



# currents

Nov. - Jan. 2021/22



Advent  
Greetings!



## Pastor's Pen

Dearest friends,

I don't know if you have noticed, but there have been doves adorning our sanctuary windows since our Anniversary Sunday on November 7. These doves remind us of the Spirit of God that is alive and well and moving in our midst. Within the beaks of these doves, you'll find hearts; hearts that remind us of the love into which we have been baptized, the love that holds us fast, and the love that prepares us and sends us into the world to serve and to love. And upon these hearts, you—the saints of Morrisville Presbyterian Church—were asked to write down something or someone here at MPC that you are most grateful for. I had the privilege of looking through some of the words of gratitude written upon these hearts before they were placed in our windows and I was overwhelmed by the words you were willing to write.



Upon these hearts were words of gratitude for saints and seasons of the past, words of gratitude for the mission and ministry you witness among us today, and words of gratitude for all that God will continue to do within us and through us in the days, months, years, and decades to come. When pulled all together they tell the story of us; the story of this church. And yet, perhaps most importantly, these words of gratitude tell us a piece of the story of God and God's love; a small piece of God's story called Morrisville Presbyterian Church where God's love is felt and known and shared. Though these doves will find a new home as we prepare our sanctuary for Advent and Christmas, I want you to know that the words of gratitude written upon them will go with me wherever I go, reminding me of the

incredible life we share together at MPC. Thanks be to God for our life together! And thanks be to God that the Spirit is alive and well and always moving in our midst—for God loves us too much to leave us as we are and God is not finished with us yet! Thanks be to God for that!

With gratitude for our life together,  
Rachel



## GATHERING AND SCATTERING

Dear Priesthood of All Believers,

Worshipping on Wednesdays. Even though it is not Sunday morning in our sanctuary, I find myself having a bonus spiritual experience most Wednesdays. When I park my car in the morning MPC is buzzing with energy. There is a loving dose of chaos that I am sure God is smiling about as folks from all over our area are making the pilgrimage to our parking lot. Weekday Nursery School and Head Start students can be seen holding hands with their parents as they walk to school in our education wing. People from Trenton and Lower Bucks have lined up in their cars from our front doors to Trenton Ave. to receive food and welcoming conversation from the Food Center. The Ivins Outreach Center staff can be seen heading into their offices to do God's work in our community. And now our books carts have ballooned, becoming a portable library set up in the first couple of rows in the parking lot where volunteers, parents, students, and community members all stop by to pick up free books—a rare moment where people of different races and classes come together to enjoy free stuff. It is here where I meet toddlers impersonating T-Rexes in their greetings, where people remind me about their family member I have been praying for and that they have been praying for me, where God's blessing takes physical form in the stuff of books and maple syrup. It is a wonderful moment of worship and service on a mundane Wednesday morning.



These are some of the few pockets of faith formation and mission that I have witnessed this fall at MPC. The ever changing tide of COVID-19 has brought its challenges that we continue to work through and grow from. Yet, we have also seen the ways we have adapted to continue our church mission with COVID's limitations. On Wednesday afternoons and Sunday mornings you can see adults attend Brown Bag Bible Study and Adult Sunday School both in person and on the screen. Sunday School classes have reoriented to new rooms while the creativity and imagination have been maintained. Youth continue to gather for Youth Club to share highs and lows, grow together, and serve their community, even with masks and social distancing. The Clothing Center continues to be the best kept secret in our community providing affordable clothing while raising hundreds of dollars for our local mission causes. When I see you next I look forward to hearing the ways God has been breathing new life into our bones as a church.

I hope you will join us this Advent and winter seasons as we continue to grow in faith and service together. Carol Carpenter and Travis Keys will be leading a conversation around an Advent video series for Adult Sunday School on Sunday Mornings. Youth will lead us in an all-church caroling event on December 19 (stay tuned for more information!). The Clothing Center will have their Open House on December 11 and the Deacons will be looking for angels to donate toiletries to put underneath our Angel Tree for Food Center folks. And be on the lookout for our Advent Devotional which is a great opportunity for us to wait in hope and light for the coming of the Christ Child this Christmas season. Please call the church or email me at alexlester-abdalla@mpcusa.net if you have any questions or would like to participate in any of the above. Blessings and peace to you and our church this Advent and beyond.

Grace and Peace,  
Alex



Nancy C. Anderson celebrated 75 years as a member of MPC at the *Grounded in Gratitude* Anniversary Picnic on November 7 with her family. Nancy even participated in *Time for Young Disciples* during the worship service. Congratulations Nancy! See more pictures from the picnic on page 11.

## RAFFLE BASKET DONATION

*Submitted by Ruth Levan*

A "Count Your Blessings" basket was donated to the Family Promise of Lower Bucks organization's raffle held on October 16. Contributions from members of the Outreach Committee included Thanksgiving and autumnal decorations, food items, gift cards, as well as *Welcome to MPC* brochures. Everyone's help made the basket very desirable, valuable, attractive, and weigh 30 pounds!

To read more about the work the Outreach Committee is doing to support organizations not just in Bucks County and the surrounding area but around the globe, please turn to page 8.



## TEEN CHOIR AND GOD'S THUNDER STARTING SOON!

*Submitted by Tim Carpenter, Director of Music*



Together, let's make a joyful noise! Plans are underway for resuming Teen Choir and God's Thunder starting this coming January. Teen Choir is open to those in grade 6 and above and God's Thunder is open to grade 5 and above. Our plans are contingent on a COVID vaccine being available to these students. I am excited about this possibility and plan, have missed making music with these groups, and missed our making "a joyful noise" together in worship.

I will share more with you as these plans develop.

## CHRISTMAS ANGEL TREE

*Submitted by Patti Sheffer and Lori Newman*

We are happy to announce that the Church Angel Tree for the Christmas Holiday is back! We are once again working with the Food Center to prepare toiletry bags for the many individuals we service each week from the Lower Bucks County and greater Trenton area. The Angel Tree is in the Communication Center. We are asking anyone interested in taking an Angel from the tree to put together a 1.5 gallon Ziploc bag filled with the following items:

- A few tooth brushes
- Mouthwash - small bottle
- Bar of wrapped soap
- Deodorant (neutral scent)
- Razors
- Chapstick
- Hand lotion
- Hand sanitizer
- Mask

Ziploc bags are also available next to the tree, if needed.

A "blessing" from MPC is printed on the back of the angel and should be included inside each bag letting the recipients know that God loves them! We also know how generous our congregation is, but ask that you not include extra items in the bag. Instead, perhaps fill another bag!

The Ziploc bag can be dropped off Monday nights from 7:00 p.m. - 8:00 p.m., Tuesday mornings from 9:00 a.m. - 11:00 a.m., or before/after the Sunday worship services in the box marked "Angel Tree" in the Communication Center. We ask that all bags be delivered no later than December 28 for distribution to our Food Center clients beginning in the New Year! We are so grateful and thankful for all of you, and for all you do each year to make the Angel tree such a success!

If you have any questions, you can email Patti Sheffer at [patricia.sheffer@yahoo.com](mailto:patricia.sheffer@yahoo.com) or Lori Newman at [mne4444276@aol.com](mailto:mne4444276@aol.com).

## WELCOME NEW MEMBERS

Please extend an especially warm welcome to our New Members who joined Morrisville Presbyterian Church on Sunday, October 31 : Jane Detraz, Bill Miller, and Dave and Sandy Yantz. What a joy it is to welcome new friends into our mission and ministry here at MPC!



**Jane Detraz** has decided to come home to the church family she loves. She initially joined MPC in 1975 and was a member for 35 years. She was blessed to be a secretary at MPC for 16 years as well as the wedding coordinator, but left after the church office began downsizing in 2009. Last year she received a call asking if she would like to volunteer at the Clothing Center and the rest is history. She now volunteers and loves every minute of it! Though Jane is widowed, she feels a special connection to her husband when sitting in the pews of MPC. Jane lives in Lower Makefield and is a mother of three, grandmother of three, and great grandmother of 6. Jane is an ordained Deacon who served several terms. She loves helping people and currently enjoys making soup for the Ivins Outreach Center. She feels blessed and grateful to be back at MPC.



**Bill Miller** grew up in Haddon Heights, New Jersey and was baptized at Bethany Presbyterian Church in 1951. Bill married Laurita in 1983 and became a member of Absecon Presbyterian Church in 1997, where he was ordained as an Elder in 1998. From 1971 to 1993 Bill worked for Honeywell Inc. as a pipefitter. Bill started his own company in 1993 as a licensed contractor, designing and installing building control systems. In 2007 Bill sold the company, he and Laurita retired, and they moved to Little Torch Key, Florida where Bill became a member of Peace Covenant Presbyterian Church. Bill has been attending MPC while staying at their summer home in Yardley Borough since 2019. Bill and Laurita have now moved to Washington Crossing, PA and Bill looks forward to being an active member of Morrisville Presbyterian Church.



**Dave and Sandy Yantz** met in September 1971, while teaching at Quarry Hill Elementary School and were married at MPC in 1973. They continued to teach in the Pennsbury district for 30 plus years. Dave & Sandy have two children, Chris and Amanda, both of whom were baptized and raised at MPC. The family enjoyed 34 summers at their home on Long Beach Island. Together, they love travelling, especially cruising. Dave and Sandy are avid gardeners and Sandy is often found in the kitchen baking or candy creating. Morrisville Presbyterian Church has been a big part of their lives for many years. They have each served on boards of the church, were lead parents of Youth Club years ago, and today

they can be found making soup for the Ivins Outreach Center. "We have many treasured memories of MPC, and are anxious to return home!"

## CLOTHING CENTER'S CHRISTMAS OPEN HOUSE

*Submitted by Betsy Jurey*

Christmas is fast approaching & Santa's Elves in the MPC Clothing Center are gearing up to present you with special treasures and great savings. This year's Christmas Open House will be on Saturday, December 11 from 9:00 a.m. to Noon. Mark your calendars and we will see you all soon!



## YOUTH CORNER

*In the next couple of Currents issues we hope to hear from various youth about their experience at MPC. This season we have a brother and sister duo who answered the question "What does Youth Club mean to them?" Brandon Keys is a Junior at Pennsbury High School, as well as a veteran Youth Club member and Mission Trip participant. Bella Keys is a 6<sup>th</sup> grader at Pennsbury Middle School who has jumped right into the youth program, as this is her first year she is eligible to participate.*

### Brandon Keys

Youth Club has been a good experience for me. It has given me a chance to make new friends and has provided me with a solid support system. Both Pastor Debbie and Pastor Alex created positive opportunities—both church related and community related—for us to become involved. The Youth Club experience has helped me become a more confident teen, has given me opportunities to help others and to learn leadership skills which will help me in the future.

The Mission Trip is one of the best experiences I've had. The trip gave me a glimpse into other people's lives. It has given me a chance to be able to help people in need and to see how God works through me. I look forward to another good year at Youth Club.

### Bella Keys

This is my first year in Youth Club. I think it's fun because you get to do things that allow you to become closer to God. It has given me the opportunity to get to know the other Youth Clubbers and to become involved in ways to help our community—most recently cleaning up Williamson Park. I am looking forward to the many new experiences I will be part of this year.

## OLDER ADULT GATHERING



The Congregational Ministry Committee hosted an Older Adult Gathering on October 15.

Everyone enjoyed the beautiful weather and the chance to catch up with MPC friends.



## CHRISTMAS: BANNED IN BOSTON!

*Submitted by the Rev. Jack McAnlis, Minister of Visitation*

In the early 17th century, a wave of religious reform changed the way Christmas was celebrated in Europe. When Oliver Cromwell and his Puritan forces took over England in 1645, they vowed to rid England of decadence and, as part of their effort, cancelled Christmas. Protestant reformers (including Presbyterians) attempted to instill pious behavior prohibited displays of ostentatious or flashy behavior, and outlawed all symbols believed to be idolatrous. By popular demand, Charles II was restored to the throne and, with him, came the return of the popular holiday.

Christmas was first celebrated in the American colonies in the mid-17th century by Puritans in the northern states of New England and Pennsylvania who celebrated the birth of Jesus Christ. However, from 1659 to 1681, the celebration of Christmas was outlawed in Boston, and lawbreakers were fined five shillings. Many English customs fell out of favor after the Revolution, including the celebration of Christmas. That sentiment must have lasted for many years because Christmas was not declared a federal holiday in the United States until June 26, 1870.



### *In Loving Memory*

Our sympathy goes out to the families of those who recently passed away:

- Mary Jane Harris, on Thursday, October 14, 2021.
- Suzanne Wilson, on Friday, October 15, 2021.
- John "Jack" Wilson, on Friday, October 15, 2021.
- Ted Fletcher, on Monday, November 15, 2021.



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



### Christmas Eve Schedule

**4:00 p.m.**

Children & Family Service

**6:30 p.m.**

Lessons & Carols Service

**8:00 p.m.**

Lessons & Carols Service

**10:00 p.m.**

Christmas  
Communion Service

## OUTREACH COMMITTEE UPDATE

*Provided by Ray Hendrickson, Chairperson, MPC Outreach Committee*

*Give generously to him and do so without a grudging heart; then because of this the Lord your God will bless you in all your work and in everything you put your hand to. Deuteronomy 15:10*

Over the past year and a half, MPC has assisted over twenty organization monetarily and “hands on”! Many of these organizations are local (Habitat for Humanity of Bucks County, Family Promise and TASK), but others are not! For years, MPC has assisted the Outreach Foundation of the Tete Province in Mozambique.



**Habitat for Humanity** is a global nonprofit housing organization working in local communities across all 50 states in the U.S. and in approximately 70 countries. Habitat’s vision is of a world where everyone has a decent place to live. In our own Bucks county, *Faith Build 2021* is their project of building homes in Bristol where faith groups and congregations have come together and put their faith into action! MPC has long been one of those congregations. There are many ways and levels in which MPC has been involved – assisting at a work site, assisting at a Restore location and making substantial donations.

**Family Promise (FP) of Lower Bucks** is a non-profit organization that brings the local faith based community and social service agencies together to assist homeless families with children regain their housing and their independence. FP provides shelter, meals and comprehensive services while helping them to lasting self-sufficiency. Help includes counseling, arranging child care, transportation, budgeting, job interview skills and connections to other services including healthcare. Nearly 80% of the families mentored by FP programs nationally are enabled to return to self-sufficiency. During the COVID pandemic this organization has been extremely busy and MPC has been most generous in their support.

The **Trenton Area Soup Kitchen** mission is to feed those who are hungry in the Trenton area and offer programs to encourage self-sufficiency and improve the quality of life. They do this by:

1. Serving nutritious meals, free of charge, no questions asked to anyone who comes seeking nourishment,
2. Providing education, job training and workforce development that empowers people to pursue their hopes and dreams,
3. Providing case management, access to community resources and assistance to help neighbors in need.

Not only has MPC supported this organization financially, but many volunteers have travelled to Trenton to prepare meals and support for those in attendance.

In Mozambique's Tete Province **The Outreach Foundation** actively supports a holistic evangelism project that is transforming the lives of thousands. This ministry has helped our global partner, the Presbyterian Church of Mozambique, to establish more than 80 new congregations in the last twenty years. These churches continue reaching out to their neighbors, sharing the Gospel with those who do not know the Lord. In partnership with U.S. Presbyterians, many of these congregations have replaced their small grass structures with brick buildings. Wells, or “boreholes” as they call them, have brought clean water into many villages, positively impacting the health of all. Mr. Berry Long of this foundation shared his thoughts of this most worthwhile project to the MPC adult education class recently and thanked MPC for its long standing support!

Please contact Ray Hendrickson at 215 495-3114 or at [hrrh1453@gmail.com](mailto:hrrh1453@gmail.com) or Pastor Alex Lester-Abdalla at [alexlester-abdalla@mpcusa.net](mailto:alexlester-abdalla@mpcusa.net) should you have any questions on the above organizations or any of the other many organizations MPC has supported. Or perhaps, you have suggestions for other organizations “outside the walls of MPC”! Better yet, want to help MPC in the many opportunities of “outreaching”?



*A generous person will prosper; whoever refreshes others will be refreshed.*

Proverbs 11:25

## CONTINUING EVOLUTION OF THE BOOK DISTRIBUTION

*Submitted by Susan Light*

Thank you for the many contributions people have made to the Book Distribution. We appreciate the coloring books, bible stories, brand new toys, and many used books. The books we especially need at this time include: bibles (especially King James and NIV versions), dictionaries (especially children's versions), Harry Potter and other young adult series, cookbooks (adult and children's versions) and Spanish books for all ages. Books most frequently taken are those for young children through about the second grade. Current adult best sellers of all types are also popular.

When we resumed the Book Distribution this past summer we had to move it outside to the MPC Parking Lot because of COVID restrictions. This move has been a tremendous benefit for the Book Distribution. People now usually look at the books either before or after they pick up their food. Since they do not have to carry the books around while they are selecting food, there is no weight limit or time pressure while they select books. We distribute sturdy paper bags (purchased at Home Depot) to hold their book choices and offer our clients fresh bags whenever needed.

For display, we place books in Banker Boxes which enables us to easily sort them by categories and transport them in the back of a van efficiently. We distribute free small boxes of crayons and coloring books when possible. We bought a case of crayons at the beginning of the school year when they were only 50 cents per box. We also provide colored pencils and adult coloring books which some people find very relaxing. These items are ice breakers. They enable us to walk around to the cars and offer our wares and invite folks to consult the boxes of books. If they tell us of a special interest, we can tell them which boxes to check. The most efficient way for clients to obtain a book is to tell us what they are looking for and when we find a copy we will set it aside for them.



We noticed that books depicting only Caucasian children on their covers are ignored by our Food Center clients. These are often books published before 1962 when the first children's picture book (*The Snony Day* by Ezra Jack Keats) featuring a child of color as the main character was published. We now have a special collection of Rainbow books which depict children of all colors.

There is a great need for Spanish language books. Sometime it seems that maybe as many as 50% of the book clients speak Spanish better than they speak English. The children's books that have pictures and identifying English words next to them are especially popular. Many clients want to learn English better and probably everyone needs and wants an English-Spanish dictionary. We have a source for used dictionaries and I encourage our clients to take extras and distribute them among their friends. They are also finding that Spanish language textbooks go both ways and can help them with learning English. Probably a program to help people improve their English is a great need for our clients.

Two of our clients want bibles for their churches. We have already provided them each with about two dozen copies and I suspect they will always be able to distribute more. I suspect that a large percentage of our clients want a bible for themselves or a loved one. One of our Baltimore sources has a lot of bibles, so we take as many as we can get each time we visit. One of the Food Center volunteers heard about our bible needs and her church has offered to purchase some new Spanish language bibles for us. A great gift!

We have found two wonderful sources for free books in Baltimore: The Maryland Book Bank and The Book Thing. Their hours are limited because of COVID, but they are a wonderful source of all kinds of books. We usually make two trips a month and can find all the books we need. They are a treasure trove and we appreciate their generosity and willingness to ignore state boundaries. Their generosity has impacted our own program. We used to hate to run out of things. Now we appreciate when our clients help us with distribution by taking extra copies of bibles, dictionaries, coloring books and crayons or pencils, etc. An empty box is a beautiful sight when you know that God's gifts are on their way to people who need them.

*(continued on next page)*

## BOOK DISTRIBUTION (CONTINUED)

Our goals include making sure all our clients have copies of dictionaries, both English and Spanish if needed, bibles, and books for children and adults. We appreciate all the help the congregation provides by giving us space, resources, and encouragement. Thank you.

We hope the Book Distribution will continue to grow and expand its services. We frequently learn of new needs and new ways to distribute books to people who need and want them. This past summer, one client took books to place in a barber shop where youth are welcome to gather during the summer. We gave her all of our Harry Potters and as many other teen books as she could carry. Reading specialists would probably have some great ideas. We appreciate when we find a pile of books that have been sorted by grade level and marked. Some folks have dropped off a few brand new toys, still in their packages, that they had tucked in a closet. They go right away. I suspect that family games, perhaps used, but definitely complete, would be of interest to families. We would need an individual to be in charge of collecting and checking game donations to see if they are complete and to store and deliver them on Book Distribution days. Decks of cards can be purchased in bulk for a nominal cost (probably we all have some used, complete decks sitting around) and rules for card games are easy to print out from the web. Perhaps some of you have other ideas?

Some of you may have noticed that picture books are no longer placed on the book carts. This is because the large size of picture books makes them very difficult to move on a book cart. Since we take the book carts outside for book distributions, we now keep picture books in Banker's Boxes. We know they are a popular item for preschoolers and are not sure how to make them available for our own congregation members.

Finally, there is the issue of clutter. Sometimes people drop off books at the door or leave piles of books by the book carts. We appreciate all donations, but do not want to detract from the neatness or accessibility of the church. People who are frequently in the church and willing to move any clutter to a designated spot might be a solution to this issue. Volunteers are welcome.

We appreciate the support of the MPC Food Center in the Book Distribution adventure. Thank you. Please do not hesitate to contact me if you have any suggestions at [susanklight@gmail.com](mailto:susanklight@gmail.com).

## MPC AT YARDLEY'S HARVEST DAY

On September 18, MPC hosted a booth at Yardley's Harvest Day. The event was well attended with a number of people stopping by the booth to learn more about MPC, take a photo, or to share stories of their involvement with Youth Club and Food Center.

A huge "Thank You" to the volunteers who took a few hours out of their day to greet attendees, pass out balloons, and help spread the word, "No matter who you are or where you are on your journey of faith, please know that you are welcome at MPC!"



# GROUNDING IN GRACE PICNIC



The Congregational Ministry Committee hosted two picnics this fall. Gathering in Memorial Garden, those in attendance enjoyed a box lunch and the opportunity for fellowship with friends.



# GROUNDING IN GRATITUDE ANNIVERSARY PICNIC

# SCENES FROM RALLY DAY!



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