



Mount Pleasant Presbyterian Church

THE PELICAN

January 2021

FROM THE PASTOR

A New Beginning

*"... those who wait for the LORD shall renew their strength,
they shall mount up with wings like eagles, they shall run and not be weary,
they shall walk and not faint." (Isaiah 40:31)*



I think it happened sometime during the summer, that moment when we all started saying "2020" with an edge in our voice and a roll of our eyes.

For reasons no one needs recounted, the year itself had become shorthand for Murphy's Law – the idea that, if it could

go wrong in this crazy year, it probably would. By the time December finally rolled around, all hearts seemed to have fixed themselves firmly on the 31st. We were beyond ready for the calendar to flip, so we could wipe the slates of our spirits clean and start again.

Now, as this much-anticipated year begins, I find my thoughts wandering back to an earlier time and an earlier tragedy. More accurately, I remember something said after that tragedy was over, when we were all picking up the pieces and trying to find a way forward in a world that would never be the same. On December 14, 2012, twenty children and six adults were shot and killed on what began as a normal day at Sandy Hook Elementary School in Newtown, Connecticut. Like many parents of young children, I struggled to comprehend the dark depths of that kind of horror. And then, just as we were trying to comprehend what had happened and why, a unique photograph -- and an even more unique quotation -- began to make the rounds on social media. The meme combined a picture of Fred Rogers greeting a child with words the pastor and television icon had said many times before: *"When I was a boy and I would see scary things in the news, my mother would say to me, 'Look for the helpers. You will always find people who are helping.'"* Almost overnight, the meme was shared tens of thousands of times by people all over the world. It helped a nation to renew its strength.

As we look to put 2020 behind us, I am taking this good advice. I am looking for the helpers. Thinking about where we have been, I see all the heroic doctors and nurses who worked so hard, in such dangerous conditions, to care for the sick and keep us well. I see the researchers who dove headfirst into the quest for a vaccine and accomplished their goals in record time. I see people who stood up against injustice and dared to speak up for those whose voices were not being heard. And I see people who chose every day to see the good in others and in the world, even when so much negativity, anxiety, and conflict swirled around them.

Looking ahead to the year to come, I am still looking for the helpers. At this point, however, I am not looking outward. I am looking inward. I am looking for us, and I am looking at us. This year, we can be the helpers. This year, we can be the ones who stand up and speak up for justice. This year, we can be people who work for peace. This year, we can be people who dare to live and love sacrificially, for the good of our brothers and sisters, and to the glory of God. Scripture says that those who dare to live with this kind of optimism are given everything they need to not only succeed, but to fly. They will *"renew their strength... they shall mount up with wings like eagles... they shall run and not be weary... they shall walk and not faint."*

This year, let's not only look to the helpers. Let's be the helpers that this world needs us to be.

Blessings and peace,

Rev. Dr. Peter Bynum
Pastor & Head of Staff

CONNECTED THROUGH HOPE

Holding on to Hope for 2021

Lord, I maintain my hope in You and I hold onto the assurance that what I am praying for is already accomplished in the name of Jesus. (Psalm 84:11)

Hope that our global health crisis will come to an end.

Hope that the COVID vaccine can be administered safely and quickly to all those who need it, and to everyone else soon thereafter.

Hope that our lives will return to some sense of normalcy again soon.

And Hope that we can put out the welcome mats at Hope House and Hope Cottage in the not-so-distant future.

When that go-ahead is given, you can be sure we will be ready to reach out to those in need of a safe, temporary place to call home as they care for loved ones in area hospitals.



You may see some changes, in particular to Hope Cottage. Other changes that have taken place over the last ten months are not as obvious.

Yet the mission remains the same as the Hope House ministry looks forward to an 11th year of providing hope and peace to all those who stay here.

May each of you have a Blessed and Healthy New Year.

Adopt-a-Day at Hope House

JANUARY 1

Happy New Year, praying for a better 2021; Given by Lawrence and Phyllis Simeon

JANUARY 11

In Honor of Rhett Moore; Given by B.J. Moore

JANUARY 19

In Honor of Michael John Widener; Given by Ken and Donna Widener

JANUARY 7

In Honor of Brenda and Toby Craig; Given by Barbara Horton

JANUARY 14

In Honor of Henry Warren Rowe on his birthday; Given by Ken and Donna Widener

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

CONNECTED THROUGH EDUCATION

The Adult Faith Formation Ministry Team and Christian Education Committee of MPPC Present the 2021 Congregational Lenten Study:

Living into Lent

**Kickoff - Sunday, February 14, 5-6 p.m.
Rev. Dr. Von Clemans, Presenter**

"There are only two days with fewer than twenty-four hours in each lifetime, sitting like bookends astride our lives: one is celebrated every year, yet it is the other that makes us see living as precious." — Kathryn Mannix, With the End in Mind: Dying, Death and Wisdom in an Age of Denial

About the Presentation: This presentation will frame our shared Lenten journey in terms of the last week of Lent (Holy Week). Looking closely at the biblical texts of Holy Week as we will explore how the seven movements of the *Living Into Lent* devotional book – following Jesus, meditating, praying, loving, thanking, enacting and gathering -- provide ways of reflecting on the Christian faith that can be meaningful and significant for us as disciples of Jesus.

About the Book: This year we use the book *Living into Lent*, by Donald K. McKim, as our Lenten small group study. McKim describes his book as being written for those "who want to focus on Christian living and reflection during the season of Lent." Through daily readings and weekly gatherings, participants will engage in devotions, a biblical text for the devotion drawn from the Scripture passage, a theological quote, a devotional essay, an Action Step, and a prayer that connects life and Scripture to our call to discipleship as followers and ambassadors for Jesus Christ. Suggested book donation: \$7.00.

About Small Groups: Registration for Small Groups begins **January 17, 2021**. Participants can sign up for specific or "open" small groups via Realm or by contacting Trish Snead in the church office. You can

access and signup for a group facilitator through your Realm account by going to **Community > Groups > 2021 Lent Small Groups**. An "open" group means that you are interested in that particular small group format (in-person or virtual) and are open to who facilitates your group. "Open" group registrants will be paired with a group. If you would like to facilitate a small group, please contact Dan Wiard or Trish Snead at the church.



Bytes of Faith: God Time

Welcome to the new year! I invite you to join me in my God space in this month's *Bytes of Faith* as we talk about time we spend with God, that personal time we both talk and listen to God. We begin our conversation out on the bike, literally, and conclude with reflective time using *Psalms 139*. What does your "God time" look like? Are you able to have those raw, heart-felt conversations with God? How do you hear God's voice? The start of a new year is a great opportunity to collect your thoughts and prayerfully consider time spent with God. I hope you will join me.

Blessings,

Dr. Dan Wiard
Director of Christian Education



Bytes of Faith is an opportunity for you to gather and invite a staff member into your home to hear and talk about topics of faith. It is a way for us to "connect." These short 15-minute clips are designed for all ages and invite viewers to engage in a subject through conversation and activities at the end of each recording.

(Lent) is a time for reflecting on our Christian lives, listening to God's word and will for us, and engaging in practices that can deepen our Christian experience. — **Donald K. McKim**, *Living into Lent*. Presbyterian Publishing Corporation. Kindle Edition.

LIVING INTO LENT

*Sunday, February 14,
5-6 pm*

This presentation will frame our shared Lenten journey in terms of the last week of Lent (Holy Week). Looking closely at the biblical texts of Holy Week as we will explore how the seven movements of the *Living Into Lent* devotional book – following Jesus, meditating, praying, loving, thanking, enacting and gathering -- provide ways of reflecting on the Christian faith as disciples of Jesus.



REV. DR. VON CLEMANS

is a PC(USA) pastor/educator who retired after over four decades in ministry, most recently serving for 18 years as associate pastor of adult faith formation ministries at Myers Park Presbyterian Church in Charlotte, NC. His doctoral studies focused on educational ministry and technology. He is a past president of the Association of Presbyterian Church Educators (APCE). He currently serves as an online instructor for Vibrant Faith Ministries and as a congregational coach for Creating a Culture of Calling, an initiative funded by the Lilly Endowment. He is working on certification as a professional coach with the International Coach Federation. His passion is helping congregations, educators, and pastors strengthen adult education and faith formation.

CONNECTED THROUGH EDUCATION

A new year and a fresh start - this is music to our ears after a crazy year facing a global pandemic while social injustice is at an all-time high, and toilet paper is at an all-time low. We have been praying for this new beginning, but these problems do not go away once the clock strikes midnight. Instead, a new chapter begins. It is time to make changes ourselves so that these problems are behind us. We can do this by loving one another, trusting science, and knowing that our Lord and Savior will see this through.

The youth of MPPC have been very interested in finding God during these difficult times and you would be amazed with what they have to say. They are people who see the joy in the midst of sadness and turmoil. I personally learn from them every time I am around them – and praise be to God for that!

Let's celebrate our youth and what they have to offer to MPPC and to the world. So welcome 2021...we are ready for you. And God, we are ready to serve you every step of the way!



Courtney Kraus
Director of Youth Ministries



CONNECTED THROUGH EDUCATION

Faith Practices for Kids in the New Year

I like to do something on New Year's Eve that relates to New Year's Day in some way. Sometimes I'll make challah bread for dinner and have it as French toast the next day. Sometimes I'll start a project and finish it the next day. The act of carrying over something like a bridge reminds me that even though we look at a new year like a fresh start, it truly isn't. We bring all of our stuff from the year before with us, good or bad, and we get to decide how it will be a part of the new year.

That's exactly why this year, I might let myself skip that tradition.



Are you the type to make New Year's resolutions? If so, do you keep them for 5 minutes or do they become a life changing event? New Year's resolutions, or intentions, are a great way to create a faith practice for children. This also helps your children remember the message of Ecclesiastes 3:1-8, that there is a season for all things in God's creation. No matter how long you typically keep your intentions, there's a way to help your kids use the idea of a new year to deepen their faith! Read below for ideas you might use to help your kids prayerfully enter 2021, both short-term for your January 1 celebrations and versions for continuing throughout the year!

Sarah Harbin-Coleman
Director of Children's Ministries



Show your kids your favorite verse in the Bible. Have them find and mark it in their own Bible, and create original artwork from it. They can hang it in their rooms or put it above their desk, so that they can learn the verse and think of it all year long.

OR

Select 52 verses and have your kids use one as a memory verse each week! I have a PDF set up for this if you would like a copy.

Ask your children to choose an act of kindness and 12 ways they might practice that act of kindness. They can carry out all 12 acts at one time, or spread them out with one per month.

OR

Make a Random Acts of Kindness jar with 52 ideas, written on small pieces of paper. Shake them up and each week, take one out and practice it!

Ask children to write a prayer for the new year. They might include prayer concerns, praises, and intentions for how they want to serve God and love others in the new year.

OR

Have your children resolve to lead prayer with your family every night or once a week throughout the year.

Ask your children to choose their favorite hymn or Christian song to listen to as they prepare for the new year.

OR

Create a worship playlist or follow mine (use the QR code) and listen to it together all year long!



CONNECTED THROUGH MISSION

A 2020 MPPC Missions Christmas thank you!

Christmas 2020, the end of a devastating year for so many in our community and around the world, brought an outpouring of love from you, our MPPC sisters and brothers in Christ! In so many ways, your hands and feet, your gifts of supplies, and your gifts of hard-earned money shared our Lord's love with those that are among the poorest in resources. It was beautiful to see the ways in which adults, youth, and children all became involved!

East Cooper Meals on Wheels

By the middle of December, a total of 210 Christmas cards that you and your families created for the homebound recipients of East Cooper Meals on Wheels (www.ecmow.org) had been delivered. The cards were delivered, bringing joy and love along with special Christmas meals to folks who have been especially hard hit by the isolation caused by the COVID virus. (Plans are already in place to repeat this loving project at Easter with cards for ECMOW recipients still isolated by the virus.)



Angel Tree

A picture tells a thousand words...**Thank you Angel Tree Donors!** Thank you to all of our amazing members and friends who decided to bless an "angel" this year. We served 7 organizations this year and 131 children with 2 angels per child (one for clothes, one for toys). We know there were many, many children who woke up on Christmas morning smiling due to your kindness, generosity, and love!

East Cooper Community Outreach

East Cooper Community Outreach (www.eccocharleston.org), a long-time mission partner of our church and a recipient of funds from your Challenge Grant donations, continues to provide food & clothing, dental & medical services, financial assistance, empowerment, and household furnishings to those in need right here in our immediate community. With your monetary donations through the Challenge Grant, supplies, and labor in re-stocking their shelves, ECCO was able to enlarge and renovate their food warehouse to provide a greater service to East Cooper residents.



CONNECTED THROUGH MISSION

Wise Giving

So many local and international MPPC partner agencies have benefited from our 2020 MPPC annual alternative gift giving campaign. A loved one who is honored by your Wise Gift has been blessed by knowing that someone in need is being helped. And, every mission partner that received your donation will help multiple people in critical need. This year was no exception, and your generosity was particularly needed considering the devastation that COVID-19 has had on lives here and around the world.



HALOS

Kinship care is when loved ones - like grandparents, relatives or close family friends - care for a child when parents are unable to do so. Kinship care helps children maintain bonds, provides stability, and gives them a feeling of identity and belonging. HALOS (www.charlestonhalos.org) serves these kinship caregivers who are raising children in order to keep them out of foster care with strangers. The Academy of St. John continues to reach out in support of this worthy agency, especially in this time of COVID.

HALOS
Because Family Matters.®

Tricounty Family Ministries



Members from the Connect 3 Sunday School class collected close to a \$700 total of \$25 gift cards to places like Walmart and Target for the North Charleston community served by Tricounty Family Ministries (www.tricountyfamilyministries.org). The cards were given to parents with young children so they could have the dignity of buying their children Christmas presents themselves.

Additionally, as suggested in the MPPC Advent Book, many of you generously supported the "Sock Box" collection for Tricounty Family Ministries. The box was filled several times over with a cornucopia of socks and toiletries.



Another mission opportunity listed in the MPPC Advent Book served members of our own church. Our Christmas card project saw children and adults creating Christmas cards for MPPC members who are home bound or unable to get to church...such a simple thing that brings so much happiness!

CONNECTED THROUGH WORSHIP

Happy New Year from your Music Ministries!

I believe we are all happy to put 2020 behind us. However, before we get too far into the new year I would like to thank everyone who got us through the fall and Christmas season. From the parents, children and adults who supported the music program to the wonderful members who decorated and undecorated the church, we say a heartfelt thank you. Your diligence and efforts proved that the Body of Christ perseveres through all hardships. We learned how to use new technology, heard ourselves sing up-close and met each other in masks to ring and decorate. There were more smiles and laughter than frustration and our faith grew.

As we look to 2021, we have a certainty that things will begin to get back to normal. I'm mainly looking forward to in-person rehearsals. I miss the children's smiles, hugs and high fives. The deep conversations, laughter and tears of the adults have been mostly absent as well. We'll need to be patient for a while longer. The Zoom rehearsals and weekly recording sessions aren't quite over. However, there is an end in sight and for that I am grateful.

If you want to join in on the fun, give Jason or me a call or send an email –

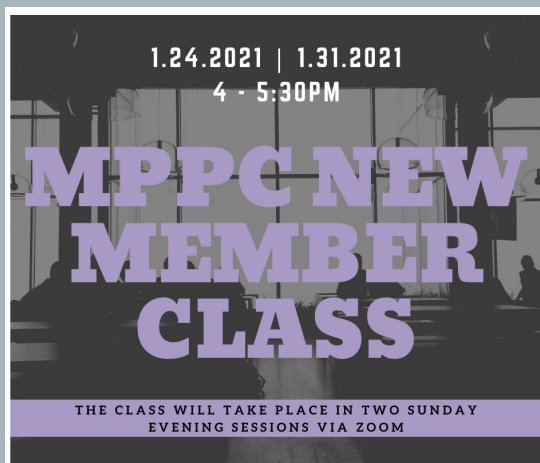
- Bells - Monday evenings in small groups
- Children's music – Wednesday afternoons
- Adult music – Wednesday evenings.

There is always room for YOU!

Barbara Loehr-Fox
Director of Music Ministries



CONNECTED THROUGH COMMUNITY



New Member Class

Our next New Member Class will be held on January 24th and January 31st. Participants will meet via Zoom from 4 p.m. until 5:30 p.m. on both Sundays. These two evening classes will allow us to introduce each of you and us. Pastors, Elders and other church leaders will join us to talk about life at MPPC and answer any questions you may have. Please spread the word, and ask any friends and neighbors who may be considering membership in our church to contact Rev. Bart Edwards with any questions they may have.

The D4 Initiative

This December, your Deacons discussed a variety of possible service projects we could lead on behalf of the MPPC congregation. Thanks to Pastor Lib's fantastic idea, the Deacons decided to do a diaper drive for the Bundles of Joy diaper bank. Our goal was to "fill up a truck" with diapers, and we called it the Deacon December Diaper Drive, better known to the Deacons as the "D4 Initiative."

Did you know that an average monthly supply of diapers costs approximately \$80? The only federal assistance program that can be used for diapers is TANF (Temporary Assistance for Needy Families), but TANF has to cover many other expenses, including heat, electric and water bills, rent, clothing, transportation, and other basic needs. Little if any money is available to purchase enough diapers to keep a baby clean, dry, and healthy.

As you can see from the picture on the right, the Deacons did fill up a truck with diapers (and then some)! We made the donation to the Bundles of Joy diaper bank on behalf of the entire congregation at MPPC, and they were thrilled to have the donation. All of the Deacons were overjoyed to participate in this service project, and we hope we made a small difference for those in need.

Sincerely,
The Deacons at MPPC



The 4G Network - Getting Grounded in the Gospels

2021 offers a new opportunity for Bible study - specifically deepening our relationship with Jesus Christ through diving deep and lingering awhile in the 4 gospel narratives. Similar to A Year With the Bible, but with a less demanding reading schedule, we read a chapter a day and gather via Zoom on the Tuesdays between January 5 and April 6 from 12:10-1 p.m. for a discussion facilitated by Parish Associate Lib McGregor Simmons. Contact lmcgregorsimmons@mppc.net to indicate your interest and to receive your Zoom invitation.



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

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