



currents

Mar.—May 2024



Visit us at MPCusa.org



Pastor's Pen

*Spirit of the living God, fall afresh on us.
Melt us, mold us, fill us, use us.
Spirit of the living God, fall afresh on us.*



Dear MPC Family,

Lent is always a season in the life of the church that invites us into deeper connection with God and with one another. In this season, we are challenged to be honest about the things that separate us from God, and either let go of these things, or take on new practices that invite us into deeper relationship with God. Implicit in all of this, however, is the fact that Lent invites us to be open to change. To be open to the ways that God seeks to melt and mold our hearts and to transform us in ways that call us to be more faithful. But change is never easy! Not in our own lives or in the life of the church. And there has been a fair amount of change among our staff in the last few months. In early January, we celebrated the “re-retirement” of the Rev. Jack McAnlis, who has served as our Minister of Visitation for the better part of a decade. Additionally, we celebrated Laurie Jacobson, our Financial Administrator, who retired at the end of February after serving in this role at MPC for almost 19 years!

Though the Personnel Committee has been working hard (for months!) to ensure that we have appropriate coverage in these areas and that ministry will continue as expected, that doesn't change the fact that two people, who we dearly love, will no longer be a part of our staff at MPC. Laurie and Jack have seen MPC through a lot! In their own areas of expertise, they have provided a steady presence in the midst of both beautiful and challenging season of ministry. They have seen this church through multiple pastoral and staff transitions and have always been a welcoming and steadfast presence in our life together. While change is inevitable, it is never easy, and it is especially challenging when it involves the grief of “goodbye” and a quick turnaround to welcome someone new.

While I am thrilled with the recent work of our Personnel Committee in their efforts to find not only suitable, but WONDERFUL individuals (Rev. Brian Ballard, new Minister of Visitation and Rosie Sheahan, new Financial Secretary) to fill these two vacancies, we all know it will take time for them to feel like a “normal” part of life at MPC. Rest assured, they are up for the task, and both Brian and Rosie are already doing a wonderful job in their work at MPC! Nevertheless, I know it will feel different for awhile, and will require an openness from each of us to receive the gifts that Brian and Rosie have to offer our family of faith.

I am sad to say, “goodbye” to Laurie and Jack—there is no question about that! But I am also excited to see where God will lead us next, particularly as we welcome Brian and Rosie and open ourselves to the gifts and experiences they have to offer! Please know that my door is always open if you would like to talk further about either of these transitions. As I said in blessings for both Jack and Laurie, “We remain thankful, O God, for what has been, and grateful for what has yet to be.” In this Lenten season and in all the years to come, it is my prayer that we might be open to the movement of God's Spirit among us even, and perhaps especially, in the midst of change. I pray that God would continue to bless us in our life together as we seek to be a blessing to others.

With gratitude for our life together,

Rachel

LISTENING IN THE SILENCE

Dear Priesthood of All Believers,

Ssshhhhh...

Don't repeat this too loudly, but I actually like winter. I am aware that this opinion probably places me in the minority. That being the case I dutifully pray for snow to miraculously miss the houses of people who do not want it. Likewise, I hope for Punxsutawney Phil to not find his shadow. However, there is something about winter that I cannot help but appreciate. I like the beautiful fall of snowflakes and the brilliant light that dances off its top crust of white. I like the bareness of trees that allow me to gaze longer along the horizon. And maybe most of all, I like winter's sound. Better said, I like the lack of sound in winter.



One of my favorite things to do in winter is to go for a walk at Core Creek Park. When there I am struck by the absence of sounds that I had heard in the previous seasons. There are fewer animals in the woods in winter. There are even fewer humans on the walking paths. It feels as if all the sights and sounds have gone underground to hibernate and all I hear is the wind breathing. I am reminded of a paraphrased quote from pastor, writer, and ethicist Sam Wells when he said something like "When we sit in silence we move from one sense of chaos to another." Chaos may be a little harsh, but the idea still stands. When I stop and listen amidst the quiet of winter I realize I can hear other noises I hadn't noticed before: the chirping of finches in thicket, the constant thud of ice drops melting onto a metal gutter, the low hum of a local highway in constant motion.

Elijah stopped and listened for God amidst the quiet. In this story from the book of First Kings, Elijah traveled to a mountain in search of God. First there was a great wind breaking rocks and splitting mountains, but God was not in the wind. Then there was an earthquake shaking the very ground, but God was not in the earthquake. Then there was a fire burning all around, but God was not in the fire. Finally there was silence—sheer silence. It was in that silence that God spoke to Elijah and told him what to do.

In this season of Lent there is an invitation to embrace the stillness of the season. To shed that which keeps us from inner truth. This can look differently, in many ways. Some folks find meaning in giving something up that preoccupies our time or energy. Some folks add a practice to their lives they think will orient them to God. Our church will provide many ways for us to shed our normal noise and hear an invitation of greater love and justice in our lives. You can join together in devotion and prayer through our Lenten Devotionals written by members of our community and coordinated by our worship committee. You can gather in fellowship and community at Lenten Soup Suppers. You can volunteer your time or talents, prayers or resources as we will host the Code Blue homeless shelter in Fellowship Hall. No matter how it might look like for you, may we all rest together in the power of stillness this season. For in the silence we will get closer to what God is saying to us and what we might do about it.

Grace and Peace,

Alex

CHILDREN'S MINISTRY NEWSLETTER

Our Children's Ministry Newsletter is now available on a monthly basis. Look for copies inserted in your weekly worship bulletin as well as online by clicking the 'Education Newsletter' button in the weekly updates email or on the MPC website on the Sunday School page and under Quick Links..



OUR CHURCH FAMILY

In Loving Memory

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

- Carol . Hernandez
on Thursday, January 11, 2024

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



SACRAMENT OF BAPTISM



On February 18, June Kaye Thompson received the sacrament of baptism. June is the daughter of Caroline and Michael Thompson. Please join us in welcoming the newest member of Christ's church.

WELCOME TO OUR NEW STAFF MEMBERS



Welcome to our new Minister of Visitation, Rev. Brian Ballard. Brian is stepping into the role of recently retired Rev. Jack McAnlis to support our robust care of our congregation and community. While Brian may be a familiar face to some as a previous intern at MPC, he makes his way back to us having served Bryn Mawr Presbyterian Church as their Associate Pastor for Pastoral Care and Senior Adults. Prior to attending seminary, Brian spent six years in leadership roles in the non-profit sector. Brian is currently a first-year Ph.D. student at Princeton Theological Seminary focusing on homiletics. He is married to Amy, and together they have two children, Florence and Simon.

Rosie Sheahan is our new Financial Secretary, replacing Laurie Jacobson who retired at the end of February. Rosie brings many years of experience in Financial Control, Accounting, Audit and Tax. She is a local Yardley resident, where she lives with her husband and three children. In her spare time, Rosie enjoys skiing, running on the canal path, and cheering on the kids from the sidelines of soccer, softball, and baseball. She loves to travel and her last family vacation was exploring Banff and Jasper national parks in Canada by RV.

If you have not already had an opportunity, please stop by and introduce yourself to Brian and Rosie to help them feel welcome.



Visit mpcusa.org

HAPPY RETIREMENTS!

On January 7, a special fellowship hour was held to congratulate Pastor Jack McAnlis on his re-retirement and thank him for his years of ministry at MPC. While he and Karin will continue to be a part of our worshipping community, Jack stepped down from his role as Minister of Visitation. Jack has been such a blessing to our church and his contributions go well beyond his visitation role.



Laurie Jacobson, our beloved, long time Financial Secretary retired at the end of February. We are so grateful for the amazing service that she has provided to our church for nearly 20 years. We will miss her welcoming smile and calm demeanor. On February 21, a luncheon was held celebrating Laurie's retirement. Afterwards, Laurie wrote, "I want to thank you all for your kind words and gifts as I get ready to retire. It is a time of such mixed emotions for me. I do look forward to this next phase in my life spending more time with my granddaughter and traveling with Wade. MPC has been a big part of my life for many years. I cherish the friendships made and hope that we will be able to find a way to stay in touch. I will miss all of you. With blessings, Laurie."



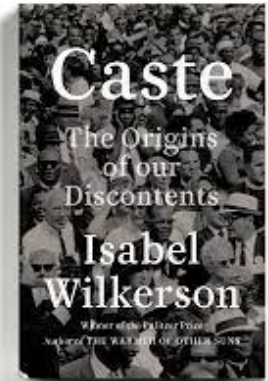
MPC BOOK DISCUSSIONS FOR FELLOWSHIP & LEARNING

Submitted by Chris Bannister

All are welcome to join us for our next discussion on April 15 and May 20 at 7:00 pm in the church lounge. Feel free to bring a friend too!

Our next selection for April or May is : Caste: The Origins of Our Discontents by Isabel Wilkerson | Goodreads This is by the same author of *The Warmth of Other Suns: The Epic Story of America's Great Migration* (2010) which we enjoyed reading together a few years back.

Get your own copy of the books (at the bookstore, library or on-line) and read at your leisure. Please contact Chris Bannister (bannistercr@gamil.com) with your interest and questions.



BLOOD PRESSURE SCREENING

Submitted by Nancy Stoner

We are pleased to announce a Blood Pressure Screening event on Sunday, April 14. The screening will take place in the chapel after the service, starting at 11:45 a.m. To ensure a smooth and efficient screening process, we kindly ask you to:

- Wear clothing that will make your arm easily accessible for blood pressure monitoring.
- Limit your caffeine intake on the day of the screening.
- If you are on medication for blood pressure, please continue to take it as usual on the day of the screening.
- Bring your own personal blood pressure monitoring record on the day of screening if you wish.

Your health is our priority. We look forward to seeing you there!



FOOD CENTER REQUESTS

Our Food Center is asking for the following foods over the next few months. A shopping cart has been put in the Welcome Center to receive your donations. Thank you for your continued generous help!

March - Peanut Butter (plastic jars preferred)

April - Canned Fruit

May - Shelf Stable Milk (boxes or cans of evaporated)

June - Macaroni and Cheese



ANOTHER ANGEL TREE SUCCESS!

Submitted by Cindy Moskow

Thank you so much from the Deacons to everyone who contributed to the toiletries donations from our Angel Tree this Christmas! Those in need are receiving these gifts now (121 bags were collected) and are greatly appreciated by all those who have received them. They go a long way in meeting the personal needs of the clients at our MPC Food Center. Thanks to everyone for making this ministry such a success where there is such a need.



YOUTH CLUB DELIVERS

Submitted by Dawn Flook

The holiday spirit was in full gear for Youth Club this past Christmas. As is our tradition for the holiday, Youth Club adopts a family to help ease the burden of the season. This year we assisted a mom of five that Youth Club had actually helped last year, but this year two step kids were added to the wish list - seven kids ranging from three to twelve years old. And, as it seems to also be a tradition, our Youth Club and friends of Youth Club did not disappoint with fulfilling everything on the list. It might have meant last minute Amazon deliveries or running to the store for a pair of Nike sneakers as the gifts were being wrapped. This family was overwhelmed by the effort and all we shared with them this holiday season. We even had one donation especially for the Mom from her favorite store, along with many gift cards from her preferred grocery stores. The picture, which includes our gift recipient, was taken at the end of the night.



TAKE ME OUT TO THE BALLGAME

Submitted by Lisa Zazzu

Join us on Saturday, June 15 at 6:00 p.m. when MPC will be heading out to the Trenton Thunder baseball game for a night of fun, food, and fellowship. This is a great opportunity for us to spend time together as a church family outside of the walls of the church building. Look for more information regarding tickets in the coming weeks.



WOMEN HELPING WOMEN

Submitted by Beth Curtiss

Sunday, April 14, is *Gifts of Women Sunday* at MPC - a recognition and celebration of the gifts that women bring to the church. Anne Stewart, Executive Vice President from Princeton Seminary will be our guest preacher.



Presbyterian Women (PW) are asking each woman to bring a donation of a feminine hygiene product which will be distributed to The Family Service Association of Bucks County, Libertae, and The Food Center. Your overwhelming generosity last year was very much appreciated and we are looking forward to once again helping women in our community by providing these necessary and very expensive items. There will be a receptacle to deposit your donation in the communication center as you join us in worship on April 14.

TAKING UP THE “CHALLENGE”

Submitted by Damon Miller

Through the bustle of Sunday morning arriving to church on time for Sunday School or worship, your time may be spent saying a brief “Hello” to those you may recognize. As you sit in the pew you look around and see familiar faces but for many years you never took the time to speak to them, except to have an exchange of “Peace” during worship. Maybe you know them through their children. Maybe you sit on the same committee or sing in the choir together. Sure you recognize their face, even know their name, maybe laugh at a joke they say, but do you know their life? “Everyone is so full of interesting stories that we do not know until we get that one-on-one chance to go further beyond the nice hellos at church,” wrote Elizabeth Lester-Abdalla. Caroline Thompson added, “An hour or two on Sundays is not enough to build community for most. We need to have conversations with one another that go beyond ‘Hi, how are you?’ and get into ‘No, how are you...really?’” Recently, members of MPC shared their stories and thoughts of taking the Three Cups of Coffee Challenge Pastor Rachel Rhodes had presented to the congregation.

“My curiosity was piqued a bit: Would I be able to find three willing members to accomplish this challenge with me? Would it be difficult to start the conversation? Would it be challenging to find topics of conversation that were of mutual interest?” wrote Nancy Powers. Others were “excited” or “anxious”, while Seth McHenry took the challenge beyond just getting to know someone new to “finding out how we (as a church and I as a person) could help them and connect with them.”

Getting to know one another on a deeper level beyond a simple greeting revealed stories of overcoming health issues, hobbies and talents, family, favorite books, future plans, similar lifestyles with children and work, as well as their involvement with MPC. Cindy Moskow shared, “Elizabeth Dugan and I met for tea and cookies and talked about why we like MPC! I talked about Rebecca Circle and Adult Education, and she shared about Brown Bag (Bible Study).” It was also discovered through these conversations that paths crossed in the past. Over breakfast, Larry Low and his wife Phyllis met with Cindy Moskow. Larry wrote, “We learned we were in the same high school graduation class! When we arrived home we viewed our yearbook, and there she was with the same smile!” Cindy added, “Kathy Foster, I have now learned, graduated with us in the same class!”

Generations were crossed and those from all ages were brought together. Nancy wrote, “I realized (the people I met with) encompassed a range of ages (30-ish, 50-ish and 70-ish.). In all cases I felt that we were genuinely interested in each other and were accepting of each other. Rory Thompson told his mom, Caroline, “Now that I had this play date, I see Alex [Keys] on the playground at school and now I know her and she is my friend.” Seth met with new member Rich Green, a “young adult about my oldest son’s age. I wanted to be sure to be welcoming but not come off as overbearing in any way given the generational difference. It was fun to learn about him and his wife, where they had been and were coming from in seeking a new church relationship and how they were looking to interact with the church. We’ve interacted several times since then.”

Where do these “cups of coffee” lead? It seems that shared experiences, ongoing conversations, and making MPC inviting are in the future for some. “My last coffee clutch was with a relatively new member, Wendy McMenamin,” wrote Betsy Jurey. “Wendy was shopping in the Clothing Center where I volunteer. I learned a lot about her journey. She has a full life, husband, kids, dog, helping her elderly mother and a second home. With all this going on, Wendy is finding time to volunteer at our Clothing Center.” During her time with Nancy Powers, Elizabeth Lester-Abdalla added, “We also got to share what we like to read and learn about, which has already been fruitful in our recommendations since we met up for tea!” Larry concluded his comments with, “We have been engaging with those we do not know to help make them feel more welcome.”



**Look for
some great
conversation
starters
on the back!**

Let us build a house
WHERE  CAN DWELL
MORRISVILLE PRESBYTERIAN CHURCH

(Continued on next page)

TAKING UP THE “CHALLENGE” (CONTINUED)

Overall, everyone believed the challenge was a pleasant experience. Seth wrote, “I learned that things aren’t always as they seem and that there is joy in finding out about another person’s story.” Cindy added, “Getting to know people better was fun and I hope to connect with others in this way.” “I realized that I had more in common with my ‘strangers’ than I had imagined I would,” wrote Nancy, “and I found it to be fun, interesting and worthwhile having a connection to these people.”

So the challenge isn’t over. You, too, can break out your “3 Cups of Coffee” mug and invite someone over or gather for a meal out and use the “Conversation Starters” if you don’t know where to begin. Take some advice from those that have already shared a cup. “Sometimes you just have to do it! It won’t be perfect. A kid will have a runny nose. The weather will be poor. We will only have an hour of free time, when I’d rather have two. I learned that you should just do it!” wrote Caroline. Nancy agreed, with “If you can get past the initial hesitancy the rest is easy! The church is meant for all, so we should strive to make it for all.” “It makes going to church all the more fun to see people you feel you really connect with and know, and it helps us be a more intentional congregation that is deeply rooted in our relationships,” wrote Elizabeth with Seth adding, “engaging with people as close to one-on-one as we can is very effective in building and maintaining the body and fabric of the church.” Possibly Betsy summed it up best, “Interacting with the congregation is always a good idea. So let’s all keep having a cup of coffee.”

CONVERSATION STARTERS

Who helped you to feel that you belonged at MPC (or elsewhere)?

What brought you to this area and to MPC?

Where have you seen God at work in the past year?

What has been the most energizing thing you’ve participated in at MPC?

Who do you want to be when you grow up?



Share your “Challenge” stories, we’d love to hear them (with photos too!) Send them to damonmiller@mpcusa.org.

OLDER ADULT LUNCHEON



Congregational Ministry hosted a Valentine luncheon for our Older Adults. Folks enjoyed homemade soups and sandwiches while catching up with old friends. After lunch, Nancy Powers accompanied us as we brought out the blue hymnal’s and sang some old favorite hymns. If you would like to be included in future Older Adults events, please contact Lisa Zazzu at lzazzu@verizon.net or 267-994-2153.

MPC CLOTHING CENTER'S SPRING DONATIONS

Submitted by Kathy Foster

The MPC Clothing Center is now accepting clean and gently used spring and summer clothes, as well as spring and Easter decorations. No fall and winter clothing, or Christmas and winter decorations will be accepted at this time as space does not allow for storage of off-season items. As a reminder, all donated items (housewares, linens, glass, china, etc.) must be washed and clean, and no donations should be left outside the church doors. Donations may be dropped off at any time when the church is open. Please place all donations on the shelves downstairs by the elevator.

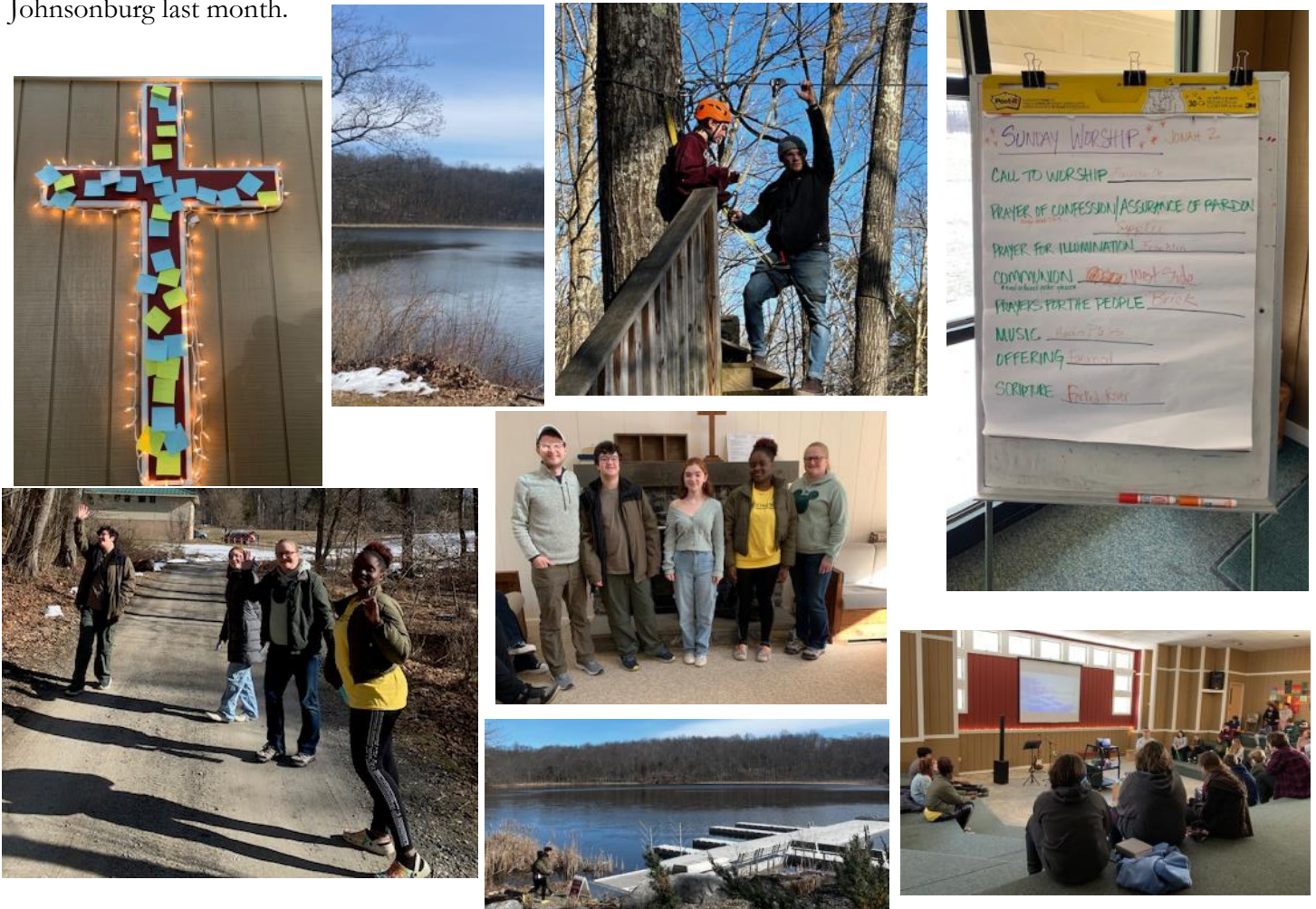
Open each Thursday from 10:00 a.m. to 2:00 p.m., the Clothing Center volunteers are committed to providing a pleasant shopping experience for our valued customers. Come and see that we are more than just clothes! The last day to shop before closing for the summer is June 13.

Profits from the Clothing Center are given to charitable agencies and organizations, both local and global, determined by the MPC Outreach Committee. Your continued support and cooperation are greatly appreciated. Thank you!



CONFIRMATION RETREAT

Confirmation students from MPC, along with Pastor Alex, attended a confirmation retreat held at Camp Johnsonburg last month.



CODE BLUE

MPC continues to share our talents and build fellowship through helping others in the community! With the colder temperatures overnight, and it being mid-month, more than 30-35 guests were expected.

Join us in praying a line from St. Francis' prayer that our Code Blue volunteers use to start each shift! "Lord, make me an instrument of your peace. Where there is hatred, let me sow love. Where there is injury, pardon. Where there is doubt, faith...For it is in giving that we receive, it is in pardoning that we are pardoned, it is in dying that we are born to eternal life. Amen."

Visit mpcusa.org



SHROVE TUESDAY & ASH WEDNESDAY

The rescheduled Shrove Tuesday Pancake Supper was followed by the Ash Wednesday worship service as the Lenten season began at MPC.



CHRISTMAS SEASON AT MPC



YOUTH CLUB

Submitted by Dawn Flook

Seeing the youth in Fellowship Hall with brooms, one might think it was a cleaning effort. However, it was instead a competitive game between the current Youth “Clubbians” versus our alumni Youth “Clubbers.” The alumni showed they still got their game by squeaking ahead with a score of 6 to 7 in the final seconds of the game.

This January event kicked off our 2024 Wednesday dinner and group time for students between 6th and 12th grade. Both youth members of the church, and those from the community, are welcomed to attend!





www.WeekdayNursery.org
267-797-3665

Morrisville Presbyterian Church
771 N. Pennsylvania Avenue
Morrisville, Pennsylvania 19067

REGISTRATION
IS OPEN!

CAMP WEEKDAY

5

D
A
Y
S

June 3-7, July 15-19, Aug 5-9
9am-12pm Monday-Friday
Ages 3-5

Outdoor Play
Crafts
Music

Certified
Teachers on
Staff

\$200 per week
\$575 for all 3
weeks

COMING SOON

Family Movie Night

Sunday, April 14th

5 pm to 7:30 pm in Fellowship Hall



Everyone's Welcome!

BRING A DESSERT TO SHARE!

**Pasta Dinner, popcorn
and fun fellowship!**

Call Nancy McHenry @ 215-514-9685



**Want to get to know folks
at MPC a little better?**

**Want to share a meal with
friends old and new?**

Join *Dinner Groups of Eight*

Sign-up in the

Welcome Center to

host or be a guest!

**Call Nancy McHenry for
more information @ 215-514-9685**

****Dinners will be scheduled by
hosts in the next few months***

CONTACT US

MORRISVILLE PRESBYTERIAN CHURCH STAFF

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

Rachel A. Rhodes

Senior Pastor & Head of Staff (ext. 234)

RachelRhodes@MPCusa.org

Alexander Lester-Abdalla

Associate Pastor (ext. 225)

AlexLester-Abdalla@MPCusa.org

Brian Ballard

Minister of Visitation (ext. 232)

BrianBallard@MPCusa.org

Timothy Carpenter

Director of Music

TimCarpenter@MPCusa.org

Adrienne Poissant

Pastoral Intern

AdriennePoissant@MPCusa.org

David Sterling

Property Manager (ext. 231)

DavidSterling@MPCusa.org

Rosie Sheahan

Financial Secretary (ext. 226)

RosieSheahan@MPCusa.org

Damon Miller

Communication Coordinator

DamonMiller@MPCusa.org

Rachel Zobel

Christian Education Coordinator

RachelZobel@MPCusa.org

Nicole Brice

Administrative Assistant (ext. 0)

Office@MPCusa.org