



currents

Fall 2024

***We are the church
together!***

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SAYING “GOODBYE” TO PASTOR RACHEL

Head Pastor Rachel Rhodes said “Goodbye” to MPC on July 28 before she headed to her new calling at St. Simons Presbyterian Church in St. Simons Island, Georgia. A book of photos, personal messages, and scripture passages submitted by members of the congregation reflecting Rachel’s time here at MPC was given as a special gift.



Find more photos on page 10.

NAVIGATING THROUGH OUR SEASON OF CHANGE

Dear Priesthood of All Believers,

What a difference a year makes. In the November edition of *Currents* last year, Larry Low shared a detailed update on the Memorial Garden project. Money had been raised, priorities had been discerned, and a beautiful set of plans had been rendered. But there still was no contractor to do the work. Fast forward to today and we were able to kick off Rally Day in the renovated garden. Kids were blissfully running around the grand oak tree. Folks of all abilities were able to use the new ramp for greater access to the grounds. And a congregation of people gathered at tables to enjoy one another in fellowship. The project is not complete, as we are working towards a phase two, but gratitude is in order to Larry, Seth McHenry, the trustees, session, donors, and the church as a whole, whose prayers and donations made this plan into a reality.



This fall our faith community also finds ourselves under construction. At front of mind is our church's search for an interim pastor. Indeed, session has been working diligently to recruit, interview, and discern who God is calling to guide us in this interim season. However, finding an interim pastor can serve as a visible tip of an always-ongoing iceberg of formation. For as people of faith, we are perpetually growing. And I have witnessed how the Holy Spirit has been shaping a new structure in all of us as individuals and as a congregation. Volunteers have stepped up to visit folks and organize our weekly prayer list. Adult Education has seen a new burst of energy at Sunday School, Brown Bag Bible Study, and Book Groups. Church leadership are tackling challenging questions as we update our financial systems to keep up with the changing climate of churches. And I have heard from many people in our pews who have appreciated the diversity of voices in our pulpit over the past several weeks.

So as we move from one season to the next with hands open to how the Spirit is shaping us, I leave you with the prayer below. I turn to these words often from the Iona Community (<https://iona.org.uk/>), especially when I am trying to act from hope instead of fear, to welcome new beginnings instead of clinging to fading familiarities, and to center God instead of myself. May we continue to be a people attentive to God's movement in our midst and participating in God's prayer for each of us.

*O Christ, the Master Carpenter
You at the last, through wood and nails,
Crafted our whole salvation.
Wield well your tools
In the workshop of your world,
So that we who come rough-hewn to your bench
May here be fashioned
To a truer beauty of your hand.*

Grace and Peace,

Alex

OUR CHURCH FAMILY

In Loving Memory

Our sympathy goes out to the family of those who we were recently notified of their death:

- Harry Dent
on Tuesday, July 16, 2024
- Former Pastor, Ronald Rosenau
on Monday, July 22, 2024

Let us continue to remember these individuals and all of their family members in our prayers at this time.



INTERIM PASTOR UPDATE

A committee of session and personnel members was formed for the purpose of evaluating and presenting a candidate for the Interim Pastor position. The job description was posted online and interviews were successfully conducted with two qualified candidates. These conversations were productive and insightful, allowing the committee to gain a deeper understanding of each candidate's vision, experience, and pastoral approach.

The Interim Committee has selected a candidate for the Interim Pastor position and has obtained approval from the Session at the September 23 meeting. Currently, a contract is being drafted for approval from the Philadelphia Presbytery Commission on Ministry.

Members of the Interim Committee: Karl Helland, Bill Hughes, Wendy McCleskey, Rich Ryan, and Lisa Zazzu, are grateful for your prayers and support during this time and will continue to keep you informed as they move forward in the selection process.

BACKPACK DRIVE THANK YOU

A VERY BIG thanks to all who contributed to the Deacons' Backpack Drive this year! We collected more than 50 filled backpacks as well as a generous amount of cash which was used to purchase and fill 16 more. These backpacks from MPC will be distributed to students in our community for whom the great expense of starting the school year can be a hardship. What a blessing you are to them!

SACRAMENT OF BAPTISM

The sacrament of baptism was received on July 21 by Charlotte Marie Ciallella and Olivia Hudson Ciallella, daughters of Christina and Matthew Ciallella, and Aria Diane Patterson, daughter of Shea and Tyler Patterson, and granddaughter of Sharon and Geoffrey Smith. Please join us in welcoming the newest members of Christ's church.



FINANCIAL SECRETARY UPDATE

Your church leadership has been working diligently to find a permanent solution to the financial secretary position currently held on an interim basis by Laurie Jacobson. After much research and discernment, the Finance Committee has recommended to hire The Quantify Group (<https://thequantifygroup.com/>) to fulfill these responsibilities. Session has voted to agree with this recommendation. Laurie's last day with us will be October 7, and we are eternally grateful for her generous offer to help us in this interim time. After October 7, a combination of The Quantify Group and current staff will fulfill these responsibilities. We ask for your continued prayers and patience as we update our new systems and navigate this new season. If you have any questions please feel free to reach out to Pastor Alex. We give great thanks to the Personnel Committee, the Trustees, the Session, and members of the Finance Committee for working together to find this solution.

2025 STEWARDSHIP CAMPAIGN - "WE ARE THE CHURCH"

Submitted by Tom Smith

The 2025 Stewardship campaign's theme is "We are the Church", which means the church is God's people. But how does stewardship fit in the theme "We are the Church?"

Stewardship is the responsible use of resources given to a church by donors and members to achieve God's purpose. These resources can be in several forms:

- Monetary donation – which is normally our first thought
- A gift from your estate through a will, trust, or life insurance, which supports special projects like the Memorial Garden improvements
- Time and Talent
- Caring for people in the church and community

This year we would like to emphasize the meaning of responsible stewards of our church family and how our care and love for others influences our gifts to the church. Tithes and offerings support our programs and ministries. For example, helping those with food insecurity through the Deacons Holiday food baskets, donating time and talent plus provisions to the Food Center, Community Meals through Code Blue, along with housing the homeless.



Other ways are investing in our youth through the Youth Club, the mission trip to Pipestem WV, educational ministry, and school backpacks in late summer for those in our local community. The list goes on.

A letter, along with an Estimate of Giving card for 2025, has been mailed and is your opportunity to commit your financial resources, time and talent, and prayers for the upcoming year. If you cannot give financially, there is a space on the card to mark this, but maybe you can give with your time and talents.

Please bring the card and envelope with you on Dedication Sunday, October 13. If you cannot attend, please either mail the card to the church office or complete it online at mpcusa.org/e-estimate-card. More information is included within the letter.

As we look back on the past year, the words of a beloved hymn come to mind:

*And when the people gather,
There's singing and there's praying,
There's laughing and there's crying sometimes,
All of it saying
I am the church!
You are the church!
We are the church together!*



We have surely experienced a year full of singing, praying, laughing, and sometimes crying. But through it all we are followers of Jesus who proclaim, "We are the church together!" We hope you will join us, especially now during a time of interim leadership when the responsibilities of MPC are increased in all areas, by supporting our church and one another in the year ahead.

KIMBERLY TURNER, MPC'S ADMINISTRATIVE ASSISTANT

Since July 1, you may have heard a new voice answering the phones at MPC. Kimberly Turner is the face behind the voice and we welcome her as our new administrative assistant/receptionist. Kim was born and raised in Ewing, NJ. In early 1991 she relocated to Dallas, TX for a position with a global travel agency. While in Dallas, she met her husband and in May 1992, they relocated to Seattle, WA. There they raised their family of six and were actively involved with youth ministry and community outreach. Kim taught preschool for twelve years, managed apartment buildings with her husband, and worked as their church's receptionist for two years prior to relocating back east to Newtown, PA in the fall of 2019. Kim loves to spend time with her family, enjoys long road trips, watching sports, listening to music, and reading a really good book. If you have not done so already, please call or stop by the office to introduce yourself and welcome Kim to MPC.



NEW CONTACT FOR PRAYER LIST

Submitted by Ron Workman

With Pastor Ballard's recent resignation, Ron Workman has agreed to manage the MPC Prayer List, and will continue to update the list on a weekly basis. This list is faithfully prayed over in the middle of the week by members of our church community.”

Please notify Ron at ron_workman@prodigy.net or 215-808-0809 if you have individuals or families that you would like to have included in this list. He will follow the past practice of leaving all names on the Prayer List for six weeks unless requested to shorten or lengthen that time period or we know that prayers need to continue for chronic illness or injury.

Also, please let him know if you would like to be added or removed from the distribution list, or if your email address has changed to continue to receive the prayer list.



Visit mpcusa.org



WEDNESDAYS ARE FOR BROWN BAG BIBLE STUDY

Brown Bag Bible Study has started again at noon, each Wednesday. All are welcome and encouraged to join in. For those who wish to meet in person, we will meet in the Conference Room, located on the second floor. For those wishing to attend via Zoom, the Zoom link will be emailed out every Monday. If you wish to be added to the email distribution list or to confirm that you are on the distribution list, please send your name and email address to office@mpcusa.com.

ADULT EDUCATION SCHEDULE

All Adult Education classes start at 9:30 a.m. each Sunday in the Conference Room, located on the second floor.

October 6 and 13 – Rev. Shannon Smythe

Wide Open Hearts: A Message from Our Palestinian Siblings in Faith



Come hear stories and messages from our Palestinian Christian siblings in East Jerusalem and the West Bank. Through a review of Palestinian history, grounding in scripture, and personal photos and videos, Rev. Dr. Shannon Smythe will share about her recent solidarity pilgrimage to Israel-Palestine, which was entitled “Come and See, Go and Tell” and sponsored by the Israel-Palestine Mission Network of the PC(USA) and the Sabeel Center for Ecumenical and Liberation Theology. Through a time of discussion together, we will consider ways we might respond faithfully to what our Palestinian Christian siblings are asking of us.

October 20 – Rev. Jack McAnlis

Where is the best place for the Ten Commandments?



Some states are passing laws to have the Ten Commandments posted in every classroom in that state. This session will be an open discussion of the “separation of church and state” as well as exploring some cultural issues on why this topic continues to be a concern to some Americans.

October 27 – Christopher Bannister

What the Bible says about watching the World News.



In today’s media driven world, especially in this election year, it’s easy to be trapped by the plethora of negative content that surrounds us 24/7 in every form of media. We are bombarded by texts, tv ads and social media posts attempting to disparage one group or another.

It can be tempting to indulge in watching bad TV shows, videos or movies with explicit content, scrolling through social media feeds filled with gossip and drama, or even seeking out disturbing videos online.

But as Christians, what does the Bible say about watching bad things?

November 3, 17 and 10 – Rev. Jack McAnlis

“A Dickens of a Christmas”



The writings of Charles Dickens have had a major influence on how Christmas is viewed and how it has come to be celebrated, particularly as a time of family gatherings and giving gifts. Using Dickens’ “A Christmas Carol” as a focus, this class will examine the activities of our modern Christmas festival and assess them in light of Christian faith and tradition. Participants are asked to read “A Christmas Carol,” or view a video based on the book, as preparation for the class.

November 24 – NO CLASS Happy Thanksgiving!

December 1, 8, and 15 – Pastor Alex Lester-Abdalla

Waiting to Act: Contemplation and Action in Advent



Pastor Alex will invite us to reflect on and engage with Advent themes and scripture passages through the lens of contemplation and action. Through this study we will engage with the spiritual sides of justice, how prayer and faithful action are related, as well as what God might be inviting from each of us while we prepare for the Christ Child. We hope you will join us as we seek to live practical and inspired lives together.

MPC COMMUNITY MEALS

MPC hosted a Community Meal of approximately 52 guests in July, in partnership with Advocates for Homeless & Those in Need (AHTN). The hosting of the monthly meal was assisted by young adults from MPC who helped prep and serve a supper of cheesy chicken and rice, fresh green beans, apple sauce, dessert, iced tea, lemonade, hot tea and coffee and dessert, which included a welcomed donation of pies from Jim Gaston. Another meal followed on August 30.

Morrisville Presbyterian Church has committed to this schedule of Community Meals!

- Tuesday, October 29, 2024 at 6:00 p.m.
- Friday, November 29, 2024 at 6:00 p.m.
- Tuesday, December 31, 2024 at 6:00 p.m.
- Friday, January 31, 2025 at 6:00 p.m.
- Tuesday, April 29, 2025 at 6:00 p.m.
- Friday, May 30, 2025 at 6:00 p.m.
- Tuesday, July 29, 2025 at 6:00 p.m.
- Friday, August 29, 2025 at 6:00 p.m.



A variety of helpers are needed for each meal including: grocery shopper, kitchen helpers, greeter, and bakers for dessert. If you are interested, or would like more information, or be added to the email list, please reach out to Beth Becker or Dawn Flook, or email MPCcodeblue@gmail.com.

CLOTHING CENTER IS OPEN AND ACCEPTING DONATIONS



After being closed for the summer, the MPC Clothing Center has reopened! Come and take a look at our renovated area allowing more space to shop. The Clothing Center, located on the lower level of the church, is open every Thursday from 10:00 a.m. to 2:00 p.m. Come and see we are more than just clothes! All profits are donated to other community non-profit agencies and organizations through the MPC Outreach Committee.

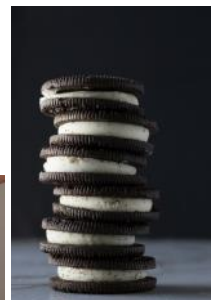
The MPC Clothing Center is now accepting clean, fall/winter clothing & shoes, seasonal home décor (fall/autumn, Halloween, Thanksgiving and Christmas). Please do NOT leave off-season clothing and items as we do not have the space to store them. For more information about the Clothing Center, please visit mpcusa.org/clothing-center.

FOOD CENTER'S UPCOMING FOOD REQUESTS

The requested food donation for the following months are:

- October - canned beans (except green beans).
- November - Shelf stable or canned evaporated milk
- December - Cookies
- January - Peanut butter

A shopping cart is in the Welcome Center to receive your donations. Your generosity is always greatly appreciated!



NURSERY VOLUNTEERS ALWAYS NEEDED

Childcare at church is an amazing gift to young families, providing a safe, fun space for small children, and enabling parents to participate in worship in our sanctuary. We are reliant on volunteers to staff the nursery and we need your help. To volunteer, please add your name to the sign-up sheet outside the Nursery, or contact Cynde Jacobus at cyndej127@gmail.com or Erin Aronson at ekernan@gmail.com or 267-210-7966. Thank you for considering this wonderful way to support young families and the mission of MPC.



REBECCA CIRCLE

Looking for a way to share faith, fun and fellowship? Come give Rebecca Circle a try! We meet in the Lounge, September through May, on the second Monday of each month at 7:00 p.m. Experience different programs each month ranging from spiritual, informative, hands on to just plain fun. Come as you are. No experience necessary. All women of MPC are welcome. For information call or text Jen Jones at 215 962-3655.

IVINS OUTREACH CENTER VOLUNTEERS NEEDED

Submitted by Beth Becker

The Ivins Outreach Center has a new Cancer Care Program and is looking for volunteers to provide assistance in driving members to medical appointments and calling to check on members, showing care and support. For more information about this opportunity to serve our community, please reach out to Beth Becker at ebecker25@comcast.net or call Beth at 215-262-1556.



SCENES FROM RALLY DAY

The halls and classrooms of MPC became abuzz with the sound of excitement and learning as Sunday School started on Rally Day, Sunday, September 8. People of all ages were involved as the new education year began.



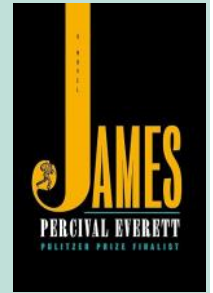
SAYING "GOODBYE" TO PASTOR RACHEL (CONTINUED)



UPCOMING SELECTIONS FOR BOOK DISCUSSION GROUP

Submitted by Shellie Stoddard

The relatively short *Sula* by Toni Morrison is the reading selection for the October 22 meeting. The suggested reading for the November 19 meeting is *James* by Percival Everett, a story about the adventures of Huckleberry Finn, told from "Jim's" perspective. Both books should be available at your local bookstore, library or online. Meetings take place in the Lounge and begin at 7:00 p.m. Please contact Shellie Stoddard at 215-510-5717 or stoddard.shellie@gmail.com with your interest and questions.



SINGERS AND RINGERS AND BEARS, OH MY!

Tim Carpenter goes to Montreat.

The Presbyterian Association of Musicians holds its yearly conference in late June at Montreat, a village nestled in the Black Mountains of western North Carolina, not far from the famed Biltmore Estate. This conference, split into two identical weeks, offers workshops and choirs for attendees from elementary school through adults and attracts musicians, pastors and families from across the country. At the dinner table one evening the states of Pennsylvania, Florida, North and South Carolinas, Kansas, and California were represented. I was the representative from Pennsylvania.



The daily schedule was this: three classes plus worship every morning, three classes and an interest/music reading session each afternoon and a concert each night. I attended daily workshops on teaching your congregation to sing without accompaniment, how to play hand drums, playing in an advanced bell choir (a joy and a terror...), a lecture series on adapting world music to western worship, participating in the reading sessions and two hours of reading in the shade and watching children play in the stream that wanders into and out of the iconic Lake Susan.

It was a good experience. It's a blessing to be exposed to new and/or different ways of doing things, talking with "church people" who may have the same joys and struggles you do, to rest and - best of all - to fully participate in worship without being in charge.

Oh, about the bears... Black Bears have made a comeback in the Black Mountains and all trash cans have been "bear proofed". If you are out and about at night and see a bear, it's best to be polite and not ask it any questions.

SPECIAL VISITORS TO MPC

On Sunday, August 18, Betty and Eric Beaverstock, from Hudson, New Hampshire, visited MPC while celebrating their 57th wedding anniversary in the area. The Beaverstocks were married in the Chapel by former pastor, Reverend Jack Roof on August 19, 1967. Betty, a former Sunday school teacher, was the daughter of Norma and Fred Johnson. After worship service, the Beaverstocks continued on their trip. We wish them many more years of happiness together and welcome them back to MPC whenever they return to the area.



SCENES FROM YOUTH IN MISSION TRIP

In July, Youth in Mission held their annual mission trip. They returned to Pipestem, WV and worked on renovations to a former school from the 1950s that now houses a community church in a nearby former coal mining town that had experienced severe flooding. Tasks included building a cement barrier to limit future water penetration, and to give the front of the building a much needed update. Other activities included enjoying the outdoors at the lake and horseback riding at the Pipestem State park. In the evenings, the group enjoyed sharing dinner responsibilities, devotional time, square dancing, playing group games, or just enjoying some downtime. The YIM team is very grateful to the many supporters within our congregation who generously support this Youth mission every year.





GROUNDING IN GRACE PICNIC

After the beginning of Sunday School, followed by worship service, on Sunday, September 8, Rally Day concluded with the Grounding in Grace picnic. The picnic was held in the recently renovated Memorial Garden where everyone enjoyed some fellowship time in the picnic-perfect weather.





COMING SOON

Sunday, November 3

- All Saints Sunday
- Anniversary Sunday Luncheon



Sunday, November 10

- Blue Jean Sunday



Sunday, November 17

- Word in Music Worship Service



Sunday, December 1

- First Sunday of Advent

Sunday, December 8

- Advent Festival



Tuesday, December 24

- Christmas Eve



Be sure to check upcoming bulletins, emails, and social media for details on these and other upcoming events at MPC. Visit mpcusa.org to sign up for emails and where to find us on Facebook and Instagram.

CONTACT US

MORRISVILLE PRESBYTERIAN CHURCH STAFF

771 North Pennsylvania Ave. | Morrisville, PA 19067 215.295.4191 | Office@MPCusa.org | www.mpcusa.org

Alexander Lester-Abdalla
Associate Pastor (ext. 225)
AlexLester-Abdalla@MPCusa.org

Timothy Carpenter
Director of Music
TimCarpenter@MPCusa.org

David Sterling
Property Manager (ext. 231)
DavidSterling@MPCusa.org

Damon Miller
Communication Coordinator
DamonMiller@MPCusa.org

Rachel Zobel
Christian Education Coordinator
RachelZobel@MPCusa.org

Kimberly Turner
Administrative Assistant (ext. 0)
Office@MPCusa.org