



currents

Winter 2022

O come, let us adore him



Photo provided by Rev. Jack McAnlis

See page 2 for Christmas Eve and Christmas Day worship schedule.

Visit us at mpcusa.org



Pastor's Pen

Dear MPC Family,

One of the unique joys of being a pastor in the PCUSA is that we are gifted time and resources to continue our education. Each year, pastors are granted two weeks of "Continuing Education," in order to pursue opportunities for growth, education, and renewal. In the fall of 2019, I was selected to be a part of the Zick Scholars Program, a program focused exclusively on the task of preaching. This program is privately funded by the generosity of Cathy & George Manning, who began the program in memory of Cathy's parents, John and Mary Zick. And alongside five other pastors from around the country, together we have sought to pursue excellence in preaching, learning from experts in the field and from one another. Our cohort facilitator is the Rev. Dr. Tom Tewell, who some of you may remember because Tom came to lead a Session Retreat for us back in January of 2018. Tom was in pastoral leadership for over forty years, serving in churches around the country and most recently serving as the senior pastor of Fifth Avenue Presbyterian Church in New York City. Since that time, he founded the Macedonian Ministry Foundation, and in his retirement now serves as a pastoral and leadership consultant for pastors all around the country. Tom is a gifted preacher and teacher, and it has been wonderful to work with him in the Zick Scholars Program.



I share all this with you because I always want you to know the kinds of things I am pursuing when I am away for continuing education. But I also want you to know a little bit more about this program as we enter the season of Advent. Why? Because my friends and colleagues in the Zick Scholars Program are uniquely contributing to our worship and educational life this Advent. Together, we are working our way through Advent, challenging each other in preaching and benefiting from the gifts and insight of the Rev. Dr. Luke Powery (Dean of the Chapel at Duke University), who has consulted with our group on a number of occasions. You can read more about these Advent plans on page 4 of this issue of Currents.

But for now, I hope you will join me in celebrating the connectional church in which we dwell. When we have so many of our own traditions and celebrations (especially during Advent & Christmas), it's easy to forget the vast number of churches and congregations who also journey through Advent alongside us. But in this particular year, we will not only have companions on the journey, we will have five other churches committed to praying for us and for our worship life this season. Five other congregations (from all over the country) who will be giving thanks this Advent for Morrisville Presbyterian Church. I hope you will join me this Advent season in praying for each of these congregations, and I also pray that the Spirit will move through our collective witness this season in beautiful and powerful ways.

With gratitude for our life together,
Rachel



Christmas Eve Worship Services

4:00 p.m. ~ Children & Family Service

7:00 p.m. ~ Choirs, Carols & Candlelight Service

The 7:00 p.m. service will be livestreamed.

10:00 p.m. ~ Carols, Communion, & Candlelight Service

**Then join us on Christmas Day at 10:30 a.m.
as we celebrate the birth of our Lord.**

GAINING MOMENTUM TOWARD THE FUTURE

Dear Priesthood of All Believers,

Much to my surprise, he pauses. “Well I just moved upstairs.” “Oh. That’s a big deal,” I replied, “Do you like being upstairs now?” Seeing that he wasn’t brimming with enthusiasm about the new move, I changed tactics: “Moving classes can be hard. Do you miss your old class?” “Yes,” he admits. “But we celebrated my friend’s birthday yesterday! There were donuts! And I got gummies!” My conversation partner finally beams when telling me this, then he darts off to the playground as our dialogue is brought to a fittingly abrupt end.

This brief conversation was a personal highlight of mine during our Grounded in Grace picnic this last September. On face value, it might seem simple or insignificant that I discussed graduating from one pre-school class to another with a child of the church as they stared intently at their Rita’s water ice. But for the past few years, these kind of interactions have been few and far between. With the many different chapters of the pandemic, it has been hard to build momentum around gathering in the many ministries of our church across all ages. I am not sure if you have noticed, but during this fall something has changed.

Much to my surprise, Sunday School rooms have filled larger than expected. More kids are scurrying down to Time for Young Disciples and are eager to sing with Tim at Time for Music. Adult Sunday School has been brought back to the conference room. New groups have gathered to discern the church’s relationship to racism. Youth Club returned to our weekly meals. We even have had a Men’s Retreat and restarted some Men’s Ministry gatherings. Like a clutch play in the dying moments of a game, the momentum has shifted. People are able to gather more freely in faithful study, fellowship, and service; and it feels great. The work of Sunday school teachers, committee members, and faithful volunteers are paying off as we see tons of smiles in the church and hear echoes of voices in the hallways. We give thanks to God for the ability to gather for worship and nurture.

So now what? With this new found momentum, I have been wondering what church will my Rita’s eating, four year old conversation partner inherit when he is older? I have been asking myself the question, “Are we maintaining an institution, or are we making disciples?” While we have been hurt by the ways the pandemic has impacted our church these past few years, I have seen blessings of resurrection amidst the ashes. There was a recentering on what was most important and emerging abilities as we were forced to create something new. So, there is an invitation before us to marry our new momentum with the core of the Gospel: to love of our God and to love of our neighbor. As long as this principal is at the center of what we keep doing, a future vision of the church will begin to develop.

While my impulse has been to bring people back into our church walls, our session has been going out into the community to listen and learn how we can be better neighbors in Morrisville. Separate committees have been using our new found skills of flexibility and collaboration to host new events at Snipes Farm and the local brewery in town. We even inaugurated our first Mission Sunday where congregation members shared testimonies of where they see God acting in the mission activity of MPC.

In all these things, and in so much more, I have seen moments of momentum for which to give deep thanks, and exciting pockets of vision for the future of this church. So I hope you will join us, however you feel called, to follow Jesus Christ in this way as we seek to make disciples of all ages and love our God and our neighbor here in Morrisville.

Grace and Peace,

Alex



2022 CHRISTMAS ANGEL TREE

Submitted by Patti Sheffer

The Deacons are happy to announce we will be bringing back the Church Angel Tree for the Christmas Holiday! We are once again working with the Food Center to prepare toiletry bags for the many individuals we serve each week from the Lower Bucks County and greater Trenton area. We are asking anyone interested in taking an Angel from the tree, to fill a one-gallon Ziplock bag with the following items:

- 2 Toothpastes (regular size)
- 2 Toothbrushes
- 2 Bars of Wrapped Soap (neutral scent)
- 2 Deodorants (neutral scent)

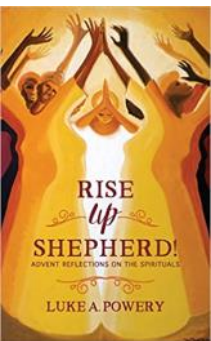
A "blessing" from MPC is printed on one side of each Angel, the item list printed on the other side. Please include the Angel in each Ziplock bag with the items. We know how generous our congregation is, and ask that you not include extra items; instead, perhaps fill another bag.

Bags 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 service in the box marked "Angel Tree" in the Communication Center. We ask that all bags be delivered no later than December 27, for distribution to our Food Center clients beginning in the New Year! We are so grateful and thankful to all of you, and for all you do each year to make our Christmas Angel Tree such a success!



If you have any questions, please email Patti Sheffer at patricia.sheffer@yahoo.com.

ADVENT SERMON SERIES, *RISE UP SHEPHERD!*



Submitted by Pastor Rachel Rhodes

We have a unique opportunity this Advent! As part of the Zick Preaching Scholars, Rachel has joined with pastors from five other Presbyterian congregations to put together an Advent series for 2022. These pastors serve congregations in California, Pennsylvania, Tennessee, Virginia, and Wisconsin. Each of the pastors will be sharing in the planning and writing of liturgy for the Sundays, and the group has contracted the Rev. Dr. Luke Powery, Dean of the Chapel at Duke University, to provide a series of study videos that we will be incorporating into our Advent Adult Education Series. Additionally, we will be using Dr. Powery's Advent Devotional, *Rise Up Shepherd! Advent Reflections on the Spirituals*, as a guide for personal spiritual reflection. Copies will be available in the Communication Center.

The Zick Preaching Scholars is a program sponsored by George and Cathy Manning in memory of her parents John and Mary Zick, longtime members of the Fifth Avenue Presbyterian Church in New York City. The group is facilitated by former Fifth Avenue senior pastor, the Rev. Dr. Tom Tewell.

Members of this cohort include:

- The Rev. Dr. Jay Howell, Sequoyah Hills Presbyterian Church, Knoxville, Tennessee
- The Rev. Dr. Andy Morgan, Fountain City Presbyterian Church, Knoxville, Tennessee
- The Rev. Dr. Jessica Patchett, Christ Presbyterian Church, Madison, Wisconsin
- The Rev. Rachel Achtemeier Rhodes, Morrisville Presbyterian Church, Morrisville, Pennsylvania
- The Rev. Jessica Vaughan-Lower, San Marino Community Church, San Marino, California
- The Rev. Andrew Whaley, Raleigh Court Presbyterian Church, Roanoke, Virginia

HOLIDAYS, "HOLY DAYS," AND "GOOD DAYS"

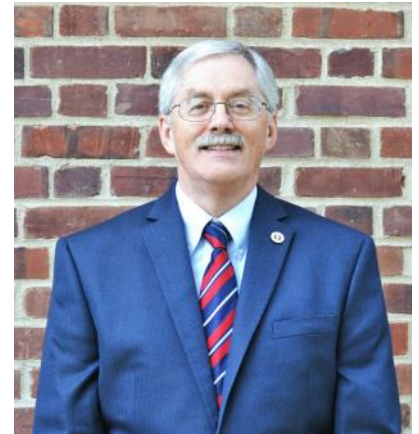
Submitted by Rev. Jack McAnlis, Minister of Visitation

The “holidays” are here! My dictionary defines “holiday” as “a day of freedom from work.” That definition did not come from a farmer! Having grown up on a farm, my “holiday” was a few hours between rounds of chores and after they were all finished.

My dictionary also defines “holiday” as “a day set aside for special religious observance.” I would like to call that a “holy day.” As we come to the end of the calendar year, we have Thanksgiving and Christmas, both of which I would like to characterize as “holy days.” They are primarily times of acknowledging the presence of God in our lives and celebrating divine deliverance, providence, and grace. But often, these holidays are more closely aligned with the secular festivities of eating, football, family, and gifts.

The word “holiday” is scarcely mentioned in the Bible. Of course, the Hebrews had and continue to have special Jewish days for making sacrifices and for religious observances, such as Passover. The Hebrew words literally mean “a good day.” The biblical reference is in the Book of Esther referring to the feast of Purim celebrating deliverance from Israel’s enemies. It was a happy or festal day that gave expression through games, merriment, noisemaking, and “playing mummers.” Sounds like New Year’s Day! That is coming, too!

Whatever the nature of your holidays, may they include remembering the “Giver” of all life and the feast. Spending time to reflect on God’s goodness and expressing gratitude for it, infuses an element of what is “holy” into any day and can make it “good.”



BOY SCOUT TREE SALE

Troop 3's annual Christmas Tree sale has opened! We are thankful for each of you that has let our Scouts be part of your family's Christmas tradition, and look forward to welcoming you back this year. Sale hours are: weekdays 6:00 p.m. - 9:00 p.m., Saturdays 9:00 a.m. - 9:00 p.m., Sundays 10:00 a.m. - 9:00 p.m.



MPC Clothing Center Open House

Saturday, December 10, 2022

9:00 a.m. - 12:00 p.m.

Room 4, near Fellowship Hall

Come and do some shopping.

See you there!

OUR CHURCH FAMILY

In Loving Memory

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

- Jamil ("Jim") Faridy
on Wednesday, October 5, 2022.

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



WOMENS' RETREAT

Submitted by Beth Curtiss

The Women's Retreat is taking place on February 24 - 26 and will be held at the Pendle Hill Quaker Retreat Center in Wallingford, PA. The presenter is Pastor Diane Jamison Fitch who will lead us in study on the topic *Transitions: Invitations to New Beginnings* based on Isaiah 43:18-19. Look for the pink brochures to register or call the church office at 215-295-4191.

2023 OFFERING ENVELOPES

Submitted by Laurie Jacobson

Offering envelopes will be available in the Communication Center starting Sunday, December 18. If you would like them mailed, please contact Laurie at the church office and she will send them to you. Please note that envelopes will not be given to those who have signed up for online giving.

MEN'S MINISTRY RETURNS

It has taken us a couple of years, but the men of MPC are getting back together for fellowship and community. This is a casual gathering to watch a Thursday night football game, share in conversation, and at halftime Pastor Alex raises a question for people to discuss. If you are able, you are invited to bring a beverage and a small appetizer so we can all share the burden of food and fellowship. Festivities begin at 8 pm and feel free to come whenever works for you since the choir contingent will be arriving after practice. Please contact Pastor Alex at alexlester-abdalla@mpcusa.net if you are interested in learning more about this fellowship opportunity.

CHRISTMAS FAMILY CHORUS

Submitted by Tim Carpenter, Director of Music

Sing with the Family Choir on Christmas Eve! The yearly Family Choir, composed of the Chancel Choir, Teen Choir, their families and everyone who likes to sing is invited to be part of this choir. We will rehearse for 30 minutes in the sanctuary immediately after worship on December 4, 11, 18, and prior to the 7:00 p.m. Christmas Eve service. Make a joyful noise to the Lord!



YEAR END GIVING

Submitted by Laurie Jacobson

Thank you for your continued generosity and support throughout this year. To ensure that your gifts appear on your 2022 giving statement for tax purposes, please make sure all gifts are post-marked, delivered to MPC, or given online by December 31, 2022.

Visit mpcusa.org:

- Livestream of worship services
- Videos of past worship services
- Link to podcasts
- Weekly worship service bulletin
- Sign up for email blasts
- Congregational life within MPC
- Mission and outreach of MPC
- Calendar
- Online giving portal

WELCOME TO OUR NEW MEMBERS

Please extend an especially warm welcome to our New Members who joined Morrisville Presbyterian Church on October 16: Karla Jones and Richard Ryan. What a joy it is to welcome new friends into our mission and ministry here at MPC!



Karla Jones was born and raised in Wilmington, Delaware, with her parents, siblings, and extended family. After high school, Karla graduated from Goldey Beacom College and Indiana University of Pennsylvania and worked in the business district of Wilmington. Several years later, Karla would complete her Master's Degree in Education with a certification in Secondary School Counseling from West Chester University. In June 2022, Karla retired from Bristol Township School District, earning Library Science and Instructional Technology certificates from Arcadia and Clarion Universities. She is now exploring virtual part-time employment from her home in Langhorne. It was around December 2020 that Karla found MPC by attending church virtually as we all navigated COVID. Today, she enjoys attending church in person, facilitates our virtual Fellowship Group, attends Rebecca Circle and the Brown Bag & Bible, and has coordinated other church outings. Karla is enjoying spending time with her friends in person again and looks forward to getting to know everyone at MPC.



Rich Ryan lives in Yardley with his wife Mary. He was a longtime member of Covenant Presbyterian Church in Trenton, NJ, where he served as a deacon and on several committees. Rich was born and raised in Ewing NJ, and has a fraternal twin brother Lory who is a pastor at Christ Presbyterian Church in Marlton NJ. He recently retired from Janssen Pharmaceutical R&D, where he worked as a Discovery Scientist in Neuroscience/Analgesics and later as a Principal Regulatory Medical Writer in Clinical Oncology. Rich attended Ewing High School, Susquehanna University and Temple University School of Medicine. He completed his postdoctoral fellowship at the National Institutes of Health. Rich enjoys spending time with his retired racing greyhounds Dora and Mick, fly fishing, CrossFit, shooting sports, watching motorsports, and traveling. He is looking forward to becoming part of the MPC family, and discerning God's role for him as part of the church community.

ONLINE FELLOWSHIP TIME

Submitted by Karla Jones

Did you know that each Sunday afternoon starting at 12:30 p.m., several church members meet via Zoom to check in, share ideas and have a few laughs? We meet for about forty minutes, and you can log on when you are available. If you attend church remotely, are a snowbird and go to a warmer climate during the winter season, or want to share some fellowship time with welcoming and caring church members, please email Karla Jones at kmdjones@verizon.net of your interest. She will add you to the email listing to receive the Zoom link.



SMALL GROUP BOOK DISCUSSION

Submitted by Shellie Stoddard

Small Group Book Discussions are another opportunity to explore history, literature and social topics with our church community. Our selected books and schedule of discussions through June 2023 is as follows:

- January 10 (second Tuesday) and Feb 7: *Putin's World: Russia Against the West and the Rest*, Angela Stent (2019, 448 pgs) Foreign policy and current events, Russian history and foundation of current international relationships.
- March 7: *The Personal Librarian*, Heather Terrell and Victoria Christopher Murray (2021, 341 pgs) Historical fiction about the personal librarian to JP Morgan and first director of the Morgan Library and Museum who must hide her true identity as a black woman who passes as white.
- May 2: *Shadow of the Silk Road*, Colin Thubron (2007, 384 pgs) Author records traveling earth's greatest land route: China to central Asia, Afghanistan, Iran, and Turkey. Traveling by local bus, truck, car, donkey cart and camel, he traces trade and armies as well as ideas, religions and inventions.
- June 6: *The Kite Runner*, Khalid Hosseini (2004, 371 pgs) Fiction. Check your bookshelf--you may have read this one previously. Now on banned book lists, this is a rich story of 1970s Afghanistan.

Please pick up books at your favorite bookshop or public library. For more information, contact Shellie Stoddard at stoddard.shellie@gmail.com.

BLUE JEAN SUNDAY

Thank you to the Blue Jean Sunday crew for all of their work last week. Volunteers helped clean the Sanctuary, Fellowship Hall and the kitchen as well as removing leaves from around the building. Please take a moment to thank Property Manager David Sterling for his efforts in coordinating this event and all he does in the life of this church.



HELPING YOUNG READERS

Submitted by Wanda Webster Stansbury, Executive Director, CCFA

The Center for Child and Family Achievement's (CCFA) 8th Annual "Books & Treats" was held at the Jefferson Intermediate School and Wilson Homes recently. Over 600 books were donated by Morrisville Presbyterian Church and Trenton Free Public Library. Students at Jefferson School were given a bundle of four books each, to inspire reading, home libraries, and promote school attendance.



REFERENCE BOOKS NEEDED

Submitted by Susan Light

The Jefferson Elementary School in Trenton has asked the Book Distribution to provide dictionaries for their 400 families. Adult and children's dictionaries and thesauruses are very useful for families and students. Please place your donations in the plastic box next to the book carts near the Lounge.

So far the Book Distribution has donated forty-six hardcover and twelve paperback adult dictionaries. The Reference Book Drive will continue until we have reached the goal of 400 adult dictionaries to the families whose children attend Jefferson. Children's dictionaries and thesauruses are also being collected. So far another fifty-seven of these reference books have been donated.

MPC's generosity is appreciated in donating these reference books. Consider asking your friends if they have extra reference books and if they would put a notice in their church's bulletin requesting dictionaries. Please call Susan Light at 215-801-8185 if you have any questions. Be sure to check bulletin announcements updating the number of books donated.

PRESBYTERIAN DISASTER ASSISTANCE - YOU CAN HELP

Submitted by Ray Hendrickson

The Presbyterian Disaster Assistance (PDA) enables congregations and mission partners of the Presbyterian Church (USA) to witness to the healing love of Christ through caring for communities adversely affected by crisis and catastrophic events. MPC has been a most giving church for many years. Most recently, \$14,000 has been given to the PDA designated Ukraine Relief, and now money is being collected for Hurricane Relief. Visit their website at pda.pcusa.org to witness how PDA is assisting so many of our brothers and sisters in Christ both far and near to the walls of MPC!

"STAYING PUT IN LOWER BUCKS" NEEDS YOU!

Submitted by Kathy Foster

By providing many needed services, the Ivins Outreach Center's "Staying Put in Lower Bucks" program enables older adults to remain in their homes and actively engage in their community. They are solely dependent on volunteers, for without our volunteers, we would not be able to sustain this program. If you would like to set your own schedule and are willing to: provide transportation to area doctors, hospitals, grocery shopping and pharmacy pick-up OR make friendly telephone calls or visits to check on a person's well-being OR provide minor assistance in a home such as changing light bulbs and fire detection batteries, then we need you. One of the greatest gifts you can give is your time! For volunteer opportunities and how you can help call the Ivins Outreach Center at 215-428-0500 ext. 103 or visit our website. ivinsoutreach.org. Ask a friend to join you!

ANNIVERSARY SUNDAY



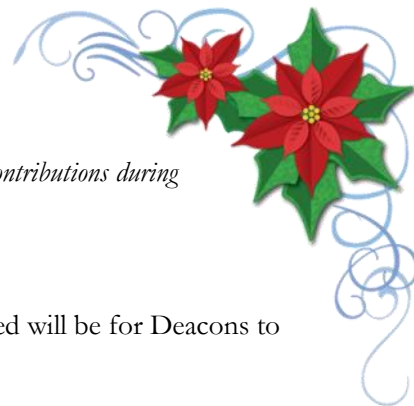
Anniversary Sunday was held at MPC on October 30. It is the day when we celebrate everyone's membership in MPC. Our 50+ year members were recognized during worship. Following worship, our Anniversary Sunday luncheon took place in Fellowship Hall.

OLDER ADULT AFTERNOON TEA

Submitted by Lisa Zazzu

The Congregational Ministry Committee hosted an Afternoon Tea on November 16 for our older adults. Twenty-five guests attended and Fellowship Hall was filled with conversation, tea, and sweet treats. One attendee said, "It was reminiscent of the tea parties we had in college, only much more relaxed!"





2022 Christmas Memorials & Honorariums

The following opportunities are available for people desiring to make memorial/ honorarium/ celebration contributions during the Christmas season:

Please fill in the tear-off below and return it with your check in the total amount of your option(s)

POINSETTIAS

Please note changes to the Memorial donation form for Poinsettias. Poinsettias purchased will be for Deacons to deliver to homebound members during the Advent season.

MUSIC FUND

Memorial contributions to this fund help to supplement the music ministry program via the Memorial Committee's oversight. In the past, these funds have been used to invest in handbell equipment, guest musicians, and additional musicians for special musical offerings.

DEACONS' FOOD BASKET PROGRAM

In addition to free-will donations received by the Deacons, you are welcome to contribute to the Food Basket Program as a gift or memorial to loved ones by using the form below.

CHRISTMAS MEMORIAL CONTRIBUTIONS

Please do not add the memorial contribution amount to your pledge payment!

Make checks payable to MPC with the type of memorial noted on the memo line.

I (we) wish to make the following contribution(s) to:

_____ **Poinsettia(s)** Number of Plants: _____ Amount attached: _____

_____ I would like to purchase a poinsettia for the Deacons to deliver to a homebound member during the Advent season. The cost is \$8.00 per plant.

Please note: There will be no poinsettias to be picked up after the Christmas Eve service.

_____ **Music Fund** Please find \$ _____ attached for this fund.

_____ **Deacons' Food Basket Program.** Please find \$ _____ attached for this fund.

Given by: _____

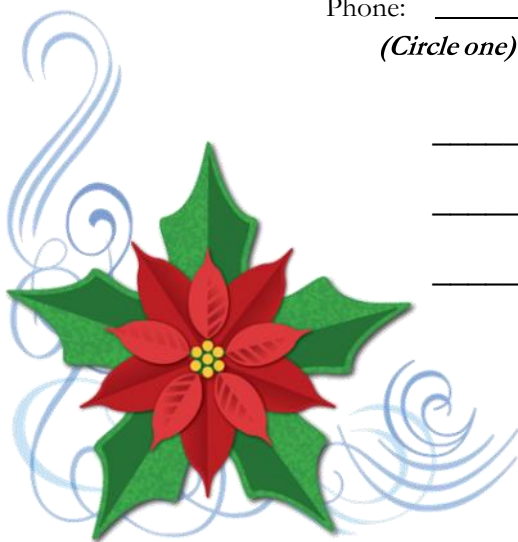
Phone: _____ +

(Circle one) "In loving memory of" "In celebration of" "To give thanks for"

Please print your submission exactly as you wish it to appear in the bulletin and return this form to the Church Office.

Deadlines for submissions

All Contributions Due - Monday, December 12, 2022



MEN'S RETREAT

The Men's Retreat was held on Saturday, October 8, at Snipes Farm and Education Center. The men of MPC worked on two projects supporting Snipes' mission to plant water-loving native plants in the recently created "bioretention basin," and plant trees adjacent to the basin. The bio-retention basin lies at the heart of efforts to harvest flooding reaching the farm from the surrounding developed areas, so that water recharges and feeds the streams during times of drought. Trees near the basin and streams help to clean water as it moves over and under the land. A box lunch was also provided to the participants.



Introducing mobile giving

iPhone



Scan the appropriate QR code with your phone and find MPC by searching code 'FEDN99' or 'Morrisville Presbyterian Church'

Once set up, you can schedule recurring gifts or make one-time offerings with one click.

Android



Need Help? email Office@mpcusa.org and ask that your questions be forwarded to the stewardship committee.

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