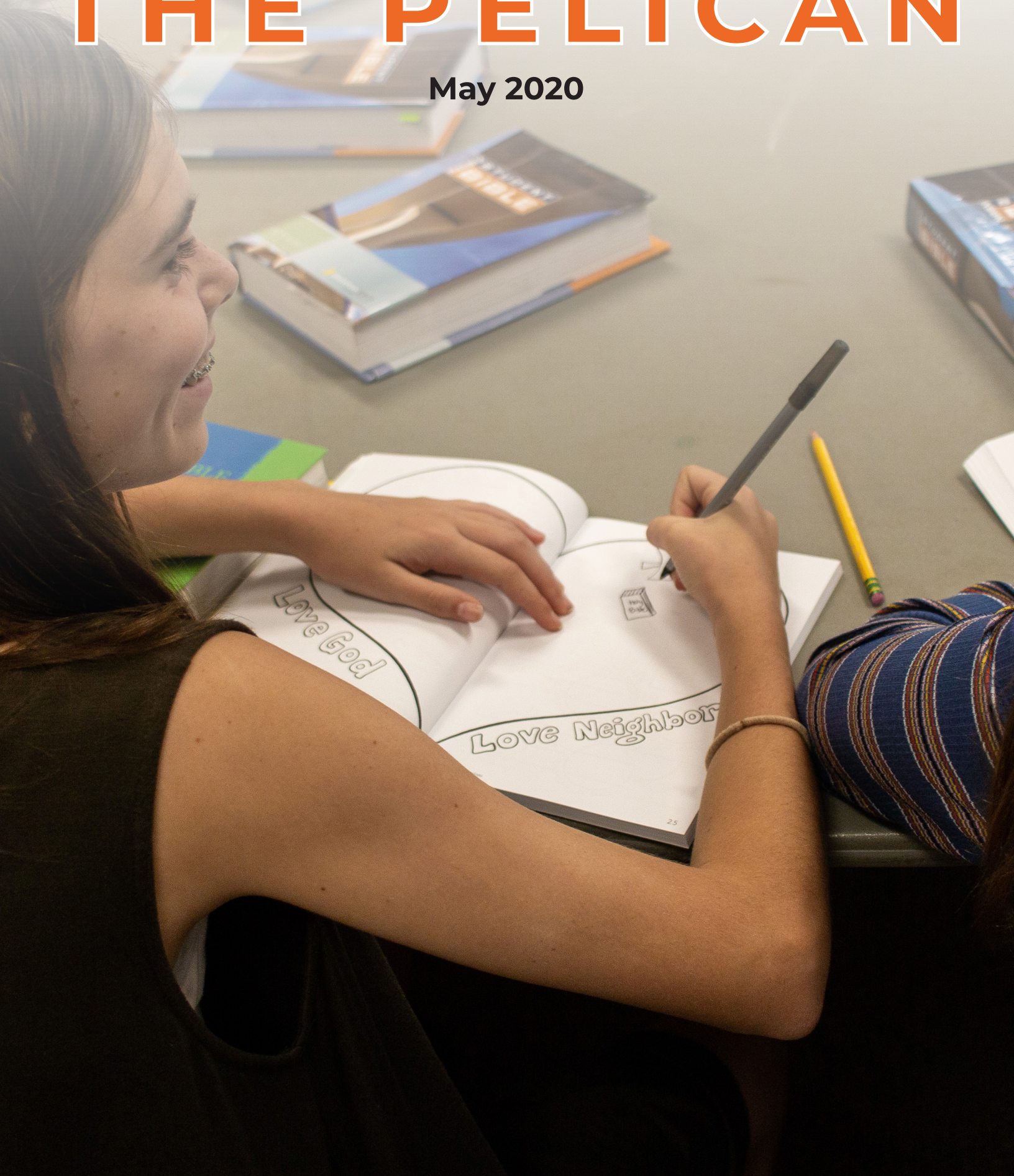


Mount Pleasant Presbyterian Church

THE PELICAN

May 2020



FROM THE PASTOR

Discerning the Spirits

"Beloved, do not believe every spirit, but test the spirits to see whether they are from God..." (1 John 4:1)

One of the struggles that every Christian must confront is the challenge of discerning the will of God. Hints and signs may seem to point in certain directions, and we try to interpret those signs as best we can. But, at the end of the day, can we really know what God is up to? And, even if we could see clearly what God is up to, how do we know that the things we are up to are really helping God? As we see in the First Epistle of John, Christians throughout the ages have sought to "test the spirits." All of us have tried our best to read the spiritual tea leaves -- to interpret the hints and signs that life gives us -- all in the hope of discerning God's will for us and for the world. It has always been, and always will be, a task limited and corrupted by human frailty. And yet we know that this is a calling for every earnest believer -- the call to try our best to follow God's will in all that we do.

In the coming weeks, we will be called upon to "test the spirits" in new and vexing ways. We will be pressed to decide when, and how, we will gather again in person as a church and community. We are already hearing a variety of voices -- a cacophony of health experts, economists, and politicians pressing competing visions of how it all should go. As the church, we will have to do our best to read and interpret these signs. But make no mistake... we will need to read them through one lens, and one lens only. We need to test these spirits as disciples of Christ... to see whether they truly are from God.

Specifically, the session will have to wrestle with tough questions like the ones that follow. As you read them, I invite you all to begin your own prayerful discernment:

- How will worship change if gatherings (worship, Sunday School meetings, etc.) are limited to specific numbers?
- How will our celebrations of baptisms and the Lord's Supper change to account for new health concerns?
- Will we continue to pass an offering plate, or should that practice change?
- How will our cleaning and sanitation practices change?
- Will we serve breakfast and Wednesday night meals the same way?
- What kind of new technologies will we need going forward?

This is just a small sampling of the kinds of questions we will all have to answer. As we answer them, we will have to be mature, diligent, and honestly self-reflective about the differences between what we want personally, and what we need socially... between what we have known in the past, and what makes sense for the future... about perspectives that are based in frailty and self-interest, and those that are selfless and prioritize the needs of others.

Fortunately, Christians have learned across the centuries that we have amazing resources at our disposal -- resources that aid and guide us as we seek not our own will, but the will of God. God gives us direction through **the Word of God**, which is always a lamp unto our feet, and a light for our path (Psalm 119:105). We are also aided by **prayer**, which leads us from anxiety to peace as we present our requests to God (Phil. 4:6-7). God also brings **trusted friends and fellow believers** into our lives to help us find our way through the world (Prov. 15:22), especially when those people have studied and learned aspects of God's creation that we have not. God also gives us wisdom through the **experiences of living**. God has given us eyes, ears, hearts, and minds, and God expects us to use those gifts faithfully to understand the world as best we can.

Together, over the coming weeks and months, we will work together, with honesty and faith, to "test the spirits." We will read the signs that God gives us and do our best to follow God into a future that is faithful, selfless, hopeful, and true. As every disciple knows, there will be crosses to bear. But we also know that, with every cross borne in Christ, an Easter is sure to follow. May the Lord bless as we seek to do God's will!

Peace,



Rev. Dr. Peter Bynum
Pastor & Head of Staff



RISE AGAINST HUNGER



Last November, our Director of Youth Ministries, Courtney Kraus, led our youth in a Rise Against Hunger program (www.riseagainsthunger.org). Rise Against Hunger hosts packing parties where participants pack family sized, high-carb and nutrient-dense meals that get shipped all over the world for people in need. That night our youth packed over 12,000 meals. Those meals were added to other meals packed by various organizations to support Rise Against Hunger's Charlotte, NC warehouse. The number of meals grew into 285,120 meals! Those meals have been sent to Nicaragua.

I am very familiar with Rise Against Hunger, as it started in Lynchburg, VA. I have sponsored several "packing parties." I have also not only seen Rise Against Hunger meals stacked floor to ceiling in large a warehouse in Port-au-Prince Haiti, but have also seen those meals feed hundreds of children each day for their school lunch. Our mission partner in Haiti, Haiti Outreach Ministries-HOM (www.haitiom.org) uses these meal kits to feed over 1,500 students on four campuses every day of the week. In many instances this is the only substantial meal these children will eat on any given day. Unfortunately, like we are experiencing

here in the USA, schools in Haiti are closed due to the global pandemic and like here, there is great concern for the children and their ability to receive proper nutrition. In light of this pandemic, HOM has decided to take the 1,000's of meal kits they have in storage and distribute them to their students and their families. The children and families need the food now, not stored up in a warehouse for later. Teachers, administrators, and students came together to pack rice, beans, and cooking oil in small bags and distribute them through out the neighborhoods to their students and families.

This is just one small example of how the mission work we do here in Mount Pleasant is saving lives and helping people around the world. Your local and international mission committees have been hearing powerful stories from all our mission partners about how they are coping and handling the current situation. Please continue to keep them in your prayers and send donations when you are able.

Rev. Bart Edwards
Associate Pastor



HOPE HOUSE

Great News From Hope House

On May 10th, Hope House will open it's doors to members of our congregation who have been serving on the frontline during the COVID-19 pandemic. Many of these brave and dedicated workers have been staying in costly hotels in an effort to keep their families safe from the virus. We have three bedrooms available. If you are a member of MPPC and a healthcare worker who would like to quarantine at Hope House, call Beth Moore at (843)532-4892 for details.

Hope House would also like to offer a prayer to our guests, their families, and all members of MPPC...

PRAYER for a PANDEMIC

"author unknown"

May we who are *merely inconvenienced*
remember those whose **lives are at stake.**

May we who have no *risk factors*
remember those who are **most vulnerable.**

May we who have the *luxury of working from home*
respect and support **those who must choose** between
preserving their health and paying their rent.

May we who have *flexibility to care for our children*
when their schools close
remember **those who have no options.**

May we who have to *cancel our trips*
remember **those who have no place to go.**

May we who are *losing on our investments*
remember **those who have no money to invest.**

May we who settle in for a *quarantine at home*
remember **those who have no home.**

During this time, when we cannot physically wrap our arms
around each other, let us each find ways to be the loving
embrace of humanity to our neighbors.

Be aware. Be accepting. Be supportive. Be kind.



Adopt-a-Day at Hope House

MAY 1 - 30

In Honor of all of the Front Liners, Health Care Professionals, First Responders, Teachers, and Grocers that are keeping us safe and healthy. Given by the Hope House Ministry Team

MAY 5

In Honor of my Grandchildren, Elizabeth, Bennett, and Mason Moses. Given by Carrie Thompson

MAY 8

In Honor of Glenn Hair and the Finance Team for all they have done to continuously improve the accounting practices at MPPC. Given by the Hope House Ministry Team

MAY 10

In Honor of Mike and Claire Walsh and Miff and Karl Cone for their donations and continuous support of our guests at Hope House. Given by the Hope House Ministry Team

MAY 16

In Memory of Jennifer Hess. Given by Lynda Davis

MAY 17

In Honor of our 34th Wedding Anniversary. Given by Coby and Bobby Mozingo

MAY 19

In Honor of the young Children of our Church who eagerly serve as ushers and assist their parents in collecting the offering. Given by Susanne and Dick Query

MAY 27

In Memory of my dearest husband, Donald Johnson. Given by Klara Johnson

MAY 29

In Honor of my Daughter, Claire Ryan, who wears a mask 9 hours day to keep us safe and healthy. Given by Elizabeth Grantham

MAY 30

In Honor of my Grandson, Gaige Ryan Who is missing his Sr. Prom and Graduation this COVID-19 School Year. Given by Elizabeth Grantham

CHILDREN'S MINISTRIES



The Womble family inspired us to participate in the Water Mission Walk For Water virtually on March 21!



The Brown family posted their Palm Sunday drawings in their window!

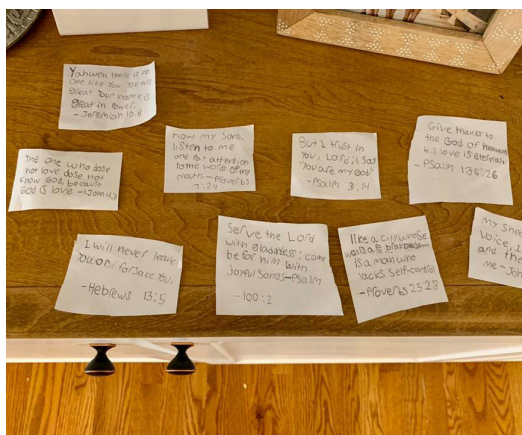
Church is at Home, too!

I don't have to tell you we are doing church in new ways right now. I know that it will take some time for us to fully understand what March and April 2020 will mean to us as families, Christians, parents or children, and as a church. But it has been amazing to see our families engaging, and I want to celebrate that! Thank you to our children's ministry leadership, Sunday School teachers, and all of our families!

Sarah Harbin-Coleman,
Director of Children's Ministries



Lyles Bruorton created an original painting to show what Easter means to him.



Hayes Lucy created a Scripture scavenger hunt for her family in response to a Sunday School lesson.

Carolyn Word impressed our K-2nd Grade group during our lesson on "Doubting Thomas" with a kitchen science experiment you might have to see to believe! I witnessed it with my eyes and it works! We would show you a picture, but then you won't get the full surprise. Try this out with your kids!

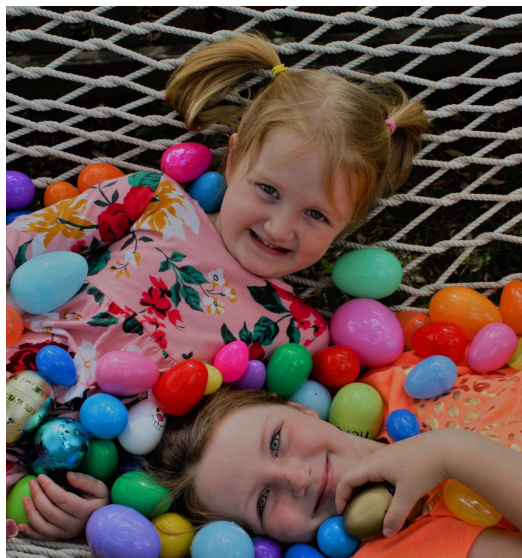
Color Changing Invisible Ink

- ½ cup water
- 1 tbsp baking soda
- Paper
- Rubbing alcohol
- Turmeric
- Q-tips or paintbrush for first step
- Paper towels, paintbrush, or cotton ball for last step

Add baking soda to water and stir to make your "invisible ink." Use Q-tips to draw a picture or write a message with your ink on the paper. Allow to dry while you mix turmeric and rubbing alcohol, taking care not to stain your container, counter, or clothes. Apply your solution to the dried paper and watch what happens!



Ila Gray Sailor and her neighborhood, Point Pleasant, collected a car full of wish list items for ECCO in response to MPPC C.A.R.E.s!

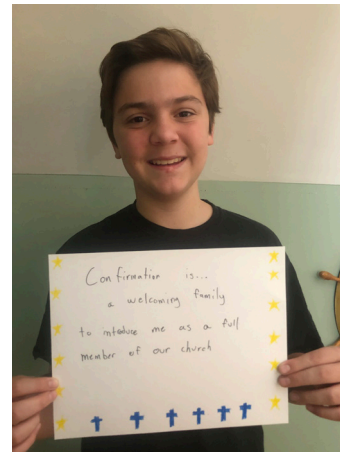
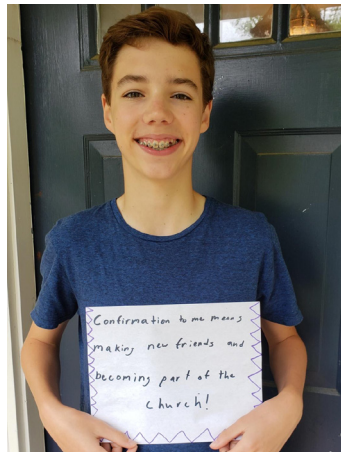


Weller and Sally Magill enjoyed being a part of over 350 posts in our virtual Easter egg hunt, #onebasket2020.

YOUTH MINISTRIES

Some of our newest members!

See more at facebook.com/mtpleasantpres



I would like everyone to take a moment and remember their Confirmation year. Maybe it was when you were in 6th grade or maybe it was when you were in high school. Whenever it was I bet it was a year that you cannot forget because it was when you committed yourself to God and the church's teachings. At MPPC youth go through Confirmation in 8th grade and this year we have a class of 36 dedicated, smart, witty, and faithful disciples of Jesus Christ.

This is surely a year they will never forget in the midst of COVID-19, the year when their lives went virtual, even Confirmation class. The Confirmation Class of 2020 met with the session over Zoom for their examination on April 19th and shared their Confirmation vows virtually during the Confirmation Sunday worship service on May 3rd.

I wanted to share the of the good news of the Confirmation Class 2020 by letting the congregation get to know them on a personal level. You can visit our Facebook page to learn what confirmation means to our confirmands. Our hope is that once we get to worship together in person again you can welcome them by name. This is a very special class and I hope you will join me in giving them a virtual "Welcome to the Church Family" hug.

Courtney Kraus,
Director of Youth Ministries



CHRISTIAN EDUCATION

It's a Wrap...Almost!

The 2020 Lenten Small Group study of *Neighborhood Church* is behind us! As part of the small group challenge, new initiatives were developed to be better neighborhood church. The initiatives were discussed and presented during an online Zoom meeting on Wednesday, April 15, and the results are summarized below. These suggestions will be shared with appropriate ministry and committee teams. From there, the groups can discern how MPPC might integrate these initiatives into the life of the church.

Thank you to all small group facilitators and participants who helped make this year's Lenten study an "outward" experience! This experience will help define how MPPC is a *neighborhood church*!

Small Group Initiatives

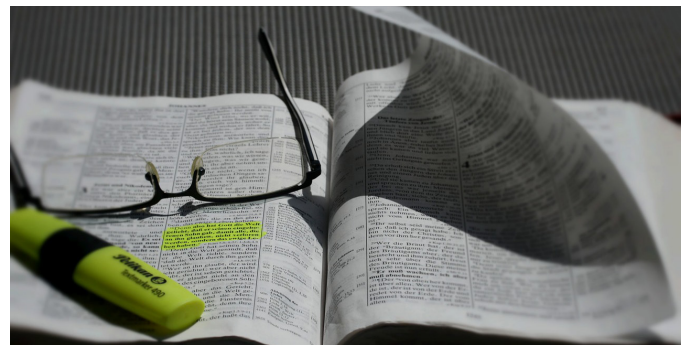
We recognize that we are an active congregation engaged in the community and outreach. To be neighbor includes taking care of our congregation. The following is a summary of recommended initiatives.

- Explore being a neighborhood church, neighborhoods act as an arm of the church in reaching out to and supporting members, especially during the COVID-19 pandemic.
- Get better acquainted with our congregation and our mission and ministry.
- Explore creating mentorships and sponsorships; we can share our expertise to help integrate new members into the life and ministry of the congregation.
- Consider starting a support group for caretakers of older adults.
- Reach out to existing groups using the church facilities.
 - *Alcoholics Anonymous*
 - *Groups like ECCO and Habitat for Humanity*
 - *Engage in conversations with those who use our facilities to better our relationship and share our resources*
 - *Hear the stories of our guests and visitors*
 - *Personally invite those who use our space to attend, serve and tell their stories*
- Look at the Learning Center and see if there are opportunities for the LC to expand and/or look outward as a missional component.
- Look at new ways to share our space like the physical kitchen and classrooms as well as sharing food to help with any food insecurity that is in the community
- Create listening opportunities so we can be a better neighborhood church



Questions2God?

We have an idea and we need your help! We all have questions we might ask God. Some of the questions are from the curious, others are looking for a deep theological understanding of faith. We invite all members of the congregation to pose a question you might ask God and submit those questions via the link in the weekly eNews or post your questions on social media with the hashtag #Questions2Godmppc. And good news! We have extended the deadline to submit questions we might ask God until **May 14!** In the following weeks, staff will share some of the questions and reflectively consider our understanding through the lens of our reformed tradition. (If you post on Facebook, be sure to make the post visible to the public in its settings.)



NEW Adult Study via Zoom!

Six Themes Everyone Should Know: 1 & 2 Timothy

First and Second Timothy are not letters in the Bible many of us are very familiar with. As we study these epistles found in the New Testament, we will explore six themes that enable us in the church today to hear the gospel as expressed to these early Christians. We need to concentrate on worship, be led by faithful leaders, stay strong in the faith, love God more than wealth, hear and live God's Word, and serve faithfully in the church. A limited number of books are available to pick up in the church office. Online resources for the Bible Study will be available through the Connected Through Faith link on our website. (Online with Zoom. Wednesdays, 7:00-8:00 p.m., April 29, May 6, 13, 20, 27, June 3. Signup via Realm. Zoom link will be emailed to participants the morning of each study.)

WORSHIP & MUSIC MINISTRIES

Greetings from your Worship and Music Ministries!

What a different Holy Week and Easter we experienced this year. Perhaps for you it was more introspective, or you were able to experience the resurrection with joy and energy. We are all learning to meet and worship God in different ways. Maybe it shouldn't be surprising that the risen Lord shows up whether we're at home alone or with a small group, watching a big screen or on a phone. Those first disciples must have felt some loneliness, too, but what a miraculous change was brought to their lives. May this time also bring to us new, life-changing ways to experience Christ and love one another.

As with every Lent and Eastertide, many people's talents go into making our worship experiences vibrant. The Worship Ministry Team wants to express a heartfelt thank you to them all. To highlight a few: Martha Waters who made the beautiful Palm Sunday arrangements and bought materials for the Easter arrangements; Pam Owen-Early who decorated the doors of the church with palms and organized the Easter flowering cross; Julia and John Royall who bought and distributed the church Easter lilies; Ashley O'Daniel who made the gorgeous Easter lily arrangements; James Kennedy who changed the clothes on the outside cross. Our clergy and staff also worked outside-the-box in creative ways this year. We hope all of these gifts enhanced your season.



INTERNATIONAL MISSIONS

Almost a year ago in June, our children at Vacation Bible School went on a magical journey to Africa. Their journey was to visit the rural poor province of Katangi, somewhat east of the capital city of Nairobi. Our church, in partnership with Daystar University in Nairobi, had selected this community for a pilot project of raising chickens with the goal of helping alleviate poverty by producing a community run chicken farming effort.

The chickens will be raised for breeding, for local nutrition, and for commercial profit to the community.

An additional goal outlined for this project involves improving the community's quality of life through school health initiatives and education, which expose both the primary school pupils and the local secondary school students to healthy lifestyles.

Our children and their families, along with your church's mission dollars, supplied seed money for the purchase of healthy chicks and some of the critically needed equipment to begin this economically viable, self-sustaining chicken farming.

In our February report from recent Daystar graduate, Sylvia Mwia Musengele, who was vetted by the Daystar University leadership in Community Development to manage the project, reported that, "Since its inception the project has been of great help to the Katangi community. We are pleased to report that in the period under review, October 2019 to January 2020, the project has distributed 500 chicks to two different groups of 25 members each. Despite the heavy rains and a high chicks mortality accompanying such foul weather, more than 80% of these chicks survived and are growing to maturity."

The goal of our MPPC Kenya Ministry is to develop self-sustaining community projects in rural Kenya along with our Nairobi partner, the Community Development Department of Daystar University, and support of local community leaders.

The projects are carefully selected for three-year grants from MPPC to seed the efforts. Oversight is provided by Daystar as the community takes ownership of the project while our MPPC support diminishes. At the end of three years, the goal for these projects is that the community will have complete ownership of them and continue to improve their economic circumstances.



"My name is Veronica Nduku, through Sylvia our project coordinator, your church and Daystar came to us, mobilized us and through our group, they gave us chicks which have grown and multiplied, we are able to sell some and cater for family needs, not forgetting the eggs we get from them. Our children used to fall sick now and then because of poor diet. But now there is a big improvement because we are feeding them with eggs as we hatch the rest, may God bless Daystar University and their church partner from the U.S.A."
- Community member, MS Veronica Nduku Mutinda



"I take this opportunity to thank you and Daystar University, for giving us chicken which have been of great help to us, they lay more eggs as compared to our indigenous ones. We feed on some and we hatch the rest, they are still multiplying thanks to all of you and I pray you continue supporting us to grow to higher level of self-reliance and sustenance. We truly feel the project has been of great benefit to us." - Community member, MS Selah Nzioki

**Give a Person a Fish, and You Feed Them for a Day.
Teach a Person To Fish, and You Feed Them for a Lifetime.**

MISSION IN ACTION

"My friends, please know our efforts sometimes maybe do not seem like 'enough' in our eyes, but know that God is working in people's hearts and minds. We have to do what we are called to do; God will do the heavy lifting!" - Rev. Bart Edwards



Our church in action... Mount Pleasant Presbyterian Church's congregational response to the coronavirus crisis! While we are socially distancing ourselves these days, while it seems that our connecting is through Zoom, while we are worshipping on Sunday mornings by watching our computer screens and seeing the wonderful services that are put together by our MPPC staff, there is so much more that is going on! It is YOU, a fellowship of believers, who are doing God's work in many ways that are "behind the scenes."

- A family called one of our pastors after reading about one of our church mission partners in dramatic need of food for the Mount Pleasant community that the agency serves and then decided to make a substantial contribution to ECCO.
- So many of YOU continue to leave bags of food at the church for ECCO or drop them off directly. Others of YOU are hands-on involved in serving there as well.
- Some of YOU have made direct monetary contributions to the Lowcountry Food Bank and some of YOU are directly involved, hands-on, with this agency.
- A Sunday School class...a class of YOU, has begun a class fundraiser to support the Lowcountry Food Bank.
- From the Red Cross, March 17, 2020 – "We now face a severe blood shortage due to an unprecedented number of blood drive cancellations in response to the coronavirus outbreak." YOU, members of MPPC, stepped up to the plate at the end of April, hosting and donating in a Blood Drive in the Fellowship Hall.
- So many of YOU are involved in so many acts of love that are unknown except to you and God.

"Inspired by God's love, we want our lives to matter; we want our efforts as a church to contribute to something larger than ourselves. To be "Missional" is to understand that the Church exists not to meet our needs, but to use our gifts to carry out God's mission in the world." – mppc.net

And YOU, our congregation, continue to seek additional ways to serve:

Last summer an anonymous member of MPPC offered a challenge. The challenge was that the anonymous member would match up to \$100,000 in donations from MPPC members. The challenge was met in abundance and YOU increased the total of the funds available to over \$230,000 for non-operational, new initiatives and projects in Christ's service.

Over the past several months, your mission teams, both local and international, have been exploring agencies in need and how we can support them using funds from this wonderful gift. MPPC asked our partner agencies to prepare Grant Requests that our teams, staff and Session have studied.

Because of the COVID-19 crisis, many of these agencies can't fully determine how their needs will change when the crisis is over and some of our partner agencies in the community can't wait. They need immediate emergency funding for food and shelter for those they serve.

Recognizing these "can't wait" needs for so many that have fallen on hard times, made harder still by job loss and social isolation, the Session has approved a Coronavirus Response Grant for immediate distribution from this fund that YOU have so generously contributed to.

This immediate, critical needs support will be given to four high-impact local agencies with a gift of \$5,000 for each of the four. The Lowcountry Food Bank, ECCO, Florence Crittenton, and One80 Place.

MISSION IN ACTION



Lowcountry Food Bank

In the last few weeks alone, the LCFB has expended more than \$400,000 on food and transportation. In late March, the LCFB distributed more than 960,000 pounds of food through its partner agencies to those in need -- this equates to 800,000 meals. 15% of the 300 LCFB partner agencies and food pantries that deliver food directly to clients are closed, due to lack of volunteers, creating fewer locations for those who are trying to find food. Due to this, there has been a 43% increase in clients at LCFB agency partners and food pantries. Additionally, the distribution of more than 6,600 BackPacks to children who depend on free school breakfast and lunch meals that are not currently available because of school closures. The MPPC Coronavirus Response funds will make a difference in the lives of many people in these dire circumstances. You can also visit lowcountryfoodbank.org/covid19 to give or to find resources for yourself or a loved one. If you'd like to volunteer, visit lowcountryfoodbank.org/volunteer.



One80 Place

One80 Place has sent out a plea for donations to assist in arranging housing for their clients because it is not safe to have so many people living together in such close quarters at their homeless shelter. MPPC Coronavirus Response funds will facilitate the process of relocating their homeless clients. To volunteer, visit one80place.org/volunteer.



Florence Crittenton

More homeless, young, pregnant women and mothers are seeking assistance at Florence Crittenton - they may have been kicked out or fled their home, they're wages were cut and can't afford their bills, or they aren't able to get into shelters (most aren't accepting new people) and are not safe on the street.

Florence Crittenton will use the MPPC Coronavirus Response funds to provide short-term housing assistance (extended-stay hotel room or security deposit/short-term rental assistance), as well as some part-time case managers to help these families navigate this challenge.



East Cooper Community Outreach

ECCO is dealing with a huge increase in requests for services. In the last 3 weeks, ECCO spent \$3,000 on food, an expense that they don't ordinarily incur, because food donations have dropped in quantity due to the Coronavirus. The Coronavirus Response funds will provide support for this dramatic increase in need. To volunteer, visit eccocharleston.org/volunteer.





Mount Pleasant Presbyterian Church

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CONNECT WITH US

VIRTUAL SUNDAY SCHEDULE

10:00 a.m. Online Worship

Online Sunday School:

9:00 a.m. (Adults)

9:00 a.m. (6th and 7th Grade)

9:00 a.m. (Confirmation)

12:30 p.m. (Preschool)

1:00 p.m. (K-2nd Grade)

1:30 p.m. (3rd-5th Grade)

Monday's at 7 p.m. (High School)

SERMONS

Live Streaming: mppc.net/watch-live-on-sunday

Sermons: mppc.net/sermons

Podcasts: tiny.cc/mtpleasantpodcasts

EVENTS, REGISTRATIONS & NEWS

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