior Pastor for a vote by the FPC congregation. When the nominations are complete they will be presented to the FPC congregation at a called congregational meeting for their election.

Everyone's part is prayer for the PNC, for the congregation and for all of those involved to listen for God's leading. Please also prayerfully consider recommending someone for the PNC.

This recommendation form may be completed and mailed to the church office. Forms may also be obtained in the church office and placed in the recommendation box there.

—Marian Hope

### PASTOR NOMINATING COMMITTEE RECOMMENDATION FORM

*Return this form by January 15, 2015.*

The Pastor Nominating Committee's (PNC) sole purpose is to nominate a senior pastor for election by the FPC congregation. The PNC is to be representative of the congregation in age, gender, time at First Presbyterian Church and other ways that represent the breadth of the congregation.

**Name recommended for the PNC:**

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**The qualifications/reasons why I recommend the above-named person (required field):**

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**Recommended by (required):**

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**Return form to the FPC office by 1/15/2015.**



This month, Session will present our new budget to the congregation. That budget will show the expected income and expenses for the 2015 budget year. It will not include any “off-budget” giving which is defined as any donation to FPC with a designation not listed in our budget.

About three quarters of those off-budget donations are mission related. In past years, our operating budget covered the overhead for managing those donations and additional expenses for related projects. Because our budget assumed those associated costs, the Stewardship and Resources Center recommended and Session supported assessing a fee on off-budget gifts. Beginning in January, a 10% administrative fee will be subtracted from off-budget donations and returned to the operating budget in order to offset the expenses associated with managing those donations. You are probably aware that most non-profit organizations assess such a fee and that it is a good cost accounting practice.

Previously, we have been able to assume these costs but, in working to develop a budget culture of eliminating budget deficits and facing a very tight budget year, we decided this

option was preferable to reductions in staff or programs. The downside of this decision is that slightly less money will go to causes our members support. But, by assessing this surcharge, we will be able to keep our excellent staff, continue to offer a wide range of programs for our members and community, and not reduce support to all the ongoing mission work which is included in the Mission and Outreach budget.

We realize that this explanation might be confusing or lack sufficient detail. In addition, you may have concerns about this change in budgeting practice. In either case, we encourage you to seek out a session member to follow up on the information here. The session table will be set up in Shepardson through the month of January and we will be happy to talk with you.

—Session Communications Team



## Welcome to the World!

**R**ylee Marie Vesgaard

daughter of  
Heather and Matt Vesgaard  
born December 5, 2014

**R**owan Leonard Sick

son of  
Taryn and Brad Sick  
born December 10, 2014

**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.

As I sat in church Sunday morning (December 14) listening to the moving music from our choirs, I was aware—as others perhaps were too—that the music had stirred thoughts within all of us. Perhaps they were thoughts about ourselves, our loved ones, our church, our past.. and yes, our future. The event not only celebrated our beloved God, and gave thanks for His coming, but it signaled—perhaps because of the timing—an end to another year.

I wondered then what the coming year might hold for me, for us. A new season will soon be on it's way. These thoughts brought to mind, a bit of wisdom by Robert Louis Stevenson:

"The best things in life are nearest: Breath in your nostrils, light in your eyes, flowers at your feet, duties at your hand, the path of right just before you. Then do not grasp at the stars, but rather life's plain, common work as it comes, certain that daily duties and daily bread are the sweetest things in life."

I would hope that this is what I will find in this coming year: the ability to appreciate these "best things in life." I know that the failures that will come are as much a blessing as the successes that will come. I do not want to be in such a hurry to find pleasure in life, that I hurry right past them. I hope to MAKE time to reflect on these things and make sure that I don't forget them when the demands of the year will try and crowd into my life.

So, welcome to 2015—ready or not it's here! I would pray that you, too, will find some of those best things in life as your journey begins this new year. And in the words of Robert Frost. "In three words I can sum up everything I've learned about life: It goes on."

—Marge Rice



### SEEKING MARY POPPINS (AKA. NURSERY CAREGIVERS)

Seeking nurturing, caring, and patient caregivers who enjoy working with young children to work in our Nursery. Rosy cheeks preferred.

For full job description, visit [www.firstpresfc.org](http://www.firstpresfc.org)  
or call the church office at (970) 482-6107.

## OUR FATHER, WHO ART IN HEAVEN

How did You know my name?

Ah, He does know my name and your name! This next season of Sunday school we will do the "Kids' Travel Guide to the Lord's Prayer." And the sermon series in our worship services will also be on the Lord's Prayer: *Lord, Teach us to Pray.*

How should we pray? Why? When? Jesus gave us a guide to help answer these questions in Matthew 6, the Lord's Prayer. My prayer is that our children will learn the words to the Lord's Prayer, what the words mean, and most importantly, how these words apply to the lives of our children. Prayer is a vital part of our relationship with God. I am excited about this journey!

During Lent, we will take another journey as we learn to follow Jesus, honor Jesus, celebrate Easter because Jesus is alive, have faith in Jesus, and more.

Speaking of Jesus, that is who VBS will be all about, too! June 8–12, 2015, we are going to Hometown Nazareth, where Jesus was a kid. Look for more information and registration beginning in April.

Do you remember that Jesus was lost in the temple as a boy? Well, maybe He was not lost but His earthly parents sure thought He was. During summer Sunday school, June and July, 2015, we will learn more about Jesus as a kid. How? Through music! Kids, come to Summer Sunday School Music Camp every Sunday in June and July from



9:15–10:15 a.m. and by the end of July we will have a musical ready to present about this wonderful story of Jesus, as a boy, being about His Father's business in the Temple.

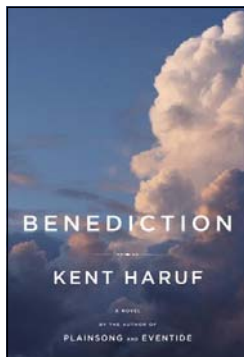
It seems a little crazy to be writing about VBS and Summer Sunday School Music Camp but starting with January and learning the Lord's Prayer, through Lent

and the teachings of Jesus, to VBS where Jesus was a boy in Nazareth and then learning how He was in the temple, —well, it all seems to fit together. It is all about Jesus and He *does* know your name!

—Alice Crawford

# Library Corner | THE WORD SOURCE

Below are just a few of the books we've added to the FPC Library for the new year. Stop by the church library on the second floor where these books and others are on display. You can also browse New Items on The Word Source website (located at [fpcf.scoolaid.net](http://fpcf.scoolaid.net), or by looking under the MEDIA tab on the church website).



## ***Benediction* (and four others), by Kent Haruf**

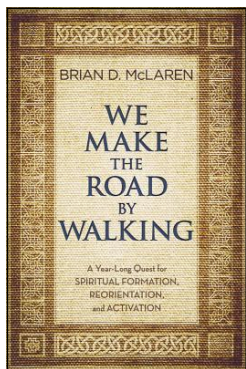
The library has added all five books that Kent Haruf has written about the fictional town of Holt in eastern Colorado. These include *The Tie That Binds*, *Where You Once Belonged*, *Plainsong*, *Eventide*, and his latest, *Benediction*. Here is what reviewers are saying:

“Grace and restraint are abiding virtues in Haruf’s fiction, and they resume their place of privilege in his new work. . . . For readers looking for the rewards of an intimate, meditative story, it is indeed a blessing.” —Karen R. Long, *The Cleveland Plain Dealer*

“A lovely book, surprisingly rich in character and event without any sense of being crowded. . . . Haruf is a master in summing up the drama that already exists in life, if you just pay attention.” —Harper Barnes, *St. Louis Post-Dispatch*

“Both sad and surprisingly uplifting in its honest and skillful examination of death, families and friendship.” —Jason Swensen, *Deseret News*

Kent Haruf, most famous for the bestseller *Plainsong*, was born in Pueblo, the son of a Methodist Minister and graduated from Nebraska Wesleyan. He had been living in Salida until his death this past November.



## ***We Make the Road by Walking: A Year-Long Quest for Spiritual Formation, Reorientation and Activation*, by Brian D. McLaren**

Brian D. McLaren is a frequent guest lecturer for denominational and ecumenical leadership gatherings in the U.S. and internationally, and is Theologian-in-Residence at Life in the Trinity Ministry. *We Make the Road by*

*Walking* is currently Amazon's #1 Best Seller under the *Christian Church Growth* category.

“This is one of the most remarkable documents in recent Christian writings...There is no evangelizing here, and no preaching, only a sinewy, but orderly and open, presentation of the faith that holds. The result is as startling as it is beautiful.” —Phyllis Tickle, author of *The Age of the Spirit*

“Brian McLaren has a talent for expressing theological viewpoints in a way that doesn't divide the camp. He gives everyone on the theological spectrum, from orthodox to progressive, something to chew on and contemplate.” —Charles Toy, co-founder of *The Christian Left*

“It is at once inspiring and challenging, ancient and contemporary, intellectually rigorous and profoundly practical. It changed the way I engage Scripture, the way I pray, the way I experience communion, and the way I interact with my neighbors.” —Rachel Held Evans, author of *A Year of Biblical Womanhood*



## ***Operation Paperclip: The Secret Intelligence Program that Brought Nazi Scientists to America*, by Annie Jacobson**

“Important, superbly written.... [Jacobsen] confronts us with the full extent of Paperclip's deal with the devil, and it's difficult to look away.” —Matt Damsker, *USA Today*

“For the first time the enormity of the effort has been laid bare. The result is a book that is at once chilling and riveting, and one that raises substantial and difficult questions about national honor and security.” —*Boston Globe*

“An engrossing and deeply disturbing exposé that poses ultimate questions of means versus ends.” —*Booklist*

“Throughout, the author delivers harrowing passages of immorality, duplicity and deception, as well as some decency and lots of high drama. How Dr. Strangelove came to America and thrived, told in graphic detail.” —*Kirkus Reviews*

Annie Jacobsen graduated from St. Paul's School and Princeton University where she wrote with Joyce Carol Oates and Paul Auster, studied Greek, and served as Captain of the Princeton Women's Ice Hockey Team.



The character quality for January 2015 is determination (versus faintheartedness). Determination can be defined as: "Purposing to exert as much energy as needed to reach a goal," or "Purposing to accomplish right goals at the right time, regardless of the opposition." It can also be defined as: "Looking at insurmountable obstacles as opportunities to cry out for God's supernatural intervention."

Life consists of choices. If we make the right choices, we experience the blessings of God. If we make poor choices, we often experience disappointment and many problems. It is important to realize, however, that after we make wise choices, determination is then needed to carry them out. Wise choices are often challenged by difficulties and temptations, so we need determination to complete the action involved in meeting our goals.

Christians are to be people of determination. The Bible presents this quality as something to be practiced. One of the outstanding examples of determination is seen in the beautiful story of Naomi and Ruth in the Old Testament. Ruth makes a strong speech in which she says, "Don't make me leave you, for I want to go wherever you go, and to live wherever you live;

your people shall be my people, and your God shall be my God..." And when Naomi, "saw her *determination* to accompany with her, she said no more," (Ruth 1:1-18).

There are many other excellent stories that involve determination throughout the Bible. Consider, for example, how determined Jesus was to go to Jerusalem, knowing that He would be killed. Or how determined Paul was throughout his life, first as he persecuted Christians and then after his conversion, in his very strong proclamation of the good news. Consider how determined Moses was in persuading Pharaoh to let the Hebrews go. Think how determined God is in pursuing us, in spite of our attempts to ignore Him or deny Him in our lives. He is **determined** to save us! Thank you, Lord!

**"I can do everything through him who gives me strength."  
—Philippians 4:13**

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 AT



SUNDAYS, JANUARY 25, FEBRUARY 1, AND FEBRUARY 8, 12:15-2 PM (LUNCH PROVIDED). RSVP TO ERIN MURANSKY, (970)482-6107. TRANSPORTATION AND CHILDCARE AVAILABLE WITH RSVPS BEFORE JAN. 19.

MOPS. A lot of people don't know what "MOPS" is. When I speak of my "MOPS Group" or my "MOPS Moms," I have to explain to others that we are a group of moms that meet often for friendship, fellowship, and support. We call ourselves MOPS because we are all Mothers Of PreSchoolers. But then when I start talking about my "Mentor Moms," I lose them even faster! According to MOPS International (yes, we are an international organization, and based nearby in Denver!) a Mentor Mom is "...someone who walks a few steps ahead of us. She brings perspective on mothering, womanhood and relationships, based on biblical principles and her own life experience." Wow. Those are some heavy shoes to fill.

Yet, here at our First Presbyterian MOPS, we are blessed beyond words to have not just one Mentor Mom, but four: Sharon Miller, Sandy Robbins, Dana Theis, and Babette Frazier are our guiding lights through motherhood. And others who fill in for these four as needed, including Joy Stewart. Not only have they been through the mothering wringer, but they have come through it with grace and wisdom that they can pass on to us. They are all now in the new phase of life known as grandmothering, and are able to look back on those blurry, exhausted years and give those of us in the midst of that time hope. Hope that it gets easier, in its own way. Hope that one day there will be more to our lives than diapers and burp rags. Hope that our children will turn out ok, despite how many times we burn the dinner or show up late to soccer practice. They are there for us at every meeting. They let us dump our problems on them from our morning troubles at getting the baby dressed AND the toddler out the door without yet another tantrum, to our day

to day struggles with married life, balancing jobs with mothering, or just getting through another day without crying. These gracious and helpful women quite literally take our troubles from us when we walk through the door, by entertaining the kids so we can get our coats off to helping us unload our cars full of children, diaper bags, and breakfast casseroles, and their favorite task of holding those crying (or sleeping) babes so new moms can eat a meal or hold an adult conversation. They greet us with smiling faces when all we've seen for the last week are crying tears from those under the age of five. We love our Mentor Moms for the way they brighten our day instantly when we see them on our Monday mornings.

But wait there's more! Our Mentor Moms also cook for us, and bring us treats! They encourage us by feeding our bodies as well as our souls. Bringing breakfast treats to our leadership meetings, signing up to bring casseroles to our regular meetings, and cooking meals for new moms or moms in need. Nothing lets you know how much someone cares like seeing Starbucks waiting for you on the morning you need it most! Recently, each and every one of our Mentor Moms helped a mom by bringing her freezer meals in a most dire time of need. Some cooked, some delivered—those meals would not have made it to the family's house without our Mentor Moms. Personally, after each of my children was born I received meals from Mentor Moms. They even go above and beyond by teaching us to cook! The majority of my generation (myself included) doesn't have the homemaking skills that our mothers did. Many of us rely on take out or frozen pizzas more than we like to admit. Yet, these Mentor Moms help us to do just that. Be Home. How to make pie crusts

from scratch, or recipes that look like they were made from scratch but with a few short cuts. How to include our children in the kitchen and make it fun for them. But also they encourage us to make it our own or that it's ok to eat frozen pizzas—because that's the season of life we are in. They teach us that we can use the refrigerated pie crusts with the little dough boy on the label because sometimes we need those few extra minutes to help our little one with homework, or potty training or... the list goes on! And, they understand that.

Sharon, Sandy, Dana, Babette, and Joy have been there. They have been mothers. And they survived! They know how difficult it is to show up to a meeting – on a MONDAY no less – twice a month when you have little ones in tow. They understand that sometimes it is a huge milestone to just get that last load of laundry done. And through that understanding comes encouragement. I cannot say how much encouragement I have received from these Mentor Moms over the years. Kind words, prayers, support, a shoulder to lean on and cry on. Birthday cards, birthday dinners, meals, treats, gifts, gifts, and more gifts—and our annual Christmas Tea! In December each year, our Mentor Moms give us a break during the busiest time for moms. December is a time for shopping, Christmas programs, family gatherings, holiday work parties, and more. Mom-taxis are at their busiest! So every year these incredible women plan our meeting for us. They cook, they set up (which ironically, they do at every meeting), they run the show, they invite guests and give door prizes, and they clean up the entire mess afterwards. All we have to do is show up. I don't think they fully understand how much this means to us. Not only to our steering/ leadership team, but also to our moms.

They encourage us by giving us a moment to relax and enjoy the season. Christmas is more than just the shopping and holiday parties. It's love, and caring, and giving. And that is what they give us every year at that December meeting. It is energizing. It helps us to get through the busy times and stop and pause at the meaningful ones.

That goes for all our meetings. They are always willing to jump in and lend a helping hand. They set up table decorations and make coffee. They plan games and hold babies. They help find speakers to talk at our meetings and they fill in when a steering member is absent. They take prayer requests and pray for us even when there are no requests made. They follow up on those prayer requests and celebrate with us in times of answered prayers. They walk through not only the bi-monthly MOPS meetings with us, but through our everyday lives with us. They are true friends. They are not just MOPS Mentor Moms, they are MOPS MOMS.

On behalf of our group, our moms, and our families, I want to say thank you to these incredible women, and those many others who have served as a Mentor Mom in the past. You are God's light and love in our group, and this group would not have survived much less THRIVED without you. We are so blessed to have you devote your precious time and energy to helping us become better moms. Because "Better Moms Make a Better World." You are living proof of that. Thank you!

—Aliy Louie





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### WHAT'S NEXT ON OUR PLATE?

Plan to attend FPC's Annual Congregational Meeting on Sunday, January 25, from 5–7 p.m. in Shepardson Hall. Our focus will be "Where are We Going in 2015?," at the heart of which will be a "State of the Church" message. We will also gain a clear sense of our current financial position, in which we will examine the 2015 Budget, report membership changes, introduce new leadership, and hear a report from the Foundation. Finally, there will be a time to remember those who have passed away in 2014.

Dinner and childcare will be provided.