

THE MESSENGER

| NEWS FROM FIRST PRESBYTERIAN CHURCH FORT COLLINS |

**A STORY OF
GENEROSITY**

**THE NINJAS
OF FPC**

DUCT TAPE



What's Inside | CONTENTS

3	Pastor's Corner
4–5	Mountains and S'mores
6–7	The Matthews House
8	Adult Spiritual Formation
9	A Story of Generosity
10–11	The Adventures of Flat Jesus
12	Duct Tape
13	Deacons Corner
14	From the Director of Children's Ministries
15	A Magic Night on the Lawn
16	Klon E. Matthews Education Scholarships
17	Library Corner
18	The Ninjas of FPC
19	On the Move
20	Parents Night Out

From the Editor | COMMUNITY

Com.mu.ni.ty: [kuh-myoo-ni-tee] A unified body of individuals. A feeling of fellowship with others as a result of sharing common attitudes, interests, and goals.

I see and hear this word so often that I fear I have become immune to the power within the elements of its meaning. The individual parts of a community don't come together organically; they come together because of the power of shared purpose. Where better than our church to live this out?

We gather weekly to worship and pray together (Sunday mornings) and eat and learn together (Midweek eXperience). We're getting to know others more deeply with fall supper series. We shared s'mores around a campfire over the summer. We're participating in Campus Strategy Forums with the larger Fort Collins community as part of our church planning. The Matthews House Community Life Center is now operating at FPC to empower youth, strengthen families, and build community for those experiencing poverty and abuse. Some of us brought friends to the Night of Magic on the Lawn or the Concert for a Cause. Every event on this list represents individuals unifying under the shared purpose of living out our faith.

The way God designed our bodies is a model for understanding our lives together as a church: every part dependent on every other part, the parts we mention and the parts we don't, the parts we see and the parts we don't. If one part hurts, every other part is involved in the hurt, and in the healing. If one part flourishes, every other part enters into the exuberance. (1 Corinthians 12:25–26, The Message)

And within community like this—based on our common desire to live in Christ—we experience love, dedication, respect, joy, hope, patience, sharing, hospitality, fellowship, and blessing. God bless our FPC community; may we find our individual space within it this fall.

—Cathy Richardson

THE MESSENGER

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FIRST PRESBYTERIAN CHURCH
531 SOUTH COLLEGE AVENUE
FORT COLLINS, CO 80524
(970) 482-6107
WWW.FIRSTPRESFC.ORG

MINISTERS | THE CONGREGATION
SENIOR PASTOR | COREY NELSON
EDITOR | CATHY RICHARDSON

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.



First
Presbyterian
Church

PASTOR'S CORNER

YOU HAVE AN IMPORTANT PART TO PLAY IN THE NEXT CHAPTER AT FPC

Hello Friends,

As we look ahead to our church's 150th anniversary in 2022, we are seizing this opportunity to give thanks for the legacy of faithful generations before us and take the baton to shape and pass on a stronger, more vibrant congregation to the next generation. In that spirit, I'm writing to share a significant and exciting update regarding the next steps in our church's vision. Last summer, over 200 of you participated in a congregation-wide survey and shared your hopes and dreams for the future of First Presbyterian Church: its ministries, mission partnerships and role in the community as a downtown church. Incorporating those survey results and insights drawn from conversations with 18 community leaders, our church leaders (including Session, Staff, and the Campus Strategy Team) developed priorities and values for directions we believe our church is being called to take.

One of the results of this discernment, alongside additional initiatives in ministry and mission, is a strong affirmation that we need to rebuild or substantially remodel our Education Wing. Built in 1959, this building served FPC well for 60 years, but cannot serve us well into the future. The many concerns include: the building is not accessible, does not meet basic codes for childcare safety or fire safety, does not have central air, and was simply not designed for the kinds of ministries and partnerships that we have in the 21st century. In addition, we imagine that a possible campaign to redesign our education space may give us the opportunity to update out-of-date restrooms, enhance our fellowship space, and create a better overall

campus design that can be more welcoming to our growing church family and community.

This spring, our Campus Strategy Team decided it was time to engage a local architectural firm to assist us in this vision and design process. After careful consideration, our Session approved a contract in July to hire VFLA Architecture + Interiors for this next stage. The team at VFLA is thrilled to be a partner in exploring the next chapter of our historic, downtown church campus and its ministry to the community.

Over the next three months, VFLA and church leaders will engage our congregation, the city, the neighborhood, and our non-profit partners to better understand our needs and possibilities for future space. ***Here is where ALL of you have an important part to play.***

We are offering two open forums which will be co-hosted by VFLA Architects and church leaders. The intention of these events is to share initial ideas and design options for consideration, to solicit your feedback and answer your questions. Please mark your calendars now and plan to join us. Every voice matters.

The first forum for everyone in the FPC community took place before this publication on September 8.

Our second forum, a Church and Neighborhood Forum, is scheduled for Tuesday, September 17, from 6:00–7:30 p.m. The invitation for this event will extend to neighbors, local business, city, University, and non-profit leaders. This second forum will also be open to anyone from FPC who

wasn't able to be here on September 8 or just wants to come to a second meeting.

The overall goal of our partnership with VFLA, following these forums, is to produce initial design and cost estimates by November so that we can determine the feasibility of a potential building campaign, possibly launching in early to mid-2020.

In the meantime, I invite you to pray for our congregation, our church leaders, and our community as we begin this dynamic next chapter of our life together. If you have questions or feedback to share now, my door is always open, and I welcome the opportunity to speak with you directly. I hope you know how much I love this church and this city. I am thrilled to be called to serve alongside you as we discover together how God will use us now and in the future.

Peace,
Pastor Corey

MOUNTAINS AND S'MORES

SECOND ANNUAL CAMPING TRIP CELEBRATES GOD'S GLORIOUS CREATION



Sixty-five campers met up at the Glacier Basin Campground in Rocky Mountain National Park for our second annual FPC camping trip in July. Our group boasted 7-year-olds (and younger!) and 70-somethings, and many in between. This weekend provided a wonderful time of respite and retreat in our glorious mountain backyard.

Many chose to hike during the days, while others fished, sharpened their photography skills, played games at the campground, or just relaxed. In the evenings, the group gathered around a campfire for a chance for reflection, fellowship, and prayer. Oh, and s'mores. A lot of s'mores! This retreat was a choose-your-own-adventure weekend, so everyone's experience was a little different. Here are some photos and words to give a glimpse into the weekend:

There were many reasons I enjoyed the FPC camping trip to Rocky Mountain National Park. One of the reasons I had fun at the camping trip was because of all the activities Ms. Pam set up for all of the kids. Secondly, the camping trip was so fun was because it was a way of connecting with God outside of the church. Finally, It was an enjoyable experience for all ages that anybody could enjoy. Overall, the FPC camping trip was a fun-filled weekend with nature, hikes, community, and faith.

—Micah (12) and Liam (10) Moore



The FPC camping trip provided a wide variety of inspirational experiences to an equally diverse group of campers. Any attempt by us to encapsulate the meaning of those experiences to others would be superficial at best, so we just hope to provide a brief sketch of our own activities.

We'll preface this with a couple of quotes that motivate us. First, "Any error about creation also leads to an error about God," (Thomas Aquinas), interpreted by Steven Bouma-Prediger (*For the Beauty of the Earth*, p. xii) to mean, "If we do not properly understand our home planet, we will not properly understand the nature and character of the God we worship and claim to serve." Bouma-Prediger went on to say: "We care for only what we love. We love only what we know. We truly know only what we experience" (p. 21).

Following that logic, we intended on this camping trip, as on many other trips, to learn more about God's planet. One way to do that is to identify the many forms of life we see. Putting a name to something and noticing where it lives is a first step toward understanding what it does and how it relates functionally to other organisms living there (the "niche" concept). We thus spent some of our time identifying plants. The diverse array of wildflowers was exceptional this year. During a couple of hikes, we photographed about 40 species and saw many more. Some of the photos are loaded onto the FPC camping trip website. On a really short excursion to grab a couple of photos of alpine forget-me-nots and dwarf clover, we met a man and his wife on the trail who had not noticed the tiny flowers. There was a brief discussion of alpine ecology, including the adaptive advantages of growing low and small in such an extreme environment. After hiking a bit further down the trail, we looked back and saw the man on his knees with his camera photographing the inconspicuous flowers.

The wildflower bloom seemed best at alpine and subalpine sites. At one subalpine site, the flower diversity was incredible; we noticed different species every time we turned around and photographed 24 different kinds in bloom. We found yellow-bellied marmots and elk above timberline. We did not, however, find pikas or fresh pika sign at any of the sites where we had seen them in previous years.

We had interesting flowers and animals right at the camp in Glacier Basin, too. Some of our friends at camp this year included golden-mantled ground squirrels, Wyoming ground squirrels, and various birds (hummingbirds, red crossbills, juncos, robins, ravens, flycatchers). Evenings at camp provided opportunities to share stories with our human friends. Corey mentioned some of the activities of our Creation Care group, and we sincerely hope that the group will grow in both participation and Earth Care activities. We interpreted the double rainbow as an encouraging sign. Again, the words of Steven Bouma-Prediger capture our sentiments: "Care for the earth is integral to what it means to be a Christian—it is an important part of our piety, our spirituality, our collective way of being authentic Christian. And care for the earth expresses the fullness and vastness of the God whom we love and serve," (*For the Beauty of the Earth*, p. 179).

—Dean and Denise Biggins



THE MATTHEWS HOUSE

DISRUPTING THE CYCLES OF POVERTY AND ABUSE

The Matthews House is a non-profit organization in Fort Collins that works to disrupt the cycles of poverty and abuse in families within Larimer County. We work with families by building trusting relationships and walking alongside parents and youth to help them take steps toward more positive futures and connect to community resources that will help stabilize the family unit. The families we work with have sometimes been involved with human services, the foster care system, the justice system, and/or generational poverty. Families work towards becoming more self-sufficient and more stable in various areas, including housing, education, employment, well-being, and life skills. The Matthews House works in three program areas: Empowering Youth, Strengthening Families, and Building Community.

In the Empowering Youth program, staff work with youth between the ages of 14–23 who are involved in the juvenile justice system or who are on their own and lacking a significant support network. We also work with every youth in Larimer County who is aging out of the foster care system. The goal of the program is to help youth successfully transition into adulthood. Our staff work with youth one-on-one to develop life skills and self-sufficiency. The youth involved in this program also have the opportunity to participate in Experiential Education, in which they can try activities they may have not

previously had access to, including pottery, fishing, snowboarding, open gym, guitar lessons, and more. Many of the youth we work with deal with low self-esteem or feeling unvalued. Experiential Education offers a safe place for kids to learn about themselves, socialize with others, and ignite their “spark.” Many youths will blossom into renewed self-confidence and a new life direction within the Experiential Education activities.



The Matthews House
Growing Stronger Together

In the Strengthening Families program, our staff work with parents who are involved in the child welfare system through the Department of Human Services. These families are usually experiencing major challenges, which might include domestic violence, homelessness, and substance abuse. The goal of this program is to help keep families together by working through the barriers each family is experiencing. Some of these barriers might be housing, job readiness, transportation, parenting skills, money management, and developing a sustainable support system. Within this program, our staff

also support foster and kinship caregivers in their homes to try to maintain foster placements for a long as possible. Children who have been removed from their parents have often experienced severe trauma and may display challenging behaviors. It is better for children to remain in one healthy placement as long as needed, so the staff help with navigating difficult behaviors and with supporting the family. The Matthews House also teaches the foster care training for prospective caregivers in Larimer County.

In the Building Community program, we work with families to prevent the occurrence of family abuse or neglect and build self-sufficiency. These families are usually not involved in child welfare, but they may be experiencing struggles with self-

sufficiency. Our staff help families strengthen areas such as housing, employment, education, parenting, and life skills. Stabilizing these areas can help prevent families from experiencing child maltreatment and reduce the negative effects of living in generational poverty. This program is housed in our two Community Life Centers, one at First Presbyterian Church, 531 S. College Avenue, and one at Genesis Project, 400 S. Link Lane. Any parent who has a child under the age of 18 can walk into our Community Life Centers and ask for support in the area they need. Our staff will sometimes help with a one-time need and other times

work with families ongoing for several years. At the Community Life Centers, there are also a number of other classes and activities available. We partner with the Center for Adult Learning at Front Range Community College to provide English as a second language classes and high school equivalency preparation classes. We also provide numerous Parent Cafes, which are conversation-based parent support groups that utilize the five protective factors shown to strengthen families: parent resilience, knowledge of parenting and child development, social and emotional competence of children, social connections, and concrete support in times of need. The Community Life Centers also host cooking and nutrition classes, recreation classes, and career development opportunities. We provide Children Activities during most of these classes for adults so that childcare is not a barrier for families to be able to participate.

At each of our Community Life Centers, we have an after-school program called Homework Helpers. This program is for students ages 8–16 who need after-school support. We have daily adult volunteers who serve as mentors for the students and also help with academic work time. The program also provides various enrichment opportunities for the students so they get to experience some activities and places in our community that they might not normally have access to because of cost or transportation barriers.

Our Community Life Centers also host community engagement events, which are fun, free family events open to any families working with The Matthews House. Many of these events are family dinners, in which we provide a free meal for families, the opportunity to build relationships with other families, and fun activities connected to the theme of the family dinner. Some of the themes we have used in the past are a family dance with a DJ, a karaoke and game night, a fast kickball tournament

with a BBQ, and our annual Thanksgiving dinner.

We are so excited to now be partnering with First Presbyterian Church for the location of one of our Community Life Centers. The extra classroom space and central location in town will allow us to reach more families and possibly expand our offerings to the community in the years to come! You will see lots of family traffic coming through the front doors during the week, and you can trust that our partnership together is serving some of the more vulnerable families in our community, as well as low-income families that are working hard to build a positive future for their families.

The Matthews House worked with over 3,200 youth and families last year. If you're interested in finding more information about The Matthews House, reading a few success stories, or getting involved in an ongoing volunteer opportunity, check out our website: www.themattewshouse.org.

—Lise Harwell, M.Ed. Education and Enrichment Director

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The Matthews House
 Growing Stronger Together

ADULT SPIRITUAL FORMATION

CHRISTIAN EDUCATION ENCOURAGES LIFE-LONG LEARNING

Presbyterian Christians take educational mission seriously. We value learning about the world and how it functions. We value the ability to develop God-given talents in order to fulfill the tasks to which God calls us. Education is one of the hallmarks of the Reformed tradition.

Reformed churches have always looked to the Bible as the foundation for all matters of faith and practice. Therefore, it is the Bible to which First Presbyterian Church (FPC) and all churches in our denomination turn for guidance in shaping the spirit, strategy, and content for ministry in education. Biblical principles have informed the church's theological reflection on the mission of education. (Ferguson, Education: A Transforming Ministry, Presbyterians Today, May, 1998)

Fundamental to educational ministries is the notion that Christian women and men are called to a life of service while utilizing our talents and gifts. This requires us to listen and learn. Adult education helps us grow and develop in service to God. (2 Timothy 1:6).

The amount of information available to us these days on matters of faith, Scripture, and being present in the world is greater than ever before. It is literally in the palm of our hands. The Church is no longer the sole keeper of information. However, if asked, many of us must confess that much of what we know about religion was learned years ago in Sunday school. You are invited to join in the concept of life-long learning. At FPC there are now two tracks to "update" your religious education knowledge base: (1) Biblical Study, and (2) Contemporary Religious Thought. Courses on a variety of topics are held throughout the year on Sunday mornings between services (10:00–11:00 a.m.) on Sunday mornings and on Wednesday evenings with dinner and study, (5:15–7:00 p.m.) as a part of the Midweek Experience (MX).

We at FPC are fortunate to experience unique relationship-building when we study together within our adult educational experiences. Exploring issues of faith with one another means that we can offer support through the ups and downs of a life of faith. Studying Scripture in community allows us to challenge one another as we experience how the word of God applies to our modern day lives. All the adult education classes strive to create space for individuals at different points in their faith journey.

Make room in your calendar for this fall's course offerings!

—Madgetta Dungy

Adult Education

Sundays, 10:05–11:00 a.m.

The Spirituality of Mister Rogers

Facilitator: Rev. Rich Thompson

September 15: *The Spirituality of Mister Rogers*

September 22: *Mister Rogers Neighborhood*

September 29: *Music as the Sound of the Soul*

October 6: *The Continuing Influence*

Exploring Generosity

Facilitators: Jinny DeJong and the FPC Generosity Team

October 13: *Stories of Generosity*

October 20: *The Paradox of Generosity*

October 27: *Practices of Generosity at First Pres*

Five Fabulous Chapters: Paul's Greatest Hits

Facilitator: Rev. Ron Sisk

October 13: *What's Love Got to Do with It?* 1 Corinthians 13

October 20: *Be a Good Citizen.* Romans 13

October 27: *Equal in God's Eyes.* Philemon

November 3: *Lasting Contentment.* Philippians 4

November 10: *Enduring Faith.* Hebrews 11-12:2

Midweek Experience (MX)

Wednesdays, 6:00–7:00 p.m.

Earth Care

Become a better steward of God's earth by taking a closer look at Earth care issues.

September 18: *Water Resources*, led by Fort Collins Water Utilities Specialist, Water Conservation Group of Fort Collins Utilities Office

September 25: *Leave No Trace Hiking and Camping—How to Earn a Gold Star for Mother Nature*, led by Aliy Louie, Larimer County Park Ranger

October 2: *Air Quality*, led by Ellison Carter, Colorado State University

October 9: *International Environmental Sustainability*, led by the Dominican Republic Sustainability Mission Team

Comparative Religions

Local faith leaders compare doctrines and practices of the world's religions.

October 16: *Judaism*

October 23: *Islam*

October 30: *Greek Orthodox*

November 6: *Hinduism*

November 13: *Buddhism*



My brother told me about his friend Mike who was diagnosed with a form of terminal leukemia unless he received a bone marrow transplant. Thankfully, his sister was a perfect bone marrow match. But his immediate problem was severely depleted platelets levels that put the transplant at great risk. Mike needed to be in good health and infection-free before any transplant could be attempted.

Even though I had only met Mike once or twice, I knew he was a great family guy in his early 30's with a one-year-old daughter. He owned an auto repair business and loved anything mobile with an engine—cars, motorcycles, boats, and ATV's. He was being treated in the City of Hope Hospital in southern California, not too far from where I was living. When the call went out for platelet donors, I stepped up. Having just come through my own health scare journey of over two years, I felt like it was my turn to "give back" for all the help I had received.

I gladly drove the one hour to City of Hope to be tested as a possible platelet donor.

To my surprise, I was almost a perfect donor match! Turns out that my platelets would survive and function in his body for 7+ days, whereas other donors' platelets lasted a day at most. I was the only close match found.

**Prayer is sitting in the silence until it silences us,
Choosing gratitude until we are grateful,
And praising God until we ourselves are an act of praise.
Mature prayer always breaks into gratitude.**

—Prayer of Gratitude by Father Richard Rohr

Donating was not easy. I had to drive an hour each way to City of Hope. It took longer and longer to donate (from 2, 3, 4, 5 hours per session) as my platelet levels dropped. Since I had been poked so many times in my recent hospital stay, my vessels were very difficult to find. I was freaked about having needles in each arm for hours as they filtered (harvested my blood for platelets) my blood. I donated fifteen times over seven months as the doctors tried to make Mike's body as infection-free as possible. Near the end of the process, my own platelet levels were dangerously low.

Then transplant day finally arrived, and Mike received his sister's bone marrow. For the first few days, everything was looking so positive. Then, positive turned very negative when Mike was ravished with a fungal infection and died.

I was devastated! I felt horrible physically and slumped into the sad conclusion that I'd wasted all that time and effort. It wasn't until the funeral that I began to see what my platelet donations had given Mike...and given me.

Waiting for my platelets to build his blood for transplant, Mike received precious days to be with his wife and hear his little girl call him "daddy." It gave him the necessary time to sell his business and put provisions in place for some support for his wife. Most of all, his hope for life was renewed.

At the funeral, I received hugs and sincere words of gratitude from almost every member of his family which felt good. Then I saw a picture of Mike asleep in his hospital bed with his daughter also asleep, on his chest. That image hit me hard as my heart to God's reality about love and generosity slowly softened. I learned that my intellectual understanding of how I had helped Mike was incomplete; there were greater outcomes than getting ready for a bone marrow transplant. I had given "life" to Mike for the season granted him, and my life was ultimately the better for it.

In giving, we receive.

—Charles May

Exploring Generosity—Adult Education Coming This Fall Presented by the Generosity Team

October 13—Stories of Generosity
First-person stories of giving and the formative blessings received, as Charles May has told in his *Messenger* story.

October 20 —Paradox of Generosity
Presenter: Jinny De Jong
Considering the sociology of generosity based on research from Christian Smith and Hilary Davidson of Notre Dame.

October 27 —Practices of Generosity
Presenter: Doug Hunt
Facilitated panel discussion on facts, figures, and trends in giving at our church.





DEACON CORNER

Just as most of you are gearing up for the change in schedules this fall so are your devoted Deacons and their teams of volunteers. The 18-member FPC Board of Deacons is made up nine teams who are each assigned to manage specific tasks.

Do you enjoy coffee fellowship on Sunday morning? Have you ever received a card or call from one of our dedicated Cards and Calls team members? Maybe you have had a need for some emergency assistance, a meal, or had a visit during a stay in the hospital. All of these things and much more are provided by the Deacon duos of First Presbyterian Church. We are very blessed in our church to have the support of our congregation (with volunteers and financial resources), our Session, and the leadership of our Director of Caring, Marge Rice, and our Parish Associate, Glenn Perica which enable your Deacons to provide so much outreach!

In each *Messenger* throughout this year, you will meet each devoted Deacon duo and find out what they are doing to support the members of our church family. First up: Sue York and Robin Troxell, Deacon Equippers.

Sue York married her husband Greg in 1976. Three years ago, they moved to Colorado to be closer to their children Alex (Tasha) and Hannah (Nick), two grandsons Jaxon and Tucker, and two grand-puppies Ziggy and Champs. Sue is an avid reader and sewer. She loves making quilts for her family. Sue enjoys hiking, biking, and water sports of all kinds. Sue became a member of FPC

two years ago and enjoys being part of this wonderful church and congregation.

Robin Troxell joined First Presbyterian Church in 1976 just one month before her marriage to Harry Troxell. She has served as a Deacon and an Elder and been involved in many activities in the church including teaching Sunday school, facilitating an adult Sunday school class, Presbyterian Women, Building Committee, Vacation Bible School, and cooking many meals in the church kitchen. She enjoys reading, sewing, knitting, and keeping up with her two children Heather (Aaron) and Craig (Tiffany) and four grandchildren. Robin is a process engineering manager for Whip Mix Corp.

Deacon Equippers support the other teams that make up our Board of Deacons. If they need volunteers, are wondering how to find those in need, want to brainstorm ways to be more effective or just need help with one of their duties, Deacon Equippers work with them. For example, one of our goals this year is to strengthen the use of MyFPC for our teams in the hopes that they will share that knowledge with others and we can increase the benefit of that communication tool throughout the congregation.

We are excited about the work that our nine teams and the volunteers that support those teams do, but we need your help – we are asking if you will be our eyes and ears in the congregation and let us know when you hear of a need that we may not be aware of. Also, maybe you or someone you know would be “blessed to be a blessing to others.” We can help find that best fit ministry connection. Maybe there is a need you have that we can help with or maybe you will feel called to meet a need – either way we all win! We encourage you to seek us out either at coffee fellowship, via email or a call and let us know how we can better serve and strengthen our congregation so that we can better serve our community.

—Sue York and Robin Troxell



Sue York, Deacon Equipper



Robin Troxell, Deacon Equipper

DUCT TAPE

BEING THANKFUL FOR THE TOUGH STUFF

This last week, I happened to be fortunate enough to watch an interview with comedian and talk show host Stephen Colbert where he talked about grief and despair and, most importantly, gratitude. Colbert is best known for his late nights on TV, but after watching this interview, I realized there's more to his story.

Stephen Colbert lost his father and two brothers in a plane accident when he was 10-years-old. The tragedy completely changed the trajectory of his life, because he then felt the responsibility of caring for his mother instead of just being a young boy. "The ordinary concerns of childhood disappeared," he said.

Yet, Colbert looks at his traumatic loss as a gift. Quoting J. R. R. Tolkien, he said, "What punishments of God's are not gifts?"

What? Did I hear that right? "Punishments" are not unique to celebrities. I know that if you look closely, you will see that almost everyone is carrying some sort of burden, grief, or loss. Many of us are in the middle of hardships, and I am guessing those hardships are not often looked at as gifts. So we have to wonder what it was that made Tolkien and Colbert see these as gifts.



Colbert reflected that faith helped him accept that the world God gave us is a gift of God's love. Gratefulness for his love has to include gratefulness for the suffering that is part of life.

That's not to say that hardship didn't change him—how could it not? Colbert was shattered—not destroyed, he says, but shattered.

I have to smile at the way he said "shattered," as I recently told a friend of mine that my heart was being held together with scotch tape. That next week, in a brown bag, appeared a roll of yellow duct tape with a note stating, "This is for your heart. It's stronger than scotch tape." Now there is a gift—a roll of tape

because of a broken heart!

She understood. She has met sorrow somewhere in her life, and this was her way of sharing that experience so that I would know I was not alone. Duct tape connected us.

The funny thing about broken hearts is they are sometimes difficult to detect in someone else. We often wish we had a strip of duct tape or a bandage or a scar that showed so that someone could see our pain and might ask, "How are you? That looks like it hurts." An outward sign would let them know that we are changed, or maybe even shattered.

Colbert had to find a way to love that which he wished

had not happened. He has learned to accept tragedy because he knows it is part of the world that God gave us — and he has vowed to have gratitude for the gifts. If he remains grateful for his life, he is grateful for *all* of it. What a powerful lesson!

I'm not trying to be a Pollyanna. Our griefs and our sorrows are real. They cut like a knife. And still, there are gifts that *do* flow from these sorrows. Like rolls of tape, connections we make with one another hold us together. The time we spend with a friend or family member, consoling them and walking with them is an opportunity to comfort someone else with the same comfort we have received.

Some of you have endured more tragedy than anyone ever should, but I have watched as gifts of charity, support, compassion, and love have flowed out as a result. These are gifts *from* God, and we are instructed to use them. What a gift to be able to share them with one another.

I hope that you, too, can find peace in your grief. Sometimes, only the step you are on or the very next one ahead is all that is illuminated for you. It is there! The light that God sheds is sufficient.

—Marge Rice



from the Director of Children's Ministries

Vacation Bible School was BEYOND Wonderful!

"Mission Commander?" The sweet little voice was coming from my right about waist high. It was my name and role all week at VBS. Because of all of the incredible volunteers (too numerous to mention you all), the week went smooth and a wonderful time was had by all!

Thank you so much to everyone who helped to make VBS such a wonderful week! Thank you to the decorating team lead for creating Space Stations and galaxies throughout our church. Thank you to the over 50 youth and adults who volunteered their time with crafts, games, group leading, celebration, and AV magic, preparing snacks, acting and being at my beck and call. And thank you to those who took donation stars and brought in every item we needed.

We welcomed 85 participants. Many of them attend our church, and there were several who do not. At least three new families expressed interest in checking out our Sunday School. We hope so; they were such great families!

"Mission Commander? I wish this could be every week!" At first, that statement made me feel a little faint, but then I thought about it...

And so...in the Kids First programs, we will be exploring where God's love can take us all year long!



Ministry FOR Kids:

Sunday School will continue to be held during the 9:00 and 11:00 Worship Services. Our curriculum this year will be *Growing in Grace and Gratitude* put out by the PC(USA).

Ministry WITH Kids:

Again this year there will be Sundays where we worship as one church family. There will be other intergenerational events like the Fall Festival, the Advent Celebration, a Talent Share, and Egg Dyeing.

Ministry BY Kids:

This summer our VBS kids donated two big garbage bags of children's clothing to Homeward Alliance. The Supply Capsule going to Planet HWA will be up all year for even more donations. We will be partnering with HWA throughout the year for other service opportunities. One is taking place in September:

- **September 27**, 6:00–7:00 p.m.—We will be putting together kits to be distributed at the Murphy Center.

This Summer, we went to Mars and Beyond! This year we will go even farther!

—Pam Armstrong



A Magic Night on the Lawn

This congregation is blessed to sit at the intersection of College and Mulberry. But we are even more blessed to facilitate the intersection of different groups and mission partners. On a Wednesday night at the end of July, our congregation hosted a magician to share with families, friends, and neighbors of the church.

That alone would have been fantastic, but it turned out that families meeting at the church with La Cocina, as well as the families living at the church with Faith Family Hospitality were also able to join in the fun. Add to the mix a board meeting for McBackpack, and you had a recipe for a rich and beautiful picture of the Church! Thank you to the almost 150 people who enjoyed a diverse and eclectic evening on the lawn as you embodied the very best of what it means to be a neighborhood church on the move! —Walt Schuchmann

MAKE A JOYFUL NOISE UNTO THE LORD!

The FPC Music Ministry is pleased to announce the rehearsal schedule for the 2019–2020 Season. We strive to offer opportunities for singers, ringers, and instrumentalists to express their love for God. Our team is here to help you find the right fit for your creative gifts. (Instrumentalists, contact Marvin Crawford for more information, mrcrawford@firstpresfc.org.)

2019-2021 MUSIC MINISTRY SCHEDULE

FOR ADULTS

- **Sanctuary Choir** (Adults, College & High School)
Rehearsals Thursdays, 7:00-8:30 p.m., Choir Room
Marvin Crawford, Director
- **Chancel Handbell Choir** (Adults & College)
Rehearsals Wednesdays, 7:00-8:30 p.m., Room 102
Choir is currently full, but subs are needed.
Marvin Crawford, Director
- **FPC Festival Chorus** (Adults, College & High School)
Rehearsals Thursdays, 6:30-8:30 p.m., Choir Room,
Marvin Crawford, Director
Christmas Rehearsals begin October 24

FOR CHILDREN AND YOUTH

- **Jubilate Ringers**, (5th-12th Grades)
Rehearsals Sundays, 10:15-11:00 a.m., Room 102
Kathryn Rudd, Director, Kathryn.Rudd@comcast.net
- **Children's Sacred Chorus** (2nd -5th Grades)
Rehearsals Wednesdays, 4:30-5:15 p.m., Room 308
Open to the community. Register at firstpresfc.org
Alyssa Johnson, Director, ajohnson@firstpresfc.org
First Rehearsal September 18

Want more info? Contact Marvin Crawford, Director of Music and the Arts, at mrcwford@firstpresfc.org or visit our website firstpresfc.org

Klon E. Matthews Education Scholarships Awarded for 2019

"Each of you must give as you have made up your own mind, not reluctantly or under compulsion, for God loves a cheerful giver." — II Corinthians 9:7

As a cherished member of First Presbyterian Church, Klon Matthews left a living legacy with the education fund he established through the church's Foundation. He was a life-long public-school educator and administrator, plus an outgoing and exuberant disciple of Christ. In 1999, his wife, Eileen, set up the Klon E. Matthews Scholarship Program to honor his commitment to education by supporting young Christian men and women in our church who have the desire to grow in their walk with Christ and pursue higher education.

Precious gifts like these to our Foundation are acts of charity and hope for the future of our church family. While the principle of these gifts is retained in the Foundation's perpetual fund, the income and earnings continue to provide secure, stable funding for God's work through our church for generations to come.

To date, the Klon Matthews Scholarship fund has distributed a total of **\$16,550 in college scholarships** to young adults in our congregation! The Klon Matthews fund currently makes available two \$1000 scholarships each year, with the goal of helping equip and encourage young adults at FPC.

Two wonderful young women reapplied again this year and were awarded this year's scholarships; qualified candidates may apply to receive up to two years of financial assistance. What an honor to

offer this year's scholarships to Rebecca and Emma Kirby, who are flourishing as sophomores at college.

As a sophomore at Brown University, Rebecca is pursuing a double BA in Public Health and Biology. She believes that public health is a hugely important and impactful field right now, and the need for it is only growing. In pursuing this degree, she hopes to push for change that affords everyone the same access to health. She is pursuing the double degree with biology because she thinks it will be a beneficial supplement to public health. At Brown, she has continued her love of sports and music, participating in the orchestra, chamber ensemble, and running club. She truly is honoring the spirit of this scholarship as she attends church service weekly and is a member of the Brown Christian Union, a bible study and social club.

As a sophomore at Vanderbilt, Emma is continuing her musical and academic studies and is planning to double major in Bassoon Performance and Medicine, Health, and Society.

On behalf of the Klon family, the FPC Foundation Board, and the Klon Matthews Scholarship Committee, congratulations! All of us at FPC are so deeply grateful to Klon and Eileen Matthews and their legacy of charity and generosity that has benefited so many of our young adults, and will continue to do so in the years ahead.

—AudreyMcDill



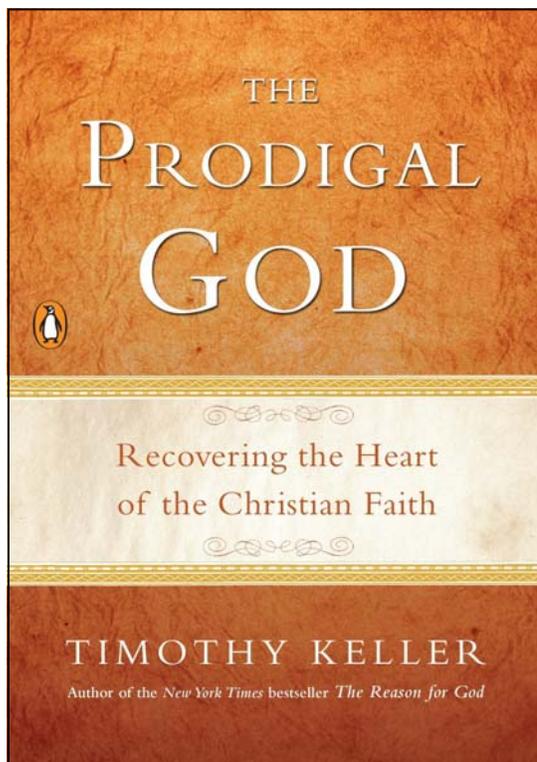
Rebecca Kirby, 2019 Klon Matthews Scholarship recipient



Emma Kirby, 2019 Klon Matthews Scholarship recipient

LIBRARY CORNER

THE WORD SOURCE



“Invest a little, gain a lot,” fits the payoff in reading a small but impactful new perspective on the parable of the Prodigal Son. Your FPC Word Source Library has acquired *The Prodigal God*, by Timothy Keller, founder of Redeemer Presbyterian Church in Manhattan.

Many treatments of the Prodigal Son focus upon lessons for the irreligious. Most often, the younger son is taken as the central player in Christ’s message to the Pharisees. That does exist in Keller’s book, but more attention is given to lessons that can be taken from the behavior of the elder brother, the “good” son.

The Prodigal God provokes one to think about not just repentance for sin, but also to reflect upon one’s Christian acts. Keller presses for personal introspection about the true motivation for “religious” behavior. “I’ve never disobeyed you,” the elder brother says to his father. Yet, Keller considers the elder son lost, and asks, “How does a person who is lost, yet has no sins on the list, get saved?” Keller has a point to make when he asks the reader, “Why does the elder brother refuse to go to the feast?”

By the time you read this, the FPC Library hopes to have available in its collection a copy of the book *Neighborhood Church*, by Karin Van Tatenhove and Rob Mueller, the book used by Pastor Corey in his August sermon series. That title aims at inspiring churches to become vibrant and engaging community partners with the families and neighbors around them. Additional chapters add to the four segments heard in Pastor Corey’s sermons. In *Neighborhood Church’s* focus on embodying the values of love, grace, and justice, *Neighborhood Church* could be a companion read to Keller’s *Prodigal God*, described above.

The Word Source Library is on the second floor of the Education Annex. Over 4,000 titles can be browsed or searched by title, author, or topic on any computer or mobile device via fpcf.scoolaid.net.

— Tom Tonoli



12% of US households face food INSECURITY



60% of people suffering from hunger are WOMEN



821 MILLION people around the world are HUNGRY



CROP HUNGER WALK
Sunday, October 6, 1:00 PM at FPC

Walk yourself and donate
or sponsor the FPC youth team:
<https://www.crophungerwalk.org/fortcollinsco/Firstpresyouth>

THE NINJAS OF FPC

A BEHIND THE SCENES LOOK AT SUNDAY MORNING WORSHIP

It is often said in the behind-the-scenes world that the goal is to remain invisible and unnoticed. For this reason, tech personnel around the nation have taken to referring to themselves as ninjas.

Tech ninja-ing is a team sport. No ninja can remain stealthy and undetectable without the help of their fellow ninjas. It takes three of us to operate the cameras, lights, slides, video switcher, carillon bell system, video streaming, audio recording, assisted listening system, microphones, and sound mixer at FPC every Sunday morning.

Displaying his amazing ninja skills as our slide and light operator is Mike Rudd. On the occasion that Mike takes a Sunday off, Tricia Navarre, Kat Gillespie, or I fill in. Slide operation is simple in concept but difficult in execution. One must follow along with all of the songs, responsive readings, liturgical elements, and scripture readings without getting lost or becoming overwhelmed, and then find that perfect moment to display, switch, or take down each slide. It takes a great deal of concentration and focus. One only gets truly good at it over time, as the order of worship moves from paper bulletin to pure instinct. Mike has been refining his ninja skills for over ten years.

Switching off every other week, Doug Hunt and Doug Josephson are our incredible ninja duo. Camera and video switcher operation is an art, and they are ninja da Vincis. Camera operation is characterized by creativity on-demand with split-second precision and a steady hand. On any given Sunday, one of these two is operating and managing not only two separate cameras and feeds but also a direct feed from the computer of all the slides and media being displayed during the service. They then cut skillfully from one feed to another using the video switcher, thus creating what all of you have come to know and love as the live stream. Doug Hunt began serving as a camera ninja

over ten years ago, and Doug Josephson officially joined the ninja ranks in 2017.

As ninja leader, my journey begins long before that of my volunteers. Each week, I receive a packet of this week's music, the audio and visual needs, as well as the order of worship for the upcoming services. I then assemble all of the necessary slides in ProPresenter. ProPresenter is our fantastic and powerful software that makes it possible for all of the lovely slides, photos, and videos to be presented to the congregation seamlessly and without the unwanted distraction of desktop backgrounds and mice dragging things across the screen. Though we have been cultivating an extensive library of content within the program, sometimes new material still has to be entered in by hand. I then meet with Marv Crawford, FPC's Director of Music extraordinaire! The two of us go through all of the music and slides each week to ensure that we have everything entered, lined up, and ready to go. I am also responsible for producing or procuring videos (such as Moments for Mission) and entering them into ProPresenter for display during services. In addition to slides and media, my weekly tasks include reporting to the church's copyright services on our music usage, changing the playlist for the carillon bell system so there is a fresh set week to week, and the not so small task of maintaining all of the audiovisual systems within the Sanctuary and Shepardson Hall.

Sunday mornings are quite the covert affair as it is our goal to remain undetected to help create the magic that is a worshipful environment. As ninja leader, I am always the first to arrive on the scene. I begin setting up and checking equipment at least an hour and a half before services. If the setup requires more time or I have more to do, I will frequently arrive even earlier. Extra time allows me to maintain stealth and have everything up and running by the time people begin arriving for worship. My ninja

support team arrives a half hour before worship begins. They then settle into their stations and double-check all of the components they are responsible for as well as review the order of worship.

Five minutes before the service is set to start, we ninjas are in our place and paying acute attention to what's going on in the Sanctuary. We have to be ready with split-second reflexes the moment the service begins.

When the signal comes, it's go-time. All ninja team members are focused on executing their functions with split-second accuracy. Mike is carefully paying attention to the progress of the speaker or musical number so that he can time his slides perfectly. One of the Dougs is controlling the cameras, anticipating where the speaker will move and what feed should come next. I'm at the soundboard orchestrating each piece of the service and mitigating unforeseen hiccups. When the final item in the order of worship is reached, we ninjas breathe a sigh of relief, work on any problems that weren't able to be resolved during the service, and prepare to do it all over again.

During the program year, when we have two services, Mike Rudd and I move quickly after the first service has concluded to strike all of the equipment used and set up for the second. Then Marv and I run an entire music rehearsal and sound check before the second service begins.

The task of running worship is certainly not an easy one, but it is extremely rewarding. We ninjas in the booth get to experience worship from a very different vantage point—we get to be part of the magic. Team ninja is always looking for recruits who we can welcome into our ninja ranks. If you are a person who relishes the thought of covert missions and working with technology, young or old, we would love to bring you in!

— Jaime Peak



ON THE MOVE

COMMUNITY CONNECTION GROWS AT FPC

In the past few years, we have seen our vision of being a church on the move grow exponentially in both developing ministry partners and the use of our building by outside groups. In the past year we have made several key partnerships that have not only moved us out into the community, but brought the community to us in a big way.

Between Aug 2018–Aug 2019, we had approximately 21,000 visitors come through our building, whether to attend community groups, events, or forums at our church. We already have 34,000 people from the community scheduled to visit our building from now through August 2020. Which brings up the question, where are all these people coming from? Did you know we host 30 different community programs each year? These groups include Boy Scouts, McBackPack, which provides supplemental food to PSD students and families who would not have enough food for the weekend, Al-Anon & Drugbusters, which provides support and rehabilitation for addicts and loved ones impacted by drugs and alcohol use, and the Family Center/La Familia which offers education and family strengthening services for Larimer County.

We already have 34,000 people from the community scheduled to visit our building from now through August 2020.

As the scheduler of all things happening at FPC, the past two years I've been able to watch as we fulfill our mission to show God's love through caring and empowering service within the community. Our advantage of being centrally located in Fort Collins is that we can more easily reach students, families, and those in need and searching for answers. By hosting our ministry partners we help them reach a greater population of those in need of their services. Particularly for those relying on walking or public transportation which can make the difference between them getting the help they need or not.

One of my greatest joys working at First Pres is to watch families come into our building for education, services, and emotional/mental health for the whole family. We've become known as a safe place for those in the community to find hope and to connect with organizations of people who care enough to love them out of their difficult situation and help them flourish.

— Kimberly Shober



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PARENTS NIGHT OUT

Friday, September 20
Friday, October 25 (*4th Friday!)
6:00–9:00 PM

Fun for Kids = Free-Time for Parents
Register at firstpresfc.org. SPACE IS LIMITED.