

Mount Pleasant Presbyterian Church

THE PELICAN

March 2021



FROM THE PASTOR

*Therefore lift your drooping hands and strengthen your weak knees,
and make straight paths for your feet, so that what is lame may not be put out of joint,
but rather be healed. (Hebrews 12:12-13)*



More and more people are talking about it – a sense of exhaustion, disorientation, and weakened spirits. For some it manifests itself mostly as loneliness and the pain of isolation. Others find themselves unusually anxious, especially about health and wellness. Some are primarily annoyed and angry, frustrated that things are not returning to “normal” the way we wish they would. On the whole, lots of us feel like we are drowning under the constant weight of work, home, family, and school responsibilities. If financial strain and job insecurity are added to the mix, it all begins to feel like too much – way too much. The collective experience of this feeling now has a name: “pandemic fatigue.”

While I wish I had a quick solution for this issue, I do not. We are all feeling this fatigue to one degree or another. I do, however, take solace in the good signs we are seeing. Numbers and rates of infection, thank God, seem to be trending downward. More and more people are receiving the vaccine. In many ways, the light on the horizon seems to be getting brighter, and for that I am grateful.

In the meantime, we continue to wait. Providentially, the season of Lent is a time perfectly suited for this kind of waiting. Lent invites us to take time to reflect and be honest with ourselves about pain we are feeling, pain we are causing, and pain we hope God will assuage. As we engage this discipline, let me offer two resources that may be of help to you. First, if you are recognizing signs of pandemic fatigue in yourselves, you do not need to suffer alone. Reach out to a pastor, a church educator, a Sunday School acquaintance, or another friend in the church and share what you are feeling.

The church has a vibrant Stephen Ministry program that is ready and willing to offer a listening ear and a compassionate spirit to you. Even in this pandemic, meaningful connections continue to be made in our church. All you have to do is reach out, and a friend is near.

Secondly, scripture remains one of the greatest gifts God has given to us. The book of Psalms, for example, is full of prayers, laments, and cries from people struggling under the weight of life's burdens. When we make these ancient words our own, when we pray them like the original psalmists prayed them, we discover that their faith becomes ours as well. So, I will close with some words from one of those ancient cries to God (*Psalms 31*), which I offer here as my prayer for all of us who are experiencing pandemic fatigue in this season of our shared faith:

In you, O LORD, I seek refuge... Incline your ear to me; rescue me speedily.

Be a rock of refuge for me, a strong fortress to save me. You are indeed my rock and my fortress; for your name's sake lead me and guide me; take me out of the net that is hidden for me, for you are my refuge.... Be gracious to me, O LORD, for I am in distress; my eye wastes away from grief, my soul and body also... my strength fails because of my misery, and my bones waste away... Let your face shine upon your servant; save me in your steadfast love... O how abundant is your goodness that you have laid up for those who fear you, and accomplished for those who take refuge in you...

Love the LORD, all you his saints. The LORD preserves the faithful... Be strong, and let your heart take courage, all you who wait for the LORD. Amen.

Blessings and peace,

Rev. Dr. Peter Bynum
Pastor & Head of Staff

CONNECTED THROUGH WORSHIP

Greetings from your Worship and Music Ministry!

While our Lenten and Easter Worship opportunities are a bit different this year, you may be able to participate even more fully due to the variety of ways to connect. One of the blessings of this difficult time is that everyone is able to participate in ways which make them the most comfortable. Please choose your way and join us.

- Our traditional **Noon Lenten Worship and Lunch** series will be virtual. Each Thursday – Feb. 25, Mar. 4, 11, 18 and 25 - one of the ministers, Dan Wiard or myself will lead a short time of scripture and prayer with a musical offering. The videos will stay up through Lent, so you may view them at any time. They are available on mppc.net/video-resources, as well as on Facebook and our YouTube channel.
- **Maundy Thursday**, April 1, will be an in-person and live-streaming service of worship at 7 p.m. The live-stream of this service will be available on mppc.net, Facebook, and YouTube.
- On **Good Friday**, April 2, our annual Prayer Vigil will take place. More details to come.

Easter Morning will have an expanded schedule –

- **7 a.m.** – In-person outside porch service (no reservations needed).
- **9 a.m.** – Pre-recorded full worship service with video presentations of the combined adult choirs' anthems and a children's sermon and choir offering on our website, Facebook and YouTube.
- **9 a.m.** – In-person service with overflow in the Fellowship Hall (reservations required).
- **10:30 a.m.** – In-person service with overflow in the Fellowship Hall (reservations required). Also, live-streaming available on our website, Facebook and YouTube.
- **11:30 a.m.** – In-person outside porch service (no reservations needed). The Net Band will provide musical leadership. The live-stream of this service will be available on mppc.net, Facebook, and YouTube.

Barbara Loehr-Fox
Director of Music Ministries



In Other News –

Your Fine Arts Ministry will sponsor the Village Concert Series in March. The program will feature the Gravel Road Bluegrass Band, Thursday, March 18, at 7 pm. The group is comprised of local teachers who will sing hymns, gospel songs and other favorites. The band will perform from the Fellowship Hall Porch and concert goers will watch from the gravel parking lot. Please bring your own chairs or blankets and socially distance with masks on as you enjoy this wonderful concert. You won't want to miss this fun event.



CONNECTED THROUGH EDUCATION

What Will Faith Formation Look Like in a Post-Pandemic World?

If you are participating in our church-wide Lenten study *Living into Lent*, you are one-third of the way through our study! We explored the spiritual practice of *Following Jesus*, the definition of Christian life and experience, and *Meditating*, pondering who God is and what God has done. This first week of March we are somewhere in the midst of *Praying*, one of the central practices of Christian faith, and soon we will explore *Loving*, where our Christian gospel is centered in God's love for the world and the matchless expression of that love in God's Son, Jesus Christ.

While I journey through Lent with these four spiritual practices, seven in total when we are done, I am also trying to look through these practices as a lens and ask, "What will faith formation look like in a post-pandemic world?" From conversations to conferences throughout our denomination, there is rising consensus that **how** we do church is changing. We will embrace things we did well before the pandemic, but we will also blend and keep some of the new things we learned and developed and continue to learn and develop.

Bruce Reyes-Chow, pastor and former moderator of the PCUSA, offered this perspective at the most recent Association of Presbyterian Church Educators conference as it applies to worship based on results from a survey he did. I suggest the model is applicable to education, too. Church has five options for post-pandemic service/ (education) formats: In-person only, Zoom/ Remote only, Streaming, In-person and zoom, and Hybrid. Pre-pandemic we can argue that

MPPC was in-person and streaming in worship. In education, however, our pre-pandemic education was strictly in-person. Based on survey results, we want to create an experience where, whether in-person or remote, people have essentially the same (education) experience – a hybrid model. Among questions Reyes-Chow suggests we need to consider: "What is the most faithful decision for the future of the community?" Further, he says that it is "reimagining over replication. Take advantage of the platform to enhance the (education) experience."

Lent is a time to reflect on our discipleship journey. I am doing that, but I am also meditating and praying and so much more, about the how (and why) of faith formation in the church. It's a time of discernment. I am curious how you are reimagining how we will do faith formation post-pandemic. My door is virtually open, and the porch is a great place for in-person conversation. I hope you will share your ideas with me as we reimagine together.



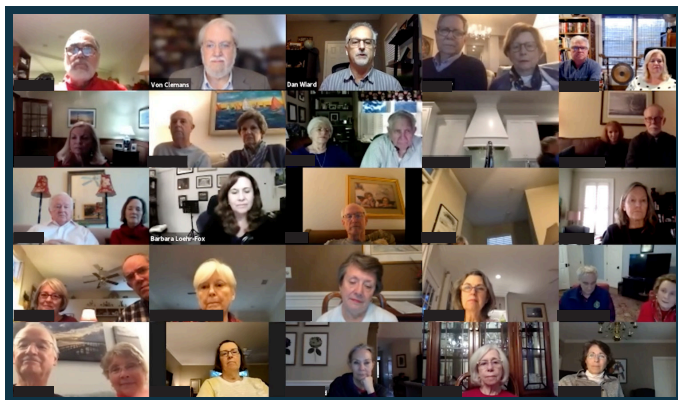
Dr. Dan Wiard
Director of Christian Education

On the Communion Table...

We have stood behind physical, wooden tables and spoken metaphorically about the expansive nature of the Body of Christ. We now have the opportunity to act, live, and love as if we believe this to be true.
(The Reimagined Table) – Bruce Reyes-Chow

Interesting facts about our Lenten Small Groups:

- More than 240 people are signed up and participating in 20 Lenten Small Groups. Four groups are in-person; sixteen groups are via Zoom.
- There are 30 Small Group Facilitators.
- Lenten Small Groups are meeting on Sunday, through Friday, beginning as early as 7 a.m. to as late as 8 p.m.
- More than 90 unique users and approximately 120 people participated in the first virtual Lenten Small Group Kickoff.

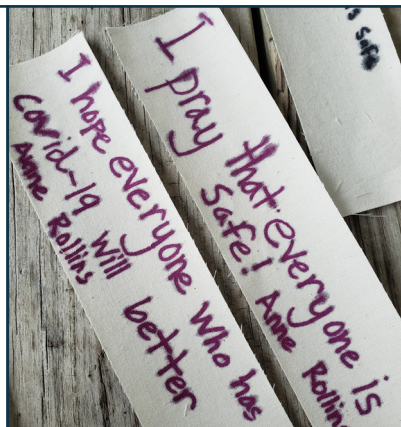
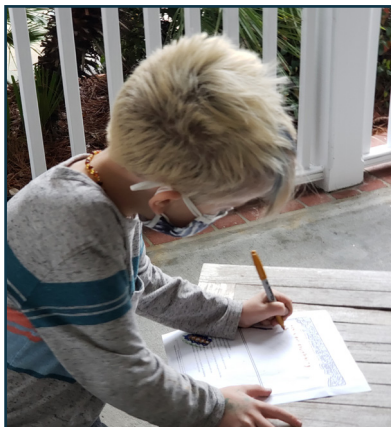
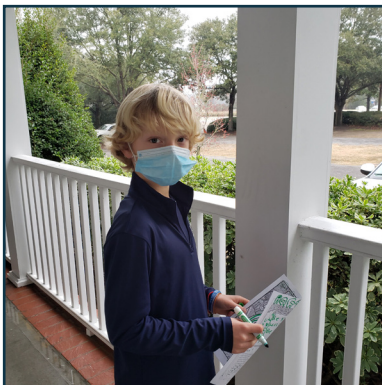


CONNECTED THROUGH EDUCATION

The 3rd-5th grade elementary students have been enjoying safe monthly gatherings, and it has been great to get together and spend time in prayer, fellowship, and service. Below are just a few of our pictures.

We are currently developing opportunities for other age groups to gather safely! As always, thank you for trusting us with your child's faith journey.

Sarah Harbin-Coleman
Director of Children's Ministries



Save the Dates for these March Children's Ministry events!

- March 21 – Third Grade Bibles presented
- VBS Registration Opens April 1 (Camp is August 2-6)
- Holy Week – Return Lenten Change collections
- Bethelwoods Camp July 11-16 (Register at bethelwoods.org)
- April 11-May 30 – 1st and 3rd grade lessons available
- May 2 – First Grade observes communion
- Third Thursdays – 3rd-5th grade
- Coming Soon: K-2 gatherings and preschool opportunities!

Don't forget to collect change for Dee Norton CAC during Lent!

CONNECTED THROUGH EDUCATION

During this season of Lent, I am reflecting in many ways, one being the way we have grown as a youth group since March of 2020. This time last year the fear of COVID-19 was new and we were unsure of how long this “new normal” would last. Schools, restaurants, extracurriculars, and even youth group gatherings were canceled because of this new virus that was spreading across the country and across the world. As the reality of the effects of the virus set in, I thought to myself: What in the world is going on? I mourned the lives lost at the hands of the virus and yearned for a time when I could meet with the youth in person again. The closures then resulted in a quarantine intended to keep us safe from each other through separation. Although I count the time I was able to spend with my family in Hartsville last summer as a blessing, the void that had formed where in-person MPPC youth gatherings had been quickly began to weigh on me. While the novelty of Zoom meetings and other virtual activities was fun, I continued to ask myself when I would be able to be with my youth without a screen between us.

All in all, the outbreak of the pandemic started a whole new adventure in the world of youth ministry. Facebook groups were abuzz with questions like: “What are your youth liking on Zoom?” “Is your participation low or high?” “How can we, as educators, support each other?!” Christian educators shared questions like these, as well as creative ways to adapt to the new normal, along the way. Then summer came, and the cancellations continued...no Montreat, no CROSS mission trip, no day trips to Charleston Fun Park. Cancellations are hard for the youth, but they are also hard for the youth advisors and especially for the person who bears the responsibility of breaking the news of cancellations...the youth director. We are now in March 2021 and even though we can meet in-person outside, the reality of cancellations are still present. Now, 12 months into the pandemic, I am still figuring out what a revised version of youth ministry looks like. The truth is, we’re all continuing to figure out what normal looks like every time we wake up.

One of the critical reminders that I have found is that we HAVE to stop comparing what our lives look like now to what we had pre-COVID-19. Instead of looking back to what we had, we should focus intently on what we have with each new day and with the progress of COVID vaccination. Even with the odds against us, we HAVE done amazing things and will continue to make great strides as we press forward diligently.

Based on the reflections I have spent time with over the past year, I have decided that we have to remember the positive things that have happened last year as opposed to getting focused on the negative ones. We have come SO far in the world of youth ministry and there is truly no stopping us now because we have officially been through the thick of it together. Let us praise God for allowing us to feel uncomfortable, for feeling unsure of what the future holds, for stretching us to our most creative lengths. Yes, this too shall pass, but what can we take from what we have learned from this past year to keep us moving forward?

Courtney Kraus
Director of Youth Ministries



Save the Dates:

- March 21st: Confirmation Day Retreat at Sunrise Presbyterian Church
- April 18th: YOUTH SUNDAY
- April 25th: CornerStone End of the Year Party
- May 2nd: Confirmation Sunday



Souper Bowl of Caring Update:

Thank you MPPC Church family for your donations on Souper Bowl Sunday! We raised \$580.00 for 180Place!

CONNECTED THROUGH HOPE

Gifts of Hope

"Good will come to those who are generous and lend freely, who conduct their affairs with justice." (Psalm 112:5)

Your generous spirit continues to shine on Hope House, for which we are enormously grateful.

During Wise Giving in 2020, more than four thousand dollars was donated to our Adopt-A-Day program! Every donation goes toward operating Hope House and Hope Cottage. That alone costs about \$50 a day, even during times like this when we cannot have guests.

We are so blessed that these donations continue to come in every month, mainly from church members.

Adopt-A-Day is a way you can acknowledge a family member or friend with an honorary, congratulatory, or memorial gift. Plus, it's tax deductible!



From all of us at Hope House, our heartfelt thanks go out to those of you who have given so generously, and continue to do so.

We cannot wait to reopen the doors to those families who need a safe and peaceful place to stay as they care for loved ones in area hospitals.

Adopt-a-Day at Hope House

MARCH 1

In Honor of Rev. Dr. Peter Bynum; Given by Marshall and Lisa Hay and Addison and Ellen Hay Johnson

MARCH 9

In Honor of Christy Widener Rowe on her Birthday; Given by Ken and Donna Widener

MARCH 18

In Honor of my loving Husband, Greg McCoy, on his birthday; Given by Judy McCoy

MARCH 28

In Honor of our Family and our church family at MPPC; Given by Mike and Claire Walsh

MARCH 5

In Honor of Barbara Loehr-Fox; Given by Marshall and Lisa Hay and Addison and Ellen Hay Johnson

MARCH 15

In Memory of Audrey Scott Peper, Steve Peper's Mother; Given by Stephanie and Lynn McCants

MARCH 23

In Memory of Jane Bishop; Given by Joyce Peters and Linda Vingi

MARCH 30

In Loving Memory of Lori Blackburn; Given Anonymously

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

CONNECTED THROUGH MISSION

Charleston Area Justice Ministry

"He has shown you o mortal, what is good, and what does the Lord require of you but to do justice, love mercy and walk humbly with your God" (Micah 6:8)

On February 23rd, upon the recommendation of the Sessional Missions Committee, at the request of the Local Missions Team and in support of the more than thirty MPPC members actively involved in the Charleston Area Justice Ministry (CAJM), the Session approved MPPC's formal membership in CAJM as a covenanted congregation. While engagement in social justice ministries may be relatively new to MPPC, our denomination has a long and rich history of promoting social justice. As a covenanted congregation we join seven member congregations from the PC(USA) Charleston Atlantic Presbytery and thirty other faith-based congregations and community organizations who have come together with one goal: to make the Charleston area more just.

CAJM's culturally, economically, geographically, and religiously diverse membership speaks with one powerful voice for justice for the wider Charleston community. Among CAJM's accomplishments over the last ten years, it has:

- Increased preschool educational opportunities in Charleston County by securing commitments for 2200+ more seats for pre-school education for at-risk 4 year-olds
- Decreased school suspension rates and school-based arrests in the Charleston County School District by gaining commitments from the School Board and Superintendent to implement Positive Behavioral Interventions and Supports and Restorative Practices
- Reduced racial discrimination in police practices by securing approval of the Charleston and North Charleston City Councils for independent racial bias audits of their police departments
- Improved public transportation by securing commitments from CARTA for a Fair Fares Plan that eliminated ride limits on senior discount passes, created an unlimited weekly pass for low-income riders, and eliminated transfer fees during a single commute



Through the strength of its unity, CAJM negotiates with policymakers in the interests of the community. Each fall, CAJM holds 100+ house meetings around the Charleston area where participants share problems identified within the community. This activity concludes with the CAJM Community Problems Assembly where hundreds of community members vote on a single problem to address for the new year. During the winter and early spring CAJM leaders engage in a comprehensive research process with face-to-face meetings with state and public officials and professionals in related fields to better understand the problem and to uncover best practice solutions. In the spring thousands of Charleston area residents gather for CAJM's Nehemiah Action Assembly to meet with public officials and to secure public commitments from the officials to implement the solutions (based on Nehemiah 5:1-13).

All members of MPPC are invited to participate in this year's Nehemiah Action Assembly on Monday, March 22nd at 7pm via Zoom. It will focus on issues of healthcare and affordable housing. If you would like to register for the Nehemiah Action or get more information about how you can be involved with CAJM, please contact Andy White Boggan, Coleman Legerton or Sue Verner.

CONNECTED THROUGH MISSION

Volunteer with Reading Partners South Carolina

Mount Pleasant Presbyterian Church is serving as a tutoring center for Reading Partners South Carolina. Reading Partners is a national children's literacy nonprofit that mobilizes local volunteers to empower aspiring readers in underserved schools to read confidently at grade level through one-on-one tutoring. MPPC currently hosts 31 tutoring sessions and there is a need to serve more children from the Charleston County School District.

Reading Partners is looking to host up to 30 more tutoring sessions from MPPC. Those interested in tutoring must attend two virtual orientations before being connected with an elementary school student and beginning a literacy mentorship. Tutoring sessions last just over an hour and volunteers must commit to at least one session per week, M-Th during the hours of 9 a.m.-3 p.m. No teaching or tutoring experience is required to participate in this program. All tutoring centers follow CDC COVID-19 health and safety guidelines.

If you are interested in tutoring, sign up via readingpartners.org/volunteer or email volunteersc@readingpartners.org with questions. To learn more about the organization check out readingpartners.org/southcarolina.



Rakes On Wheels

Our MPPC Rakes on Wheels yard cleanup for the recipients of Meals on Wheels will take place toward the end of March this year in a COVID-

safe environment, outdoors with mandatory face masks. Many of you have participated individually, as families, and/or as members of various MPPC groups. Our project serves those Meals on Wheels recipients and MPPC members who are not able to clean up their own yards.

In all cases, these folks needed assistance with their yards...whether because of age, disability, or a lack of resources to get the job done. Over the years, in many cases, our yard cleanup has been just enough that first year to solve the big and overwhelming problem for these owners. With the pride and joy they find in their freshly cleaned yards, the owners

have found other resources to keep the yards maintained. Your work has truly "planted a seed" (pun intended)!

Our spring yard cleanup is scheduled for March 13 through March 27 with emphasis on Saturdays the 13th, 20th, and the 27th. All Congregation groups and individual members are invited to sign up for this rewarding effort. Families with kids are invited to bring their children, giving the children an opportunity to learn and experience serving others in our Lord's name. (Children under 16 must be accompanied by an adult). More detailed information will be found in our MPPC weekly eNews and bulletins. Bring your gloves and rakes for 2-3 hours of yard cleanup on your choice of a Saturday morning or a weekday, whichever will work for you and/or your group.

To volunteer or for more information, call Alexis Wright-Singleton at the church, (843) 884-4612, or email Jim Ingham at inghamsc@hotmail.com. If you need help with cleaning up your yard for the spring, please let us know! MPPC members unable to clean up their yards should promptly call the church to be placed on our work list.

CONNECTED THROUGH COMMUNITY



MPPC Youth Volunteers with The Green Heart Project

The Green Heart Project builds garden-based experiential learning projects and school garden programs to educate students, connect people, and cultivate community through growing, eating, and celebrating food. The Green Heart Project was founded in 2009 as a small school garden at Mitchell Elementary School in downtown Charleston with the intention of reconnecting their students with fresh, locally-grown produce. On Saturday, February 20th middle and high school youth from MPPC participated in building composting bins, installing irrigation systems, and painting signs for the garden.

EXHAUSTED BY THE PANDEMIC?

YOU DON'T HAVE TO FACE IT ALONE.

A Stephen Minister can walk alongside you or a loved one to offer support and care—and it's free and confidential.

To learn more, contact one of our Stephen Leaders.



Are You Experiencing Pandemic Fatigue?

You don't have to face it alone. A Stephen Minister can walk alongside you or a loved one to offer support and care. It's free and completely confidential.

To learn more, visit mppc.net/stephen-ministry or contact Parish Associate Lib McGregor Simmons.

CONNECTED THROUGH COMMUNITY

New Director of the MPPC Learning Center

It is with great joy and excitement that we announce and welcome Interim Learning Center Director Lori Baney as the new Learning Center Director. Lori comes with tremendous experience. She has worked at the Learning Center since 2003 in diverse roles with a drive and passion for the Learning Center and introducing children to God's love. Lori's servant heart for our school, its history, the teachers, and children helped her lead as Interim Director during a year unlike any other.

We look forward to seeing Lori's leadership continue to guide and grow The Learning Center of Mount Pleasant Presbyterian Church as we seek to serve our children and their families.



Endowment Gifts

Given In Memory of Alma Savedge:

Ralph and BeKy Jenkins

Dal and Linda Schreck

Nancy Lewis

Jerry George and Lynn Graves

Karen Jones

Susan and Douglas Mellichamp

Dorothy Anne Bowers

Given In Memory of Jo Goss:

Nancy Lewis

Given In Honor of Will Whitsett:

Julian and Ann McGill

Given In Memory of Jane Bishop:

Dal and Linda Schreck

Kevin and Sue Verner





Mount Pleasant Presbyterian Church

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ELECTRONIC SERVICE REQUESTED

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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

FOLLOW US



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OTHER WAYS

mppc.net/contact
843-884-4612

PRAYER REQUESTS

mppc.net/prayer-requests