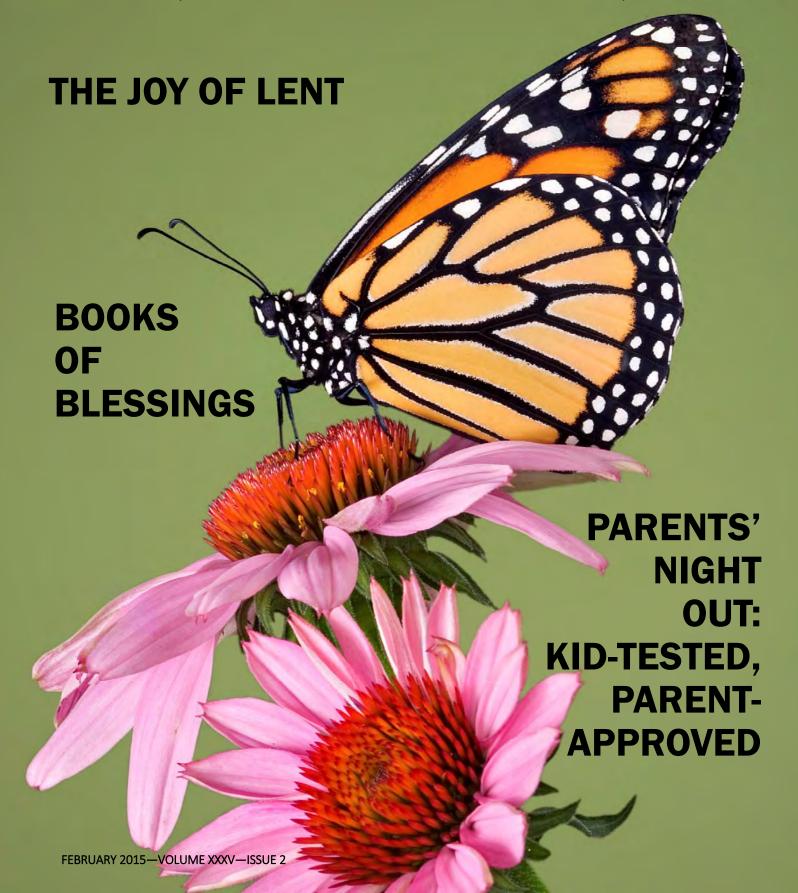
THEMESSENGER

| NEWS FROM FIRST PRESBYTERIAN CHURCH FORT COLLINS |



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From the Editor | BUTTERFLIES

I've always loved butterflies. Bright wings flickering in the wind. Weightless—and so delicate. They dance into spring with sunshine and tulips and embody transformation and renewal.

Lent, too, is a time of examination and metamorphosis. We begin in the ashes and death of winter and flutter into Easter with the rising sun. Many times, we enter the season of Lent seriously, eyes downcast as we examine our faults and shame. But this year at FPC, we will be challenged to experience the *joy* of Lent (p. 4). Introduce a friend to the joy of community at FPC during our weekly Wednesday evening gatherings, (p. 5) or perhaps reintroduce yourself to the subject of discernment in a Lenten study (p. 6). What's more, parents and children alike can experience joy at our Parents' Night Out (p. 11) and Mom's Night Out (p. 14).

As we fly into the season of Lent, may we put aside the fluttering of the world and look to Jesus, "...who for the joy set before him endured the cross."

—Cathy Richardson

THEMESSENGER

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MINISTERS | THE CONGREGATION
INTERIM SR. PASTOR | PAUL PARSONS
ASSOCIATE PASTOR | CINDY FROST
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 purpose and mission will be <u>accepted on the 15th of each month</u>. All articles must be sponsored by one of the church's five Centers and are subject to the approval of the Editor. Submissions will be edited for length and suitability.

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



Let mutual love continue. **-Hebrews 13:1**

As a child growing up in our family's church, I admit I was often bored in the church service and didn't know what to do with those coffee fellowship times. I was pretty shy and often just felt awkward when adults tried to have conversations with me. But I have such fond memories of the church picnic or church softball evenings where people were making connections through playing together. My biggest "warm fuzzies" associated with church came from those times when we were interacting naturally over food and fun and just being together without a big agenda. As I hit my super-shy teenage years, I was grateful for the adults who volunteered with the youth group and others who would help break through my shyness with some ongoing inside jokes. (I recall Gary, who would come up with (silly) life verses for people. I still remember the one he chose for me was Exodus 16:36: "An omer is the tenth part of an ephah." A meaningful verse to build one's life around, right?) I truly believe that these positive associations with my church growing up were a big part of keeping me grounded in faith, even when my doubts and skepticism started kicking in as a young adult.

Now, one of the things I love about being a pastor is that it puts me smack down at the hub of an amazing community of people. I have a chance to get to know such great people, get to hear some of their fascinating stories, see their gifts in action, and watch how God is working in them and through them. Sometimes I forget when I'm in a group of people who are fairly involved in the church that everyone doesn't know each other yet, and I'm so glad when I watch new connections being made. Often I even find myself in the role of pseudo-"matchmaker" when I want to help one individual/couple/ family from the church to meet another because I can tell that they'd really hit if off it they got to know each other like I know them. And of course, a beautiful aspect of being at the hub is experiencing the care that comes from the community when one is hurting or struggling, as well as witnessing how people in the community are caring for one another.

This focus on the relational community aspects of church is why I'm excited about what we will be doing this year for Lent! As we focus on JOY in our sermon series through the book of Philippians, we will also be intentionally celebrating the joy of community through our Wednesday night gatherings. This will

be a great chance to build up our relationships with one another—getting to know new people, strengthening our intergenerational bonds, and deepening our connection to one another. As we seek to live into our vision of growing our multigenerational community we hope that people of all ages and walks of life will join together to enjoy the fun and fellowship of time together as a church family. One of my takeaway lessons from my church experience growing up is that you probably never know when your participation and engagement in the community is going to make a big difference to someone else.

This truly is a remarkable community of people here at FPC! I've seen that even (especially?) through our ups and downs. Even when we hit some of our recent challenges, I felt like God gave me eyes to see the beauty that is at the core of this church community. There really is something special about being God's people—called to be the local body of Christ, centered on the good news of Jesus Christ and what he has done for us, and all seeking together to grow in our faith. There is a common bond that we share as brothers and sisters in Christ who are worshipping and serving God together, and this "family of faith" is one of my favorite things about church. In this time of rebuilding as a church, I pray that we would be building and rebuilding our relational connections with one another across the generations.

So I hope everyone reading this will give serious thought to joining the fun of our Joy of Community evenings. Your presence matters to us, and we are definitely better together!

—Cindy Frost

And let us consider how to provoke one another to love and good deeds, not neglecting to meet together, as is the habit of some, but encouraging one another, and all the more as you see the Day approaching.

-Hebrews 10:24-25

JOY

FPC focuses on the joy of the Lenten season



When we adopted the little black chowmix puppy from the Montrose Animal Shelter, we named her Maci, which in Hungarian means "teddy bear." The year was 1999, and we had just suffered the tragic death of our daughter Becca's 4H-trained dog, Maddie, perhaps the world's greatest dog ever. It would be a hard act to follow—that's for sure. And starting over can be hard, no matter what the circumstance. I remember digging down deep, reaching for the willingness and commitment that would be necessary to be a responsible, faithful companion for Maci. And what came to me and never left me was joy. The joy that that dog would bring into my life for 15 years, 8 months, and 13 days. It would all be worth it because of the joy that she was.

When we approach Lent, we tend to think of what our sins have cost the Lord Jesus Christ. This is only appropriate. As the ashes imposed on Ash Wednesday remind us, our lives are frail because of

the reality of sin; we are created out of the dust, and our lives will return to dust. It is for this very reason that Christ Jesus has died and risen: that we might have a real and living hope to life after physical death. The cost to Jesus is immense, that we might not be left only with dusty death. We should enter into Lent fully aware of the need to face into the cost of our brokenness and corruptions.

But that's not the whole story! The author of the letter to the Hebrews invites us to allow another truth to enter in, to make its home with us: "Therefore, since we are surrounded by so great a cloud of witnesses, let us also lay aside every weight, and sin which clings so closely, and let us run with endurance the race that is set before us, looking to Jesus, the founder and perfecter of our faith, who for the joy that was set before him endured the cross, despising the shame, and is seated at the right hand of the throne of God." —Hebrews 12:1–2

Jesus' faithfulness on our behalf involved him setting his full attention on the promise of joy, a joy that would attend to him throughout his incarnate life on earth, even and especially through the horrors of humiliation and death. It would draw him, accompany him, and reward him on the journey. This same faithfulness through union with Christ is now ours. His experience of joy can draw us, accompany us, and reward us on our journey through Lent and beyond. It is meant to be the normal Christian life.

Joy. This is our theme for Lent 2015, as odd as it would seem for a period known for being penitent and sorrowful. Remorse for our sins should still play a part in our Lenten journey, but this year, let us place an even greater focus on the joy that he has won for us, gives to us, uses to motivate and reward us. For the truth is, dear ones, we have so much over which to rejoice.

The cost of love is immense. We put Maci down on December 30, crippled as she was in her back legs, with almost no quality of life left, blind, deaf, utterly dependent on Nicole and me. We miss her every day. Was it worth it? Of course it was and **is** worth it! Joy washes over our lives because of this dog. Joy attended every day we walked through life with her. I would never trade this life with her for a life in which we never knew her. So it is with Christ Jesus, who for the joy set before him endured the cross for us. Let us set our anticipation and expectancy on the joy Jesus experienced and walk in it this Lent.

—Paul Parsons



The Joy of Community is coming to FPC on five Wednesday evenings during Lent beginning February 18. Join church members and guests from the community as we focus on our Lenten theme of experiencing joy. These special evenings will help support the church's vision of growing our multigenerational church community. Dinner begins at 5:15 p.m. (Dinner is free, but donations will be accepted toward the cost of the meal.) Joy-themed activities begin at 6:00 p.m. All ages are welcome and encouraged to join in. A special Creative Corner will feature games, crafts, and storytelling for our younger guests. Childcare will be provided in the nursery for the littlest ones. Please join us for this great opportunity to meet a diverse group of new people in a warm and friendly setting!

February 18—The Joy of Community Kickoff Event

- Soup dinner from 5:15 to 6:30 p.m.
- 6:00 p.m. introduction to Joy of Community
- Ash Wednesday worship service at 7:00 p.m.

February 25—The Joy of Play

- Dinner served from 5:15 to 6:30 p.m.
- 6:00 p.m. games begin. Let the odds be ever in your favor! Steady hands? Try Jenga; Bible scholar? Then Bible Trivia is for you; Competitive? Maybe Yatzee, Pinnocle, or Risk is your game. Just want a quiet friendly place to chat and do something fun? We've got dot-todots and puzzles for every age and skill level.

March 4—The Joy of Celebration

- Dinner served from 5:15 to 6:30 p.m.
- 6:00 p.m. Make a joyful noise unto the Lord celebrate with cake and an intergenerational song sing.

March 11—The Joy of Service

- Dinner served from 5:15 to 6:30 p.m.
- 6:00 p.m. How can you help serve? There will be ample opportunity to enjoy one another as we assemble and create projects that help serve our community.

March 25-The Joy of Sharing our Gifts

- Chili Cook-Off served from 5:15 to 6:30 p.m.
- 6:00 p.m. What is your talent or gift? Have a treasured song or short skit to perform? How about a quartet or quintet? The evening also includes our famous Chili Cook-Off and Bake-Off. This is a special fundraiser for our youth ministry.

For more information, check the FPC website, Facebook page, and bulletins.

Come experience the Joy of Community at FPC this Lent.

Be transformed by the renewing of your minds, so that you may discern what is the will of God. —Romans 12:2

How do you discover God's guidance for personal and congregational decisions? Our Christian spiritual tradition refers to the process of sorting out the "voice" of God's Spirit from other conflicting voices as the art of discernment. *The Way of Discernment* is a 10-week spiritual formation study for small groups. It is part of the Companions in Christ spiritual formation series and offers a biblical and practical framework for understanding the practice of discernment. We will explore a variety of paths and practices that will help us gain clarity of how the Holy Spirit is speaking, guiding, and inviting us to know God's will for particular life situations we are facing.

This study is designed for:

- People yearning to hear the Holy Spirit's guidance
- Individuals looking for direction in vocation or life changes
- Church leaders seeking clarity about their congregation's distinctive mission
- Christians searching for God's will in matters of belief, ethics, and faithful living

The study provides:

- Principles of personal and group discernment
- Daily exercises to help us move from information to experience
- Weekly guided meetings designed for group sharing and individual reflection

Schedule:

Eleven consecutive Wednesday evenings beginning Wednesday, February 4, 2015 from 6:30 to 8:30 p.m. (except February 18, Ash Wednesday, when we will meet from 5:30 to 7:00 p.m.)

Location:

FPC Parlor

Childcare:

Please indicate your needs so we can make plans to accommodate you.

Leaders:

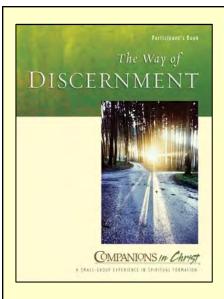
Nicole Parsons and Bob Simpson

Book Cost:

\$10 (available from Bob Simpson)

Questions and Sign-up:

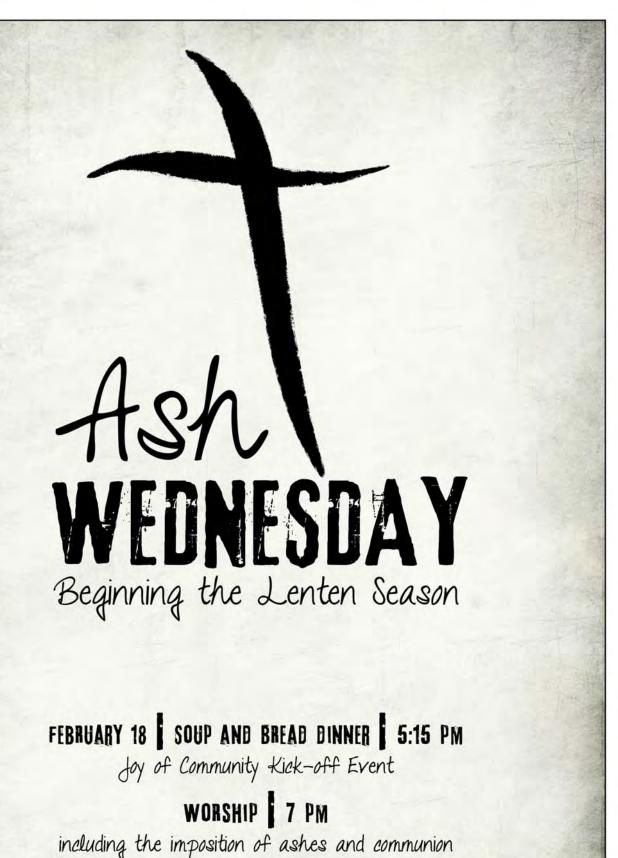
E-mail Bob Simpson, robertfsimpson4316@gmail.com.



About the Authors

Marjorie J. Thompson is an ordained minister in the Presbyterian Church USA. She has served as director of the Pathways Center for Spiritual Leadership and as spiritual director to Companions in Christ, a program outgrowth of the Pathways initiative of Upper Room Ministries. Marjorie has exercised a ministry of teaching, writing, and spiritual guidance for many years.

Stephen V. Doughty served for over two decades in parish ministry and for 10 years as the executive presbyter for the 71 congregations of the Lake Michigan Presbytery. A regular contributor to Weavings, he is currently engaged in a full-time ministry of retreat leadership and writing.





He was so tired of walking, and he was so hungry. Up ahead he could see a church. Maybe they could give him something to eat or tell him where he could get a free meal. He stopped for a moment, feeling the familiar gnawing in his belly as he took stock of himself. Running a hand through his hair, he realized he might be turned away just because of the way he looked: rumpled, dirty clothes, unshaven. His feet were almost bare because of worn-out socks. No wonder he had an open blister on his heel. After all when you have slept in the open, as well as walked for miles when you couldn't get a ride, this was the result. But weren't churches supposed to welcome strangers? As he approached the church building, he caught sight of

his own reflection. Who was that dirty stranger reflected in the glass? Did he dare to open the church office door? How would they respond to his needs?

Does this scenario seem familiar to you? It happens almost every day at our church, and the need is growing. Here's how we respond to homeless persons at the present time: a care bag is given someone who is hungry, containing poptop cans of food, nourishing granola bars, a V8 drink, and a pudding cup. They are also given a list of resources that our Fort Collins community offers homeless individuals. We are considering also adding a pair of new white socks to the care bag and perhaps also a few toiletries.

What ideas do you have for meeting the needs of homeless individuals that come to our church office door? The Emergency Assistance Deacons are gathering information from our church family, and we are interested in hearing your good ideas. We will soon be working on an updated Emergency Assistance Policy for our church that reflects our Session's vision of being a welcoming church. Please share your ideas with Marge Rice, mrice@firstpresfc.org.

—Carol Rowley

BOOK DRIVE | Presbyterian Women

BOOKS OF BLESSINGS

Presbyterian Women collect children's books for local agencies

He called a little child and had him stand among them. And he said, "I tell you the truth, unless you change and become like little children, you will never enter the kingdom of heaven. Therefore, whoever humbles himself like this child is the greatest in the kingdom of heaven. And whoever welcomes a little child like this in my name welcomes me." —Matthew 18:2–5

We all know how important books are to the children, grandchildren, and other little ones in our lives. Books can make a lasting impression and offer encouragement to children. Books can be the beginning of a newfound love of learning. And books can be a refuge and safe haven for these little ones.

Presbyterian Women will collect books throughout the month of February for their annual book drive. At the end of the month, Presbyterian Women will sort and box up donations and deliver them to four agencies: the Health District's Family Dental Clinic, The Family Center/La Familia, Salud Family Health Center, and Teaching Tree Early Childhood Learning Center.

Choose new or gently used books for boys and girls of all ages. Then bring your books to the *Children's Book Drive* box, located beside the bookshelves outside the church office. Questions? Call Pat Sherwood, (970) 484-9658.

Let's extend our hands in fellowship and welcome to the children of our community, as Jesus did so often, by providing as many books as we can for the less fortunate children in our community! Thank you for supporting our annual all-church Children's Book Drive.



Man, is it good to be back! I want to start my communication with you all by saying thank you. I am honored to have the opportunity to be on staff at FPC for a second time. Our last period of time together, when I worked as the University Ministry Intern, was a short year. Now I am the Interim Director of Youth Ministry, and this too may be a short run. However long, I am eager to get to work.

Over the past two and a half years, I have learned so much about myself and ministry. Shortly after I moved away from Fort Collins, I married my lovely wife, Casey. One thing I have learned since our wedding is having a healthy relationship with your spouse, at times, can take a lot of work. Don't get me wrong, the two of us go together like Bing Crosby and Rosemary Clooney in White Christmas, but there are times when our duet is off tune and we have to work hard to make our day-to-day sound like a sweet melody. I am sure those of you who are married identify with what I am saying. Ministry is very similar to marriage in that respect. After six years of ministry experience, many days have been smooth; however, there have been times where it takes a lot of work on my part and on the part of the church.

My goal for the youth program while I am here is to build a foundation of laborers in the church who are willing to do the work necessary to have a sustainable youth ministry at FPC. Taylor Kisers come and Taylor Kisers go, but the Church is here until the Lord comes back. I want to equip parents, grandparents, college students, young adults, and the youth themselves to create a flourishing ministry directed to junior high and high school students. Don't hear me wrong, I am not trying to



use "church words" like equip, foundation, and laborers to get a bunch of volunteers so I don't have to do anything. I want to work! God has called me to FPC to get my hands dirty, but I truly believe "it takes a village to raise a child." So this is my plea for help. Like marriage, youth ministry takes a lot of work. We'll have ups and we'll have downs, but the fruit is worth the labor.

Ecclesiastes 4:9 says, "Two are better than one, because they have a good return for their labor." I can do a lot of things on my own, but I can't possibly have the same impact in youth ministry as I could with a whole church laboring beside me. I smile thinking of the day that we all work together creating an atmosphere where children and youth want to spend all their time having fun and learning about and serving the God that made us all. The road is long and the work is hard, but remember that He who starts a good work in us will see it through to completion (Philippians 1:6).

I am not asking anyone to step out of his or her comfort zone...yet. There are so many things you can do that will benefit the youth in our church—the most important of which is praying for them. Pray continually. Pray without ceasing. When you are done praying, pray some more. Listen to God, and if He lays it on your heart to be a partner in youth ministry, contact me and we will find the perfect ministry opportunity for you and your gifts. If not, I only ask that as a church, we all stand behind our youth and show them that we love them—and that we will work hard for them. Don't do it because I asked; instead, do it with the mindset of Timothy when he writes, "[this] is why we labor and strive, because we have put our hope in the living God..."(1 Timothy 4:10). Trust me—the fruit is worth it!

-Taylor Kiser



* Every Third Friday *
This month: February 20, 6-9 p.m.

<u>Ages 0-10</u>:

Come fed and in your PJs for snacks, games, and movies.

Cost is \$12/one child; \$5/additional child (\$25 maximum/family)

Ages 11-14:

Come ready to hang out for games and fun. Cost is \$5.

Fun for Kids = Free-Time for Parents Register online by Feb 18: firstpresfc.org

First Presbyterian Church * 531 S. College Ave, Fort Collins * (970)482-6107

ANDERSON CHORAL SCHOLAR SELECTED

Marissa Rudd becomes first recipient of gifted Choral Scholarship at FPC

This past summer, the family, friends, and musical community of Fort Collins mourned the passing of Edward D. Anderson in July 2014. Mr. Anderson was the father and father-in-law to Karlin and Lee Gray and grandfather to Heather Vesgaard.

Edward D. Anderson was a widely recognized music educator and church musician in Northern Colorado and the midwest United States. In 1948, he moved his family to Fort Collins and was appointed Director of the Choral Music Department and Professor of Music at Colorado State University, where he taught for 37 years. During his career extending over seven decades, he influenced the lives and careers of countless young people through his focus on music education generally, and more specifically, spiritual enrichment through sacred music innovation and performance. To honor his legacy in the choral music ministry, the Edward D. Anderson Choral Scholars Fund was established in 2011 and operationally launched at St Martin's Lutheran Church in Austin, Texas. Its long-term objective is the hope of training a new generation of choristers in churches or community organizations and venues by enabling exposure to excellent sacred music and highly qualified mentoring church musicians.

Mr. Anderson was thrilled to witness the growth of the Scholars concept in Austin as a unique blend of music excellence, education, and performance within a liturgical setting. Prior to his death in July 2014, he requested that

the program be expanded to include home churches in Fort Collins, Concordia College in Morehead, Minnesota, his alma mater, and the choral music programs at the International Peace Garden Camp (USA-Canada). FPC was extended an invitation to participate in this program in the fall of 2014.

I am pleased to announce and introduce to the congregation Marissa Rudd as the first receipt of the Edward D. Anderson Choral Scholarship at FPC. I am thrilled to welcome this gifted individual into the FPC music ministry.

Marissa Rudd was born in Milwaukee, Wisconsin, and is currently working on her undergraduate degree in Vocal Performance at Colorado State University under the instruction of Dr. John Seesholtz.

Her most recent operatic performances include Gianni Schicchi (Lauretta), Suor Angelica (Chorus), Tenderland (Chorus), Cendrillon (Prince Charmant understudy), and Patience (Rapturous Maiden). In the spring, Marissa will be playing Elettra in Mozart's Idomeneo.

She placed third at the National Association of Teachers of Singing (NATS) West Central Regional Conference Vocal Competition and first at the NATS Colorado/Wyoming Vocal Competition in the spring of both 2013 and 2014. Recently, she placed third in the Boulder International Vocal Competition, where she competed with singers from across the globe!



After she completes her degree, she hopes to continue her education to earn her Master of Music degree.

The Music and Arts Ministry is grateful to the Anderson family for the opportunity to participate in Edward D. Anderson Choral Scholar Program, and we look forward to the blessing this will bring to the congregation as we continue to use music as a vehicle for the glory of God.

-Marvin Crawford

AVAILABILITY | Church of Character

The character quality for February 2015 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. Listening skills are really important! They can make you a better family member and 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! Especially 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." —from *The Power for True Success: How to Build Character in Your Life*





VEPS

MOMS NIGHT OUT

Moms, join Mothers of Preschoolers for the next Mom's Night Out, Tuesday, February 17, at 6 p.m. **Get Happy with your Snaps** in this upbeat 60-minute class, brought to you by Dear Kate Studios.

You'll walk away with simple strategies that will get you happy with your snaps. Plus Kate will even show us how to lose 10 lbs. in the camera. That's right—you won't want to miss this! Invite your friends, all are welcome! Just meet at 6 p.m. in room 209.









www.DearKateStudios.com



Welcome to the World!

Macy Katherine Redder daughter of Keah and Steve Redder born January 22, 2015

Carlisle Malone Garrett
daughter of Catherine and Blake Garrett
born January 30, 2015

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.



Joyful, Joyful, We Adore Thee an all-church breakfast gift for the FPC family

Join us between services for breakfast and a time of fellowship.

Sunday, March 1, at 10:15 a.m. in Shepardson Hall

Your presence is the only gift we seek; however, donations will be accepted.

Presented by the Caring Ministry at First Presbyterian Church



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