

MAPC

LIFE

THE MAGAZINE OF MADISON AVENUE PRESBYTERIAN CHURCH • FALL 2018



**CELEBRATING ADVENT &
CHRISTMAS AT MAPC:**

ADVENT DEVOTIONS

**ADVENT RETREAT &
CAROL SING**

**CHRISTMAS WORSHIP
SCHEDULE**

THE REV. JENNY McDEVITT'S INSTALLATION SERVICE

And words from Jenny

**UPDATE FROM THE NEW GENERAL SECRETARY
OF THE HARARE SYNOD**

**COMINGS AND GOINGS
MEET OUR NEW STAFF MEMBERS**

STEWARDSHIP

FROM THE PASTOR

Dear Friends,

As I write this, details of the shooting at Tree of Life Synagogue in Pittsburgh are coming to light. I have been with you seven months, but this is not the first time we have heard news of tragedy together. It is not the first time we have asked painful questions, to which we bring different perspectives and different expectations of ourselves and of our leaders. It is not the first time we have wondered where God is in the midst of all this. This latest event grieves me deeply; what grieves me even more deeply is knowing we will find ourselves in this same place, with these same questions, again.

When facing the hardest, most inexplicable moments the world thrusts upon us, I cling to two promises like a drowning man clings to a life preserver: that in life and in death we belong to God; and that God is with us always — which means that when we weep tears of grief, God weeps right alongside us.

I do not know the larger answer to our country's violent epidemic. What I have found to be a useful and constructive way forward, however, is to practice, deliberately and daily, the spiritual practice of gratitude. That may sound small and insignificant; in some ways it is. And yet sometimes the smallest of changes can bring about a change far bigger than we would imagine.

Back in high school, I played field hockey and ran distance events with the track team. As a result, I wore a watch that kept track of intervals — and though I am not yet officially middle aged, I am old enough that technology has changed significantly. That old watch could not check my email or alert me to a text message, but it did beep every hour, on the hour. And it was on the advice of an old mentor that I began offering a short prayer of gratitude for whatever I was doing, and whoever I was with, every time my watch beeped. At the risk of stating the obvious, sometimes this was easy to do — when I was enjoying what I was doing and when I was with people I loved. Other times, though, this was challenging. Those moments, though,

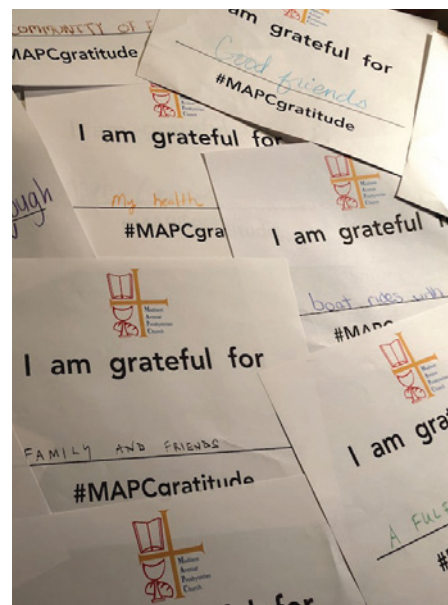
taught me how to be grateful even in the midst of any circumstance. Taking a final exam? I'm grateful for my education. At the dentist? I'm grateful for insurance. Arguing with a classmate about a group project? I'm grateful she cares as much as I do.

It was small then, but that practice, instilled in me by someone much wiser than I, taught me that there is something redemptive that can be found in every moment, and something beautiful to be found in every person. Theologically speaking, this is because, to paraphrase John Calvin, there is not one whit of creation that is not infused with God's glory and God's grace. Even where we might least expect to find it.

As I write this, Thanksgiving is quickly approaching — a time when we have many reminders to be grateful and give thanks for all that we have. Perhaps this is the right time to begin an ongoing practice of gratitude. I learned to choose gratitude not because I am virtuous, but because I had someone, and some thing, reminding me constantly. It takes time to develop new habits. I have been reminded of this recently in a book I commend to you: *You Are What You Love: The Spiritual Power of Habit*, by James K. A. Smith. We may consider pieces of this book together as a congregation in the Spring.

For now, all I can share with you is my own testimony: gratitude has profoundly shaped and changed my life for the better. It has enabled me to see beauty and possibility where I might be more inclined to see ugliness and obstacles. Ann Lamott (and possibly others before her) says that heaven is simply looking at the world through a new set of glasses. While we are earth-bound, looking at the world through the lens of gratitude can help us see God more clearly. It can open our hearts in ways we would have never expected, and in ways we wouldn't have ever been able to dream.

As this most recent shooting reminded us, there is still plenty that is broken all around us. Choosing gratitude then becomes not a silly Pollyanna exercise, but



an act of faithful Christian resistance. It declares that light is stronger than darkness, goodness is stronger than evil, life is stronger than death, and love is strongest of all.

During the month of November, we have been practicing gratitude together. Signs like the ones you see in the photo have been available in the Church House Lobby and at the Stewardship Brunches on November 18. Keep filling out as many as you like, and, if you are willing, leave them for us to compile into a large, congregation-wide expression of gratitude later this year. If it's easier for you to make one at home and send us a picture of yourself holding it, wonderful! Bit by bit, on our small corner of 73rd and Madison, may we remind one another and remind the world that hope is never lost, not so long as we have the eyes to see it and the hearts to seek it.

In closing, I'll say what I hope you already know: Madison Avenue Presbyterian Church, I am grateful for you. Each and every one of you. It is an honor to bear witness to the Gospel with you, and seek to follow Jesus in all that we do.

Peace,

Jenny

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Stay Connected

Have you moved? Do you have a new email address? Are you getting the weekly Pastoral Staff Newsletter? We want to be sure we have your updated contact information! Please send changes to Carmen Olmeda in the church offices, co@mapc.com. If you would like to receive the weekly newsletter, please let Carmen know and be sure she has your email address!

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Sow Bountifully

Drawing from Paul's second letter to the Corinthians, this year's stewardship theme centers around the exhortation to sow bountifully. Paul reminds us that today's good efforts — sharing our resources of prayer, energy, time, hope, and finances — yield tomorrow's harvest. Though our dreams for MAPC may be varied — some imagine further outreach to the city; some are eager for more intergenerational service opportunities; some know pastoral care will be a need not far down the road; some will always delight in hearing new music soar through the sanctuary — we are united by our gratitude for all that MAPC is and has been.

That gratitude is what fuels our hope. Theologically speaking, present and future hope is built upon past history. We are a people of hope because we know of God's great faithfulness throughout the generations. Faith often asks us to trust what we cannot see, but all of us have seen God at work in our lives through this congregation. This makes our hope so much more than mere pie-in-the-sky wishing; our hope is the conviction that God will keep God's promises because that is who God is and that is what God does.

In preparation for a successful stewardship season, Fall Fellowship Gatherings once again took place at church members' homes. Meeting in groups of approximately 20 people, we found fellowship with one another through food and drink, casual conversation, and reflection from our senior pastor, Rev. Jenny McDevitt.

Stewardship Sunday was November 18. That Sunday, members of the congregation were asked to bring their completed pledge cards to worship, where they were dedicated to God. As

has become our tradition, brunch was served in the Parish Hall after each service. If you need a pledge card for 2019, please contact Lissette Perez-Erazo in the church office: lgp@mapc.com. If you have questions about giving, please contact one of the following:

Rev. Jenny McDevitt, senior pastor, jmm@mapc.com

Roger Pierce, director of administration and finance, rsp@mapc.com

Julian Schroeder, chair of the stewardship committee, julianschroeder@gmail.com

Help us sow bountifully now, that we might continue to reap bountifully in 2019 and beyond.



Your pledges support every aspect of the church's ministry, including those depicted here. Above: Assembling hygiene kits for survivors of natural disasters is an intergenerational project. Below left: Members and friends enjoy the summer Roof Garden party. Below right: Chili Dog is a big hit at the Blessing of the Animals service at Kids' Club.



All-Church Retreat at Holmes Camp, September 28-29.

We had a wonderful retreat at Holmes Camp at the end of September. About 20 MAPC members and staff went up on Friday evening for a relaxed evening of fellowship. They were joined by 25 more members, of all ages, for the retreat program on Saturday. It was a perfect, early fall day! In the morning we spent time exploring our spiritual autobiographies—both our individual stories and the church's autobiography. After a delicious lunch served and enjoyed at picnic tables outside, we went for hikes, took naps under the trees, enjoyed conversation on the porch overlooking the lake, then joined together for closing worship before heading back to the city. It was a wonderful, relaxing time of being together with the church community, learning about our faith journeys, and dreaming about what lies in the future for MAPC.



Some of our group found the rock-climbing wall on their hike, and displayed impressive climbing skills and admirable effort! Above: It was a perfect afternoon for relaxing, reflection or even sitting on a rock to work by the lake. Below: Small groups shared their spiritual autobiographies in the morning session.



Meet Rebecca Heilman

Rev. Rebecca Heilman is the newest addition to the pastoral staff, and the first Pastoral Resident, at MAPC. Since August 20, Rebecca has served as the staff liaison to the outreach committee and the evangelism committee. This includes work with the overnight shelter and the Zimbabwe partnership. She also assists with worship leadership each week. Originally from Valdeese, North Carolina, Rebecca has delighted in exploring New York City, a place she never imagined living. She credits the faithful yet unpredictable Holy Spirit for leading her here.

Rebecca graduated from Union Presbyterian Seminary in May, 2018, and was ordained at her home church in August, where Rev. Jenny McDevitt preached the ordination sermon. Prior to seminary, Rebecca served as a Young Adult Volunteer in Zambia for a year. Her experience living with and working alongside the Zambian people will be a tremendous benefit to MAPC. Our history with ministries in both Zimbabwe and Zambia is what initially piqued her interest in the Pastoral Resident position.

The Pastoral Residency is the result of transforming the Phillips Talbot Global Ministry Fellowship. That long, rich history of partnering with TEEZ in Zambia drew to a close following Rev.

Paula Cooper's tenure (for more information on Paula and her new call, which will strengthen ministries throughout southeast Africa, see page 12). The Pastoral Residency is open to recent seminary graduates, who will serve at MAPC for three years before moving on to seek a permanent position elsewhere. Providing additional training and experience to newly ordained pastors was a priority of the PTGMF program. The Pastoral Residency program will carry that tradition forward, equipping young pastors for a lifetime of service to the Church.



Rebecca joins the pastoral staff in leading worship every Sunday and teaching in our Kids' Club program every Wednesday afternoon. Above, she is reading to the elementary school-aged children at the beginning of Kids' Club.

Farewell to MAPC Business Manager Richard Frey

MAPC's Business Manager, Richard Frey, retired at the end of May after almost 25 years! Many of you who have served on Session or the Board of Trustees had the opportunity to work with Richard and know how valuable his years with us were. For those of you who didn't work directly with Richard, he played a major role in keeping MAPC running for the past quarter century. We held a reception after worship on Sunday, June 3 to say thank you and wish Richard and Janet farewell and Godspeed in retirement. In lieu of a purse, Richard asked that donations be given to the scholarship fund Richard and Janet established at Richard's high school, Lancaster Mennonite School. The Frey Endowed Scholarship fund provides financial assistance to residence hall students from varied racial/ethnic backgrounds. The current recipients are students from Nigeria. MAPC members, staff and friends contributed nearly \$7,000 in Richard's name for the scholarship fund.

Richard, we are deeply grateful for your quarter century of work with MAPC, and we hope you and Janet have a rich, full, long retirement! — *Beverly Bartlett*



Welcome Roger Pierce to MAPC



Roger Pierce joined MAPC as Director of Administration and Finance in April, coming on board just as Business Manager Richard Frey was retiring. After many years working at the highest levels of corporate business administration, he sought out the position at MAPC in order to make a difference and give back to the community. He saw the position description on our church website while seeking information about additional volunteer opportunities; his first introduction to MAPC was as a host at our overnight shelter. The combination of his clear business acumen with his servant's heart makes him the ideal person to guide the business operations of the church.

Roger's introduction to MAPC was anything but gentle. Immediately upon his arrival, he began overseeing the installation of the building's sprinkler system. While work on that project made excellent progress, the Church House suffered significant flooding after a valve leak on the Roof Garden. Roger's leadership ensured that the extensive recovery work began immediately; as such, the Day School was able to open on schedule. Despite a hectic beginning to a new job, Roger says he is grateful everyday for the chance to work at MAPC.

The New Seminararians

This year MAPC is fortunate to have two seminary interns from Princeton Theological Seminary in their final year of the Master of Divinity program. We hope that you have enjoyed getting to know them this fall as they have led worship and facilitated a variety of our educational programs.

Audrey Webber is a native New Yorker and has lived in Manhattan for most of her childhood and young adult years. Audrey graduated from Hunter College with a double major in Religious Studies and Art History. She has had the opportunity to combine these two interests in her work at the Metropolitan Museum of Art, Fifth Avenue Presbyterian Church (where she is an ordained Ruling Elder), First Presbyterian Church of Forest Hills, and other organizations.

Audrey is always on a mission to connect her passion of serving God with her gift of art. She enjoys finding ways that her love of art can create inclusive and sacred worship experiences for people of all ages.

Audrey enjoys creating art, writing, cheering for the Yankees, watching 1930s and '40s movies, and spending time with her husband and their Chihuahua, Banjo.



Audrey Webber leads Bible Study at Kids' Club with the 2nd through 4th graders.



Chesna Hinkley leads Kids' Club Bible study with the kindergartners and first graders.

Chesna Hinkley is a native of Lansing, Michigan. From a young age Chesna loved the church but planned to become a doctor until about four years ago. She graduated with a Bachelor of Science degree in neuroscience from the University of Pittsburgh. During her studies and hospital internships she felt more drawn to the spiritual care side of hospital work. This care for others in their personal faith experience, along with her work in campus ministry, drew her to Princeton Theological Seminary.

In addition to her studies, Chesna works for Christians for Biblical Equality, a non-profit that strives to equip Christian leaders to spread the Gospel of Jesus Christ and break barriers of race, gender, and ethnicity.

Chesna loves singing in the Princeton Theological Seminary choir and currently serves as a student representative to the Theology Department. In her spare time, Chesna loves to read, travel, and drink coffee, preferably all at the same time! During her time at MAPC Chesna is excited to explore how her passion for academics blends with her leadership within a congregation.

Installation Service for The Rev. Jenny McDevitt

What in the world is an Installation Service? It sounds like we are getting new appliances. Nope! In the Presbyterian Church (USA) we “install” pastors to their positions. On Sunday afternoon, September 23rd the Presbytery of NYC officially installed Jenny McDevitt as the Senior Pastor and Head of Staff of Madison Avenue Presbyterian Church. During this service Jenny made promises to the congregation to serve us faithfully, and we made promises to support her and be in ministry with her. It was a celebration that brought together MAPC members and friends, members of the Presbytery of New York City, former colleagues of Jenny and a large contingent of friends and church members from her former church, Village Presbyterian Church in Prairie Village, Kansas (a suburb of Kansas City). We are so glad you are here, Jenny! And that you are now officially installed!



Above: Those ordained as Ministers of the Word and Sacrament and Ruling Elders in the Presbyterian Church (USA) gather around Jenny for the laying on of hands. Below left: The pastoral staff of MAPC: Andrew Henderson, Beverly Bartlett, Jenny McDevitt, Rebecca Heilman and Christina Cosby. Below right: Deacon and choir member John Carr leads the recession at the end of the service.



The CCAP Synod of Harare

CCAP Synod of Harare held its biennial Synod Assembly from 16 to 20 May 2018. We thank MAPC for sending a solidarity message to the Assembly. The letter was read to the meeting and we all appreciated the message.

Evangelism: CCAP Harare Synod is in the process of training Evangelists to make follow-up visits and relocate members of the church who were displaced during land reform. So far we have trained 43 evangelists with self-sustaining skills which will enable them to plant churches as tent-makers. Although they are trying their best they still need the church's support. They find it hard to sustain themselves because of the poor economic performance of our country.

TEE: For the spiritual growth and nurture of our churches we are grateful to MAPC for assisting us in starting Theological Education by Extension (TEE). Our minister, Rev. Esau Mbondo, is back from his time of training in Zambia, and we are working to mobilize resources for him to kick start the program. Currently, he is full time at the congregation of Ma-rondera and has started the TEE program with members of his congregation.

The Church's Impact on Society: We are in the process of revamping the Nyabira School and building another primary and secondary school at Rock Haven. So far we have completed one block with four classrooms which is already in use. The second block with five classrooms is at roof level. These classrooms are being used by secondary school students. The enrolment is already at 216 for the secondary school. There are 149 primary school pupils, from Early Childhood Development through Grade 5, using temporary shelters. We are in the process of registering this school with the Ministry of Education. The purpose of establishing this school at Rock Haven is to help children of that community who walk about 8 kilometers to the nearest primary school and more than 10 kilometers to the nearest secondary school.

The church is in the process of registering its Community Oriented Relief Department (CORD) with the government. Through CORD, the church will be able to serve society, addressing humanitarian needs such as education, HIV/AIDS programs and other needs in the communities. Under CORD we have the Chikondano group, which goes into the communities to teach about healthy behavior. These ministries will help the church become relevant to people's lives and preach about the love and care of God practically.

The Prosperity Gospel as it is preached by most Pentecostal

churches in Zimbabwe is a real threat to many mainline churches. Due to poverty, cash shortages, the collapse of the national economy and massive unemployment, many desperate people are hooked by such gospels. Our desire to start and expand the program of TEE is to nurture our Christians in sound theology and empower them so that they will be rooted in Scripture. We also encourage all ministers to further their theological studies to gain the resources they need to respond to the false teachings of this prosperity gospel.

Post-Election Update: National elections were held in Zimbabwe on July 30, after Rev. Chipata submitted this article. He reports that there was some post-election violence, and the results were con-

tested. The results were announced late at night on August 2, and Emmerson Mnangagwa, the ZANU-PF candidate who acceded to the presidency following Robert Mugabe's resignation in November 2017, was declared President with 50.8% of the vote, as opposed to 44.3% for the MDC Alliance's Nelson Chamisa. The Zimbabwe Council of Churches (ZCC), of which CCAP Harare Synod is a member, issued

a pastoral statement to the nation the next day, noting concerns about the electoral process, but ultimately affirming the results. The statement urged the ZANU-PF to "create avenues for inclusive dialogue and engagement as well as to heed the complaints raised by the MDC Alliance," and to "commit to a nation-building dialogue process."

The church pleads with the international community not to isolate Zimbabwe on the basis of the election process, as that will only harm ordinary citizens, but rather to accompany the new government, civil society and churches as they seek to serve children and ordinary citizens living with poverty and hunger.

Rev. Chipata closes: "Finally, we hope and pray that our partners will continue helping us in prayer for peace and economic stability for our country. Of course, these two cannot be obtained in the absence of justice; we pray that justice should always be exercised in all corners of the country. Please continue to uphold in prayer the people of Zimbabwe and CCAP Harare Synod as we work with ZCC to promote peace and justice." —*Kingstar Chipata*

I want to take this opportunity to introduce to all our friends the new executive members and officers who were elected at the Synod Assembly:

Moderator: Rev. Aston Galanti
Vice Moderator: Rev. Alexander Malemero
General Secretary: Rev. Kingstar Chipata
Deputy G/Secretary: Rev. Jeradi Mwale
Actuary: Rev. Mizeki Mndola
Elders: Emmanuel Mavata and Joyce Mbewe



Above, top: This is the prayer point at Tswitsi, a congregation of Chinohoyi, which conducts services under a tree. Above: Rev. Kingstar Chipata conducting the ceremony for dedicating the new church building at Chiwiti. Right: At Chinohoyi congregation youths started a garden project to fundraise for their programmes. Most of them are not going to school and are unemployed. Their hope is that after the election things might change for the better.



Finishing the Phillips Talbot Global Ministry Fellowship on a High Note



Editor's note: Paula Cooper finished her service as PTGMF with TEEZ in September. She is now beginning her new position as a Presbyterian Church (USA) Mission Co-Worker, serving as Regional Liaison for East Central Africa. She will be based in Lusaka, Zambia, starting at the beginning of the new year. We are grateful for Paula's service as our PTGMF with TEEZ and are excited for her new ministry! Please keep Paula in your prayers as she returns to Zambia and settles into her new position.

"This is a milestone for TEEZ!", exclaimed the director, Reverend Dennis Milanzi, referring to the tutors' training in Ndola.

In May, our team conducted the tutors' training in Ndola, Zambia. We had 171 participants in the training! It was amazing to witness the turn-out. When I saw the crowd of people, my thoughts immediately went to the story of the multitudes that Jesus trained during the Sermon on the Mount.

"When Jesus saw the crowds, he went up the mountain; and after he sat down, his disciples came to him. Then he began to speak, and taught them, saying..."

Matthew 5:1 (NRSV). Jesus had a captive audience on the mountain and took advantage of the opportunity to teach the masses about God's truth and the characteristics they should embody to deepen their relationship with God and with one another.

Over the years, the Global Ministry Fellows have witnessed TEEZ participants come from far distances for the tutors' trainings. They have traveled by bicycle, motor bike, mini-bus (local transportation), car pool, and on foot—some with the aid of canes and crutches. Though I have not witnessed it myself, a former Fellow shared that participants had even traveled by canoe! They are young. They are elderly. They are in-between!

The coordinating team in Ndola, Zambia, mobilized the multitudes. The venue couldn't accommodate them all! The participants came to learn how to be TEEZ tutors. I feel sure Jesus knew that the multitude gathered on the mountain to hear him would be the vessels, the instruments, to assist him in building His kingdom here on earth. They would, in one way or another, take what they learned and share that Word of God with the world.

TEEZ trains prospective tutors in how to become good facilitators of the various TEEZ courses. Tutors can be likened to the "light"

and "salt" of the world – they go into the world of their respective churches and communities to teach courses designed to "prepare God's people for Christian service" – carrying out TEEZ's vision!

Through the basic courses, tutors assist and guide members of the study groups to an understanding of the course materials, increasing and enhancing their Christian knowledge, so that the church's ministries may thrive. The trainings are interactive—tutors facilitate the group, guiding and leading discussion among the participants so they may learn collaboratively and grow spiritually. Together they explore or adventure into areas of the course material that may lead to a transformation both of their private lives and their ministry within their churches.

That transformation trickles beyond the walls of the church into their respective neighborhoods. Through the courses, both participants and tutors strengthen and



TEEZ participants work on their lesson plans and presentations!

deepen their relationship with Jesus, the Christ—learning of their gifts and their purposes.

The tutors' preparation of lesson plans and creative questions guides the study group into active and vibrant discussion, which, through the power of the Holy Spirit, gives birth to those gifts and purposes that God has planted within each group member. This type of interaction can begin to transform the tutor, the church members, the community, and even the nation of Zambia.

Jesus' training of the multitudes on that mountain and TEEZ have a common vision - to "prepare all of God's people for Christian service." The goal of TEEZ is to continue reaching milestones similar to the one met in May at Ndola!

I am grateful to MAPC for the opportunity and experiences that I have been afforded. This year has been nothing short of a milestone for me!

Summer Adventures and Fall Beginnings

Our June Days camp program included many hours in Central Park, where we explored different areas, climbed boulders, made music and art, read books and simply enjoyed our time together under sunny skies. Our use of the park has grown in recent years, largely in response to the growing body of research on the relationship between experiences in nature and children's healthy thriving. Our vision of how to incorporate the park in our program has also been influenced by our visit to early childhood schools in Sweden last year. There we spent time at a forest school and studied the way educators include nature in their daily planning. To support teachers' ongoing work using the park in their curricula, we began the year there together on a "Heart of the Park" tour

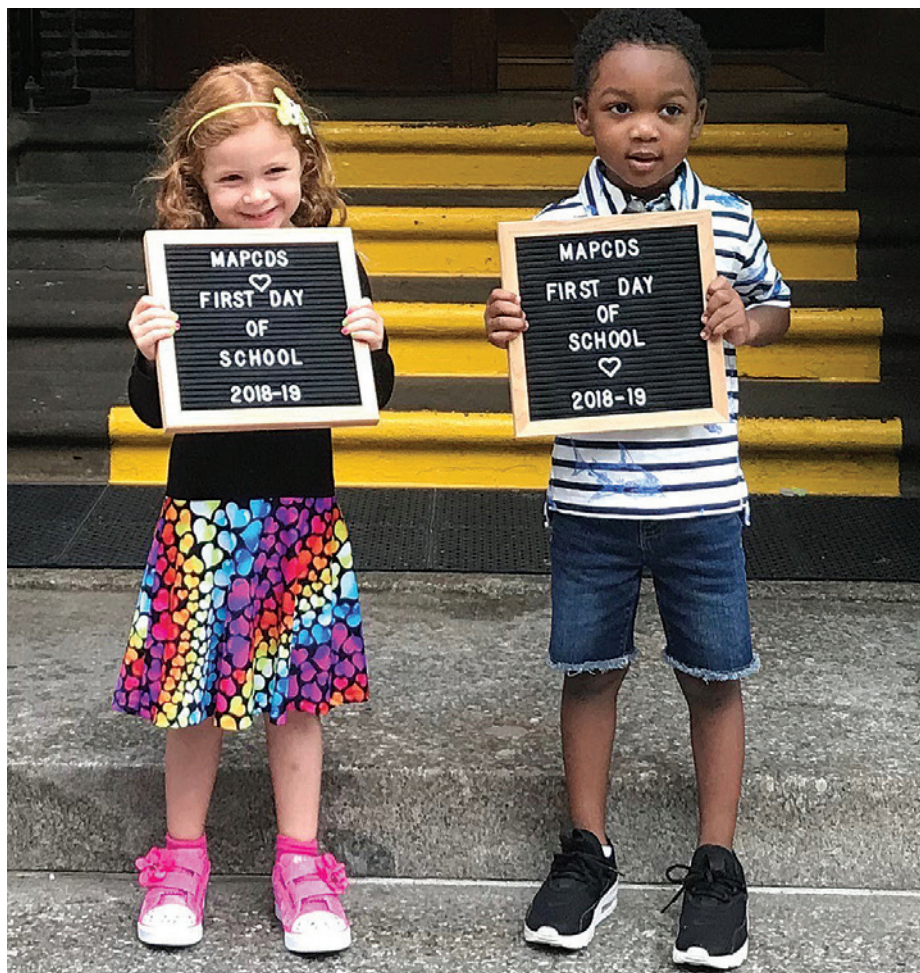
led by a volunteer from the Central Park Conservancy. We walked across 72nd Street and learned about the historical and architectural highlights along this route. From the Samuel Morse statue at Inventors Gate to Strawberry Fields, our staff became more familiar with the park and considered new ways to explore with children.

Park Days, as we have come to call these planned outings, often impact curriculum. Classes visit the park each month, and no two experiences are quite the same. Digging for worms, playing in streams, and making forts out of fallen branches are common occurrences. A meditative walk to note the changing season might be ideal for one group one day, while another might be fascinated by musicians they encounter. One group was

so intrigued by the paths we took that they were inspired to make maps to document their adventure, both drawn on paper and abstractly arranged three dimensionally with natural materials. Our time in Central Park has even inspired poetry. Language, mathematical thinking, artistic expression, physical challenge and scientific inquiry are all interwoven in our Park Days, just as they are incorporated in daily classroom life.

We are eager to see what the children are captivated by in the park this year and how their interests impact both classroom life and their own personal development.

Left: Day School students celebrate the first day of school. Below: Outings in Central Park inspire art and writing.



New York City Children's Chorus Tour to Spain

At the end of June, 46 choristers of MAPC's New York City Children's Chorus program spent a glorious week performing throughout Spain! The choristers, drawn from the In Harmony and Concert Choirs, performed four concerts to packed houses in Madrid, Valencia, Motril, and Alcalá de Henares. They sang a service at the Basilica in Valencia which was recorded for Spanish television. They also had the chance to meet and sing with two of Madrid's finest youth choirs, Sinan Kay and the Diversity Youth Choir. We explored the great Moorish palace, the Alhambra, in Granada, and viewed priceless works of art at the Prado in Madrid. Thanks to the generosity of our donors, each chorister received \$1,200 toward the cost of this tour. This was an incredible opportunity for them, and it wouldn't have been possible without the support of our parents and donors. An extra-special thanks goes out to our parent chaperones who took such great care of our kids while abroad! – Helen Karloski, Program Director, NYCCC

Our choristers sing throughout the high liturgy at the Basilica de la Virgen de los Desamparados in Valencia. NYCCC joins forces with one of Madrid's finest children's choirs, Sinan Kay, for a performance at the Basilica de San Miguel.



Building Upkeep

Last summer was full of construction and building improvements at MAPC. The sprinkler work in the Church House, which has been in the planning stages for several years now, is finally completed! The entire building is now fully sprinklered ahead of the NYC fire code deadline of 2019. Also this summer, the Phillips Building stairwell got a long-overdue makeover. Thanks to the reserve fund of the New York City Children's Chorus, the entry way and stairwell are now bright and welcoming.

The other work that happened was unexpected—flood recovery!! In mid-August there was a valve and pipe misfunction that resulted in a cascade of water flowing down from the Roof Garden on the west side of the building, causing damage to staff apartments, Day School classrooms, and staff offices and flooding several floors of the building as it made its way to the bottom of the stairwell. Many thanks to Roger Pierce, Jenny McDevitt, and the Building and Grounds Committee of the Trustees for seeing that flood recovery happened in a timely fashion so that staff apartments and Day School classrooms were restored by the time everyone returned at the beginning of September.

Keeping up old buildings takes a lot of resources. Here are examples of your Mission Fund and annual pledge dollars at work!



Above: The Phillips Building stairwell has been transformed into a bright, welcoming space. Below: The Fifth Floor of the Church House served as a staging area all summer for the building-wide sprinkler installation.



Saint Andrew Music Society (SAMS) Concerts

Sunday, December 2 at 3 pm

Christmas on Madison Avenue

Concert Choir of the New York City Children's Chorus

Sunday, December 16 at 4 pm

14th Annual Carol Sing

Choir of Madison Avenue Presbyterian Church

New York City Children's Chorus

Seasonal choral music, readings, & audience carols

Sunday, February 10 at 3 pm

Barbara Strozzi: In Defiance of Time & Fate

duoSeraphim

Sunday, February 24 at 3 pm

Tchaikovsky and His Contemporaries

Russian Chamber Chorus of New York

Sunday, March 3 at 3 pm

Bach & Arensky

Peter Vinograd & Friends



Fall and Winter Congregational Nurture Events

Friday, November 30, 2018

Church Family Night, 6 pm in the Parish Hall

We'll be anticipating winter and Christmas on this last night of November. Come enjoy dinner with church friends, a holiday craft, a Christmas movie, and something new—decorating the Church House Lobby for Christmas! RSVP to Lissette Perez-Erazo, lgp@mapc.com.



Saturday, December 1, 2018

Advent Quiet Day/Retreat, 9-3 pm, Parish Hall

Give yourself the gift of quiet and reflection before the season races ahead. Beverly Bartlett will lead an Advent Quiet Day/Retreat with times of worship, reflection, and silence. We'll begin with coffee and a light breakfast and enjoy lunch together. We will gather in the Parish Hall and use other parts of the building throughout the day. The cost for the day is \$20 to cover meals and materials. RSVP to Lissette Perez-Erazo, lgp@mapc.com

Friday, January 11, 2019

Church Family Night, 6 pm in the Parish Hall

Come enjoy another Church Family Night! Dinner, craft, movie, gym time, fun and conversation. You do not need to have children in your home to come to Church Family Night! All of us are part of the church family. You do need to be able to enjoy some noisy, energetic fun!

Friday, January 25, 2019

Friday Night Fireside Jazz, 6:30 to 9:30 pm

Come join us for our 3rd annual Friday Night Fireside Jazz event! We'll enjoy fantastic finger food, live music, and conversation—with a fire in the fireplace, of course! We'll provide childcare on the 5th floor for those who need it. Watch for sign up details in the weekly Pastoral Staff Newsletter.



Sunday, January 27, 2019

Library Awareness Sunday Author Luncheon 1 pm in the Parish Hall

The Hood Library Fellowship is hosting another "meet the author" lunch at 1 pm in the Parish Hall. Watch for more details in the weekly Pastoral Staff Newsletter.

Thursday, February 7, 2019

Moms Night Out, Thursday, 7 pm

MAPC Moms, mark your calendars now and come enjoy a relaxed evening out. Moms with children of all ages are invited!



Sunday, February 10, 2019

Senior Fellowship Lunch

1 pm in the Parish Hall

And don't forget these regular groups—both of which are open to all:

The MAPC Book Club meets on the third Tuesday of the month, at 4 pm, in the Hood Library. Each month's selection is announced in the weekly Pastoral Staff Newsletter.

The Spiritual Growth and Faith Sharing Group meets at 1 pm on the 1st and 3rd Thursday of each month in the library at James Lenox House, around the corner from the church on 73rd Street.

MAPC Fellowship



Above left: Mayada Anjari, a Syrian refugee, cooked a wonderful meal for MAPC members and friends at our third annual "Dinner with Mayada." Above right: MAPC kids, friends and cousin get dropped off for camp at Holmes Presbyterian Camp. Below: Katie Keiley, Kate Baier, Anne Connor and Linda Field shared their stories at our annual fall Women's Brunch.



Above: Our Church Family Night Halloween party is always a popular event! After the Halloween parade in the Sanctuary with spooky organ music, the children sit on the steps for a photo op. Right: MAPC members enjoyed a beautiful early summer evening on the Roof Garden at our annual Roof Garden party. Below: Kids' Club participants and staff enjoy cooking together.



Christian Education and Youth Ministry

Church School, Sunday Mornings at 10:10, 5th Floor

Church School is a time for children ages 3 and up to engage in Bible Study, singing and crafts with other children in the church—it is one of the ways our children forge relationships and develop a sense of community that will provide fellowship and support as they grow up. This year, through the Seasons of the Spirit curriculum, we will learn about creation and humanity's role in God's world. Our time opens with community singing, then we split into age groups for Bible Study and crafts.

Youth Hour, Sunday Mornings at 10:10 am, Youth Lounge on the 5th Floor

Superheroes, villains, spies! What do they have to do with faith? Even our most beloved secular characters can teach us about God and living as people with integrity, compassion and a strong moral compass. So, come on Sunday mornings and bring your favorite superhero along to explore Faces of our Faith as they appear in popular culture.

High School Fellowship, Sunday Mornings at 10:10, 4th Floor, Phillips Building

Come join in our new high school fellowship on Sunday mornings! We are meeting in the Phillips Building—take the elevator to the 4th floor, go down a half-flight of stairs, through the big black door, and down the hall. Kind of like finding your way around Hogwarts. Our seminary interns, Chesna Hinkley and Audrey Webber are leading this group. This year we are reading through the Gospel of Luke together, doing art journaling in our Bibles, and talking about what Jesus' teachings mean for our lives today.

Wee Kids and Kids Club, Wednesday afternoons from 4-6 pm, Church House

Have you missed out on the fun at our Wednesday afterschool program? The good news is that it is never too late to sign up and be a part of Kids Club (age 3 through 5th Grade) or the Madison Avenue Presbyterian Church Children's Choir. Come one, come all because together we learn more about who God is. Join us as we sing, share Bible stories, play games, and eat dinner as a church family each week.

T(ween) Club, Wednesday afternoons from 5-7 pm, Church House

Middle Schoolers, we are sure this new school year has taught you a lot about the world around you! But where do you see God in that world? Sometimes putting together what we experience in the world and who we believe God is proves to be challenging. The Rev. Jenny McDevitt will be there to wrestle with all your tough questions! Come and bring your friends as you explore the Bible, talk about God and following Jesus, engage in recreation, and sing with Ms. Huff.

MAPC Serves

Senior highs, we have a goal to contribute 300 hours of service to our neighborhood this year, and we need your help! Each month there are three service projects planned that help serve the homeless, elderly, and children near the church. Stay connected to your church family and help those that need it most!

Save the Dates for 2019

Children's Sunday—February 3, 2019

Third graders will receive their Bibles and our youngest children will help welcome us to worship.

Confirmation and Youth Sunday June 2, 2019 at 10:30 am

Come worship with us as our Confirmands and youth lead us in worship. There will be a congregational brunch to follow the service.

Youth Mission Trip 2019 July 14-20 (tentative)

This year we will join our Sent by Love partners at the Triennium Youth Conference at Perdue University.



The four members of the 2018 confirmation class helped lead worship on Youth Sunday, including preaching. Emily Bartlett, Adeline Burg, Emily Patterson, and Cole Glotfelty are among the 25 people who have joined the church in the last few months!



Above: The Confirmands and Christina Cosby, Director of Christian Formation, leading worship on Youth Sunday. Below: T(ween) Club participants on Wednesday afternoons mix a lot of fun in with Bible study.



Sent by Love

“For just as the body is one and has many members, and all the members of the body, though many, are one body, so it is with Christ. For in the one Spirit we were all baptized into one body—Jews or Greeks, slaves or free—and we were all made to drink of one Spirit. Indeed, the body does not consist of one member but of many. ... Now you are the body of Christ and individually members of it.” —1 Cor. 12:12-14, 27

The Bible is full of many stories and sayings that we are taught, commit to memory, and have embedded in our hearts. Yet, when we truly sit with them, they can be confusing. One body, but many parts? What does that mean?

This is the theme Sent by Love set out to explore this year. Four churches from different social, economic, and geographical locations came together, affirming that Christ calls us to be one body—even if our physical locations and life situations differ. First Presbyterian Church of Spirit Lake (Iowa), Lake Park Presbyterian Church (Iowa), First Presbyterian Church of Jamaica (NYC), and MAPC gathered to build relationships, serve others, and encounter God’s Word.

Along the way, we served many organizations as we listened to stories of where and how people have encountered God in their corner of God’s world. We helped organize the food pantry at St Francis House in Sioux Falls, South Dakota. Little Stone Presbyterian Church showed us true resurrection faith as we painted their walls, helping prepare their building for a new con-

gregation. Our PC(USA) elders of the Lakota Indian tribe taught us about God in nature and led by example as our time together was met with flash flooding. Our Iowa partners embraced their Midwest culture as they introduced us to breakfast pizza and tacos in a bag.

These experiences not only spoke of our individuality in Christ, they taught us why our unique gifts matter and how our diversity contributes to the creation of a more whole world. The Youth Mission Trip showed us how our faith unites us to people and cultures beyond our own.



Above: Xaviera and Susannah enjoy a fun afternoon at the lake on the Sent by Love trip. **Below:** Sent by Love participants from MAPC, First Presbyterian Church in Jamaica (Queens) and our partner churches in Iowa organized the food pantry at St. Francis House.



Advent Devotions

Week One, Read Luke 21:25-36

If we need a reminder that the season of Advent is not a warm and cozy “get ready for Christmas” time, this gospel passage for the first Sunday of Advent should serve that purpose! Advent means “coming”, and it is a time for anticipating, preparing, and waiting for the return of Christ. The early church thought Jesus was returning imminently, within their lifetimes. After all, Jesus seemed to think that would happen, too. The imagery of what will precede the end days is the stuff of apocalyptic disaster movies—signs in the heavens, distress among the nations, roaring seas and waves. Remember, the deep symbolized the forces of chaos. It is enough to make us cower under our beds or take to our bunkers. But, no! That is not what Jesus says we are to do when we see these signs. No, we are to stand up and raise our heads because our redemption



is drawing near!

Here we are, almost 2000 years later, and we are still waiting for Jesus to come and bring God’s realm to its glorious completion. For most of us the end days and Christ’s coming are not something we spend a lot of time thinking about, not in our branch of Christianity, anyway. Yes, we want the assurance that we will be with God through all eternity, but we don’t spend a lot of time thinking about the end of days and Christ’s return. If we are going to worry about changes in the heavens and roaring seas, then climate change, with its increasing number and intensity of storms, creeping deserts, shrinking ice caps, and rising oceans, seems like a much more real and present danger. And we already have plenty of confusion and uproar among the nations to fully occupy our attention.

So how do we live as people who are trusting and expecting that Christ will come, that God’s reign will one day be complete? Advent reminds us that in the midst of the worries, anxieties and troubles of our day, God has promised that Christ will return. Jesus tells us in this passage how we are to live in this troubled in-between time: with our heads held high, looking for him, trusting in our redemption. He tells us to live as though he would return any moment. “Be on guard so that your hearts are not weighed down with dissipation and drunkenness and the

worries of this life, and that day catch you unexpectedly.”

Advent assures us that Jesus is coming. We are to live expectant lives of active waiting. We are not to live without hope, or as if this life does not matter. We are to live as followers of Christ, sharing his love and trusting that one day all that harms, destroys and oppresses will end. Jesus has not left us alone to face the troubles of this world. Because Jesus came to earth as one of us and sent the Holy Spirit, he abides within us, even as we await his return. We live in him even as we wait for him.

As you move through this week, remind yourself throughout each day, “Christ is with me.” Imagine what this world will look like when it is made new, and pray, “Lord, Jesus, quickly come.”

— Beverly Bartlett

Week 2: Read Luke 3:1-6

Prepare. Get ready. Do this. Make sure you do not forget. These phrases enter our ears and run through our minds constantly. Our to-do lists run longer than the hours we have in the day. Our minds keep track of what we have yet to do, and what we could have done better. We never get a break from the chaotic busyness that surrounds our lives.

We come to church sometimes to add more to our list. At other times, we come to check a box off of our long list. During busy seasons in our lives, such as Advent, we come to escape the many preparations added to our already overscheduled lives.

Then we come to this second week of Advent, and in our Gospel passage from Luke we read that we must prepare! Get ready! Be sure to make ready for the coming of the Lord! One more thing we must add to our long list of preparations. But what does this preparing and making ready look like?

When we take a closer look, it appears much different than we assume. This preparation takes the form of waiting, waiting with anticipation for God’s next move in our life together and in our individual lives. This kind of preparation asks us to step back from our to-do lists, to pause and see where God is in our midst while we wonder where God will nudge us next.

When we add this active waiting into the daily routines of

our lives we create a straight path for God in our midst. Our mountains of to-dos get lower, and our valleys of what we could have done become filled in. We realize that God meets



us, in our humanity, just as we are.

So, this Advent make sure to pause in your preparing. Be sure to wait with wonder. Be sure to leave room in your life for God to do something new.

Wait. Prepare. Wonder! For the Lord is coming and we must be ready!

- What is God asking you to make ready for this Advent season?
- In what ways are you actively anticipating God's next move in your life?
- How can you participate in bringing God's Kingdom to earth this year?

— Christina Cosby

Week 3: Read Luke 3:7-18

When have we not experienced the sense of urgency in New York City? Tasks to be finished, meetings to attend, papers to be written...the list could go on. You know that feeling, right? Your heart is pounding, your mind racing, your anxiety is building, and if you don't finish a specific task the world might end! For some, urgency is a common response to our overworked lifestyles. Time is money, right?

The author of Luke may not be rushing down Wall Street punching in numbers, but that does not stop Luke from giving its readers a sense of urgency. From the very beginning of Luke 3:7 - 18, John the Baptist urgently proclaims his frustration to the crowd by harshly calling them "children of vipers" and exposing that they are fleeing from imminent wrath. The urgency continues in the imagery of an ax about to strike and trees being cut down to be burned. All of this builds to John speaking of the urgency for baptism and a changing of one's life. And then the urgency of the coming of "the one who is more powerful than I". And with this sense of urgency, the people around John ask a simple question, "What should we do?" John answers, "share your clothing and food." He singles out the tax collectors and soldiers, inviting them to be honest and just in their interactions with the people they serve. The Baptist redirects the crowd so that they may restore their community to an authentic and just community.

With all of this, John urgently and enthusiastically pre-

pares the way for the Messiah. Luke says that John baptizes with water so that there is repentance and judgement, a much harsher view of baptism than what we know. John says the coming Messiah will baptize with fire, but surprisingly this baptism will bring the Holy Spirit, empowering us to live out a Christian life. John's immediate prediction of the coming Messiah's ministry is not the actual ministry the Messiah lives out. As we know, Christ lived a life with little judgment, but with lots of grace. Therefore, with such urgency in the air, wrapped around unclear agricultural language, one finds good news. Luke is providing the people with images of a new re-



ality to come. We find that the acts of injustice are no longer significant because a new understanding of the world will soon arrive. The new world will come with the Messiah and bring people who will be baptized with the Holy Spirit, who em-

powers us to speak out, seek change, and maybe even slow down in the midst of urgency.

Since we are urbanites, living in a city that never sleeps, we might think we are professionals at tackling urgency. But there comes a time when the busyness is overwhelming and frankly too much to handle. This week, when you can't take one more step in this quick paced world, I invite you to stop, wherever you may be, close your eyes, and find inner peace. Take five long breaths and as you inhale, pray internally, "God of grace" and as you exhale, pray, "allow me to breathe in your Spirit."

— Rebecca M Heilman

Week 4: Read Luke 1:39-55

These words from Luke are some of my favorite in all of scripture. The confidence and faith of Mary's song both humbles me and inspires me. The content of her song is more than a bit unsettling, for she sings of a world turned upside down. I have but a glimmer of understanding of what that means for me, as I know just how fortunate I am by virtue of where I was born, what opportunities were afforded to me, and how I am able to live my life in relative ease. So here is the truth: I long for the day Mary's song is to be realized ... and I am a little uncertain about that day and what it really means for me.

Historically and theologically, Advent is a complex and contradictory season. In 2018, we practice "waiting" for the coming of Christ, an event that happened over 2000 years ago. At the same time, we wait, in a very real and literal sense, for the second coming of Christ. We celebrate what has already

happened while awaiting what is still to come. In this sense, Advent is a time of “already and not yet.”

But there is one more contradiction we ought not miss in this season. Mary sings with confidence, but at the same time, Mary was a teenager whose own life had just been upended. There is no doubt in my mind that she was afraid. Her cousin Elizabeth was also pregnant in a very unexpected way. She, too, must have been frightened. And so let us not miss what happens right before Mary sings: she “sets out with haste” to see Elizabeth. Because while her life is filled with much unknown, she knows this much: it is easier for us to face difficulty and uncertainty together. Not only was their reunion balm for their own souls, but “when Elizabeth heard Mary’s greeting, [Elizabeth’s] child leapt in her womb.” The power of relationship has been demonstrated and documented by sociologists and biologists alike, and yet I believe it is more powerful than even those fields prove. When God created humankind, we were made to be together. Way back then, God put it this way: “It is not good for the human to be alone.”

Mary’s song is one of the most powerful moments of Ad-

vent. Yet I suggest that she is able to sing that way only because she has gathered up strength and courage from her time with Elizabeth. Faith is a gift, but sometimes we need one another to make the best use of our gifts.

Advent is a time of waiting. Though our circumstances are different from Mary’s, we are all waiting for something. What are you waiting for? And how might the difficulty of your waiting be assuaged by sharing that “expectant time” with someone else?

It is the fourth week of Advent. Christmas is nearly upon us. The waiting of this liturgical season is hitting its peak, and our hearts are quickened because we know what is coming. We know what we are waiting for. Let me suggest to you that this is true even today. We may not know the specifics of an outcome or what it will mean for our lives, but we know this: just like it was over 2000 years ago, Christ is coming to us. Christ will be with us, no matter why we wait or what we face. Jesus Christ, Emmanuel, God with us, is on the way. Therefore, we wait with hope. We wait with peace. We wait with joy. And we wait with love. For love is on its way to us, right now. — *Jenny McDevitt*



THE ANNUNCIATION BY FRA ANGELICO, C. 1430

Tell Me More

Our Inquirers Class has taken off in a new direction in the past several months. Rather than starting with what the church decides prospective new members need to know, we are starting with what those prospective new members want to know. “It’s a more relational approach,” says Rev. Jenny McDevitt, who leads the class. “It’s a conversation more than a lecture. The new members get to know one another in a fun and relaxed way, we all ask lots of questions, and along the way I find out what’s most important to the individuals who have come — what motivates them to learn more about MAPC.” Over the course of that, almost everything that might be typically covered in an inquirers class is covered, but rarely, Jenny says, in the same order. “The participants dictate when we’ll talk about certain elements of Presbyterianism or things that are unique to MAPC.” The class takes place for 2 1/2 hours on a Saturday morning. “We can’t cover everything in that amount of time,” Jenny says, “but faith is constantly evolving, constantly growing. What I hope to do is start a conversation that continues for these new members through robust participation in the life of the church. By the time we are finished on Saturday morning, they feel a real connection to the other attendees, and studies have long shown (and our hearts have long told us) that relationships tend to be what keeps most people in a church. We live in a world where people long to be known, long to belong. Our theology will always be tremendously important. But theology without relationships is simply an academic exercise. Jesus calls us to more than that.”



So far, 21 new members have attended a “Tell Me More” Session and gone on to join the church. The last “Tell Me More” of 2018 is scheduled for Saturday, Dec. 8, at 9 am in the Phillips Lounge. Contact Lissette Perez-Erazo in the church office to sign up: lgp@mapc.com.



Top: Thanks to the work of the Evangelism Committee, there is once again a MAPC banner flying over Madison Ave! Above and left: MAPC staff enjoyed giving out treats in front of the sanctuary on Halloween. Many people stopped to ask, “What church is this?” Evangelism can be fun!



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**Look inside for
some important
dates you won't
want to miss**

Celebrate Christmas at MAPC!

Sunday, December 16: 3rd Sunday of Advent

9 & 11:15 am: Services of Word & Sacrament

"Let There Be Joy"

The Rev. Jenny M. McDevitt preaching

10 am: Christmas Pageant

4 pm: The 14th Annual Carol Sing

Choir of MAPC & New York City Children's Chorus

An MAPC favorite! Audience carols, choral music, seasonal readings.

Free admission.

Tuesday, December 18: A Service of the Longest Night

7 pm: The Longest Night:

A Service of Word & Sacrament in the Dana Chapel

A gentle service acknowledging that for many, the holidays are among the most difficult times of the year. Though the night of grief and sadness may be long, light is on the way.

The Rev. Jenny M. McDevitt preaching

Sunday, December 23: 4th Sunday of Advent

9 & 11:15 am: Services of Word & Sacrament

"Let There Be Love"

The Rev. Jenny M. McDevitt preaching

Monday, December 24: Christmas Eve

5 pm: A Christmas Eve Family Service

A child-friendly, 40-minute service that includes the telling of the Christmas story in a tableau enacted by children in our Kids Club program, along with the singing of carols.

10:30 pm: A Candlelight Communion Service

"Let There Be Light"

The Rev. Jenny M. McDevitt preaching

Seasonal choral music, including excerpts from Vivaldi's Gloria, with guest instrumentalists

(Prelude begins at 10:10 pm)

Tuesday, December 25: Christmas Day

11:15 am: A Service of Lessons & Carols

A quiet, meditative service that includes the telling of the Christmas story through scripture, poetry, choral music and congregational carols.

Sunday, December 30: 1st Sunday after Christmas

11:15 am: A Service of Word & Sacrament

Christina A. Cosby preaching

(note: no 9 am service!)