

# THE MESSENGER

| NEWS FROM FIRST PRESBYTERIAN CHURCH FORT COLLINS |

## DEVOTIONS FOR HOLY WEEK

**“NO GREATER LOVE”  
EASTER ONLINE**

**IN-PERSON  
WORSHIP  
PLANNED**

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## From the Editor | SPRING

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Spring has sprung. Have you seen the signs? Warming sunshine, fuzzy buds on sleepy trees, robins bobbing along? Although springtime in Northern Colorado often includes more snow and cold temperatures, some of the first spouts to pop from the winter ground are the slender, new leaves of daffodils.

Likely because they appear around the time of the spring equinox, daffodils' bright blooms are said to promise the end of winter and are a sign of rebirth and renewal. Whether it's their sunny color or the date of their arrival, I've always considered daffodils to be happy, hopeful flowers. One Christian legend says that a daffodil appeared in the Garden of Gethsemane as a comfort to Jesus, who was grieved by Judas' betrayal. So, welcome flowers, welcome rejuvenation, welcome spring!

Springtime 2021 blooms with hope. We see signs of the end of the COVID winter. We are no longer hoarding toilet paper (right?). Vaccines are increasingly available. Children are returning to in-person learning. And, at long last, we will soon return to worship together, side by side, in the FPC Sanctuary.

Ahead I see the day when the sun shines through cobalt, ruby, and golden glass lighting long-missed faces. Voices join together again to praise the Creator of the rolling spheres, ineffably sublime. Won't you join us this spring as we plant the seeds of hope, joy, love, and grace at FPC?

—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 email 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.



First  
Presbyterian  
Church

# PASTOR'S CORNER

## IN-PERSON WORSHIP PLANNED FOR MAY 2

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Hello Friends,

This past week marks the one-year anniversary of the coronavirus global pandemic that led to sheltering in place and moving our lives, including worship and the ministries of our church, online. As I reflect back over these past 12 months, I'm so grateful for the many church leaders and volunteers who have demonstrated resilience, creativity, and perseverance in continuing and even expanding our ministry and pastoral care of First Presbyterian Church. We have been stretched, have learned, and have grown a lot through this last year, and we have hung in there together as a family of faith. Thank you to everyone whose generosity, continued support, and encouragement has carried us through. Thanks be to God!

Today, I am also thrilled to share with you that we are taking the next steps to return to in-person worship in our beautiful sanctuary and, eventually, to expand in-person opportunities to a broader range of ministries and programs at FPC. With the guidance of our COVID Task Force, staff, and other leaders, our Session has approved a plan to begin opening the doors for in-person worship on **Sunday, May 2**.

As I'm sure you can appreciate, there are many logistics to navigate as we want to reopen in a way that continues to keep people safe and continues to offer excellent worship and other ministries online for those who are not yet ready for in-person experiences. With that in mind, here are a few initial answers to common questions:

### **Rationale: *Why are we making plans to return to in-person worship at this time?***

- A majority of staff and worship leaders, along with a significant percentage of our congregation, are vaccinated or are in the process of completing their vaccinations.
- County rates of infection, hospitalization, and transmission are decreasing and trending in the right direction to indicate a safer environment for gathering. We will continue to monitor this closely and may adapt plans as necessary if this changes.
- We have a clearer understanding of the guidelines and systems to support those guidelines to create a safer environment for gathering.
- We recognize that this timeline for reopening will feel too soon for some and too late for others. I can assure you that church leaders are being well-resourced by medical and public health professionals and are being careful to prayerfully discern our next steps. Again, we will adjust our plans if public health conditions necessitate a change.

### **Logistics: *How will we reopen our campus to in-person worship and ministry?***

- First and foremost, we will continue to follow County and State guidelines and look to some of our other partners (like similar churches) to determine practices that work best for our context. These will include registering for worship online to limit attendance based on our allowed capacity, social distancing, wearing masks, and limiting time and exposures getting into and out of the sanctuary. We will also be carefully implementing appropriate cleaning protocols to maintain a safe space for our church family and the non-profit partners who share our campus. We will communicate more specific details as we get closer to the date since we know guidelines could change between now and then.
- We will continue (as we have for years) having worship and, likely, other ministries offered online so that they are available to everyone regardless of health, safety concerns, accessibility, etc. We are committed to making sure that **everyone** is included and welcomed, cared for, loved, and nurtured as we move forward.
- As the weather allows, we will explore offering fellowship and other ministries, like small groups or Sunday School, outdoors.

As always, I welcome your feedback and your questions. We still have details to work out, but we are confident that we have the people and processes in place to move forward safely and responsibly. In the meantime, I encourage you to dive into the opportunities we will be offering for Holy Week and Easter, which are included here in the Messenger, in our weekly emails, and on our website. Although we will be online for these celebrations this year, I am looking forward to sharing with you the Good News that Christ is risen! He is risen indeed!

Peace,  
Corey



# STORYBOOK ART

## CRINKLED PAPER AND GLUE ILLUSTRATE LENTEN MOMENTS

Our favorite church newsletter's perceptive editor suggested that you might be interested in reading about the visual art that is displayed in our Sanctuary during Lent. Perhaps we, the visual arts team, will start the story with how this Lenten season's banners came to be.

First, Corey plans ahead. Weeks ago, he had a list of the scriptures he'd preach on throughout Lent. We began by reading those scriptures and looking for an idea that carried through them all. It seemed that the theme was "Stories." Then, we thought, "What if each of these stories had its own picture—a page from a storybook?"

Some years ago, we learned from a

wise worship arts creator that, while sanctuary art is sometimes elaborate, precious, and meant to last through the centuries, it need not be. Like the music we hear and create in worship, art can be an expression meant just for that time—that hour, that minute. What's important is that it be worshipful. The idea of ephemeral presentations appealed to us, and in recent years, we have often turned to paper.

Once we had a theme—storybook pictures—we gathered our materials: tissue paper, construction paper, and Sunday school supply room paper, and a couple of gallons of Mod Podge. We chose stained glass colors to fill in the settings and characters John describes

in Jesus' last week in Jerusalem. Then we ripped, cut, crinkled, and overlaid that paper on long sheets of kraft paper. With creative juices flowing (maybe spilling), flexibility, and cooperation—and plenty of grace when things turned out differently than we expected—the picture-book illustrations came to life!

— Sara Hunt



***I Am the Good Shepherd***  
**John 10:1–18**

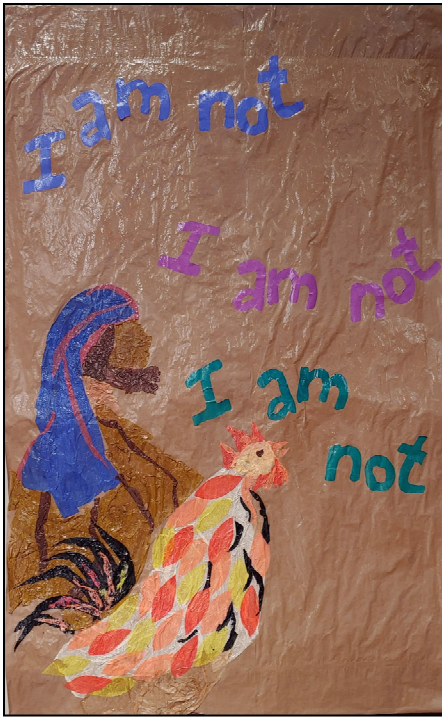


***See How He Loved Him***  
**John 11:1–45**



***Bare Feet***  
**John 13**





***I Never Knew Him***  
**John 18:12-27**



***The Real Question***  
**John 18:28-40**

This year, Peg Mussard, Annie Liu, Jean Tonoli, and Sara Hunt created the seven colorful banners for Lent. In other seasons, the team has included Bethany Fisher, Joyce Knapp, Chris Perica, Molly Secher, Starr Teague, and Sue York.

Their work has enriched us, and we anticipate that they will participate in future projects. If you are interested in lending your gifts to sanctuary art, the Visual Arts Team welcomes others to participate. Contact Sara Hunt for more information.



***We Have No King***  
**John 19:1-16**



***Triumph and Tragedy***  
**John 19:1-16**





# NO GREATER *Love*

## DEVOTIONS FOR HOLY WEEK LENT 2021

As many of you know, our tradition at FPC includes a daily worship service at noon during Holy Week with the invitation to have colleagues in ministry from our community leading us. While we cannot do that this year, we have decided to creatively invite the reflections of others and the connection to the community to happen in a new way. On the following two pages, you'll find a devotion for each day of Holy Week written by a member of our Mission and Outreach Center. These devotions connect a theme from scripture to our mission partners' vital ministry. I encourage you to use this guide to accompany you through the days of Holy Week and especially to expand your prayers during this time to include these community partners and the many people they serve.

On Maundy Thursday, join Rev. Mary Lynn Tobin and her family as they lead us in worship from their home. The name Maundy Thursday is derived from the Latin *mandatum*, or mandate, command. During the meal he shared with his disciples, Jesus gave his most important commandment, "Love one another as I have loved you." It's not a suggestion, and it is definitely not as easy as it sounds, especially when we don't like someone. So what might that look like for Christians today? Join us online, and we'll find out together!

For Good Friday, we have recreated our Tenebrae service this year with new recordings to capture the final hours of Jesus' life before his crucifixion as John tells the story. After each lesson, either a hymn or a choral anthem will offer a moment for meditation and reflection. The service moves towards darkness and silence as we are left in a liminal space awaiting Easter morning. While this year's Easter service will be online only again, we will celebrate the joy and hope of all that we have learned in this past year and all that we are looking forward to in a brighter year ahead.

—Corey Nelson

## MONDAY, MARCH 29—CREATION CARE—WALT SCHUCHMANN

*“The LORD God took the man and put him in the Garden of Eden to work it and take care of it,” Genesis 2:15.*

Our FPC Mission Statement says in part, “We joyfully serve the Lord and the world reflecting God’s infinite grace through...being loving caretakers of God’s creation.” The Earth Care Pledge adopted by Session states, “The earth and all creation are God’s. God calls us to be careful, humble stewards of this earth, and to protect and restore it for its own sake, and for the future use and enjoyment of the human family.” These statements mean different things to each of us, but many of us would probably include planting and reaping, recycling, conserving resources, avoiding littering or dumping toxic substances and honoring our mountains and plains.

Long-time FPC mission partner **Plant With Purpose (PWP)** shares our commitment to caring for God’s creation. But the prevailing circumstances in regions where PWP works are far different than in our richly blessed Colorado. PWP works with families to heal the ravaged environment through planting trees (over 37 million) and engaging in sustainable agroforestry. Families are equipped to save their earnings and invest in better lives and are encouraged to love God and one another. This is Creation Care at work!

*Let us pray: Lord, you have blessed us with a beautiful and bountiful creation. For this we give our thanks. Teach us to respect and care for your Garden and lead us to support others who are working locally and globally to restore your creation and build better lives.*

## TUESDAY, MARCH 30—FOOD AND HEALTH (INTERNATIONAL)—ERIKA NOSSOKOFF

*“Jesus went through all the towns and villages, teaching in their synagogues, proclaiming the good news of the kingdom and healing every disease and sickness,” Matthew 9:35.*

Have you ever seen a prescription bottle with these words: “Take with food”? Healthcare workers at the Faith Alive hospital in Jos, Nigeria are grateful to our church and others for helping to fill their FANOL Bank (Faith Alive Necessities of Life) with things like rice. Many of their patients need basic food just to survive, let alone heal.

In the same way, prescriptions could read: “Take with spiritual food.” We often focus on people’s physical needs for healing without offering spiritual nourishment. Faith Alive is a great example of doing both/and. Along with medicine and rice, they point people to Jesus through prayer, singing, worship, devotions and counseling. Patients can choose whether or not to participate, but those who do are offered hope and healing found only in Jesus Christ.

What do you consider to be the basic necessities of life? In what ways do you need healing? In what ways are you offering healing to others? Did Jesus ever heal someone physically without addressing their spiritual needs?

*Let us pray: Lord, we thank you for the hope and healing that Faith Alive continues to offer in Nigeria. Please provide for their needs as they serve some of the poorest of the poor and give their staff and volunteers strength, encouragement and the resources they need. Amen.*

## WEDNESDAY, MARCH 31—FOOD (LOCAL)—DAVE CAMPBELL

*“God said, ‘See, I give you all the seed-bearing fruit; this shall be your food,’” Genesis 1:29–31*

This passage comes to us from the description of the sixth day of creation. The provision of food happens immediately after human beings are created—apparently God knew from the beginning that people get hungry! We still eat seed-bearing fruit, but the garden we inhabit and the table of food set before us is a good deal more complex than that depicted in Eden. We have the capacity to feed the world, but aspects of our social and political life work to create hunger amid plenty. While we work for more just economic arrangements, the church is also called to help meet immediate and urgent food needs. Tragically, one of every three children in Larimer County lives in a household that experiences food insecurity, meaning they lack reliable access to a sufficient quantity of nutritious food. By providing financial support and volunteers to the Food Bank of Larimer County, Food Bank for Larimer County ([foodbanklarimer.org](http://foodbanklarimer.org)), we provide meals and related assistance that assist our neighbors in need. Please consider volunteering or making your own financial donation to the Food Bank today.

*Let us pray: Gracious God, you have provided us with a bountiful garden, yet too often we do not share that abundance so that all can thrive. Help us answer your call to pursue a more just society, and empower us to minister to the needs of those who go hungry due to a lack of sufficient food. Amen.*



## MAUNDY THURSDAY, APRIL 1—HOUSING—JOSEPH MOORE

*"Thus says the Lord of hosts, the God of Israel, to all the exiles whom I have sent into exile from Jerusalem to Babylon: 5Build houses and live in them; plant gardens and eat what they produce....But seek the welfare of the city where I have sent you into exile, and pray to the Lord on its behalf, for in its welfare you will find your welfare," Jeremiah 29:4-5,7.*

This passage was written to newly exiled people in Babylon. Their world had been turned upside down, their hopes dashed, their livelihoods and sense of community was destroyed. These margin dwelling exiles were homeless in the truest sense of the word. While Jeremiah 29 isn't a blueprint for a social service plan, it does highlight the importance of building community. You see, the exiles could have re-belled against their oppressors, they could have resisted any sort of integration, they could have refused to live in Babylon. But God had other plans...plans for them to build houses, to plant gardens, to create a strong community.

It doesn't matter if we find ourselves in Babylon or Ft. Collins, CO...the people of God are always called to build communities where human beings can flourish. At our best we, as followers of Jesus Christ, seek the welfare of the city, for in its welfare we will find our own. I'm so grateful that First Presbyterian is able to partner with agencies across our city working to build strong communities. Places like Home-ward Alliance, Catholic Charities, and Habitat for Humanity strive to not only house people, but to build hope-filled resilient communities.

As we make our way this week toward Good Friday and the promise of Easter, I hope you'll consider how you might support the work of community building and welfare seeking in your neighborhood and across our city.

*Let us pray: Holy God, in this most Holy of weeks, we remember that you didn't always have a place to call home. We also remember those in our own lives who have worked to build houses and to plant gardens so that we might thrive. We pray this week that we would seek the welfare of all in our community so that every person in Fort Collins might know your peace. Amen.*

## GOOD FRIDAY, APRIL 2—AT-RISK CHILDREN & FAMILIES—CHRIS PERICA

*"Why are you asking Me about what is good? There is only One who is good; but if you wish to enter into life, keep the commandments," Matthew 19:17.*

I've been pondering deeply the life Jesus calls us to—the life of following Him. How do I do this? How can I help? What can I give? And to whom? There are so many options right here in our hometown. Mission partners that our congregation supports to help children and families who are at risk or struggling right now. Jesus teaches me to love my neighbor as myself and to put action to my thoughts. Money is always needed by these agencies and our congregation, through our Mission budget, offers some financial support. And though we can always supplement with monetary donations of our own, there are also opportunities to offer service in a variety of ways, both in person and non-directly. Our local partners that serve vulnerable children and families are: Crossroads Safehouse ([crossroadssafehouse.org](http://crossroadssafehouse.org)); Homeward Alliance ([homewardalliance.org](http://homewardalliance.org)); The Matthews House ([thematthewshouse.org](http://thematthewshouse.org)); Project Self-Sufficiency ([bringthepower.org](http://bringthepower.org)) and Realities for Children ([realitiesforchildren.com](http://realitiesforchildren.com)) Let us consider how we might be Christ to our neighbor.

*Let us pray: Lord, help us to remember we are now your hands and feet on earth. Help us to see our neighbors with compassion. Please guide us to be in service to those you have placed before us. Help us to remember your love for us as we then chose to offer love to others. In your precious name we pray. Amen.*





# LIBRARY CORNER

## THE WORD SOURCE

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Have you been missing a good read while being safer at home all these months? While the Word Source Library is now open when the church is open, you can also check out eBook or Audiobook versions of books in our church library right from your own home. You can now browse through hundreds of books in our church library that have been linked to eBook and Audiobook versions that can be downloaded from our local Poudre River Public Library. Whether you are already an avid eBook or Audiobook user or have always wanted to try them and just don't know where to start, give our pathway a try.

For over 30 years, the Word Source Library committee has reviewed thousands of books to select those of value and interest to our congregation. Our new pathway has linked many of our more recent acquisitions and popular books to eBook and Audiobook versions. Available selections include books from our collection on faith, spirituality, theology, prayer, and religion as well as fiction and biography. Some juvenile biographies, fiction, and spiritual books have been linked as well.

Our pathway will introduce you to OverDrive and hoopla, the two large collections of virtual books served by the Poudre River Library. While OverDrive eBooks may be preferable for kindle users, both have nice interfaces and apps for reading and listening on your laptop, tablet, or smartphone. If the eBook you desire has a waitlist, you can come to our library for the physical copy.

You can get started with eBooks and Audiobooks by clicking on the ONLINE CATALOG button found under MINISTRIES > CHURCH LIBRARY on the FPC website, [firstpresfc.org](http://firstpresfc.org). From there, look for the green Audiobooks & eBooks tab. Detailed instructions are given on that page, including how to get a Poudre River Public Library card if you don't have one. Please send any feedback, issues, or thoughts to the Library Committee at [thewordsource@gmail.com](mailto:thewordsource@gmail.com).

Besides trying the new access for ebooks and audiobooks, you are also welcome to come by the church library for some of our special collections that are not available in electronic form. For example, our collection of over 750 children's books cannot be found online, and many of our theological and spiritual offerings are not yet available. We also are still displaying collections on our shelves and tables. These include seasonal favorites, currently for Lent and Easter, and special collections such as Science and Religion and our new collection on Racism and Religion. The children's corner always has many of our more recent and favorite children's books displayed.

—Carolynn Bond

# A LETTER FROM PAUL

## WHY STUDY THE ROLLS ROYCE OF THE EPISTLES?

“We have a letter! We have a letter!” Imagine the excitement a letter from Paul would have created in the Ephesus church in AD 62. Generally, when it was necessary to “mail” a letter, a personal friend or close associate would be asked to deliver it to its intended recipient. Since Paul was in a Roman prison at the time, he asked Tychicus and Onesimus to deliver three letters for him. This would have been quite a feat since they had to travel from Rome to Ephesus. One letter went to Ephesus, and the other two went to Colossae, which we know as Colossians and Philemon.

Since Paul’s greeting is likely the shortest and least personal greeting of all his letters, some think one of Paul’s followers wrote it. The letter was probably meant to circulate among several churches. Nevertheless, it came from Paul, and the church at Ephesus got to read it first!

More exciting is that Paul’s letter has finally circulated its way to us! We will have an opportunity to read it together on Sunday mornings beginning on April

11, in a class titled *Lessons from Ephesians* taught by Dr. Bill Rowley. Over 10 Sunday mornings at 10:15, we will explore 20 principles for Christian living and share together how these principles can enrich our lives.

Why a class on Ephesians? It has been described as the prince of Paul’s epistles, a majestic presentation of the gospel, the Rolls-Royce of the epistles, and the most divine of all Paul’s letters. But don’t be put off by this high praise! Ephesians does soar with some of Paul’s lofty language. For example, where else will you find a 245-word sentence of praise in a short letter?

Still, this doesn’t negate the practical nature of Paul’s letter. Unlike his other letters, he is not addressing a heresy or a problem specific to a particular church. The focus of Ephesians is Paul’s desire to share with the Ephesians (and us) the truth the Lord taught him about Christ and the Church.

In this letter, Paul addresses questions many of us have. What does it mean to be in Christ? How does this differ from being with Christ? Are we really saints?

Ever wondered about the purpose of the benediction? What does it mean to live a life worthy of our calling? Why is Christian unity so important? Does unity mean conformity? What does spiritual maturity look like? What does it mean to redeem the time?

A retired Presbyterian minister and close friend of mine once told me what he thought Paul meant when he wrote Ephesians 1:3–14, that really long sentence. He said, “I think Paul wrote this sentence with tears in his eyes, completely overcome. I think there are times when the church needs to feel more than it thinks; when it needs poetry and music to reach where words alone can never penetrate; when its greatest need is just to be held. I think here, just for a few seconds, before he launches into his letter, Paul simply wants to hold the Ephesian congregation, and to hold us.” This is reason enough for a class on Ephesians!

—Bill Rowley



## FOOD+CLOTHES DONATION DRIVE-BY

Sunday, May 23  
Sponsored by  
the Mission and Outreach Center

Watch the eNews for more info



# FPC Summer Camping Trip



## Save the Date: July 15-18

We reserved Glacier Basin Campground for the annual FPC Camping Trip. At this point, RMNP is not open for group camping, but we are crossing our fingers that that will change by the summer. Look for more information about reserving your spot in future eNews emails.



**Save the DATE**

## FPC YOUTH SUMMER EVENTS

June 5: Larimer County Food Bank

 June 26: Summer Fun Day

July 16-17: Camping

August 8: Volunteer TBD 

August 28: Back-to-School Lock In

Look for more information as the dates get closer.  
These events are subject to change.  
Contact Carlie Hoskins: [choskins@firstpresfc.org](mailto:choskins@firstpresfc.org)

## JOIN US FOR VACATION BIBLE SCHOOL

**SAVE THE DATE:**



## JULY 27-29

## 5:45-7:45 PM

**MORE INFO COMING SOON!**



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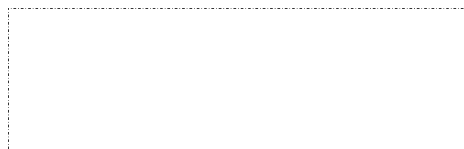
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**NO GREATER**  
*Love*  
**EASTER ONLINE 2021**

**APRIL 4 | 9:00 AM**  
**ONLINE WORSHIP**  
**LIVESTREAM AT [FIRSTPRESFC.ORG](http://FIRSTPRESFC.ORG)**

**11:00 AM**  
**FELLOWSHIP & FLOWERS**  
**ON THE LAWN (WEATHER PERMITTING)**