



# currents

September 2020

## WELCOME BACK!



This issue details important information regarding MPC's reopening plans as we return to in-person worship.



## Pastor's Pen

Greetings MPC Church Family,

I am thrilled to let you know that your Covid-19 Task Force met last Sunday morning and has voted to move forward with in-person worship beginning on September 13, 2020. Worship will also continue to be available each week online for anyone who is joining us from home. I realize this news has been a long time coming and we look forward to welcoming many of you back to the sanctuary in the weeks to come.

As you might recall from a previous letter to the congregation, protective measures will be implemented each week for your safety and for the safety of our whole community. **We are insisting that everyone in attendance maintain proper social distance (at least 6 feet) and wear a mask that covers your mouth and nose the entire time you are present on MPC property—this includes the parking lot, hallways, and sanctuary.**



In order to maintain a safe environment, there will also be limitations on the number of people who can attend each service of worship. **For the first four weeks of in-person worship (Sept 13, Sept 20, Sept 27, Oct 4) we are asking that you only sign-up to attend 1 WEEK.** This will ensure that everyone who would like to attend in person has the opportunity to do so. Our hope is that in the months to come we will be able to increase the capacity in the sanctuary to accommodate more people, but at this point in time that is not possible. Please keep in mind that your cooperation and compliance is critical, and will ultimately have an impact on our ability to continue to gather in person. If at any point the Task Force deems the situation (either in our church or in our local community) to be unsafe, we will have to shift to a more protective phase that may eliminate the ability to worship in person in the sanctuary.

I would also ask that you keep in mind the number of people who have been working diligently on behalf of each of you, and on behalf of our entire church and community to ensure that we are, indeed, able to gather safely. Their wisdom, research, discernment, and caution have been invaluable to our church family in this strange season. But, friends, we all know that with every new chapter there will be bumps in the road. There will be things we didn't anticipate, and there will be as many opinions as there are options. And so, please, friends, let us enter into this new chapter with grace in our hearts, with joy that we have the chance to be together, with gratitude for the many people who have helped to make this possible, and with an openness to the Spirit's work among us. Let us work together to maintain the safety of our congregation and our community and let us do so with a deep love for God and for one another.

I am grateful for each of you. I can't wait to see you! More info will be coming to you soon. If you need assistance signing up for in-person worship, please don't hesitate to be in touch with our Task Force Chairperson, Drew Hunger, at [gaidrew4@msn.com](mailto:gaidrew4@msn.com) or by phone at 215-295-6917.

With deep gratitude for our life together,

Rachel



## FAITH FORMATION UPDATE FROM PASTOR ALEX

Dear Priesthood of All Believers,

As we approach this unique fall I have been pondering the power of the word *with* and have been reminded of a story of Jacob in the book of Genesis. Jacob has just left his parents to go on a journey, traveling the road his ancestors have traveled before him. As he finds a nice spot to rest, he lays his head on a rock to sleep and has an amazing dream. In this dream he sees a ladder connecting earth to heaven. Gazing towards heaven Jacob sees divine messengers going up and down the ladder. Turning to his side Jacob sees that God is right there, beside him, saying “I am the Lord, the God of Abraham your father and the God of Isaac...Know that I am with you and will keep you wherever you go.”

God’s words have been ringing through my ears as myself, the education committee, Sunday School teachers, and others have tried to imagine what this fall during a pandemic would look like for MPC. You will notice that Faith Formation at MPC will look different this fall, but what remains the same is the power of *with*: that God is with us and that we are with one another wherever we go. The words *with* will be our guide in the month of September as we transition to our Fall 2020 educational opportunities and seek to see the ways the Holy Spirit is forming us as people of faith even during the pandemic.



Adult Education will start up again on September 13 over Zoom from 9:00 to 10:00 a.m. (notice the time change). I will be leading us in an in-depth bible study on the Jacob ladder’s text in Genesis and its theological ramifications for us as people who believe God is with us always. We end the month by hearing from some community partners on how they have witnessed the Holy Spirit being with us in their work responding to the needs in our community during the pandemic. If you are interested in joining, please contact me at [alexlester-abdalla@mpcusa.net](mailto:alexlester-abdalla@mpcusa.net) so I can add you to the email chain with the Zoom link for each session.

Our pre-kindergarten to fifth grade Sunday School classes will also be focused around the word *with* as the Sunday School teachers have decided to not have you come to faith formation, but to have faith formation come to you. Due to COVID-19 we will not be holding in-person Sunday School, but instead we will be having Sunday School mailed to each student! Be on the lookout for a package in the mail with shared prayers, memory verses, and instructions about easily accessible crafts and music time video. We look forward to cherishing the ways God is with us and the ways we are with one another even when we are not physically together.

Similar to our pre-k through fifth grade Sunday School, our Quest and High School seminar classes will not be meeting on Sunday mornings, but will be merging with our Youth Club gatherings on Wednesday nights from 6:00 to 7:15 p.m. starting September 16. As long as the weather is cooperative, we will plan to meet outside in the church parking lot, socially distant, and with masks. This will be a great way for our sixth through twelfth graders to be with one another in a safe and welcoming environment as we seek to grow together to be the people God is calling us to be. If you have any questions please contact me at [alexlester-abdalla@mpcusa.net](mailto:alexlester-abdalla@mpcusa.net).

Friends, there is no question that this season will be different and challenging. However, what is constant is the power of *with*: that God is with us and that we are with one another wherever we go. I invite you to witness with me the ways God is calling us all to grow together at Morrisville Presbyterian Church.

Grace and Peace,

Alex

## ADDRESSING COVID-19 AT MPC

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The target date for the start of limited-attendance, in-person worship services in the MPC sanctuary is Sunday, September 13, 2020. This date is dependent on meeting designated area health metrics concerning COVID-19, and, currently, the metrics support this. These metrics were communicated to the congregation in a letter from Pastor Rhodes dated August 3, 2020. These metrics and the *Plan to Address COVID-19 at MPC* can be found on the church's web site: <https://www.mpcusa.org/>.

The *Plan* is the result of the Session's aim to balance the safety of our church family from COVID-19 with the desire by members in the congregation to resume worship and activities within the church. The *Plan* is based on guidance and practices provided by the Commonwealth of Pennsylvania, the national Center for Disease Control and Prevention, the Philadelphia Presbytery, the National Council of the Churches for Christ in the USA, and the company that provides our church insurance.

The *Plan* is based on the following scientific evidence:

- Airborne transmission of COVID-19 is the predominate means by which the virus is spread.
- Keeping at least 6 feet apart, wearing masks that cover both your mouth and nose, frequent hand-washing, and minimizing touching your nose, mouth and eyes are the best ways to reduce the risk of contracting COVID-19.
- Not all individuals that are COVID-19 positive exhibit symptoms.
- Singing may be a particularly effective means of spreading the virus.

The worship services in the sanctuary will be very different:

- Wearing masks that cover both your mouth and nose will be required;
- Proper social distancing will be required;
- There will be no singing by the congregation and by choirs; and
- Entrance into the sanctuary will be by the doors near the elevator and exit from the sanctuary will be by the doors on the other side of the sanctuary along the long driveway.

Once worship services begin in the sanctuary, they will be livestreamed over the Internet, and recorded for future viewing. Livestream of the in-person service will replace the virtual worship services seen with Pastor Rachel and Pastor Alex in their homes. Adult Education prior to the worship service and the Fellowship Time after the worship service will continue via Zoom over the internet.

If at any time during the implementation of the *Plan*, the guidance from federal, state or county health experts changes so that greater protection is recommended because of a resurgence of COVID-19, the *Plan* calls for a move to a more protective phase.

As communicated to the congregation in the letter from Pastor Rhodes dated August 3, 2020, you will need to sign up for the limited-attendance worship services, hopefully beginning on September 13. A link for online sign-ups will be distributed by email, and anyone who notified the church of their need for alternative communication will be contacted by phone. If the metrics over the next two weeks become unfavorable for reopening, the congregation will be informed, and the reopening date will be delayed until the metrics again become favorable.

Please help protect the health of those coming to the church by staying home until you have met CDC's criteria and PA DOH recommendations regarding home isolation, especially for the following situations:

- You have symptoms of COVID-19 or have tested positive for COVID-19 within the 14 days prior to attending worship service in the sanctuary.
- You have had exposure to anyone diagnosed with COVID-19 within the 14 days prior to attending worship service in the sanctuary.

## CLOTHING CENTER REOPENS ON A NEW DAY

*Submitted by Kathy Foster*

Due to COVID-19, the Clothing Center has been closed since mid-March 2020, but we are glad to announce our **reopening on Thursday, October 8, 2020**. We have had to make some modifications regarding how we will operate, the most significant is **moving the day we will be open to Thursdays from 10:00 a.m. to 2:00 p.m., as we will no longer be open on Tuesdays**.

We will modify our operations, not only our in-store shopping process, but donation delivery days/times and what donations we are able to accept at this time. We are committed to providing a pleasant shopping experience for our valued customers while maintaining a safe and healthy environment.



Enter the church through the doors under the portico, go down the stairs (or use our elevator, push B), go through the door, make a left and you're in the Clothing Center of Morrisville Presbyterian Church. You will always find a warm welcome from one of the Clothing Center staff; who are always ready to assist you.

All clothing and merchandise are donated with the profits given to charitable agencies/organizations both local and global. You never know what you will find, the merchandise changes weekly and is set up seasonally. The prices are fair and we have weekly sales and specials. This little jewel of a shop tucked away in the MPC basement sells top quality and brand name clothing (including outerwear and activewear) and accessories for women, men, teens, children and infants; along with jewelry, shoes, books, household goods including small appliances, lamps, decorative pillows, dishes, glassware and linens.

Never pay full price for your family's clothing or home merchandise, come shop at our Clothing Center and you will always leave with great items and money in your pocket!

### DONATIONS

- We can only accept **clean, gently used fall &/or winter clothes – NO spring or summer clothing**, we do not have the space to store off-season wear.
- All donated items (housewares, linens, accessories, etc.) **must** be washed and clean.

### DONATION DROP-OFF DAYS/TIMES — *Please do not leave items outside by the church doors!!!*

Beginning Monday, October 5, the only days/times that donations can be brought to the church, are the following:

- Monday: 7:00 - 7:30 p.m.
- Tuesday: 9:00 - 10:30 a.m.
- Wednesday: 1:00 - 2:30 p.m.
- Thursday: 10:00am - 1:30 p.m.

### SHOPPING PROTOCOLS

- Masks **must** be worn
- Practice social distancing
- Fitting rooms will be **CLOSED**



Please call the church office with any questions.

## See you Thursday, October 8!



## MPC IS GOING LIVE

*Submitted by Damon Miller*

Starting Sunday, September 13, worship services will be streamed over the internet as they happen at MPC giving those unable to attend the opportunity to be a part of worship from their home or wherever they wish to view Sunday worship.

To view the livestream, simply click on the "Virtual Worship" button on the homepage of MPC's website at [www.mpcusa.org](http://www.mpcusa.org). The livestream window will appear at the top of the linked page.

If you missed the livestream, a recording of the full service will be available for viewing following links from the MPC website's Virtual Worship page. You may also go to MPC's YouTube channel. Visit [www.youtube.com](http://www.youtube.com) and enter "Morrisville Presbyterian Church" in the search bar to locate the channel. There you will find a list of previously recorded services. While you're there, subscribe to the channel!

Podcasts of the full-service will continue to be available through the current subscription services and links from the MPC website.



### CONTACT US

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