



currents

Fall 2022



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Pastor's Pen

Dear MPC Family,

Welcome back to a new church year! It has been such a joy to have our choir back in worship, our Sunday School classes bustling, and our sanctuary full each Sunday as we worship God together! As we have leaned into this new church year, each week in worship we have been making our way through MPC's mission statement:

*Grounded in the grace of God, we are a vibrant Christian community,
disciples of all ages, gathered for worship and nurture, scattered to serve and to love.*

For me, this has been a wonderful exploration of who we are (or who we claim to be)! It has challenged me to consider how God might be calling us to live into this mission more fully and more creatively, and it has filled me with questions about our life together: Are we as grounded in God's grace as we claim to be? Are we allowing *God* (not us) to mold and shape this vibrant Christian community? Do both long time members *and* newcomers have a place here? Why is it important that we gather for worship and nurture? And when we scatter from this place, are we going forth to serve and to love? Does this mission play a role in our life together?

These are questions that have been floating in my mind for months as we've moved toward this new church season together. But alongside these questions, I have also seen echoes of this mission being lived out each and every day we gather.

As I think about this "vibrant Christian community, disciples of all ages," I can't help but think about: children who come forward for the Time for Young Disciples; youth who gather each week for Youth Club; adults who gather for committee work, fellowship, singing, and service; and seasoned saints who remain faithfully connected through livestream and newsletters like this.

As I think about being grounded in God's grace, I am reminded that this beautiful life we have together is a gift from God! I am reminded that among us and through us God can do more than we can ever imagine or fathom. And I am reminded that if we are willing to ground ourselves in the grace of God, we cannot help but be transformed by it. Which means that in our gathering for worship and nurture and in our scattering to serve and to love, we do so with hearts open to the Lord's leading, always pointing beyond ourselves to the one in whom we place our trust.

It remains my fervent hope, friends, that we will continue to be that vibrant Christian community, grounded in the grace of God. Therefore, even as we celebrate and enjoy this beautiful life together, may we also be open to the gift and the truth that, thanks be to God, God is not finished with us yet!

With gratitude for our life together,

Rachel



BROWN BAG BIBLE STUDY - NOW THROUGH ZOOM!

Have you considered joining Bible Study but haven't wanted to jump in midstream? Have you wanted to feel more connected to the church but your work schedule makes that difficult? Now is the perfect time to join us!

On Wednesdays at noon over Zoom, we'll be taking the plunge into some of the miracles of Jesus and we hope you'll join us! Everyone is welcome, no matter how much you do or don't know about the Bible. We are learning and growing together and this one-hour Zoom Bible Study makes it possible for you to join us whether you're at home, traveling, or on your lunch break at work!

Following our Bible Study, you are also welcome to stay for our weekly prayer meeting that meets for about 15-20 minutes. If you can carve out an hour of your week to study God's word among friends, and would like to attend Brown Bag & Bible Study (or are at least interested enough to check it out for a couple of weeks), contact Pastor Rachel at rachelrhodes@mpcusa.net. We'd love for you to join us!

END OF YEAR REFLECTIONS

Dear Priesthood of All Believers,

You would probably miss it if you drove by it. It is a simple box on the side of the road, propped up by a two-by-four wooden pole. Written on the front of the box is the word "Blessing." When you open the little door to the box you might find remnants of a small act of kindness: powdered milk, tonic water, tissues. So why are twenty people in tie-die shirts surrounding this seemingly unimportant blessing box on a mountaintop in Pipestem, West Virginia? Because God is doing something powerful.

This summer youth and adults from your church traveled to Pipestem, West Virginia for our annual Youth In Mission Trip. We were sent to work on a home. We painted walls. We caked windows. We hammered in siding. But, over the course of the week we realized our work was larger than the projects we were completing with our hands. We heard stories from the staff at the Folklife Center about why we were working on this particular house. A longtime nurse had been diagnosed with MS and could not afford to paint her house with the brilliant yellow and blue that she grew up with in her own childhood home. When the house was finished, a woman and a group of volunteers are transformed in a small, but not insignificant way. Throughout our week working on this home we caught a glimpse of the work God was doing: youth found their inner-voice when working with power tools, adults reawakened to their inner-child when unencumbered with the stresses of daily life, a church humbled to realize they were receiving much more than they were giving when serving in this way.

On the last day, we made sure to stop by the local blessing box around the corner from the Folklife Center on our way out of town. We placed items from the dollar store in this simple structure, along with words of encouragement and gratitude scribbled on notecards. We huddled around this blessing box in our MPC t-shirts probably looking like fish out of water. But that is what this world needs. Places like the Folklife Center that pull us out of the monotony of everyday life and the pessimism of our time. People who travel to far-away places to offer glimpses of hope. A God who blesses through the work and life of everyday people.

As this church year begins, we seek to recognize the blessing of God in our life together at MPC. Sunday School classes of all ages will return to in-person learning this fall and there is a spot for you to grow in faith as a teacher or a student. Adult retreats, young adult gatherings, and fellowship hours are returning so we can take a deep breath and enjoy life with one another. Youth Club will continue to gather for games, comradery, and service as we seek to create a space where young people can thrive. Our session is discerning how our church can be a better neighbor in Morrisville, as we build on the wonderful work of our Centers and our relationship with Ivin's Outreach ministry. For indeed we are blessed with the energy and depth of the Holy Spirit as we look around the many activities of our church. I hope you will join us, because we will be even more blessed with your presence.

Grace and Peace,

Alex



For more on the Youth in Mission Trip 2022, see pages 6-7.

OUR CHURCH FAMILY

In Loving Memory

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

- Nancy C. Anderson,
on Monday, August 15, 2022.

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



2022 BACKPACK DRIVE

Submitted by Lori Newman, Patti Sheffer and Jen Jones

We would like to take the opportunity to thank those in the congregation who filled backpacks or donated money to this year's backpack drive! It was an incredible success! We as a congregation donated over sixty backpacks filled with spiral notebooks, pocket folders, pens, pencils, binders, subject dividers, rulers, dictionaries, highlighters, and weekly planners! We also included a special Blessing card letting the students know that God loves them! The Ivins Outreach Center will distribute the backpacks to high school students in Morrisville, Bensalem, and Bristol. We couldn't be happier that so many of these students will get to start the school year off with the necessary tools to make their year successful! Again, thank you so much for your generosity!



SACRAMENT OF BAPTISM

Evangeline Ann Ackerman received the sacrament of baptism during the August 14 worship service. Evangeline is the daughter of Chad and Kristin Ackerman.



Bryce Matthew Wood received the sacrament of baptism during the September 25 worship service. Bryce is the son of Andrea and Jeremy Wood.



Please join us in welcoming the newest members of Christ's church.

THANK YOU!

The Anderson Family would like to express our deepest gratitude to our dear church family for the beautiful sympathy cards and heartfelt-messages we have received since Nancy Sr's death. We are touched by the kindness, love, and support shown to us during this time of grief and sorrow.

Roger and Nancy Anderson

Thank you for everyone's prayers and sympathy cards upon the death of my mother. I also appreciated the flowers from the Flower Ministry, as they not only helped brighten the house, but served as a reminder of the love and support of the MPC family during difficult times.

Damon Miller

MEET OUR NEW PASTORAL INTERN - TORI PAQUETTE

We are delighted to welcome Tori Paquette (they/them), our new pastoral intern from Princeton Seminary, for the 2022-2023 academic year. Tori is passionate about the church and excited to learn more about ministry alongside the saints of MPC. Throughout the year you can expect to see Tori in our education classrooms, in worship, at the Food Center, on pastoral visits, and regularly participating in the life of the church. You can learn more about Tori below.

Hi Morrisville Presbyterian Church!

My name is Tori Paquette, and I'm the new intern for 2022-23. I'm so looking forward to meeting you all in person and getting to know your community.

Things you might want to know about me: I'm in my third year of the Master of Divinity program at Princeton Theological Seminary. Before Princeton, I got a B.A. in Jewish Studies at Colby College in Maine, where much of my family is from. Jewish Studies helped me dip my toe into theology, biblical interpretation, liturgical traditions, and religious community, which eventually landed me on this path to ministry.

After I graduate in the spring, I'm hoping to pursue work as a solo pastor in a small congregation. I'm particularly interested in community-building and how we can build relationships across lines of difference (whether those be socioeconomic, racial, political, etc.). I hope this kind of collaboration can help us work together to build just and flourishing communities.

Last year, I worked as an intern for the Hopewell Council of Churches, which equipped me to think about ecumenical community but still left room for me to grow in specifically Presbyterian ministry. For all these reasons, I'm excited to learn from your community and the unique connection that your congregation has to Morrisville. Thank you for giving me room to both teach and learn with you over the course of this next year!

Best,
Tori
(they/ them)



WHAT'S COMING UP?

Sunday, October 16

Reception of New Members during Worship

Sunday, October 23

Stewardship Dedication

Sunday, October 30

All Saints Day

Anniversary Sunday & Luncheon

Sunday, November 6

Mission Sunday

Sunday, November 13

The Word in Music Worship Service

Blue Jean Sunday (rain date Nov. 20)

Sunday, November 27

First Sunday of Advent

Watch for more information in the worship bulletins and weekly emails in the coming weeks.

JOIN REBECCA CIRCLE

All women of MPC are invited to become part of Rebecca Circle. Gather with friends, new and old, once each month for fellowship and a program. Topics include religion, spirituality, self-help, information, local trips and fun.

Join this active, supportive and joyous group of sisters in Christ on the second Mondays of the month now through May, at 7:00 p.m. in the Lounge. For information, contact Jen Jones 215 962-3655.



REFLECTIONS ON YOUTH IN MISSION TRIP 2022

Submitted by Sarah Cain

When I was first invited to this mission trip by Mr. Dan, I was a bit nervous. I didn't know any of the kids on the trip and this was my first mission trip, so I didn't know what to expect. While I was packing for the trip I was doubting whether I wanted to go or not. Whether I would be able to make friends or grow through this experience.

A way I made friends was on the worksite itself. The homeowner of the house we worked on is a retired nurse who dedicated her life to serving others, but she recently retired due to health issues. Even now, she spends her time volunteering at youth camps. She needed our help for projects around the house which would not have been completed without us. We scraped paint, replaced rotten boards, fixed cracks, and painted the house and shutters.

Working as a team on the worksite forced me to talk to people who I probably would not have talked to otherwise which helped me create new friends. I was surprised about how welcoming and friendly everyone who went on the mission trip was. I felt a sense of community and felt that I had people who were there for me. Working on the worksite also gave me a new perspective of what hard work can accomplish and how rewarding the result can be. I learned to challenge myself in a way I didn't know I could. I built confidence in myself and reached new heights quite literally by climbing thirty-foot ladders.

Every morning I would wake up early to watch the sunrise with some of my friends that I had made. I usually am not a morning person; however while I was on this trip I looked forward to waking up at 5:00 a.m. every morning to watch the sunrise. I just felt at peace as I would watch the sun rise above the horizon. Something about being outside in nature made me forget all of my stresses and made me feel relaxed. I felt God's presence while I sat on top of the mountain waiting for the sun to come up.

All together this mission trip has brought me closer to friends I never knew I would meet and gave me a new perspective on hard work. I truly feel blessed to have had the opportunity to go on this mission trip and I feel like it's a blessing to help people with their houses while having a great time with new friends. To be honest I thought this mission trip would only be about the worksite and helping others. While that was a major part of the trip, I soon realized that I also made new friends and learned from this incredible experience.

Submitted by Lizzie Stoner

My oldest sibling had gone on her first mission trip twelve years ago. I was five years old. She continued to go on the next four trips and my brother followed shortly behind. I grew up knowing nothing about the trip except for that I would eventually go on it. Now that I've concluded my third pilgrimage to West Virginia, building porches and painting houses in these small mountain communities has become normal.

There are some things that you can expect every year; square dancing, the menu, lunch time naps, overwhelming emotion. But there are also things that you can't predict: the bonds you make with people you've only known for one day; the intensity of the work we do. But something that is sure to change every year is the theme for the week.



REFLECTIONS (CONTINUED)

The theme this week was blessings. We talked about what a blessing means to us. We said a blessing is a gift. A blessing is light. Warmth. Protection. Guidance. Love. We were told to look out for moments where we were blessed and moments where we were blessings. The answers seem simple: I am a blessing for helping to improve a stranger's life and I have been blessed by everyone on the trip and the experience as a whole. But I wanted to dig deeper.

Throughout the week I tried to keep an eye out for moments where I really felt like I had blessed someone. It was hard. We were not able to meet the owner of the home that most of us spent all week at. To not see the appreciation on the face of the person we were helping made it difficult to feel like I had actually been a blessing at all. So, on our last day we finished early and packed up to leave. While most people left the original worksite to visit a second project we had been working on, a few of us stayed behind for some quick finishing touches. On our way back to the folk life center, we decided to take a pit-stop at a local stained glass store. The store was no larger than a single car garage and doubled as a work shop for one elderly man who sat in his rocking chair watching through his window the river flow by. Next to him was a woman who stood up quickly to greet us. She asked us where we are from and why our legs and hands were covered in paint. We told her we are from Morrisville, Pennsylvania and we were just painting a house. She was overjoyed to hear that we were from so far away and urged us to take a look around and sign the guest book.

We were admiring the impressive pieces of art when she finally asked "why are you here?" So we told her we are part of a church that comes to West Virginia every year and dedicates a week of hard work to improving homes around Pipestem. Upon hearing that, she began telling us about a litter of cats that she needed homes for. We said "No, no, no sorry. We can't take any animals home." But then she pulled out three small stained glass kittens and invited us to take our pick. She told us that we have to take them home, clean them, and name them and if we don't then we have to bring them back. She heard our story and was so touched by our efforts that she wanted to give us each a gift. This was a true blessing.

It was a blessing because it reminded me of how special and important this trip really is. And she helped me figure out the theme. It really is that simple. The youth in mission are all blessings because what we do on this trip not only impacts the homeowners but their neighbors who lend us tools and watch us work. And their extended family who check in on us and look out for the homeowner. It impacts friends of the homeowners who know how badly some folks need help. And it affects strangers who live in the towns we work in. Strangers who have no context and no obligation to us. These people feel truly and utterly blessed by our presence in their small town. I will cherish my glass cat forever as a reminder that often times where blessings are given, blessings are received. And I finally decided on a name for the cat: Grace.



FLOWER MINISTRY

If you would like to donate flowers for any Sunday worship service throughout the year, please contact DeeAnn Martin at 215-493-3865 or deemar918@aol.com. Flowers may be given in memory of a loved one, in celebration of a special occasion (graduations, weddings, anniversaries, a new baby...), or in gratitude for a ministry or act of kindness. Each arrangement is \$30. The flowers you give not only add beauty to our Sunday services, but provide a caring ministry delivered to members who are unable to attend worship or are experiencing difficult times.

FELLOWSHIP HOUR

Please join us for a time of fellowship and light refreshments, with an extra element, following Sunday services. Each host committee will have an educational table to share information about its mission and activities. Please come, visit, enjoy a light snack, and stop by to hear and learn more about our host group.



SESSION RETREAT



The MPC Session spent a wonderful Saturday praying and dreaming about all that God might do in us and through us in the year to come! Be sure to ask a Session member about this day-long retreat!



PRAYERS AND SUPPORT FOR UKRAINE

Submitted by Ray Hendrickson

Our thoughts and prayers continue to be with our sisters and brothers of Christ in Ukraine. The baskets labelled "Ukraine Relief Fund" are no longer being placed in the sanctuary, but your monetary support through the [online portal](#) or Sunday offering plate is so very welcome. Gifts received are given to the [Presbytery Disaster Assistance](#) (PDA), designated for Ukraine.

To learn more about how the Presbyterian Mission is helping Ukraine, and in other parts of the world, visit presbyterianmission.org.



CPR CLASS OFFERED

A CPR and First Aid certification class will be sponsored by the Board of Deacons and offered to anyone interested on Saturday November 5 at 9:30 a.m. It will run approximately three hours and the cost is \$65.00 payable by cash or check on the day of class. Preregistration is required by October 30. Please contact Joy Rees at reesfam5@yahoo.com (215-280-4999) or Ruth Levan at jlevan4@verizon.net (267-808-0945) if interested.



YOUTH CLUB IS BACK!

Calling all youth of the church! Youth Club is back for food, fellowship, and faith. This year we will be gathering on most Wednesday nights from 6:00-7:30 p.m. and dinner will be provided! We usually meet in Fellowship Hall with other locations announced in advance.

Youth Club is open to all 6th through 12th graders. The club is a great way for our youth to be with one another in a safe and welcoming environment as we seek to connect with one another and connect with God. Please contact Pastor Alex by calling 215-295-4191 or emailing to alexlester-abdalla@mpcusa.net for more information regarding Youth Club. We hope you will join us!

CLOTHING CENTER REOPENS

The [MPC Clothing Center](#) has reopened for their new season. The center, located in the basement level of the church, is open every Thursday from 10:00 a.m. to 2:00 p.m. They are now accepting clean fall and winter clothing, small appliances, and any other treasures you wish to donate. Please note we do not accept school textbooks, college SAT practice books, or encyclopedias. Due to space limitations, spring and summer clothing is also not being accepted at this time.



Donations can be left any day, except Wednesday, at the basement level by the elevator. Please do not leave donations outside.

Mark your calendar!

In addition to the usual open hours, the Clothing Center will be holding their Annual Christmas Open House on Saturday, December 10, from 9:00 a.m. to noon, when you'll be able to come and shop for those last-minute gifts and outfits.



Come and join us throughout the year as we open our doors again to raise funds for MPC-supported outreach.

www.mpcusa.org

GROUNDING IN GRACE PICNIC



The annual Grounding in Grace picnic was held on September 18 outside the Main Entrance. It was a beautiful day filled with fellowship and food.

FOCUS ON OUTREACH: MPC FOOD CENTER

Written by Damon Miller

"It seems to me that in these moments, God supplies us with this blessing," said Yulizu as she waited in a line of cars that stretched from the portico to Trenton Avenue to receive her month's allotment of food from the [MPC Food Center](#). Since 1997, the Food Center has been providing this blessing of "supplemental food assistance to families in Lower Bucks County and the Trenton area," according to the [2022 MPC Annual Report](#). And the need keeps growing. Over 740 of the 6,600 clients fed in the past twelve months were new families, like Garfield who sat in line with his wife and infant daughter. New to the area, they came to the Food Center in search of assistance from the number of volunteers who pack and distribute food each week. Others have become familiar faces. Tiffany said, "I have been coming here to the Food Center for me and my family and it has been a blessing," as she is greeted with a warm smile from volunteers checking-in clients.

The volunteers do more than just load food into the cars. They spend time with the clients, talking with them so they feel welcomed, and even sharing a laugh. "They are the best. They are good with us because we need it and they treat us like human beings, all of them," said Martha after her car was loaded. This day, pastoral intern, Tori Paquette, was talking with the clients as they were waiting to receive food from a number of local sources including Philabundance, Giant, McCaffrey's, and Bucks County Opportunity Council, to name a few. The first Wednesday of the month, weather permitting, clients also have the opportunity to pick free books for themselves.

Noted in the 2022 MPC Annual Report, total expenses in 2021 for the Food Center were \$111,156 with most of the money coming from individual donations, churches, organizations, and businesses. Estimated worth of the food given out would equal four times that amount if clients had to purchase the food in a grocery store, which has been made even more difficult with inflation costs. Raphino, unable to work due to his health, is grateful for the assistance.

The Food Center relies on volunteers to keep its operations going. Along with checking-in clients and distributing food to them, there is a need to pack bags, receive deliveries, pick up donations, and direct traffic. Volunteers can sign up each month on the Food Center website, mpcusa.org/food-center. Donations of food and money are also welcomed. Please check the website for hours when food donations are accepted. Monetary donations may be given through the Online Giving Portal at mpcusa.org/give or by mailing to Food Center at MPC, 771 N. Pennsylvania Ave., Morrisville, PA 19067. If you have any questions, please email MPCfoodcenter@gmail.com.

The line of cars seems to never end along with the hardships causing that line. The unwavering smiles from the volunteers greet each client followed with a "Have a good day" as they leave. Next week, a new line will be there again for many reasons, but some as simple as John's. "I need it. I have nothing," he says as he walks back home carrying his food.



RALLY DAY

The first day of Sunday School for all ages, Rally Day, was on September 11 as MPC began a new year of education. Sunday School starts at 9:30 a.m. each week. Posters around the church list where each room the age appropriate learning is taking place. Be sure to look in the worship bulletins and weekly emails for upcoming topics in Adult Education.



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