

# THE MESSENGER

| NEWS FROM FIRST PRESBYTERIAN CHURCH FORT COLLINS |

**Turning the  
Page  
on Another  
Year**

**Feeding the  
Malnourished**



**NEW  
YEAR**

**Newly  
Elected  
Elders**



**AHEAD**

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# From the Editor | NEW YEAR

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As we turn the page on another year, (p. 3) we look ahead to a 2014 full of blessings. What's in store for FPC? The energy and anticipation is electric. When you flip over your calendar, save the date to find out more at an Open House January 12, (p.12).

As we enter a new year, many think about resolutions and starting new. We may consider how to spend our 525,600 minutes for God's purposes, (p.8). Our new officer-elects will spend time in thought, prayer, and training, (p. 4–5) before embarking on their leadership journey. How will we spend our time, talents and tithes to glorify Him in the year ahead?

Of course FPC will continue to share the heart of Christ with the heart of the city and the world in 2014. Read more about sharing His heart in the world with the production of nutrient-packed peanut butter in Liberia (p. 6–7). Then, in February, we will collect books to share His heart right here in Fort Collins, (p. 10). And, there's more in store. *The Messenger* will share First Presbyterian Church's stories of joy, ministry, and worship.

There is much to come at FPC. Won't you turn the page and join us?

—Cathy Richardson

## THE MESSENGER

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

Articles that support FPC's purpose and mission will be **accepted on the 15th of each month**. All articles must be sponsored by one of the church's five Centers and are subject to the approval of the Editor. Submissions will be edited for length and suitability.

Article submissions will be accepted via e-mail to [crichardson@firstpresfc.org](mailto:crichardson@firstpresfc.org). Contact Editor Cathy Richardson for more information, (970) 482-6107.



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

This winter, Nicole and I are reading *The Lord of the Rings* to one another. J.R.R. Tolkien's trilogy is undoubtedly one of the most gripping, breathtaking, epic stories ever written. And thus there are times when I am reading, and the pains and risk and possibilities and wonder are so great that I cannot get the words to come out of my mouth fast enough. . . for I am compelled **to turn the page**. I can hardly wait to see what happens next.

Turning the page to a new year can be like that. The pain of failures, shattered dreams, or a body that is failing us, to name a few, can be draped like fog all over us, threatening to leave us in a heap. The risks of turning the corner, turning the page, seem immense, maybe too great to face. But on the other hand, the next page may reveal the work of an Invisible Hand, as often happens in *The Lord of the Rings* – that there is Someone at work just out of sight, who has the power to make all things right and who is working a plan that we could never fathom until it has come to pass.

So it is for First Presbyterian Church. It is time to turn the page on the recent past. Oh, don't get me wrong – there may be countless tensions, pains, and risks that God will bring to the surface of your lives in His timing, for your healing. And we will continue to be vigilant to help any of you find release from hard memories, personal wounds, bitterness, and the trauma of incessant conflict. But no longer can nor should our attention be primarily on what has happened. It is time to give our best energies, our full attention, to what lies on the next page.

For this purpose, our Session invites you to join our Officers-elect (deacons and elders just elected) for Officer



Training, beginning Wednesday night, January 8. We believe that this six-week seminar will be helpful to **anyone** who wants to know how the Presbyterian Church works, and how FPC in Fort Collins works. We give a special invitation to those of you who are elders in the PCUSA but not presently serving on the Session – those of you who are part of “the circle of elders”). There will be “head knowledge,” but perhaps even more importantly we will take part in essential practices that all Christians should be developing in their lives. All we would ask is that all who attend would commit to the full six Wednesdays, 6:30–8:30 p.m., in Shepardson Hall.

Something else that lies ahead on the next page is a church-wide Lenten focus on the topic of forgiveness and reconciliation. Looking at both the global and personal implications, we will come to see the immensity of what Christ Jesus has done on the cross, and how it changes the world. Stay tuned for details as we near March.

So, Nicole and I invite you to turn the page. We can hardly wait to see what happens next. One thing's for sure, though, we will find revealed the work of an Invisible Hand, who has the power to make all things right and who is working a plan that we could never fathom until it has come to pass. That's where we're going, and we hope you'll come with us.

With faith, hope, and love,

—Paul Parsons

# Session | **NEWLY ELECTED ELDERS**

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On Sunday, December 15, a Congregational Meeting was held for the purpose of electing Elders, Deacons and members of the Nominating Committee. In the next few months, those elected to the office of Elder and Deacon will participate in a training that will be led by Pastors Paul Parsons and Cindy Frost. Following the training there is an examination of the newly elected Elders and Deacons by the current Session. Ordination and installation of these officers will be in early March. The current Class of 2013 Elders and Deacons have agreed to serve the additional two months. This month, get to know the Elder-elects a little better:

## **MARIAN HOPE**

(Elder, Class of 2014) Marian and her husband Randy and three sons moved to Fort Collins from Casper, WY in 1985 and joined FPC shortly thereafter. Marian's career path was in education and administration in KS, WY, and CO retiring from Hach Co. She is involved with several volunteer responsibilities here at FPC through serving on Session and in the Caring, Welcome and Involvement Center. Marian is an ordained Deacon and Elder.



## **GRANT SHERWOOD**

(Elder, Class of 2014) Grant and his wife Pat moved to Fort Collins in 1968 where he accepted an administrative/teaching position at CSU. He joined FPC that year and has been an active member ever since. Grant has previously served three different terms as an Elder and one term as a Deacon. Other positions he has held are co-chair of the Building Committee; Pastor Nominating Committee; Center Leader for Stewardship and Resources; Stephens Minister; MAST Committee team member and most recently on the Church Nominating Committee. He retired from CSU in 2005 and continues to serve the Fort Collins community in a number of volunteer capacities. Grant and Pat are blessed to have their three children and seven grandchildren, all living in Fort Collins.



## **SARA HUNT**

(Elder, Class of 2015) Sara's life currently revolves around her family: supporting the activities of 12 year old Lydia, studying Chinese, keeping track of odd socks and cooking something interesting once in a while. Rounding out daily life she always has a knitting project at hand and a book to read. She and her family enjoy board games (Settlers of Catan is the current favorite), an occasional bike ride and hosting friends and Chinese students for dinner. At FPC Sara has been involved in a range of groups and activities over the 22 years they have been here, most recently serving on session and with the Worship, Music and the Arts Center - always attempting to stay in the midst of what God is doing.



## **BONNIE BAIRD**

(Class of 2016) Bonnie and her husband, Roger, moved to Fort Collins from Illinois in 1993 and joined FPC shortly thereafter. Prior to relocating, she taught Health Education classes at South Suburban College. After moving here, she taught classes for Red Cross until retirement. She and Roger have three grown children and four grandchildren. Bonnie was a full time homemaker during the years the children were growing up. She is an ordained Elder and Deacon, serving at FPFC and at her former church. In the past few years, she has taught Church School and been a mentor for Confirmation students. Currently, she serves on the Outreach Communion Team, and as a co-leader of a Small Group and Agape Circle. In her leisure time she loves to garden, ski, play tennis, hike, and read historical novels. She feels blessed to be asked to serve at this challenging and exciting time in our Church's life as we seek to follow Christ's direction for the future.



**JENNIFER CLEGERN**

(Elder, Class of 2016) Jennifer was raised in this church and after living many years away from Colorado returned to her home church a few years ago. She has degrees in International Affairs and Law and has lived and worked in Latin America, Africa, Washington D.C. and New York City. She currently works as a lawyer for children. She attended two Presbyterian Churches in New York City and was a member of a pastor nominating committee. She feels blessed to be asked to serve this church community at this time. Jennifer enjoys reading, traveling, yoga and spending time with family and friends.



with the Celebration Worship Team, volunteer youth leader, and is currently facilitating the University Ministry Women's Small Group. Kevin and Laura were married in July 2012 and have really enjoyed growing with the church family at FPC. Laura is one of the School Based Mentoring Program Coordinators at Partners Mentoring Youth and loves seeing the change that can happen with youth when they have a positive adult role model in their life. Kevin and Laura love the outdoors and connecting with friends.

**WALT SCHUCHMANN**

(Elder, Class of 2016) Walt and his wife Janet began attending FPC upon moving to Fort Collins in 2010 from Vienna, VA where they were active members of Vienna Presbyterian Church and where Walt was elected to and served on the Board of Trustees which managed the church's property and finances. Following four years of service in the U.S. Army, Walt's career has included working for a railroad in operations management and consulting in rail economics and operations. He is particularly interested in FPC's relationship with the community. He and Janet support and participate in Faith Family Hospitality and other community service activities. Other interests include biking, music, railroads and travel.



**LEE GRAY**

(Elder, Class of 2016) Lee and his wife, Karlin, joined FPC in 2006. Lee is retired from CSU following 38 years of teaching, research, and administration in the departments of Economics and Agricultural and Resource Economics. He is an ordained Elder and served on the Equipping and Small Groups Center. He and Karlin have, for many years, facilitated small groups focusing on Bible study, prayer, and relationship building. Lee was a member of the FPC choir from 2006-spring 2013. He has participated in visiting folks in the hospital and those in assisted care and rehab facilities. His interests include his family (Karlin, three grown children and their families, and his Cairn Terrier, Arnie), fishing, camping, and biking.



**GENE THEIS**

(Elder, Class of 2016) Gene, and his wife Dana moved from Colorado Springs to Fort Collins in May of 2013 and recently joined First Presbyterian Church. They were active members of First Presbyterian Church Colorado Springs and have a passion to serve Christ. Gene works in the oil and gas industry and is currently employed by Noble Energy. While at FPC Colorado Springs, Gene was involved in children's ministry, various men's groups, and divorce recovery workshops. Gene's interests include anything outdoors, hiking, golf, basketball, fly fishing, and especially traveling with Dana. Gene and Dana have four grown children.



**LAURA REID**

(Elder, Class of 2016) Laura has been a member of FPC 4 years and has been involved in a variety of ways. Before moving to Fort Collins, Laura was the Youth Director at First Pres in Cheyenne. She loves being involved in ministry in a variety of ways. Laura has volunteered



## FEEDING THE MALNOURISHED

Peanut Butter House Provides Life-saving Nutrition Despite Challenges

Last year, in my Pastor's Corner, I shared the good news that the Peanut Butter House was operational and starting to feed malnourished children. It has been so exciting to know that our church took a risk in faith and it has paid off, not only in being able to make a tangible difference in the lives of children who are suffering from malnutrition, but also in providing jobs and on-the-job training for the Transformation International boys who have suffered because of the civil war and resulting economic conditions (Unemployment in Liberia hovers around 90%!). And through it all, one of the biggest blessings has been developing a partnership and friendship with Revs. Luther and Christine Tarpeh, allowing us as a congregation and individuals to partner with them as they run the Peanut Butter House, mentor and provide education for the TI Boys, and as they started and now run a new school that is becoming a showcase school for all of Liberia. They truly are an inspiration as they sacrificially serve God and the people of their country.

In early December we received the following update from Christine about what is happening with the Peanut Butter House project. In it you can get a picture of some of the challenges that they face as well as the blessing that this project is to many. Thanks to all of you for your prayers and financial support for this project, the Tarpehs, and the TI Boys over the years.

—Cindy Frost



**SAVING LIVES: The Transformation International Boys work in the Peanut Butter House in Liberia**

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### AN UPDATE FROM CHRISTINE TARPEH

I am so sorry that our reports have lagged behind due to a number of factors. The heavy rains affected the internet so badly that sending e-mails across was a hectic feat. Our production dropped to a low scale level (as we waited for the disbursements of funds from the Rotary Club).

However, we kept on with distribution. In June and July, we treated 12 kids. One of them was so malnourished that the mother offered to give her over to Alfred, if he wanted the child. She had travelled from a remote village to Monrovia to see if there could be help for the little girl. But after the treatment, the same mother was so happy that she never wanted to let go of the girl any longer.

In August, we received request from three families in Harbel, Margibi [remote area in neighboring county where Luther and Christine pastor a church, site of Firestone's

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rubber plantation], for their children to be treated with the pastes. Our contact was Pastor Francis of the Pillar of Fire Church. While we were waiting for more information on the children (a set of twins and two other kids), one of the twins died. That made us so sad. We began to wonder how many kids die in the remote areas of Liberia, due to malnutrition. We immediately sent the pastes to Harbel. Happy to say the children are improving rapidly.

In September, the call for the paste came from so close to us. One of our teachers, Albertha was called early one morning to a neighbor's house. A baby had been abandoned and no one wanted this malnourished child. Albertha took the baby, but wondered what to do to help her recover. After one week of treatment with the [peanut butter] paste, it was a miraculous recovery. Today, Abigail smiles and plays around.

October saw us extending to a clinic in Rivercess (a county in the South-eastern part of Liberia). A clinic being started by a missionary couple collected some packets to treat children over there. Interestingly, they told us to keep the production going. They had seen how the product helped a child in Monrovia and were very excited about it. We are talking with them to keep supplying them when their clinic starts in January.

We started a process of extending the city electricity to the Peanut Butter House. But the process was stalled because we were to be registered as a business and would be charged accordingly, once their meter is installed. We intend to explore the process again when we embark on large scale production.

A major highlight of October was the funds received from the Rotary Club. Now we can start production full scale. To prepare, in early November, we embarked on thorough cleaning of the facilities, servicing of the generator, fumigation, etc. Due to the fumigation chemical, production had to wait till the last week of November.

We are happy that we will be ending the year on a strong note. Our desire to feed the malnourished children in Liberia is not dampened at all. Keep us in your prayers.

—Christine Tarpeh



**HEALTHY GIRL: Little Abigail's life was saved by the Peanut Butter House's life-saving nourishment.**

“We spend January 1 walking through our house, room by room, drawing up a list of work to be done, cracks to be patched. Maybe this year, to balance the list, we ought to walk through the rooms of our lives, not looking for flaws... but potential.” —Ellen Goodman

One year...12 months, 52 weeks, 365 days, 8760 hours, 525,600 minutes. Time is our most precious possession. I read an article this week referring to recent polls by General Nutrition Center. They were reporting the Top 10 New Years Resolutions—what people were planning to do with THEIR lives for the new year, and how they wanted to spend their 525,600 minutes.

#### TOP 10 RESOLUTIONS

- More time with family and friends
- Fit in fitness
- Tame the bulge
- Quit smoking
- Enjoy life more
- Quit drinking
- Learn something new
- Help others
- Get organized
- Read more

I’ve made those lists, too, but this year I’m looking at my lists and trying to re-evaluate them. What percentage of my life, on my list, is producing something of value for God? Shouldn’t that be number one on our list? God never meant for us to be self-sufficient—and make our lists of how we would handle our lives every day. He created us to walk *with* Him. *Our* needs and *His* riches are a perfect fit. “Many are the plans in a man’s heart, but it is the Lord’s purpose that prevails,” Proverbs 19:21.

Think about this upcoming new year. What’s on your list? I am praying that this year may be a time of deep spiritual growth for all of us, a time of welcoming God’s grace and gifts, a time for forgiving and a time for growing in goodness. Make your list carefully. —Marge Rice





# STUDENT STRESS

## Helping Teens Overcome Anxiety and Pressure

Does your teen suffer from stomachaches, headaches, inability to focus, insomnia, increased insecurity, or spinning thoughts at bedtime? These are just some of the symptoms related to stress and anxiety. Stress is an ongoing condition whereas anxiety is over a specific event such as a looming test or impending concert. Not all stress or anxiety is bad. Graduating high school is considered a life stressor, but most would agree it is a happy milestone. As with other adolescent behaviors, stress is overwhelming students younger and younger. Jodi Hansen, a mother at Preston Middle School became aware of this with her own son. Upon receiving grant money to explore health and nutrition, she approached the Preston counseling office with the idea for a parent seminar on teen stress. I received an invitation as a PSD volunteer and here are some of the key points from the seminar:

### **HELP YOUR STUDENT CLARIFY HIS OR HER EMOTIONS**

After a long day at school your daughter comes home, throws her books on the table and says she is stressed out. Take a moment to help her identify her source of stress. She may indeed be stressed. Or maybe she had a fight with her best friend right before her math test and she is angry, not just stressed. By clarifying emotions, you also enable your teen to handle the situation on their own. If your son is stressed because his English grade is slipping, do not fix it; ask him what he wants to do about it. As an adult you know life is not

stress free, you have learned to cope with stress. Through talking with your teen, you help them develop problem-solving skills that will in turn help them cope with the good and bad stress that is inescapable in this lifetime.

### **KEEP YOUR ANXIETY IN CHECK**

Anxiety is like bacteria, it feeds and multiplies. If your daughter appears anxious over a dance competition, the best thing you can do is remain calm. This will help her in two ways. First, it will prevent her anxiety from escalating out of control, which has physical effects as well as mental. Second, she will take cues from you on how to handle anxiety. As a parent you are a model (and super as well) and your teen will mirror how you behave, especially in anxious moments. One of the practices that you will need to teach and model to your teen is self-care. Take an art class, go for a walk, take some deep breaths, or call a friend that copes well with stress. Keeping the overall stress level down aids in riding out anxiety when it comes, and occasionally it will come.

### **SET PRIORITIES AND MAKE DECISIONS BASED ON THEM (MY TWO CENTS ON STRESS)**

Stress and anxiety do not happen in a bubble; they affect the whole family system. When I think of families here at FPC, I witness the whole spectrum of stress. The families that express the least stress have clear boundaries on behavior, activities, and priorities. And they stick to these when decisions and

conflicts arise. There is so much to do at school, after school, in sports, in club sports, in the arts, at church, with friends, and with family, that life can seem overwhelming. But when you find and hold to your foundation, it puts everything else into perspective. This means that some things will have to drop, some events will be missed, and some relationships may even have to change. Here is an activity I encourage you to try: Individually write down your top three priorities. Share with each other and then as a family write down three priorities. Try to make all decisions and activities based on these priorities for one week. Share your thoughts as a family.

—Holly Cable

The character quality for January 2014 is PUNCTUALITY (versus tardiness). Punctuality can be defined as: "Demonstrating the worth of people and time by arriving for meetings and appointments on time". Another definition would be: "Showing esteem for others by doing the right thing at the right time."

Punctuality is being on time; being prompt. It means to be physically present at the right place at the right time. Punctuality is based on two important factors. The first is a reverence for time itself, and the second is a respect for other people.

We are to have reverence for time, because God created it. He created the day and night, and established seasons of the year and seasons of life. Some of the most beautiful verses in the entire Bible are found in Ecclesiastes, dealing with time:

"For everything there is a season, and a time for every matter under heaven:  
a time to be born, and a time to die;  
a time to plant, and a time to pluck up what is planted;  
a time to kill, and a time to heal;  
a time to break down, and a time to build up;  
a time to weep, and a time to laugh;  
a time to mourn, and a time to dance;  
a time to cast away stones, and a time to gather stones together;  
a time to embrace, and a time to refrain from embracing;  
a time to seek, and a time to lose;  
a time to keep, and a time to cast away;  
a time to rend, and a time to sew;  
a time to keep silence, and a time to speak;  
a time to love, and a time to hate;  
a time for war, and a time for peace."  
—Ecclesiastes 3:1-8; RSV

Being punctual is living in harmony with the nature of God. As with all of the wonderful things which God created, we need to be good stewards of time. We can manage its use, but one thing we can't do is store it up - we either use it or lose it. And the Lord wants us to use our time wisely and effectively. Ephesians 5:15-16 says: "See to it, therefore, that you conduct yourselves carefully, not as foolish but as wise people who make the best possible use of their time..."

The second factor required for punctuality is a respect for other people and the time God has entrusted to them. Time really is one of our most precious assets. We are all given a limited amount of time and we are accountable to God for how we use it. When we keep other people waiting, we are robbing them of their time. Failing to be punctual hinders God's purposes in our life and offends those who are then forced to wait for us. Punctuality avoids the loss of time that happens when we have to wait for the "late-comers", and instead allows maximum teamwork and energy to be devoted to the task at hand.

Do I use my time wisely? Am I being a good steward of this precious gift of time that God has given me? Do I show respect for both God and others by being punctual?



## Welcome to the World!

Claire Ellen Humphries,  
daughter of  
Allison and Travis Humphries,  
born December 5, 2013.

**Are you expecting?** We want to celebrate with you! If you are pregnant or expecting to adopt soon, we would love to share the wait with you. Expectations are posted on our bulletin board across from the nursery. Won't you share your happy news with us? Please contact the church office at (970) 482-6107.

### CHILDREN'S BOOK DRIVE SCHEDULED FOR FEBRUARY

An anonymous donor will match book-for-book up to 100 books during our February Book Drive! Between now and then, look for good children's books to donate. More details in the February *Messenger*. Questions? Call Pat Sherwood, (970) 484-9658.



## JOHN KNOX

### The Beginnings of Presbyterianism

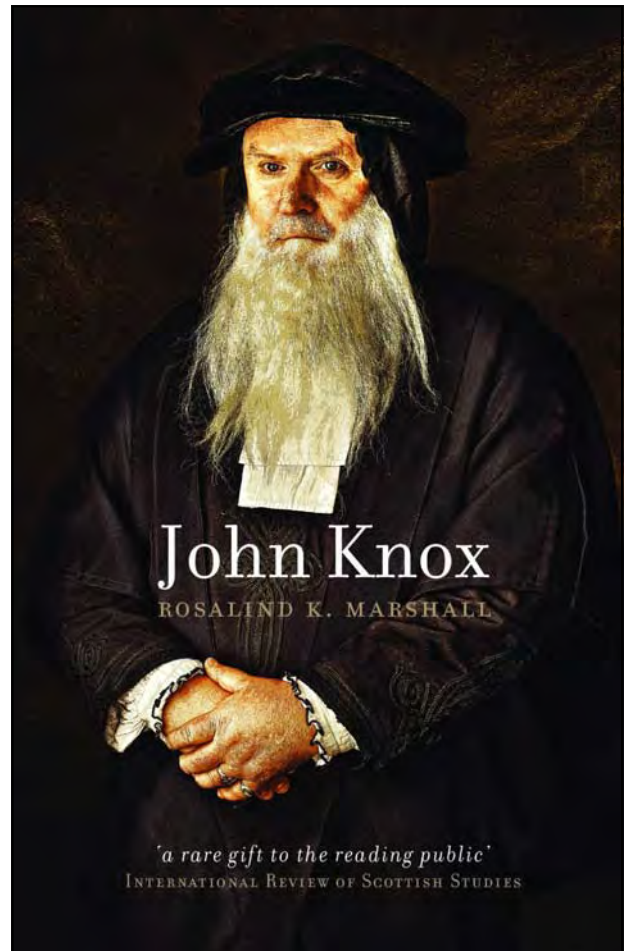
Both *John Knox. An Account of the development of His Spirituality*, by Henry R. Sefton and *John Knox*, by Rosalind K. Marshall are devoted to John Knox who laid the groundwork for Presbyterianism in Scotland in the 1550s and 1560s. Andrew Melville actually started the organization of presbyteries in the 1570s. Knox fought to establish the Protestant reformation in Scotland and thus laid the way for Melville. Knox fought against Roman Catholicism and Melville then fought against bishoprics. Knox was not an aristocrat. His father was a farmer prosperous enough to set up one son in business and to have the other, John, get a good education.

John was born about 1514 and there is little evidence of how and where he was educated until he completed it at St. Andrews College. After that he earned a living as a Papal notary and as a tutor of the sons of the so-called “Castilians” who assassinated Cardinal Archbishop David Beaton not long after Beaton had ordered the burning of the brilliant protestant preacher George Wishart. Knox had been an armed guard for Wishart, but was not with him the night he was taken by the Archbishop. Knox became known to protestant activists while he was tutoring a few of the Castilians’ sons at the castle. When they eventually negotiated their release the gentry among them were imprisoned in France and the commoners, including Knox, were sent to labor on French galleys. Knox labored thus for 19 months. Freed in 1549 he was welcomed back into the Protestant community of London.

After that Knox was licensed as a preacher by the government of Edward VI who was pushing the Protestant reformation forward. He was assigned a post in Berwick in northern England. Since the local Bishop was not sympathetic to reform he did not use the recently adopted Prayer Book of 1549. But this gave Knox more time for preaching, and he had become very good at it. In fact he became very popular, attracting many across the Border from Scotland and from several different classes on the English side. His clarity and bluntness were found to be very attractive in such slippery times. He railed against the Catholic ‘Mass’ which he saw as idolatry. He sought simplicity in communion—for instance having people sit at tables to take it, rather than on their knees.

Rosalind Marshall’s biography of Knox gives one the feel for his sincere but passionate preaching and his profound grasp of scripture. The briefer work by Henry Sefton allows one to break up Knox career for analysis and provides documentary examples of his writing.

—Wayne Clegern



Rosalind K. Marshall. *John Knox*. Birlinn Limited, Edinburgh. 2000.

Henry R. Sefton, *John Knox. An Account of the development of His Spirituality*. Saint Andrew Press, Edinburgh. 1993.



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## **OPEN HOUSE**—Sunday, January 12, 2014, 5–7 p.m. at First Presbyterian Church, 531 S. College Avenue, Fort Collins

Are you:

- Curious about what is happening at First Presbyterian as we enter the new year?
- Interested in meeting our new interim senior pastor?
- Hoping to engage current elders or pastors in conversation about FPC decisions?
- Reluctant to re-engage at FPC until you know where we're headed?

Then we invite you to this informal time to come enjoy coffee, tea, and snacks while asking questions, sharing your thoughts, and learning more about this new season of our church's life.

