THE MESSENGER

| NEWS FROM FIRST PRESBYTERIAN CHURCH FORT COLLINS |

FUN AND FRIENDSHIP

A WITNESS TO FAITH

MY CHURCH COMMUNITY

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From the Editor | COURAGE IN VULNERABILITY

Bright yellow dots on green grass turn to white, and children immediately begin plucking fluffy blooms to blow—making a wish and sending seeds sailing. Children are so willing to be vulnerable, aren't they? In this small act, they place major personal hopes on a weed. Also vulnerable are the seeds, which float through the air unknowingly, take root where they land, and grow, just to be made vulnerable to picking and blowing once more.

This June, we will look at Dr. Brené Brown's, *Daring Greatly: How the Courage to Be Vulnerable Transforms the Way We Live, Love, Parent, and Lead*. Brown studied vulnerability for 12 years and sees vulnerability as an asset to living whole-heartedly. As Christ-followers, we, too, are encouraged to embrace weakness and step out in faith. We hope you will engage whole-heartedly in all we have to offer this summer at FPC.

- Make a joyful noise with Summer Singers
- Bring Babylon to life for children at Vacation Bible School
- Participate in summer worship at 9:30 a.m.
- Give your input to the Campus Strategy survey
- Travel to Narnia with Playground Church
- Enjoy summer music at the Lagoon with Simply Social
- Pitch your tent and connect with our church family at the church camping trip

Although you may feel busy, inadequate, or vulnerable, *everyone* has a place to take root, grow, and live boldly at FPC. Join us!

—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 email 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

LOOKING TO THE FUTURE OF FPC WITHIN THE COMMUNITY

It is hard to believe that I am coming to the end of my second program year here at FPC. Looking back, I'm so grateful for our welcoming congregation, strong leaders, and dedicated staff who have been a part of this journey. We are thankfully now in a place where stable finances and personnel, an enhanced facility, and growing membership all provide us with a strong foundation on which to look forward to where God is calling FPC next. The timing of this opportunity is even more compelling as we look ahead to our church's 150th anniversary in 2022.

With this in mind, I formed a Campus Strategy Team earlier this year to guide us in the beginning stages of these next steps. The team is chaired by Grant Sherwood and includes Karen Weitkunat, Randy DeMario, Molly Secher, Jack Miller, and Heather Vesgaard. These six individuals all have a deep commitment to Christ's church and mission in the community and also represent the diverse sectors of city government, university, business, and nonprofit agencies in town.

Our work began with some affirmations of our current context. In the next couple of years, we will need to explore the possibilities of upgrading or rebuilding portions of our campus. For example, our Education Wing, built in the late 1950s, is badly out of date—mostly inaccessible and not functional for many of the ways that we might want to better utilize that space. However, if we are going to pursue these changes, we want to do so in ways that creatively and effectively maximize our ability to serve in partnership with others to improve our entire community.

We at FPC have made a long-term commitment to stay positioned at our current downtown location, and that "downtown location" is transforming before our eyes. Fort Collins is a healthy, growing, and vibrant city, welcoming a larger and more diverse population with growing issues and needs. In response, our church can either choose a reactive posture, waiting to see what happens and then responding as best we can, or we can choose a proactive posture, where we engage with our neighbors now to explore how we can best serve the wider community, both as it is and as it is becoming. We believe the second option is the wiser and more faithful course to follow.

With this in mind, the Campus Strategy Team interviewed 18 key leaders in the community in January and February. We asked questions around the following themes: What do you believe are the most pressing needs to address in our community? How could our church, with its downtown campus, work with partners to address those needs? How is our church known in the community? What advice would you have for FPC as we explore where God is calling us in the future?

These interviews provided us with important insights and affirmations that the team has integrated into a final report. During this time, we have also created a timeline for the process that we believe will be most effective to follow. Our interviews are the first half of a two-part "Discovery Phase." The second part of this phase is a congregation-wide survey which was sent out this week. (The link is included below.) After the surveys have been received, we will integrate those into the original community report and present a series of open forums over the summer for you to hear the results, ask questions, and provide additional feedback. Dates for those forums will be announced in June.

This fall we plan to begin the second part of this process, the "Planning Phase," which will take the information we have received and create an action plan for next steps. This could include a capital campaign for campus improvements, but will certainly include guidance for the growth of future ministries, as well as missional and community partnerships. We hope to conclude that phase and present a plan in early 2019 and, if there is broad support for this plan, begin the final "Implementation Phase" at that time.

So, what's next? I'm glad you asked. You should have received by mail a copy of the Executive Summary of the Campus Strategy Team, along with an invitation to participate in the congregation-wide survey asking for your feedback about your hopes and dreams for FPC as we begin this new chapter of life together in Fort Collins. We will encourage those who can to take the survey online, but will also have paper copies in the church office.

I know this is a lot to digest, and I welcome any questions or feedback you have in the meantime. In this season of celebrating and experiencing Pentecost, we also covet your prayers for the continued guidance and wisdom of the Holy Spirit. This is an exciting time to be a part of the FPC community. Let's see what God has in store for us next!

Peace, Corey

Link for the online survey:

https://www.surveymonkey.com/r/FPCVision

Or use the QR code:



SIMPLY SOCIAL

FPC FUN AND FRIENDSHIP



Like many good things, it started over cups of coffee around a kitchen table. Eight friends gathered on a cold day in February 2014 B.C. (that's Before Corey), when our church was in an "interim mode"—waiting for the discovery of our new pastor and trying to get a fresh start as a community. The eight were Dale and Maryrose Preston, Grant and Pat Sherwood, Jim and Mary Troxell, and Jack and Sharon Miller. That day we hatched a plan for bringing FPC members together in an informal way and started with the purpose and focus of "Creating opportunity for FPC members to get acquainted while having fun at activities outside of the church building; encouraging integration of new members who are not yet connected."

The next step was to expand on the brainstorming with more people involved! So the eight of us invited other couples and singles to join in on planning. More than 25 gathered on a

Sunday after church at Los Tarascos. Over fajitas and tacos, we recognized some important things. People were anxious to get together, they had many great ideas for events, and Presbyterians love to socialize around the aroma of food!

At that point we needed a name and roster of activity, and the growing group did not fail to make that happen. By March we filled a house with more interested people, and the ideas began to flow with activities that would be fun and exciting to try. At the Mexican restaurant we had asked our friends to submit entries into a "name the group" contest, as we were now ready to have a label. The anonymous-entry suggestions went to vote, and *Simply Social* (thank you Dana Theis) became our group name!

That table of eight now has grown to more than 125 people who want to enjoy meeting and sharing time with other FPC members. The event announcements and information are all transmitted through member email, with complete freedom to choose and sign up for activities that fit your interests and schedule. Usually there are at least 15 to 25 attending any given event, and we can always count on meeting someone new, as well as gathering with familiar faces.

Each event has a host(s) who can be reached directly by email to register your attendance, collect fees if needed, and provide the details. The group has evolved into a co-op of friendship where leadership is shared and planning is "simple!" The goal is to not replace, but to enrich the fellowship and joy that we experience in worship and meetings within our church.

A sampling of past *Simply Social* activities includes touring local sites, attending theater and art events, minitrip excursions, rodeos, baseball

games, biking, hiking, and restaurant dining. Food seems to always add incentive for gathering. A night of just dessert at *The Chocolate Café* was one of our largest and loudest events, as the rise in serotonin added to the noisy joy of an hour together!

The list of *Simply Social* events for 2018 is growing, and we want you to know that you are invited to join us! Plans in the making include:

- Visiting an exhibit/tour at "Avenir Museum" hosted by Madgetta Dungy
- A summer CSU Lagoon Concert evening hosted by Mary Garcia and Larry Weber; Mary and Larry will also host the December 2 "Dickens Dinner" once more
- Rockies baseball game (vs. Arizona Razorbacks) on September 13, hosted by Ray and Kim Slaughter

This is just a sampling, but you can receive up-to-date postings by way of emails generated through MyFPC once you sign up as a *Simply Social* member. Some events include costs, and others are free. All the information is included on the posting, along with the host's

email, so that you can respond to them directly. Some events have limited numbers, so quick response to hosts is always best!

In initial planning, we intended for this group to be energized by FPC volunteers, with the thought that church staff would always be invited as "participants," but not expected to "work." This structure provides time for them to be included without asking them to add to their duties. We have also been committed to not excluding any adults who want to join us. That means no age restrictions, and all are welcomed!

If you are not yet a part of *Simply Social*, there are two easy steps to take:

- Send your email request to join to Dale Preston (dpreston571@comcast.net)
- If you are not already receiving FPC emails, then also be sure to contact FPC Director of Operations, Don Genson (dgenson@firstpresfc.org), to be assigned your password to access MyFPC

We are always looking for new event ideas for *Simply Social* as well as hosts. If you want to add something new, please contact Dale Preston (listed above) or Sharon Miller (sharonmiller@millergroup.org). This always helps to avoid conflicts with other scheduled church events, and we will help you post!

With spring arriving, you may be finding yourself wanting to add more friendships and activity to your fresh calendar pages. Come join us at future *Simply Social* events!

—Sharon Miller

LIBRARY CORNER

THE WORD SOURCE

A review of Forty Autumns: A Family's Story of Courage and Survival on Both Sides of the Berlin Wall, by Nina Willner

"My grandmother lives behind an Iron Curtain and could not come with me to kindergarten," said five year old Nina Willner on Grandparents' Day at school. Little by little, Nina's mother Hanna revealed to Nina the facts of her escape from East Germany at the age of 20. Hanna, now living in America with her US army officer husband, recalls the heartbreaking price of freedom when leaving behind her parents, eight brothers and sisters, and the family home, as well as the punishments it brought to her family. In her telling, Nina's mother does not spare the cruel realities and hardships her family faced living in East Germany under Communist rule.

Gleaning from Hanna's stories and Nina's adult experiences as the first female American intelligence officer to lead sensitive intelligent operations in East Berlin at the height of the Cold War, Nina Willner tells the true story of her family separated by the Iron Curtain for more than 40 years and their miraculous reunion after the fall of the Berlin Wall. Forty Autumns is a story of courage, resilience, and love, especially among women whose spirits could not be broken. Because of the political situation, Hanna's mother Oma fought to save what she "declared their own 'Family Wall,' a sanctuary, a refuge where family would gather to preserve their souls by keeping the good in and the bad out" (p. 149). This book is recommended for high school through the most senior of citizens.

—Jane Rolston

A WITNESS TO FAITH

KLON E. MATTHEWS EDUCATION SCHOLARSHIPS

Hebrews 13:16—And do not forget to do good and to share with others, for with such sacrifices God is pleased.

\$1.5 million. This impressive figure is the current endowment of our church's Foundation. But look a little further behind this number, and you'll find beautiful stories of faithful servants here at FPC.

Members and their loved ones, in acts of charity and hope for the future of our church, have left living legacies through gifts to our Foundation. While the principle of these gifts is retained in the Foundation's perpetual fund, the income and earnings from them continue to provide secure, stable funding for God's work through our church for generations to come.

One such member was Klon Matthews, a lifelong public school educator and administrator. An outgoing and exuberant disciple of Christ, he was a cherished part of our church family. In 1999, he and his wife, Eileen, established the Klon E. Matthews Scholarship Program to honor his commitment to education.

Over the past six years, this program has distributed a total of \$14,550 in college scholarships to young adults in our congregation. The Klon Matthews fund makes available up to four \$1000 scholarships each year, with the goal of supporting Christian men and women in their desire to grow on their walk with Christ and pursue higher education.

I know I speak for everyone at FPC when I say how deeply proud we are of the four impressive young women who were awarded the scholarships this year:

Rebecca Kirby, Emma Kirby, Grace Kenyon, and Chloe Ellison.

Rebecca Kirby

Rebecca is graduating from the International Baccalaureate program at Poudre High School. She loves playing varsity tennis at Poudre. She is also passionate about the cello, participating in Denver Young Artists Orchestra, All-State Orchestra, and Western States Honor Orchestra, in addition to studying solo repertoire. She plans on studying Public Health Science on the premed track and is choosing between Santa Clara University, St. Olaf College, and Brown University to attend next year. She is extremely excited about her options and cannot wait to take on this new adventure with God's guidance!



Emma Kirby

Emma is also a senior at Poudre High School. She enjoys playing tennis on her school's varsity team and bassoon in Denver Young Artists Orchestra. Next year, she is continuing her musical and academic studies at Vanderbilt University, and is planning to double major in Bassoon Performance and Medicine, Health, and Society.



Grace is passionate about music, literature, science, and learning anything and everything she can about God's crazy, amazing world. She plans to attend either Wheaton College in Illinois or CU Boulder and hopes to study Piano Performance and Neuroscience. She would like to thank all of the amazing people in her family, school, and church community who have supported her relentlessly throughout her life.

(Continued on Page 7)







Chloe Ellison

Chloe is a senior at Fort Collins High School. She will be attending Colgate University in Hamilton, New York, as a member of the Class of 2022, where she plans on pursuing a double major in Music and Economics and hopes to eventually run a nonprofit organization that makes the arts and music more accessible to underprivileged communities. She has been studying piano since the age of 4 and began studying percussion in middle school. She's participated in marching/pep band for the past four years and holds the position of Center Snare and Section Leader. She also plays piano and percussion in her school's Symphonic Band, Symphony Orchestra, Jazz Band, Pit Orchestra, and several other ensembles. She currently hold the positions of President of Tri-M (Music Honor Society) and Secretary of the National Honor Society. She has a passion for service and was honored to be a member of the Plant with Purpose Vision Team that traveled to the Dominican Republic in 2015. At FPC, she has been singing in choirs since the age of 5 and began ringing hand-bells in the third grade. She volunteers with the FPC children's chorus as a piano accompanist. She is honored to be a recipient of the Klon E. Matthews Scholarship, alongside her very talented and accomplished lifelong friends Emma, Grace, and Rebecca. She's grateful to her family for all of their love and support.

Our hearts are full as we wish these accomplished and passionate young women every blessing as they head out into the world! We will miss you and your many musical and other gifts you shared over the years. And we are so deeply grateful to Klon and Eileen Matthews and their legacy of charity and generosity here at FPC.

-Audrey McDill



CHURCH OF CHARACTER

AVAILABILITY AND DETERMINATION

The character quality for May 2018 is AVAILABILITY (versus self-centeredness). Availability can be defined as managing my daily schedule and priorities so that I am ready and able to serve those whom God brings to me. It can also be defined as making my own schedule and priorities secondary to the wishes of those I serve.

Consider the following keys to developing the trait of availability:

Find a way to help. Give some careful thought as to how you can best help others, whether at home, work, or church. Perhaps you cannot afford to give someone money, but you could take a Saturday and help paint a house. You might not be in a position of authority to give a pay raise, but you can publicly praise a coworker for their character or for something they have done. Discern what others need and consider how you can help!

Be productive. It is easier to make time in your schedule when you have a schedule to keep. Manage your time and resources so that you will have the flexibility to see needs and be able to help to meet them.

Develop useful skills. Thinking and learning are lifelong disciplines. Consider how you can improve family and workplace skills. The listening skills that make you a better family member can also make you a better coworker.

Communicate with others. If you can't help someone now, let them know when you can help them, and then keep your promise. This is especially true with children and your spouse. Communicate with others as to when you plan to be away or unavailable.

Serve cheerfully. Occasionally, we all have to do things we would rather avoid. The key is that we don't have to be particularly happy about doing that particular task, but just to get it done as promptly and cheerfully as possible. Wholeheartedly tackle each step in the process, look past the difficulties, and find ways to proceed. The sooner you start, the sooner you can finish the job! When we do things cheerfully, we are a blessing to those around us, whether they are family or coworkers.

"Availability is giving our hearts — not just our hands — to a task."

— The Power for True Success: How to Build Character in Your Life "I can do everything through him who gives me strength."

- Philippians 4:13

The character quality for June 2018 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!



Over the course of this school year, I tackled the daunting process of applying to college. Most colleges ask a few questions that the applicant is supposed to respond to in an essay so that the admissions committee can have more personal context to consider in addition to the generic test scores and grade point average. While all the colleges I applied to have different requirements and specific questions, I found that there tend to be a few essay topics that are asked by most, if not all, the colleges. One of these topics translates into questions like, "To which community do you most belong?" or "Describe how you have been affected by and what part you play in a community in your life." When I started thinking about what I would write about for these questions, church was always the first thing that came to mind.

I belong to a lot of communities—I play multiple sports, I am in music groups in and out of school, and I am a member of school-run organizations. So why is it that I most strongly belong to my church community? When I reflect on it, I realize how influential my lifelong attendance at FPC has been in shaping me into who and what I am today.

I grew up going to church, and my closest friends are those who I met at church before I was even old enough to go to school. I joined the youth choir in kindergarten and bell choir in third grade and have been in youth group since sixth grade. I often refer to church as my second home because between youth group, services, bell choir, and my various other activities, it feels like I spend more time there than at my house. Bell choir has not only been a fun activity for me, but over the years it has aided me in my musical background. Learning to play music in a group starting in third grade helped me to thrive in more formal band and orchestra groups. This has henceforth shaped my love for music and plans for the future—I am now planning on continuing with music in college and possibly pursuing a career in it. Youth group is also a place where I feel like I belong within my church community. We are a uniquely small group of under 10 people, and I consider everyone in it a very close friend.

And although we are all so close, we have a lot of differing opinions. Every Sunday night, we get together to have fun, praise God, and learn about and discuss a "current event," such as gender inequality or religious persecution. In our increasingly divided and divisive world, the only place I feel comfortable sharing my opinions without backlash or judgement is on one of the mismatched couches in our dimly lit student lounge. Everyone in the high school youth group is so accepting of others and their opinions, which in turn has taught me to be more open-minded about opinions differing from my own. In addition to our weekly gatherings, every summer, the high school youth group goes on a mission trip somewhere in the country. The primary goal of the mission trip is, of course, to help those in the community in which we are serving. I have been on three mission trips through the youth group, going to South Dakota, Michigan, and Denver. I have found through these trips that as I am serving others. I personally grow, both mentally and spiritually. Mission trips often make one feel uncomfortable and vulnerable because serving in unfamiliar communities and dedicating a full week to serving others is fundamentally difficult. This discomfort has always made my faith in and connection to God stronger because I realize how much I fully depend on Him.

As I have gotten older, being part of my church and youth group has allowed me to grow in faith, friendship, and character. I would not be half the person I am today if it were not for my open and tolerant church community, and I am indescribably proud to share about my place in this community with colleges. Most importantly, I am so thankful to FPC for creating a community of friends, mentors, and faith-strengthening opportunities that I can be a part of and grow from.

—Emma Kirby

SHERWOOD HOUSE

FAITH FAMILY HOSPITALITY'S TRANSITIONAL HOUSING STARTS CONSTRUCTION

I am excited to share that we have FINALLY completed all of our requirements for the development review, the negotiations for the lease, and our development agreement.

Whew, what a long run this has been. As we are in this home stretch, all of our documents are being reviewed for one last time by the city's legal, engineering, planning, and real estate departments. Our portion of the development work is complete. After preliminary approval, we expect this step to be completed very soon.

Now on to the fun stuff. We are planning on having the City Council approve our lease in June. It requires two readings and is intended to be included in the City Council's consent agenda. After the second reading, we will have a 10-day appeal period. After this period is complete, we will sign the lease and obtain keys.

So this summer is looking like the beginning of our construction phase.

Here is the story of Faith Family Hospitality (FFH) from the beginning:

FFH began providing emergency overnight shelter in area churches in January 2012, with shelter, meals, and hospitality from 5:00 p.m. to 7:00 a.m. each night. Soon it became apparent that in order to provide lasting impact, the mission needed to be broadened to help homeless families achieve independence and overcome life's obstacles. The support needed to attain this expanded mission is significantly more extensive in terms of case management, facilities, and services. Currently, 32 diverse faith communities work together, taking turns as host sites, providing volunteer support to shelter guests, and feeding four guest families (up to 22 adults and children) for one week at a time. By housing four families each night, FFH has been able to double Fort Collins's family sheltering capacity. In 2014, a unique, familyfriendly Day Center was added and expanded the reach of FFH by providing support services to all wait-listed families, in addition to sheltered guest families. With these additions to the program, the percent of families going into permanent housing has increased from 31% to 68% in 2017.

Our next step is bridge housing. Taking a cue from the success experienced in the current program, a vacant building was identified. The City of Fort Collins has agreed to lease FFH the former domestic violence safehouse building at 317-321 South

Sherwood Street. This program will provide the next step toward self-sufficiency for an additional seven needy families with 12 to 14 children. In the bridge house, called Sherwood House, families will be provided education specifically targeted to support healthy families (financial planning, parenting, time management, stress management), along with graduated support and more time to achieve independence, thus reducing the bottleneck created for those with longer lengths of stay in the FFH emergency shelter program. This continued case management will assist children by providing a stable home where their parents will have additional support and learn tools to avoid future episodes of homelessness, abuse, and neglect.

The Sherwood House currently has 16 bedrooms, two kitchens, eight bathrooms, two living/dining rooms, a computer room, a resident manager apartment, and a large toy room. The anticipated value of the renovation will be \$800,000, with an actual cost estimated at \$400,000 due to inkind donations. The project requires the development of the back alley and the property's parking lot. The rest of the renovations include complete reconstruction of the two kitchens to become three kitchens and facelifts for the bathrooms. Flooring, paint, appliances, and some minor exterior repairs will also be completed. The backyard patio and playground are being redone as well.

Sponsors for the project include Group Gives, First United Methodist Church, First Presbyterian Church, Faith Church, Trinity Lutheran Church, Foothills Unitarian Church, and Thrivent Financial.

We look forward to the next step of our journey of serving families as they overcome homelessness and once again become sustainable, independent and self-sufficient.

—Annette Zacharias, Executive Director, FFH

JUNE 17-AUGUST 19



ONE SERVICE: 9:30 AM SUNDAYS

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