THE MESSENGER

| NEWS FROM FIRST PRESBYTERIAN CHURCH FORT COLLINS |

A FESTIVAL OF PRAISE AND WORSHIP

FORGIVE. PERIOD.



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From the Editor | SUMMER SUNSETS

It's springtime—the days are warmer, buds burst from the trees, birds sing happy songs, and short rain showers cloud the afternoon. Before we know it, though, the tulips and daffodils have faded and the grass needs to be mowed. This *Messenger* feels like it's "in between" two seasons—the end of the school and program year at and the beginning of summer. As May races to a finish, we celebrate moms, graduates, and Memorial Day with full and busy schedules. Then we step into summer with lazy barbecues, vacations, garage sales, and a day for dads. The days are longer, and time slows down a little.

FPC will be in between two seasons, too. We will be busy sharing Paul's underground church with children at Vacation Bible School and hosting homeless families. We will slow down to one worship service on Sunday mornings until after Labor Day.

In the midst of both the busy-ness and the quiet, God has provided so many wonders. Will we stop to hear the crack of the bat at the baseball field, to catch a sunset, to buy lemonade from a roadside stand? Will we stop to learn the name of the homeless person in the parking lot, or laugh with a child on the church playground, or bask in the music of worship and praise? I hope our answer is "yes" every time.

—Cathy Richardson

THEMESSENGER

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PUBLISHING GUIDELINES | THE MESSENGER is a publication for the people, passions, and mission of First Presbyterian Church Fort Collins. The newsletter seeks to inspire, inform, instruct, challenge, and motivate its readers to become engaged in the ministry of FPC. We pray that adult readers in all life stages will aspire to be faithful disciples for Christ.

Articles that support FPC's vision and mission will be accepted. All articles must be sponsored by one of the church's five Centers and are subject to the approval of the Editor. Submissions will be edited for length and suitability.

Article submissions will be accepted via e-mail to crichardson@firstpresfc.org. Contact Editor Cathy Richardson for more information, (970)482-6107. Check www.firstpresfc.org for specific issue deadlines.



PASTOR'S CORNER

HIGHLIGHTS OF A BUSY SEASON

Hello Friends,

To say that the past couple of months have been a busy season at FPC is a little like saying people in Chicago are excited about the Cubs winning the World Series! (Yes, I know its been its been almost six months ... but it was 108 years in the making). Anyway, with all that's been happening, I wanted to take some time in this edition of our *Messenger* to share some highlights, give you a couple of exciting updates, and extend an important invitation.

First, I want to give a huge shout-out to our staff and volunteers who have done such a great job of helping our church navigate this time of transitions. All of our staff have picked up additional responsibilities and have done so with the same energy and enthusiasm that they have always had about being a part of the FPC team. I'm so grateful for these wonderful colleagues in ministry.

I also want to thank the countless volunteers who have stepped up to serve in more ways than I could possibly name: from working at the office's front desk to managing administration and logistics behind the scenes. I know that some of our recent transitions have been a challenge on both a personal and organizational level and deeply appreciate everyone's support and engagement leading us to continue moving forward.

Speaking of moving forward, we're proud to announce two new colleagues who will be joining the team soon. Our new Office Manager is Paula Beeken, a recent transplant from Texas who brings years of local church administration and ministry experience with her. Paula began her work in the beginning of May, and, among other responsibilities, will help to manage our church calendar and building use, train

and coordinate volunteers, manage the daily operations of the office, and provide administrative support to the Session and the Pastor.

We also welcome Alyssa Johnson as our new Coordinator for Children's Music. Alyssa is a familiar presence at FPC. having sung in the choir and having led our children's music during VBS for several years. She is a music teacher at Zach Elementary School and brings phenomenal experience and enthusiasm. She will join us in August and begin leading this ministry in the fall. One additional note is that our new Children's Ministry position has been posted online, including our website, and the search is underway, so if you or someone you know is interested, let us know right away!

Finally, I want to remind you of some special events to put on your calendar for this summer. On Sunday, May 28, we will move to our summer worship schedule of one service at 10:00 a.m. every week through Sunday, September 3. This will give us a wonderful opportunity for the whole community to worship at one time and enjoy fellowship together. On Sunday, August 20, we will have the second part of our annual meeting immediately following the service, and on Sunday, August 27, we will have our annual all-church picnic after the service. More information about both of these events will be available later this summer.

One last item to add to your summer calendar this year is the Global Leadership Summit on August 10–11. This is a national event hosted by Willow Creek Community Church outside of Chicago and simulcast around the world in hundreds of locations, including Crossroads Church in Loveland, which serves as our local site. For over 20 years, this event has

featured world-class leaders in the areas of church, business, social, civic, and political life. I have personally been attending the Summit for the past seven years and always find that the content is inspiring, practical, and motivational in multiple areas of my life. I always leave with a new stack of books to read, new ideas for ministry, and new commitments for learning and growing in my own discipleship and leadership.

This year, for the first time, FPC is an official partner church with Crossroads Church, which gives us access to a great discount for our members—only \$99 for the two-day event if you register by June 27. You can find more information and register by going to willowcreek.com/summit. From there, click the link to register, then choose the Crossroads Church site in Loveland and enter priority code SPC17, which will allow you to sign up for the discounted rate. We'll send more information out over the next couple of weeks, but we hope you'll get this on your calendar soon.

Pastor Bill Hybels, the founder of Willow Creek Church and the Summit, often reminds us that the local church is the hope of the world. I absolutely believe that and know that our local church has been, is, and will continue to be a vital and vibrant part of our community, changing lives on behalf of Jesus Christ. That is what motivates us to overcome the challenges of busy seasons, times of transitions, and shared discernment about the future. It's a great time to be a part of the FPC family for we know that Christ is risen. He is risen indeed!

Peace,
Pastor Corey

THE HOMELESS HAVE NAMES

FAITH FAMILY HOSPITALITY OFFERS TRANSITIONAL HOUSING

Bobby, Judy, Jeremy, Fawn, Zayden, Julissa, Yuly, Baby Olivia ...

Those are the names of just a few of our cherished former guests. Were you a part of helping to sustain their spirits and wellbeing during their lowest days in homelessness? Did they transform you in an awakening moment of grace while you were serving them during their stay at FPC, Peak Church, or the Day Center?

They are all home now! More than 141 of them!

The expansion that Faith Family Hospitality has experienced since its inception less than 5 years ago is testament to the deep commitment of the Fort Collins faith community to help its neighbors experiencing the despair of homelessness. There are now a total of 32 faith communities participating in housing families and supporting the Day Center. More congregations are talking about coming onboard. What began as an overnight family shelter has grown to include the network of support needed by our vulnerable parents and children to heal and achieve sustainable

self-sufficiency in a timely manner. Programs have expanded to now include primary case management, a partnership with over 20 local agencies that help our families address their various needs, a full-service family-friendly Day Center, and a project to provide transitional housing for seven to eight families.

The additional support has enabled family success rates in finding employment to rise from 18% to 86% and the median days from shelter to housing to decline from 68 to 58 days. Once transitional housing is in place, a national benchmark is expected of 75% to 80% success in achieving permanent housing for guest families.

FPC has been a strong supporter of the Transitional House project. As a result of the Housing Families activities and fundraisers in 2016, FPC was able to provide appliances for all three kitchens in the house. More than 25 people from FPC attended a Hard Hat Party that raised more than \$32,000 for the Transitional House

Jamicia, Carlos, Zylah, Raul, Izabel. Heather, Justin, Mariah ...

These are the names of some of our current cherished guests. They are mothers, fathers, students, employees, children, and babies, all of them experiencing homelessness. These guests or others like them will be living at FPC from June 18 to June 25. Do you have time to touch their lives or allow them into your heart through the ministry of presence?

Sign up to set up rooms, provide meals, host for an evening, or host overnight at some point during the week of June 18. We can provide training and support. If you are not yet a part of the Faith Family Hospital Group on MyFPC, email Janet Schuchmann at jlsnv@aol.com or call her at 571-212-1698. This will ensure that you receive updates and notice when it is time to sign up.

—Janet Schuchmann



Dear FPC,

I wanted to let all of you know about a door that God has opened for our family. Sunday, April 9, the congregation of La Cañada Presbyterian Church called me to be their Senior Pastor. Thanks be to God! La Cañada is a community on the east side of Los Angeles, just north of Pasadena. LCPC is a wonderful church with a long history of faithfulness to the Gospel. I will be starting at this job in May, and my family will be moving to California over the summer. My time at FPC was a significant part of this door opening for me, so I continue to be thankful for all of you and the joyful season I had serving as your Bridge Senior Pastor. As we look toward the hope of resurrection. I thank God for FPC and for your continued witness of the resurrected Christ.

> With much love, in His name, Jeff Hoffmeyer

FORGIVE

I can forgive and forget ... I just don't want you to forget that I forgave!

As strange as those words seem, there is a bit of truth to them. Forgiveness is no small or easy thing, and we may possibly find ourselves forgiving for the wrong reason. Because forgiveness takes strength and courage, we just want that other person to remember that we actually did that for them. Yet that's not what God commands of us: We are to forgive as the Lord forgave us—not keeping score, not reminding someone we forgave—we are to simply forgive.

When I think of forgiveness, I am reminded always of two young boys who had an altercation on the playground at the school where I served as an administrator. I "created an opportunity" for them to apologize to one another before they went off to play, and they did. However, Sam, the youngest of the two, said to Darin (after he apologized), "Will you forgive me?" Darin replied, "Sure. Let's go swing!" I wanted to make Darin ask for forgiveness, too, but instead, after Darin ran off, I asked Sam, "How did that make you feel just now?" I, of course, was referring to the fact that Darin hadn't asked for forgiveness, but Sam replied, "I feel fine. My mom says it always feels good to ask someone to forgive you if you've done something wrong, and it does!" And then, he was off to the swings.

I have thought of that day often. As much as I wanted Darin to reciprocate, it didn't happen. But that didn't stop Sam. He had done what he needed to do for himself. He didn't excuse Darin's behavior, but he wasn't going to let the fact that Darin hadn't asked for forgiveness from him destroy anything in himself. We will not always be met with a receptive heart when we ask for forgiveness or when we forgive.

Forgiveness is just plain hard! We find ourselves working at forgiving someone who doesn't want forgiveness (because they feel they didn't do anything wrong), or we are working at forgiving the unforgivable. I suspect that we often feel that when we forgive someone, we give them permission to "do it again." I suppose we run that risk, but we also run it if we don't forgive. We often base our forgiveness a bit on the other "deserving" it.

Our job is to treat others honorably. We will always run into people who are perhaps rude, unfair, critical, etc., but if we treat people according to how they treat us, then very soon will have changed who WE are for the worse. Our guidelines come from God, not from how others treat us. Forgiveness is a choice, a decision. You rarely wake up in the morning thinking, "Today I'm going to forgive..." The question is: Which do you hold closer—the need to be right or the need to forgive?

I'm no Pollyanna. I have harbored hurts a long time, and I know that asking for forgiveness can be downright painful. Forgiving offenses against you or ones you love feels nearly impossible at times. Asking forgiveness or forgiving someone else doesn't always make us feel better or make the situation better. But it's a good place to start. I know that because God spelled it out for us and because He demonstrated it for us. The last words of Jesus on the cross were, "Forgive them."

Every morning, God's mercies are new. Are ours? We often want to put a question mark where God has put a period. He has commanded that we forgive one another as He forgave us. Period.

-Marge Rice

TE DEUM

a Festival of Praise and Worship

The Music and Arts Ministry is pleased to announce this year's spring concert on **Friday, May 19**, at 7:00 p.m. in the Sanctuary of FPC. This year's presentation, unlike any in the past, features an eclectic collection of thrilling and uplifting music presented by the FPC Sanctuary Choir, FPC Festival Chorus, FPC Chancel Bell Choir, Joe McConathy, Alice Crawford, Dawn Grapes, and the congregation. Selections for this evening of praise and worship include Karg-Elert's *Praise the Lord with Drums and Cymbals*, Hans Leo Hassler's *O Sing Unto the Lord*, Randall Thompson's *Alleluia*, Beethoven's exciting *Hallelujah* from *Mount of Olives*, John Rutter's powerful setting of the *Te Deum*, and a congregational hymn-singing supported by the choirs, organ, piano, and bells.

Director of Music Marvin Crawford declares that this is not your ordinary concert, but rather a concert of worship involving all who are present, collectively offering praises unto our high and holy God. The Music and Arts Ministry invites you, your family, friends, and coworkers to **TE DEUM—A FESTIVAL OF PRAISE AND WORSHIP** on Friday, May 19, at 7:00 p.m. in the Sanctuary of FPC. Childcare is available by reservation for children up to 5 years old by contacting Kelly Regan at kregan@firstpresfc.org. This concert of worship is open to the public and is free.



LIBRARY CORNER

THE WORD SOURCE

New in your Word Source Library are Brazos Theological Commentaries on Leviticus; 1 Samuel; 1 and 2 Kings; Ezra and Nehemiah; Esther and Daniel; and Psalm 1–50.

A gift of six volumes from the Brazos Old Testament Commentaries has been presented to the church library. This brings our series to 10 volumes between Genesis and Daniel. As noted previously in *The Messenger*, Brazos Press has a goal to present scripture creedally for the 21st century. Indexes in each volume have cross references to New Testament passages.

In the Leviticus commentary, author Ephraim Radner writes about the Tabernacle, Moses, Aaron, high priests, sin, sacrifices, holiness, and atonement, foreshadowing what we have in the New Testament book of Hebrews. In turn, Hebrews plays upon Leviticus. In an Amazon review, K. Barth says, "Radner makes Christological connections that dominate and enliven the entire book."

In the Psalms 1–50 commentary, Ellen Charry provides many New Testament

references. Her subtitle Sighs and Songs of Israel will strike a familiar note to the hearts of readers of the Psalms. Reviews credit Charry with "deep theological wisdom and human experience." It's been said that "she mines the Psalms for theological and pastoral value for all they are worth" and provides "daily bread for the brokenhearted Jews and Christians."

If one feels inclined to delve into Old Testament history, the following four volumes are a prize:

1 Samuel by Francesca Murphy and 1 & 2 Kings by Peter Leithart cover the histories of Israel from Saul to the Exile.

In 1 Samuel, Murphy presents Saul as taking the first steps toward political government, whereas his rival David is called a chieftain and a social anthropologist.

The Journal of Evangelistic Theology says that in 1 & 2 Kings Peter Leithart "aspires to bring the Old Testament to the church as an ongoing source of revelation in a refreshing way."

Readable sections summarize the Biblical chapters.

In Ezra & Nehemiah, Matthew Levering brings the Hebrews back from exile. The rebuilding of the temple, return to the Torah, renewal of the Covenant, and Jeremiah's prophecies are mingled with Christological references.

Esther & Daniel by Samuel Wells and George Sumner is best described by Duke Divinity Professor Ellen Davis: "A fascinating conversation between two books that captures opposite aspects of faith. In Esther God seems to disappear from history, leaving the faithful to their own desperate devices. And in Daniel we read about God breaking into the chaos of history. Imaginatively and convincingly, Wells and Sumner show the theological, ethical, and even missional importance of these 'outlier' books within the Christian canon. This book is designed to stimulate serious conversation in the church."

-Jane Rolston

A CHURCH OF CHARACTER

ALERTNESS AND FLEXIBILITY

The character quality for May 2017 is ALERTNESS (vs. carelessness). Alertness is being aware of what is taking place around me so that I can have the right response.

Alertness is often the first prevention against sin in a believer's life. In I Corinthians 10:13, Paul states, "No temptation has seized you except what is common to man. And God is faithful; he will not let you be tempted beyond what you can bear. But when you are tempted, he will also provide a way out so that you can stand up under it" (NIV). When temptation comes to lure us into sin, God has promised to provide an escape.

So how can we be alert to sin and to God's divine escape route? First, know God! The more we know God, the more sensitive we are to His Spirit and can discern when He is warning us from a certain path. Knowing God's Word is the key! It must be studied and pondered. Psalm 119:11 states, "I have hidden your word in my heart that I might not sin against you" (NIV). And Psalm 1 says, "Blessed is the man who does not walk in the counsel of the wicked or stand in the way of sinners or sit in the seat of mockers. But his delight is in the law of the LORD, and on his law he meditates day and night" (NIV). The more we study and meditate on God's Word, the more we will know Him. This relationship with God helps us to be more sensitive to His Spirit—thus recognizing temptation when it arrives.

A thorough understanding of God's Word will lead us to a more intimate relationship with Him. While cultivating this relationship, we must also remain alert to ourselves. Alertness requires that you are aware of situations that could lead to sin. Ask God to grant you wisdom that you may be more aware of

yourself and give you the strength you need to change directions when temptation lurks around the corner. Rely on and trust God and the power of the Holy Spirit in every way, every day!

"Sin can undo in an unguarded second the character which required years to form."

-Charles H. Spurgeon, The Power of True Success: How to Build Character in Your Life

The character quality for June is FLEXIBILITY (vs. resistance). Flexibility can be defined as willingness to change plans or ideas without getting upset.

Life is made up of change. This is true at home, on the job, or at school. People change, seasons change, fads change, and on it goes. We live in a world of unprecedented and constant change. No matter how hard we plan, our plans change and our lives change. But God does not change! His love and grace are the same yesterday, today, and forever. He is always with us, no matter where we are or what we are doing.

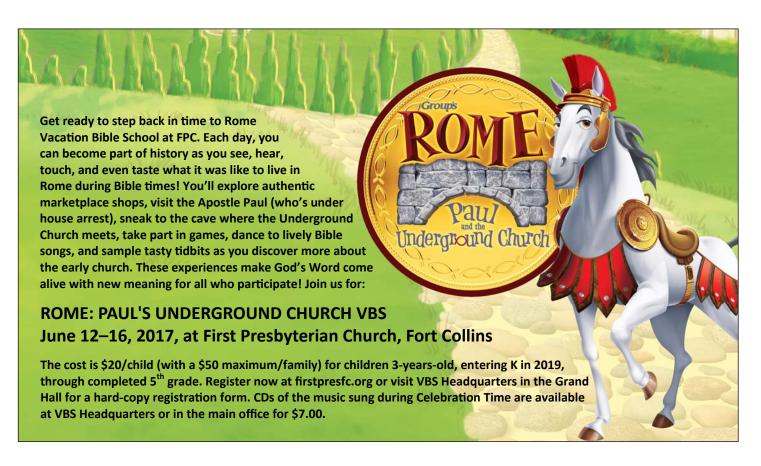
However, to be able to deal with all those things in our lives that do change requires flexibility. A rigid and unbending spirit can be harmful, both to others and to the one who holds it. Sickness or a tough job situation can call for major change in our lives. How do we cope with these things? How do we stay at peace when changes disrupt our lives? Or how do we maintain a sweet spirit when changes occur, especially those created by others with

whom we may not agree? Other people's ideas and styles may differ greatly from ours. Sometimes in our families or sometimes in our churches, new situations arise that create turmoil. We often find it very difficult to be understanding and flexible. This may be especially true for those of us who are a bit older. We should not give up personal convictions, but we do need to try to understand others' points of view.

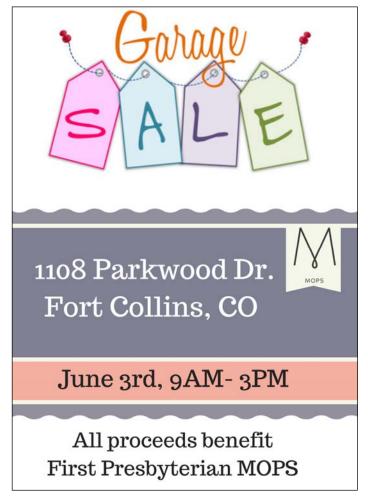
It is also critically important for us to remember that it is God who ultimately orders our steps. "Trust in the Lord with all your heart, and lean not on your own understanding; in all your ways acknowledge Him, and He will direct your paths" (Proverbs 3:5-6). This is not to say that we should not have goals or plans. They are important to an organized life, but we must always remember that God is the ultimate ruler in our lives and in the universe. God's view is so allencompassing, whereas ours, in comparison, is so limited that we must yield every moment to His direction, even in the midst of our planning and goal-setting. So when our plans change unexpectedly, we need to remember that God has a hand in the smallest details of our lives. When changes come along, don't be inflexible and disappointed. Be flexible, anticipate the best, and above all, trust God in all things.

"Before the mountains were brought forth, or ever thou hadst formed the earth and the world, from everlasting to everlasting, thou art God."

-Psalm 90:2







ACTS OF KINDNESS

BLESSING OTHERS WITH YOUR GOD-GIVEN GIFTS

One can get on Facebook on any given day and see random act of kindness people were a part of or got to experience. It's heartwarming to see so many people react positively to them. They are perfect reminders of all the good there is in the world—as some days we have a hard time remembering that.

But what about the random acts of kindness that don't go viral? I see them every day in this church, and I saw one this week. I watched a van driver work tirelessly to make certain that one of our van passengers would get to come to church, would get to see other people that live outside of her small room, would get to worship God with us on Sunday morning. What an act of love!

A trip to church that we so often take for granted is to others a monumental

task of planning, phone calls, and assistance.

Our van drivers are here to make that task less monumental. I won't name them, as they don't want to be named. They don't do it for recognition. They do it because God has commanded in 1 Peter 4:10: "As each has received a gift, use it to serve one another. Be a good steward of God's varied gifts."

I watched another act that most of you never get to see. A member of the congregation fixed lunch for the staff—as she has done once a month all year. She wouldn't want to be recognized either because she does it for the same reason. She has received a gift, and she wants to serve others. But 14 people did notice and have noticed every month, and they are grateful.

As each has received a gift, use it to serve one another. Be a good steward of God's varied gifts.

-1 Peter 4:10

So to those of you performing acts of kindness that aren't recognized in public—thank you for doing something so kind and not asking for anything in return. Thank you for inspiring others to do good as well. Thank you for taking the initiative to make another person's day better. I hope you never stop.

—Marge Rice



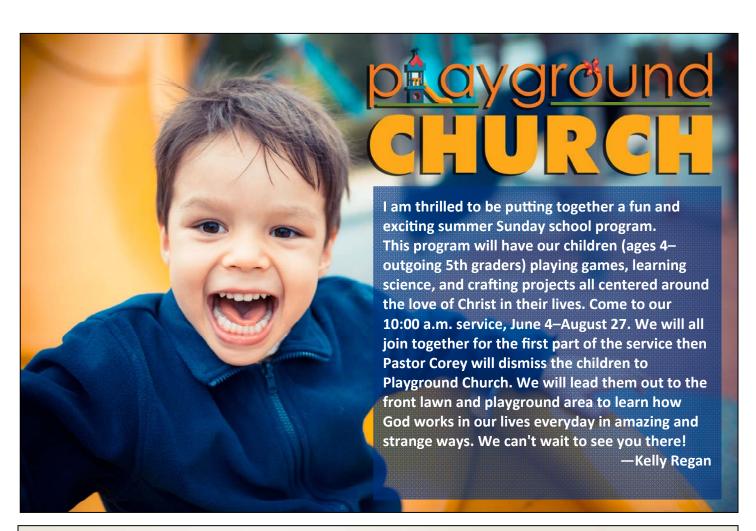
Your influence

MATTERS.

Everyone has influence and the ability to create positive change. When you improve your leadership, you impact lives, churches, businesses, governments, schools, and families. The Global Leadership Summit is a two-day world-class event simulcast LIVE in HD from Willow Creek's Campus near Chicago to over 600 satellite locations in North America, impacting an expected 400,000 participants worldwide. Willow Creek's passion is to help Christians worldwide realize God's vision for their lives, churches, and communities. The Global Leadership Summit provides a unique blend of vision, inspiration, and practical skills you can immediately apply with instruction from a world-class faculty. Learn more at willowcreek.com/summit.

Register for only \$99 through June 27.

- Go to willowcreek.com/ summit
- Click REGISTER
- Choose the Crossroads Church, Loveland site
- Priority/referral code: SPC17





All donations support the Youth Mission Trip to Los Angeles this summer.

SUNDAY, MAY 21, 10:15 AM

help support a great cause—enjoy the music and goodies



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