



currents

June 2020

10:30 AM ON
SUNDAYS VIA
MPCUSA.ORG

"LIVING WITH LONGING"

Lessons from Paul's
letter to the Philippians
about Christian life in
a time of separation.

A Sermon Series

See page 5 for more details.



Pastor's Pen

Dear MPC Family,

By now you should have received a pastoral letter regarding the creation of the Covid-19 Task Force at MPC. This small group of the Session is working diligently to navigate the uncharted waters of a re-opening plan, as well as make critical recommendations regarding church operations in the coming months as they relate to our collective safety and well-being. Keep in mind that we do not yet know when any re-opening plan could begin to be implemented, but we trust that God will direct the path ahead. Having already been in conversation with our task force, I am very confident that God has led the right people toward this task and has been directing the hearts and minds of this group from the beginning. I have been blown away by their extensive research, good questions, and deep commitment to the well-being of our entire community, and I hope you will join me in praying for them in the weeks and months to come. Within the “decently and in order” structure of our church’s polity, it’s rare for someone to take on such a significant role in the life of the church without also being handed an “end date” for their service. But we do not yet know when their work will be done, and so I remain deeply grateful for their commitment, service, and leadership at this time. When you have a moment, please offer your gratitude to Drew Hunger (Chairperson), Patrick Gilbride, AK Rosenbaum, Nancy Stoner, and Ron Workman.



Some of you may also be aware that this time of year we are usually ordaining and installing new officers, celebrating graduates, and thanking teachers as our Sunday School year comes to a close. I don’t have to tell you that this is not a typical year, but we are going to do what we can in the coming months to acknowledge these highlights in our worship together and in other creative ways. Back in March when this season began, the work of the Nominating Committee was put on hold. And even though some board members (Elders, Deacons, Trustees) are set to roll off their respective boards at the end of June, I have, with Session’s approval, asked all current officers to stay on through the end of July. Every single board member was more than happy to continue to serve in this strange season. The Nominating Committee will be picking up their work again in the coming weeks and we invite you to pray for them as they ask people to serve in this unprecedented time. We also encourage you to be attentive to invitations to congregational meetings that may be coming. Have you ever been to a Congregational Meeting online over Zoom?!? Well, you may get your chance!

In closing, I simply want to thank you all for your unceasing support and encouragement. It has been a difficult season for all of us to navigate, but I have never felt alone in it. Thank you for your prayers, for your notes of support, and for the ways you continue to do the work of Jesus Christ in these strange times. It remains a privilege to be your pastor and I am so proud to call MPC my home.

With gratitude for each of you,

Rachel



MPC'S MISSIONS KEEP THE CHURCH "OPEN"

Submitted by the Rev. Alex Lester-Abdalla, Associate Pastor

When I think about how I have witnessed MPC respond to Christ's Mission in our world the word that comes to mind is "open." As more and more people are coming to our building on Wednesday mornings to receive food from our Food Center, the volunteers there have been *open* to meeting this growing need in our community. I have received updates from Carol Romano that express concern about the rise in people who are looking for ways to feed their family. But Carol has also shared gratitude for all of you that have heeded the call to donate food, as well as hope in our volunteers who make the Food Center run. The church is holding steadfast in our dedication to meet the growing need of food and groceries in our community.

Likewise, as the virus has put an added burden on the people who are shut in or isolated in their homes, MPC has been *open* to new ways Christ is moving in our midst. Following a long, but productive Outreach Committee meeting the members of that group left with a commitment to support community partners through financial and physical means. As a church, we were able to donate upwards of \$3,500 to organizations like Salvation Army, Arm in Arm, and others that have been on the front lines of providing food, shelter, and other resources that are needed due to the virus. Also, in collaboration with Kathy Foster, the Outreach Committee and other church members have been donating soup, sandwiches, and other treats to the Ivins Outreach Center. Ivins then takes the donations, packages them up, and gives them to hundreds of people who are not able to go outside on their own. I was able to deliver some of these donations to congregation members and other folks at the Presbyterian Towers and it was overwhelming how meaningful these donations and interactions were to the people I visited.



Finally, I wanted to share how grateful I am for the ways you all have been *open* to giving generously of your prayers and resources to the COVID-19 Relief Fund. As of today, you all have raised over \$12,000 to care for our community in this unprecedented time. Over \$7000 of that total is going toward the purchase of Chromebooks to support the education of our local community in the Morrisville School District. That's enough for 22 students, practically a full class, to have access to education that they would not otherwise have! And I am confident we will be able to provide even more Chromebooks in the coming days, and help these students get access to education that they deserve.

If you are interested in donating food or volunteering with the Food Center please feel free to contact me via email at alexlester-abdalla@mpcusa.net.

Likewise, if you are interested in donating soup, making sandwiches, getting groceries for folks, or volunteering with Ivins Outreach Center please feel free to contact me via email at alexlester-abdalla@mpcusa.net.

It is because of you all that I am hopeful for the ways we will rise above the challenges of our time and continue to do God's kingdom work in our community and the world. Thank you for all you are doing to be the hands and feet of Christ in the world. I look forward to seeing how the Church continues to be open in our community even though the building is closed.

HEROIC COMPASSION

Submitted by the Rev. Jack McAnlis, Minister of Visitation

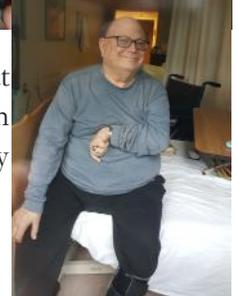
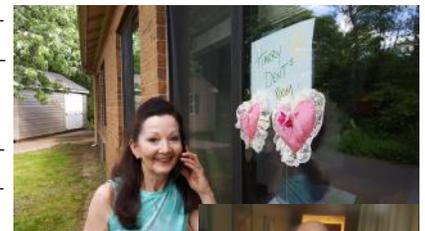
Who are the heroes? We seem to be redefining who a “hero” is these days. “In the old days,” my hero was any cowboy wearing a white hat. Then there were fire fighters who would rush into a burning building to rescue children. In recent years, anyone wearing a military uniform was called a hero. And over the past few months during this pandemic, hero status is being bestowed on front-line health care workers: doctors, nurses, first responders, and anyone who risks her or his own health to care for someone who is gravely ill.

In the dictionary, it says a “hero” is a person who is admired or idealized for courage, outstanding achievements, or personal qualities. By that definition, there are other heroes among us; many of whom would shy away from the label if it were mentioned in their presence.

Members of the Morrisville Presbyterian Church have persisted in providing care and compassion without regard for personal gain and, for some, at a risk to their personal health.

Consider that members of MPC continue to:

- Make masks. By my unofficial count, Susan Light, Natalie Sturr, Becky Hendrickson, and Fran Akelewicz had made over **1,200** masks; most were donated to medical facilities for use by medical personnel!
- Contact church members with hundreds of phone, emails, and cards. By doing this, members of the MPC community are provided a network of security and love as evidence of a “living” and vibrant gospel.
- Pray, every week via Zoom on Wednesdays and at home, for over 150 people of our church and community, as well as offer prayers for our world, our church, and our nation
- Volunteer at Ivins House baking cookies and cakes, delivering groceries and meals, and donating time and money for church members and residents in Morrisville and neighboring communities.
- Volunteer for the MPC Food Center packing and providing food every week and supporting each other in the effort.
- Spread joy. It is with gratitude that I applaud Roger and Nancy Anderson who visited Harry Dent on his birthday and decorated his window - from the outside – and sang “Happy Birthday to You.”
- Lead. Members of the Session, Deacons, and Trustees display commitment to the Gospel while providing vision, devotion, service, and financial oversight for God’s work in our community.



In classical mythology, a “hero” is a legendary figure often of divine descent endowed with great strength or ability. Think Hercules. In Christian theology, there is only one person who can claim divine descent. Yet all of us who follow Christ Jesus, can claim heavenly strength and ability through the power of the Holy Spirit. The proof is listed above.



ADDITIONAL NEEDS IN OUR COMMUNITY

Submitted by the Rev. Rachel Rhodes, Senior Pastor

Given the ongoing need in our community, the Session of Morrisville Presbyterian Church has approved the creation and function of a Covid-19 Relief Fund at MPC. This fund has been developed as a means to provide aid to the most pressing needs in our community today. With unemployment rates rising, food insecurity growing, and many people struggling in our neighborhood to make ends meet, we are committed to being the church in whatever way we can in this uncertain time. As you feel led to care for our neighbors and community, we encourage you to give generously to the Covid-19 Relief Fund at MPC.



As part of the Covid-19 Relief Fund, we are also collecting funds to support the Morrisville School District so that they can purchase Chromebooks for students who do not otherwise have access to the technology needed for their basic schooling. I imagine some of you are wondering, “What’s a Chromebook?” A Chromebook is a laptop/tablet that’s used as an educational tool in schools around the country. It allows easy accessibility to assignments and learning apps used in classrooms and provides a uniform platform for teachers and students. Many schools have used Chromebooks to connect students during this time apart, but Chromebooks are also used regularly in classrooms when schools are in session. These gifts to Morrisville School district would be used for many years to come and are about \$320 each. We believe access to education is vitally important and we are deeply convicted by the needs in our own town and our own backyard. And so as you feel led, please give generously to assist the Morrisville School District at this time.

Gifts for either of these efforts can be mailed to the MPC Office with their designation in the memo line: “Covid-19 Relief Fund” or “Chromebooks”. Or you may add this designation to the note section of your online gift. Thank you for giving so generously to our church and to our wider community and world. May we continue to be a church that lives into Christ’s call to care for one another as sisters and brothers, united in love. Let us give generously in response to all that God has given to us.

LIVING WITH LONGING - A SERMON SERIES

Submitted by the Rev. Rachel Rhodes, Senior Pastor

We hope that you are joining us each week for worship! While we can’t be together for worship in body, we can certainly gather for worship together in Spirit, and I have been overwhelmed by the Spirit’s presence even, and perhaps especially during this season of separation. For the next few weeks, Pastor Alex and I are leading a sermon series called, *Living with Longing*. The Apostle Paul was often separated from the congregations he loved and in this time of separation, we’re going to explore what we can learn about the Christian life in the book of Philippians. It is



our deep hope that as we read the stories of Scripture together as a church family, we will be encouraged, convicted, and empowered in our life together, even as we’re apart. Weekly worship (podcast or video) is available through our website (www.mpcusa.org). We hope to “see” you there!

IN LOVING MEMORY

Our sympathy goes out to the families of those who recently passed away:

- Donald L. Speakman, on Tuesday, March 10, 2020.
- Marjorie K. Westerman, on Sunday, March 15, 2020.
- Richard J. Querns, on Thursday, April 9, 2020.
- Linda Tadlock, on Thursday, April 30, 2020.
- Robert (Bob) Francis Northrup, on Friday, May 1, 2020.
- Barbara Jane Demech, on Sunday, May 17, 2020.



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

THANK YOU FOR YOUR GENEROSITY

Thank you all so much for your ongoing financial support during this difficult time. Many of you have continued to give faithfully by sending your gifts directly to the church or by utilizing our online giving portal and we are so grateful. Your generous support has been critical in this season and it has allowed us to expand our mission and ministry to our greater community in a time when it is most needed.

Our Food Center continues to provide food to a growing number of people and families in need, and the Ivins Outreach Center is providing an ever increasing amount of food to those who are home-bound, to those in our school district who rely on free and reduced lunches, and to local teens who suffer from food insecurity. Thank you! Visit www.mpcusa.org/give to learn more!



Pictured (l to r): Howard Rees, Gail Flesch, Ray Hendrickson, Becky Hendrickson, Nancy Powers, Dave Powers, Joy Rees, Carol Carpenter, James Levan, Ruth Levan, Ahnika Hernandez-Feehan, Mary Hernandez, and Carol Hernandez.

WAYS TO CONNECT WITH OUR CHURCH FAMILY

- ◆ If you would like to be a part of studying 2 Samuel with the **Brown Bag Bible Study** crew on Wednesdays from Noon-1:00 p.m., please contact Pastor Rachel (rachelrhodes@mpcusa.net).
- ◆ If you would like to be a part of a **Weekly Prayer Meeting** (approx. 15-20 minutes long) for our congregation at 1:05 p.m. on Wednesdays, please contact Pastor Rachel (rachelrhodes@mpcusa.net).
- ◆ If you would like to be a part of **Adult Education** on Sundays from 9:30 a.m.-10:20 a.m., please contact Pastor Alex (alexlester-abdalla@mpcusa.net).
- ◆ If you would like to gather for **“Fellowship Hour”** after worship on Sundays at 11:30 a.m., be on the lookout for our weekly emails about worship. They will also include information about how to sign in to Fellowship Hour via Zoom.
- ◆ If you would like to speak with a pastor during this difficult time, feel free to reach out to our Minister of Visitation, Jack McAnlis (jackmcanlis@mpcusa.net), Pastor Rachel Rhodes (rachelrhodes@mpcusa.net), or Pastor Alex Lester-Abdalla (alexlester-abdalla@mpcusa.net). We would be more than happy to speak with you over the phone or through video chat.