

Madison Avenue Presbyterian Church

PASTORAL STAFF LETTER

announcements, updates, and information for the weeks ahead



August 13 & 20, 2020

A Letter from Rev. Beverly A. Bartlett

Dear Friends,

Due to staff vacations, you'll note that this week's Pastoral Staff Letter is for both this week and next week.

I have felt like I have been in a bit of a bubble since arriving at the farm in the mountains of North Georgia almost two weeks ago. I have not left the farm in all that time. Since Georgia is a hot spot for the coronavirus, I am not venturing out among folks other than family. It is a beautiful, tranquil bubble to be in--until I turn on the news, and then I am reminded that the world and all its troubles are still there. You've probably heard the stories of the hundreds of Georgia students, teachers and staff that are now in quarantine after just a couple of days of school starting up. As I engage in conversations about my daughter's school's plans to try and re-open safely and develop their hybrid model of learning, I wonder how teachers who are already stretched thin are going to manage teaching both in the classroom and online. There is a lot of hard work going on--even in the bubble of what is usually August vacation time.

I realize that my bubble here at the farm is a privilege. Last night I watched the story on the PBS News Hour of desperate people hiking through the rainforests where South America meets Central America, some of them injured, most of them with little to no food, some of them having had everything but the clothes on their backs stolen at gunpoint, some carrying

children, helping pregnant women, and passing by the remains of those who didn't make it. They are fleeing violence and oppression in their own countries, or poverty so extreme there is no way to support themselves or their families. No one makes a trip like that for anything short of a desperate attempt at survival. And yet, they are unlikely to find a welcome. I cannot imagine going through a trip like that, only to be turned away at the border of the place you hoped would offer a new, safe start. Yes, my bubble is indeed a privilege.

I'm preaching this Sunday on the troubling exchange between Jesus and the Canaanite woman. Ultimately, this is a story about hearing those who are "other," about inclusion, about reaching across boundaries, about the reach of God's kingdom and salvation. As I write this, it occurs to me that it is also a story about breaking out of the bubbles we inhabit.

We do have times of respite, times where we can catch our breath, retreat a bit, and find renewal. But then we have to come out of those bubbles and engage the world (masked and at a safe physical distance). That is where Jesus calls us to be, and where he leads us--out of our safe sanctuaries and into the world, to break down walls, bridge divides, and work towards the beloved community, where all are welcomed and know the blessings of this life.

Christ's peace to you all,
Beverly A. Bartlett
Associate Pastor and Acting Head of Staff

Worship in August

August 16 -- The Rev. Beverly Bartlett will be preaching from the porch in the mountains of Northeast Georgia.

August 23 -- The Rev. José González-Colón, Pastor of Iglesia Presbiteriana en Hato Rey in San Juan, Puerto Rico will be our guest preacher. MAPC members will remember José from the years we supported his ministry at First Spanish Presbyterian Church in Brooklyn and his sermons during our Good Friday services.

August 30 -- The Rev. Beverly Bartlett will be preaching.

Daily Prayer

Daily Prayer – Monday, Wednesday & Friday

Find all of them here:

Three Ways to Give to MAPC During this Time

We are grateful to all of you for your financial support of the church during this time. As you know, the church continues to be the church, with staff to pay, buildings to maintain, and ministries to carry out even though our buildings are closed. We understand that with job losses and furloughs, many people are not able to contribute financially. For those of you who are able to continue your financial pledges and offerings, click on the link below to see the three ways you can give:

[Give Now](#)

Thank you for your faithful giving!

For Children & Youth

Thursdays for Children

*NEW: Kindergarteners, 1st and 2nd graders: you are invited to Thursdays for Children. We'll meet from 9 to 9:45 am on Thursday, September 3rd.

Please mark your calendar and watch your email for the zoom info.

Pre-Teen Zoom Game Gatherings are back!

3rd - 5th graders, join us MONDAYS at 3 pm for jackbox games, a chance to catch up and a brief devotion.

Youth

Virtual Youth/Family Dinners - Set up a time to share dinner (virtually) and check in with Director of Youth Ministries and Associate for Congregational Engagement, April Martin. Email April at aem@mapc.com.

We are developing plans for the Fall and are interested in your thoughts on what you want and need from the youth program.

Hobby Hour

Today at 5 pm - Youth in 6th - 12th grade, login to zoom to share your hobbies with other youth and adult volunteers.

Do you bake, watch anime, play video games, play basketball, or make origami? What do you like to do? Share your interests and skills. 30-45 minutes of fellowship on zoom.

Ways to Stay Connected

Sunday Worship

Join us for pre-recorded services of worship on Sunday mornings.

Find all our services here:

[Click Here to Watch](#)

Children's Worship

Find all of our children's worship videos here:

[Click Here to Watch](#)

Archived Storytime with Sadie & Tales with Timber

Find all of your favorite stories and tales here:

[Click Here to Watch](#)

For Adults--Opportunities for Fellowship & Study

Zoom invites are sent regularly by email.

Virtual Fellowship Hour

Sundays at 12 noon

Please join us for Virtual Fellowship Hour. Every Sunday.

Lectio Divina

We are taking a break until Fall.

Afternoon Tea & Discussion on Kate Bowler's Podcast Based on Her Book:

Everything Happens for a Reason: And Other Lies I've Loved

TODAY at 4 pm

We will listen together to a clip from Rev. Kate Bowler's podcast based on her book.

More Info: "Kate Bowler is a professor at Duke Divinity School with a modest Christian upbringing, but she specializes in the study of the prosperity gospel, a creed that sees fortune as a blessing from God and misfortune as a mark of God's disapproval. At 35, everything in her life seems to point toward "blessing". She is thriving in her job, married to her high school sweetheart, and loves life with her newborn son.

Then she is diagnosed with stage IV colon cancer.

The prospect of her own mortality forces Kate to realize that she has been tacitly subscribing to the prosperity gospel, living with the conviction that she can control the shape of her life with "a surge of determination". Even as this type of Christianity celebrates the American can-do spirit, it implies that if you "can't do" and succumb to illness or misfortune, you are a failure. Kate is very sick, and no amount of positive thinking will shrink her tumors. What does it mean to die, she wonders, in a society that insists everything happens for a reason? Kate is stripped of this certainty only to discover that without it, life is hard but beautiful in a way it never has been before.

Frank and funny, dark and wise, Kate Bowler pulls the reader deeply into her life in an account she populates affectionately with a colorful, often hilarious retinue of friends, megachurch preachers, relatives and doctors. *Everything Happens for a Reason* tells her story, offering up her irreverent hard-won observations on dying and the ways it has taught her to live."

Young Adult Happy Hour

Thursday, August 20 at 8 pm

Join to play light-hearted games, engage in a quick devotion and hang out together.

Moms' Night Out

We are working on setting the next Moms' Night Out date. Stay tuned!

Facing Racism

The Facing Racism discussion group is taking a break until Sunday, September 13. Please continue to read, watch and listen to resources on understanding the history and current realities of racism in our society. Here is a link to some of these resources:

[Click Here for "Facing Racism" Resources](#)

Bible Studies

Monday Evening Bible Study

Normally on the 1st and 3rd Mondays of the month at 7 pm. We are currently studying the Gospel of Mark. Please let Rev. Bartlett know if you would like to join this Bible study at bab@mapc.com. Since Rev. Bartlett will be on vacation/study leave the first three weeks of August, the next Evening Bible Study is August 24.

Women's Bible Study

The Women's Bible Study, which is currently studying the Psalms, met this

week by teleconference. Please contact Lissette Perez-Erazo for more details:
lgp@mapc.com

Additional Information

GetCool Air Conditioner Program

If you need an air conditioner this summer, please call 311 or enroll here:
<https://portal.311.nyc.gov/article/?kanumber=KA-03305>

Email Lissette Perez-Erazo at lgp@mapc.com if you are not currently receiving Zoom information or would like to receive any additional information regarding any of our online gatherings.

MAPC on Social Media

Facebook

Follow MAPC on Facebook for news, reminders, events, and pictures from everyday life at the church. It's a good way to engage in fellowship and to know what's going on each week.

facebook.com/MadisonAvenuePresbyterian/

