

Mount Pleasant Presbyterian Church

THE PELICAN

December 2020



Photo from Christmas 2019

FROM THE PASTOR

The Light of the World

"The light shines in the darkness, and the darkness did not overcome it." (John 1:5)



As I write this letter to you, the sights and sounds of Christmas are already filling the November airwaves. Radio stations have already switched to holiday programming, as have several cable channels. So,

by the time this letter finally makes it to you, I am sure that the Christmas explosion will be in full swing. It is always a bit of a challenge for the church to preach the Advent message when the mad rush to Christmas has already begun. Many times, Advent's humble hopes that we will pause, wait, reflect, and prepare carry about as far as a whisper in a hurricane. Fortunately for us, however, our God is used to making unlikely voices heard and keeping even the smallest candles lit. My Advent prayer for Mount Pleasant Presbyterian Church is that we will all seek out some quiet moments in these coming weeks to listen for the "still small voice" of God. If we can do that, then we, like Elijah, might just find that God is not speaking in the cultural winds, earthquakes, or fires around us, but is instead choosing to whisper deeper truths to us in periods of peace and silence.

In that spirit, I want to share with you some of the quiet but earth-shaking hopes of author and pastor Frederick Buechner. Following the lead of scripture, he views the season of Advent as a time that lives between "the fact of darkness and the hope of light." That describes most of us at pretty much any time, I would say. We are constantly trying to keep the little candles of our faith burning despite the many worldly things that seem intent on blowing them out. Personally, I can think of no better image for the season of Advent than that of a lone light shining

in the night – a candle that keeps burning even in the strongest wind – or, as the Gospel of John would say, the kind of light that the darkness of the world can never overcome. That is exactly where Buechner begins in his thoughts of Advent:

What is coming upon the world is the Light of the World. It is Christ. That is the comfort of it. The challenge of it is that it has not come yet. Only the hope for it has come, only the longing for it. In the meantime, we are in the dark, and the dark, God knows, is also in us. We watch and wait for a holiness to heal us and hallow us, to liberate us from the dark. Advent is like the hush in a theater just before the curtain rises. It is like the hazy ring around the winter moon that means the coming of snow which will turn the night to silver. Soon. But for the time being, our time, darkness is where we are.

As the season whirls around you, I pray that God will create for you some quiet moments when you can ponder your own need for the warmth of a candle's glow... your own longing for heavenly illumination... and your own hope for the Light of the World. May that light find you, and keep you, in this holy season.

Blessings and peace,

Rev. Dr. Peter Bynum
Pastor & Head of Staff

CONNECTED THROUGH HOPE

“Praise the Lord.”

“Give thanks to the Lord for he is good; his love endures forever.” (2 Hebrews 12:28-29)

While the year 2020 has been especially difficult for all of us, there are silver linings for which we are thankful! Out of coronavirus comes creativity. Out of the quarantine, we have been given bonus time with our families. The hustle bustle of our busy lives has come to a slower pace. We have reached high to try to find the good, to stay positive and find our new normal. This will be a year we will never forget.

Thanksgiving and Christmas are holidays loved by many and in 2020 the spirit rings louder than ever before. We may not have as many loved ones at our family gatherings this year...but reflecting on the things for which we are thankful helps fill the void caused by those not present. This year, we have had more time to think of those without families. It seems there have been more opportunities to GIVE to others less fortunate. Meal lines have been offered to those without Thanksgiving dinners. Parents have worked harder to teach their children the importance of helping others in need. There is goodness that has come to all of us this year. We simply must look for it!



It has become a tradition for the Laye family to decorate Hope House for Christmas. As we watch the magical transformation created, let us be thankful for all the volunteers who are such an important part of this ministry. Let us look forward to the day we open our doors again to embrace those in need of a place to stay while taking care of their loved ones in our area hospitals. Let us be appreciative of this little house that has provided shelter for those in need. Let us find the silver lining during difficult times and continue to celebrate the meaning of these holidays more than ever before.

Adopt-a-Day at Hope House

DECEMBER 8-14

In Memory of William Edward (Eddie) Twilley, Jr's parents, Mildred and William E. Twilley, Sr.; Given by Beth Fondren and Eddie Twilley

DECEMBER 17-24

In Honor of all of our dedicated volunteers and former guests at Hope House; Given by the Hope House Ministry Team

DECEMBER 15 AND 16

In Memory of Barbara Jeanne Key and Billy and Mary Cone; Given by Miff and Karl Cone

DECEMBER 25

Merry Christmas to all and In Honor of our Lord and Savior's Birth

Visit mppc.net/hope-house to adopt a day!

CONNECTED THROUGH WORSHIP

The Advent and Christmas season will be different this year, but your music ministry has been working hard to bring you some special music. Choirs have been rehearsing by Zoom all fall and recording on Wednesdays, Saturdays, and in our homes. Small bell ensembles have been meeting in-person. You have seen a few fruits of our labors. However, there is more to come. All of the seasonal musical pieces will be combined and presented as a virtual Christmas concert.

Things to look for whether you join us online or in-person:

- Many worship opportunities throughout the season and on Christmas Eve
- Decorations inside and outside the church buildings
- A Christmas tree on the Fellowship Hall porch
- Poinsettia which have been purchased to honor or in memory of loved ones
- Musical selections offered by children, adults and instrumentalists

Christmas Eve services will provide some outside, inside, and virtual choices.

All of the inside services will be live streamed. The outside services will be in the parking lot beside the Fellowship Hall. Please bring your own chairs/blanket and wear a mask. Inside services will require a reservation.

Barbara Loehr-Fox
Director of Music Ministries



Christmas Eve Service Schedule

12 PM – outside, in-person service – carol singing

1 PM – inside, in-person service (reservations and masks required) – no carol singing

2 PM – outside, in-person service – carol singing

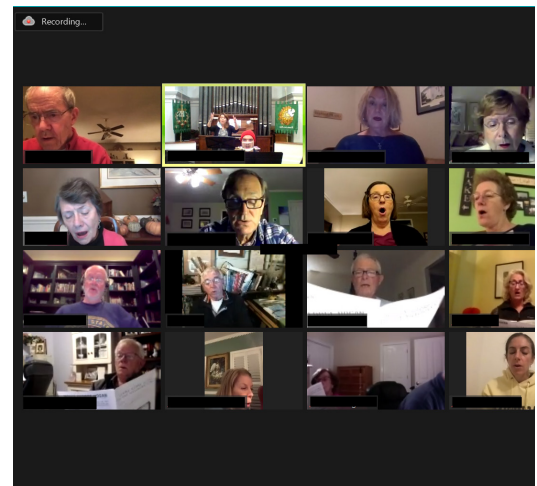
3 PM – inside, in-person service (reservations and masks required) – no carol singing

4 PM – outside, in-person service – carol singing

5 PM – inside, in-person service (reservations and masks required) – ending with a Candlelight Service with carol singing outside (please bring your own candle and lighter)

7 PM – inside, in-person service (reservations and masks required) – ending with a Candlelight Service with carol singing outside (please bring your own candle and lighter)

9 PM – inside, in-person service (reservations and masks required) – ending with a Candlelight Service with carol singing outside (please bring your own candle and lighter)



Order Poinsettias Today

Don't miss an opportunity to decorate our worship spaces with poinsettias. Order yours today on Realm.



CONNECTED THROUGH EDUCATION

An Adult Faith Formation Advent Reflection

One of my favorite TV Christmas shows to watch growing up was “The Little Drummer Boy.” It is the story of a boy who tragically lost everything; his family and his home were destroyed in a fire and he was kidnapped by strange men. In addition to a camel and his pet dog, a drum he received from his parents survived the fire. It was in that drum that he found solace and he put his heart into it when he played. Through a turn of events, the boy finds safety with astrologers (Wise Men) who are traveling to worship a newborn king (Jesus). He sees the riches the men give to Jesus - frankincense, gold, myrrh - but he has nothing to give. He thinks for a minute, and with encouragement, he gives the newborn baby the greatest gift he could. He plays his drum. He gave Jesus his heart.

As we anticipate the birth of Jesus and the celebration of Christmas, we often give gifts to loved ones and people around us. The Little Drummer Boy, though, reminds me to think about what I give Jesus through my life, and not just at Christmas. Through personal and corporate Bible study and worship, through readings and conversations, I seek to give Jesus my heart in service. The Church offers those opportunities to guide my faith formation. And I do it with you.

I hope you will join me in faith formation through Mount Pleasant Presbyterian Church. Even during COVID-19, our connection together is so important to our continued growth. Check out our website, mppc.net/adults, and see where you can join others in growing in faith. I look forward to seeing you as we continue our journey and better ourselves for Christ's service.

Dr. Dan Wiard
Director of Christian Education

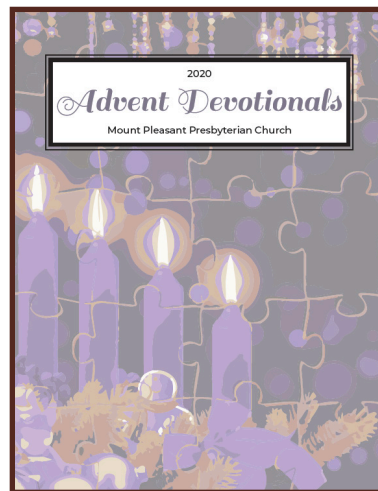


Advent Studies

One week into Advent, there are still studies in which you can connect during this Advent season. *Connect 3* and *Seekers and Sowers* are both studying Walter Brueggemann's book, ***Names for the Messiah***.

Using the Isaiah 9:6 text as his focus, Brueggemann looks at four royal titles associated with Jesus: Wonderful Counselor, Mighty God, Everlasting Father, Prince of Peace. Participants in this study will come away with a deeper understanding of what these titles meant then and what they mean today. The *Academy of St. John's* class is studying Max Lucado's ***Because of Bethlehem***. Lucado points out that the manger is the message of Christmas. No matter what this season holds for us, the promise of Christmas will bring us a lifetime of hope.

The Adult Faith Formation Ministry team has created a weekly ***Advent Devotion*** booklet that includes Scripture, reflective readings, prayers, drawings, and activities for individuals and families to do gathered around the Advent wreath. The ministry team hopes that you will find the booklet meaningful and useful as you anticipate the celebration of the birth of our savior Jesus Christ.



Don't forget, there are other powerful, informative, discussion-based studies on Sunday mornings - *The Middle*, *The Harbor* - and small groups throughout the week that offer opportunities for faith formation, friendship, and conversation.

CONNECTED THROUGH EDUCATION



Important Dates:

Make-A-Wish Holiday Run

Saturday, December 5

CORE Group

Sunday, December 6

CornerStone Youth Christmas Party

Sunday, December 13

**CornerStone Youth Ministry will
pause from Dec. 14 - Jan. 3.**

There is so much hustle and bustle around this time of year between the wrapping, shopping, parties, and eating we really do have a lot to get done. However, what will the hustle look like this year with a pandemic lingering among us? What do we give people? How will we gather? How could we possibly have the Christmas spirit when there are so many that are physically and mentally sick? Presents may look different this year, but the feeling of receiving a present around the holidays will remain. A present for some may be a phone call from a loved one or a wave through a window or even a card to someone in a nursing home. During this season I challenge you to get creative with what you give and how you give.

Take a look at the Wise Giving opportunities or join the MPPC Make-A-Wish Holiday Run Team. There are opportunities to share the love this season and I think it is a blessing that the hustle may come to a halt and that we may truly understand the reason for this glorious season.

Use this time to pause and read the 2020 MPPC Advent Devotional book. See if you can designate time each day to pause and thank our awesome God for all that He has given.

The Advent season is here so let us rejoice and be glad in that!

Courtney Kraus
Director of Youth Ministries



CONNECTED THROUGH EDUCATION

Often, when people experience their first Christmas after becoming parents, the familiar story of the Birth of Jesus rings with new meaning. Mary treasuring the wonder of the moments surrounding her ring true. The greetings of Anna and Simeon in the temple suddenly feel like grandparents fawning over the new infant. Parts of the story that have been in front of us our entire lives are powerfully redefined and we understand them anew.



This year has brought many opportunities to redefine what might be considered “normal,” and Advent arrives on the heels of nine months of changes. We have slowed down, we have found new ways to connect with each other, and we have experienced life together differently. Much of what seemed to be our way of life in March has been replaced by something we didn’t see coming.

It is my hope that this year, we might all find space to capture some of the quiet awe of Advent as families. In the midst of hanging lights and baking cookies, perhaps 2020 will provide an opportunity for you to talk to your children about the promise of the Savior, the faith of the young parents traveling far from home, and the silent night that changed the world forever.

Sarah Harbin-Coleman
Director of Children’s Ministries



Here are some activities your family might engage in to discuss and live out the Christmas story:

- Build a Nativity scene using toys your children have at home – LEGOs are helpful!
- Start a family mission project and discuss how we can serve others in Jesus’ name
- Make finger puppets and read Luke 2 together
- Create an Advent calendar. Paper chains are great, or think outside the box by counting/arranging rocks, ornaments, or even a daily snack.
- Share the joy! Make phone calls to friends and family who are going to be alone in this unusual Christmas season
- Older children can research references to the Messiah in the Old Testament. (Isaiah 53 is a good place to start!)



The Advent wreath is a great way to teach your children the meaning of this season. We light the candles that represent Hope, Peace, Joy (the pink candle), and Love as we reflect on God’s promise fulfilled in Jesus. The white candle in the center is the Christ candle. Ask your children to color the picture above, either while you read the Nativity story in Luke 2, or by filling in a little each week. (Reprinted with permission)

CONNECTED THROUGH MISSION

Challenge Grant Update:

In 2019 a generous donor challenged the MPPC congregation to give generously by offering a \$100,000 matching gift. Not only did the congregation rise to the occasion, you all went above and beyond! Many applications and proposals were studied by sessional committees and the session as a whole and I am thrilled to share that several of those proposals are starting to bear fruit. One of the challenge grants was given to our Mission partner in Haiti, Haiti Outreach Ministries (HOM).

According to the framework of the Challenge Grant program, session approved a grant to HOM to begin construction on HOM's 5th campus in Port au Prince now called the Espwa Campus. The purpose of this grant was twofold. It helped provide jobs for the current HOM staff who were out of work due to mission teams not being allowed in. It also allowed HOM to start building the Espwa Campus. This campus will allow mission partners, from our church and others, to participate in this project in the future. To the right is the update we received from Rev. Gary Fulton, Executive Director of HOM:



Hi Bart and friends at MPPC,

I hope you are doing well. Thank you for your wonderful gift supporting the new Espwa campus. I am glad to be able to tell you that we have started initial construction on the Espwa campus. The land has been cleared, the entrance road has a gravel base layer, and the security wall is going up. I have attached a few pictures so you can see the early progress.

It continues to be a challenging time for Haiti in many ways. Even though we cannot currently travel to Haiti and do not know when we will be able to return to see our friends there, many good things are happening in our ministry. Our churches and schools are open, the medical and dental staff are seeing patients in the Terre Noire clinic, and we plan to start construction on new classrooms at Barye Fe by January so we will be able to accommodate all of the students projected to be at our secondary school starting in September of 2021. Jacky and Leon are doing well and continue to inspire us all. Thank you for your prayers for Haiti.

*Grace and peace,
Gary*



ECCO December Collection

As a result of MPPC Challenge Grant funds, our local mission partner, ECCO (East Cooper Community Outreach) has renovated and enlarged their food warehouse and is thrilled to announce the completion of this project. In order to help them celebrate this exciting event, please consider making a "housewarming" donation to ECCO. Some especially needed items right now are: deodorant, soap, laundry detergent, dish

soap, all-purpose cleaner, oatmeal (small canister or box), regular size dry cereal (not jumbo multipack), turkey gravy, black eyed peas, condiments and assorted drinks.

We will be collecting these items at church on Sunday, December 13th. ECCO is a tremendous help to many in our community who are less fortunate. In the spirit of the season, please consider joining in the celebration to help our neighbors in need!

CONNECTED THROUGH MISSION



Water Missions Tower Before



Water Missions Tower After

International Missions Update

Your MPPC International Missions Team has approved a gift of \$5,000 from our church to Water Missions International for critical needs in flood ravaged Honduras. The recent Atlantic Hurricanes have impacted 1.8 million people with flooding and mudslides from the torrential rains.

Our funds will be specifically directed to be used in Honduras in the state of Colon, which includes La Ceiba and surrounding communities like San Francisco where so many of you have volunteered with Habitat for Humanity, and in Limón, on the far eastern side of Colon.

Limon is at the genesis of MPPC our mission teams work in Honduras. For four years, we have worked at a clinic started by Dr. Henry Gibson of Bamberg, SC, and maintained water filtration units installed there by Water Mission International.

Christmas Cards for East Cooper Meals on Wheels

MPPC members have a long and wonderful relationship with East Cooper Meals on Wheels (ECMOW). You've served as volunteers delivering meals to homebound neighbors in need and volunteered with our Rakes on Wheels project, creating a comforting environment for these same folks, cleaning up yards after storms or in the spring and fall.

Now, as we celebrate the birth of our Savior, we need your help!

Because of COVID, social isolation is magnified as more than 80% of recipients fall into the highest risk group. Instead of daily meals, now homebound elders receive a supply of frozen meals twice weekly to meet all their food needs for the week. Daily interaction is sadly missed. Considering this isolation, something as simple as Christmas cards can brighten a life!

Would you and each family member be willing to write two Christmas cards addressed:

Dear Meals on Wheels Recipient, expressing your love and support for these folks in this Christmas Season?

Your homebound neighbors would love **homemade cards from children** as well as **traditional cards from adults**. In just a few minutes time, two cards by each child and each adult would spread great joy!

Sign your message on these cards either with first names only or your full name. Feel free to write the same message on each card as only one card will be delivered to each recipient. Drop your finished cards with or without envelopes at the church not later than **December 10th**. There will be a marked box to capture these cards at the receptionist's desk. The cards will be delivered to ECMOW where the drivers will deliver each card to a different recipient along with pre-Christmas meals.

Contact Jim and Teri Ingham with any questions. (843) 364-5328

CONNECTED THROUGH GIVING

Wise Giving

The holidays are almost here! Most likely, you will soon be working on your Christmas gift list. There is no better gift to give or receive than to help someone in need. Wise Giving, our MPPC's annual alternative gift giving campaign, supports many of our trusted local and international mission partners. Wise Gifts can be given in honor of your family, friends, secret Santa, a neighbor, or really anyone. A loved one who is honored by your Wise Gift will be blessed by knowing that someone in need is being helped. And, our missional partner that receives your donation will help someone in critical need.



Twelve months ago, as a "normal" Christmas approached, there were many in need, here in our own community and around the world in the Caribbean and Central America and as far away as Africa. Your loving gifts through Wise Giving impacted many, many lives.

Fast forward to 2020! Consider the devastation that COVID19 has had on these same lives. Job loss, shelter beds limited by the pandemic, a lack of nutritious school lunches for many children, and scant food at home for laid-off parents. Your gifts this year through Wise Giving are more important than ever! Wise Giving is a simple and beautiful way to introduce your children to the true meaning of Christmas. Celebrate the birth of our Savior and His light of love. Help His light shine in the darkness. Since 2014, your Wise Giving gifts have provided over \$249,000 of aid to help those less fortunate. Let's continue the tradition!

You can order online at mppc.net/wise-giving or put your order form and payment into an envelope and drop it in the dropbox outside the reception area. Your gift cards and inserts about the mission partner will be packaged for you and ready for pick up at the church. Give a Wise Gift and make a difference!

A Wise Giving gift to an agency like East Cooper Community Outreach (ECCO) helps people like "Judy", a 46 year old, divorced mother of three girls who was furloughed during the pandemic. Judy came to ECCO for assistance paying her mortgage. In her own words *"It's going to be hard this holiday...I can't believe how blessed we are to have you in the community. I never thought I would be in this position-I have always been the donor, not the recipient, and you all have just really been amazing."*



MPPC Endowment

Make MPPC a part of your Legacy. You can truly make a difference for generations to come by naming the church in your documents. As you plan for the future, please consider listing MPPC in your Will, Trust, IRA Beneficiary or Insurance Beneficiary. Please visit the Endowment Tree in the Fellowship Hall or call Harry Smith at 843-708-9555 if you have questions or want more information.

CONNECTED THROUGH COMMUNITY



CHRISMON SCAVENGER HUNT

December 13th - January 3rd
Enjoy at your own pace!



Chrismon Scavenger Hunt: Dec. 13-Jan. 3

MPPC will be hosting a fun, contact free, high tech Chrismon scavenger hunt using QR codes and your phone. As you may remember, Chrismons are ornaments that have religious symbols to remind us that Christmas is all about Jesus's birthday. We will have placed 10 Chrismon QR clues all around the church campus for you to find beginning December 13 until January 3! Please start at the front steps of the Sanctuary for clue #1 and enjoy learning more about Chrismons and seeing our beautiful outdoor tree all decorated!

All of the clues, answers, and directions to your next Chrismon location will be accessible from your phone. We would love for you to snap photos while you are on the hunt. Please post on social #chrismonhuntmppc and send a photo to Logan at lprochaska@mppc.net so we can share with the larger church family. Enjoy!

Virtual Angel Tree

As members of MPPC we are all called to love and help our neighbors and the Angel Tree is an opportunity to share the joy of Christmas with children and families in our area. The Angel Tree serves six area elementary and middle schools, as well as Windwood Farms. In late October we reach out to the guidance counselors of each school asking for families who they believe would benefit from our program. Each family is asked for items that would be beneficial for their children and the family.

This year we will be using Sign Up Genius to pick an angel. Each child has two angels on the "tree," one for clothes and one for toys. The items listed for the angel are the wish list of the families, please feel free to get what you see fit. You do not have to purchase it all. Once you have selected an angel from Sign Up genius please have your gift wrapped or in a gift bag to the church by December 13th. All wrapped gifts need to be placed on the Fellowship Hall table with a label attached including the Angel's name and number. (Ex: Angel #3, Sally). Visit www.signupgenius.com/go/10c0d45afae22a3f9c43-mppc to pick an angel.



Mount Pleasant Presbyterian Church Learning Center is seeking a Director

for the faith-based weekday preschool. The successful candidate will have experience and knowledge working with early childhood education. Core responsibilities include growing and developing a mission-based preschool, managing day-to-day operations of the LC, personnel oversight, and budgetary knowledge. Strong communication and interpersonal skills required. 30 hours/week. Bachelor's degree or at least 5 years' experience working in an early childhood environment that includes at least 1-year supervision of childcare staff required. Send resumes and cover letter to directorlcmppc@gmail.com by 12/10.



Mount Pleasant Presbyterian Church

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CONNECT WITH US

SUNDAY SCHEDULE

9:00 a.m. Online Worship
10:30 a.m. In-Person and Online Worship
11:30 a.m. Outdoor Worship

Visit mppc.net to learn more about faith formation opportunities for all ages!

SERMONS

Live Streaming: mppc.net/watch-live-on-sunday
Sermons: mppc.net/sermons
Podcasts: tiny.cc/mtpleasantpodcasts

EVENTS, REGISTRATIONS & NEWS

mppc.net/events

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OTHER WAYS

mppc.net/contact
843-884-4612

PRAYER REQUESTS

mppc.net/prayer-requests