

# PASTORAL STAFF LETTER

announcements, updates, and information for the weeks ahead



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## October 22, 2020

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### A Letter from Rev. Dr. J. Patrick Vaughn

Dear Friends,

In my first two weeks with you, I have enjoyed getting to know you through Zoom calls, committee meetings, interactions with the staff, and walks in the park.

Lisette is doing a great job of tending to my calendar, and I would enjoy meeting more of you. If you are available for a conversation, please contact her ([lgp@mapc.com](mailto:lgp@mapc.com)), and she will set it up.

In no particular order, here are some of my initial impressions of Madison Avenue:

- MAPC is a remarkably and wonderfully diverse congregation.
- Members deeply appreciate the sense of community in the church, are concerned that this warmth and vibrancy seem to have faded over the past ten years, and want to nurture a stronger spirit of warmth, hospitality, and acceptance.
- Your elders as well as your trustees and deacons are deeply committed, and they devote untold hours to the ministry of MAPC.
- You appreciated Jenny's ministry and are still shocked, puzzled, hurt, and angry that she abruptly left during the pandemic.
- You are hungry to grow in faith, and you want to understand more deeply how our faith makes a difference in our lives and in our world.

- Mindful of a declining and aging membership, you have concern about the future vitality of MAPC.
- You have a very large endowment yet the high cost of maintaining the physical plant presents significant challenges.
- From the younger members to the older members you are weary of change, disruption and transition.
- You are thankful for your staff. They are a dedicated, creative, and talented team that has a passion for the ministry of MAPC. They are extremely motivated and committed.
- You value a rich history with a long tradition of strong preaching. You are rightly proud of this history but sometimes this appreciation of the past might keep you from more fully leaning into the future.
- You miss social gatherings at the manse.
- You want to reach younger families and believe these are necessary to sustain your ministry in the future.

After only ten days I do not know, of course, how accurately these actually reflect who you are. But I am encouraged. I am encouraged by your openness, your devotion, and your attitude. I am encouraged by how well you have continued to offer faithful ministry during the worst health crisis we have experienced in a century. And I am very encouraged by the way you have welcomed me into your community.

But what do you think? Do any of these impressions resonate with you? Surprise you?

I would appreciate hearing your thoughts and reflections.

Please write to me at [jpv@mapc.com](mailto:jpv@mapc.com).

Thinking of you.  
Patrick

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## For All the Saints

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We remember the family and friends of two of our members who died in the past week: Martha Roby Stephens and Sally E. Cunningham.

Martha died at home October 17th, at the age of 96, after a lengthy illness. She joined MAPC in 2006, having found us through the Saint Andrew Music Society concert series and her love of music. Martha served as a deacon and was a constant presence at worship, fellowship hour and other events as long as her health allowed. A memorial service will be planned at a later date, when pandemic conditions allow.

Sally died October 16th and had re-joined MAPC in 2018. She had been a member in the 1980s, before moving to New Jersey. Both of her daughters,

Elizabeth and Katherine were baptized at MAPC and are currently members. Sally's granddaughter, Eleanor, was recently baptized in the sanctuary on September 27. Rev. Bartlett conducted a funeral for Sally with close family and friends present at the cemetery in Bridgehampton on Tuesday.

We will miss both Martha and Sally. We extend our condolences to all who loved them and pray for God's comfort and the sure and certain hope of the resurrection.

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## Memorial Sunday

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We are receiving the names of loved ones to be remembered during our virtual service on Memorial Sunday, November 1. It is particularly appropriate to remember those who have died in the last year. If you have someone whose name you would like to have read and included in the service, please contact Andrew Henderson at [aeh@mapc.com](mailto:aeh@mapc.com).

**The deadline for the receipt of names is Wednesday, October 28.**

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## Looking Forward to Advent

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The upcoming season of Advent will be different than in the past, but pandemic or not, the seasons march on, and we need this season of expectation and hope more than ever this year. We are assembling Advent boxes that members can pick up at the church. For our "safer at home" members, we will deliver them to your building. Watch this space for more details on how to request a box for yourself/your family. The box will have a variety of items to help you observe the season--simple Advent candles/wreath, Advent devotions, craft activities, alternative Advent calendars, and a booklet created by YOU!! Please send a favorite cookie or other recipe or seasonal tradition (i.e. movies you watch, books you read, music you always listen to, activity your family enjoys) by email to April Martin, [aem@mapc.com](mailto:aem@mapc.com). We will assemble them into a booklet to include in the Advent boxes.

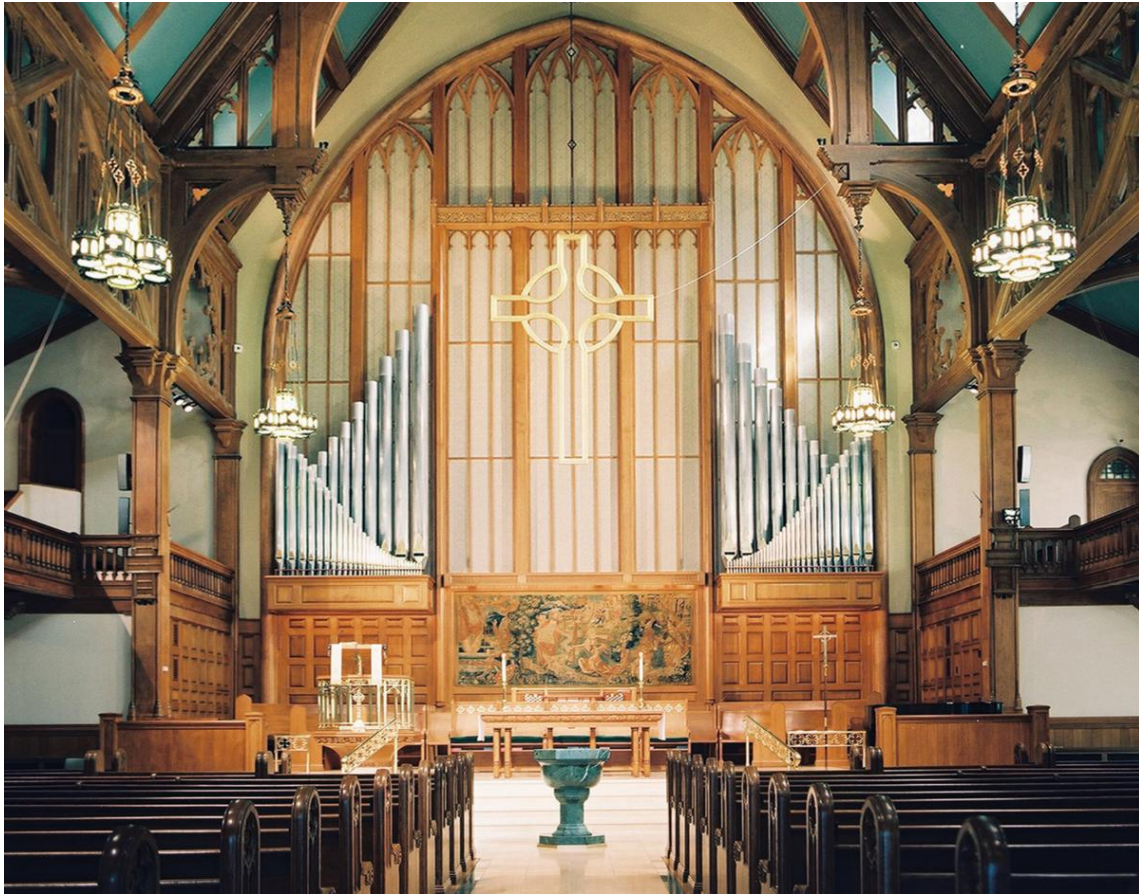
During the noon Fellowship Hours, starting with the 1st Sunday in Advent on November 29th, we will share in Advent devotions together.

Advent boxes will be available to pick up on Monday, November 30 and Tuesday, December 1.

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## 2020 Stewardship Campaign

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The Stewardship and Development Committee has worked diligently to plan this fall's stewardship campaign. In the spring it became clear that the original plan for the fall would have to be adjusted since in-person gatherings would not be possible. Next week MAPC members should watch for an invitation, sent both by email and hard copy, to participate in a virtual fall fellowship gathering. There are eight gatherings you can choose from (the dates will be in the invitation). We will limit these Zoom gatherings to a maximum of 20 people to allow for the opportunity for conversation. Our Transitional Minister, Dr. Vaughn, will be at each gathering as will Rev. Bartlett. It is a challenging time to get to know a new pastor, and this is one of the ways we can do that. We hope to see you at one of the fall fellowship gatherings.

In addition to the gatherings, church officers will be calling active members to check in, see how you are doing, share news about the church's ministry and finances, and encourage you to join them in making a pledge for 2021.

Giving is a joy. It is one of the ways we respond to God's grace and abundant mercies. And now more than ever, we, our city and our world need the church's ministry and witness to the love and justice of Jesus Christ.

The verses below, selected from Isaiah 58, provide the theme for this year's campaign. We encourage you to read and reflect on the entire chapter.

"If you remove the yoke from among you  
And satisfy the needs of the afflicted  
The Lord will guide you continually  
And you will be like a watered garden  
Like a spring of water

Whose water never fails."

When we use our time, energy, and resources to bring life and wholeness to others, we in turn will flourish as a well-watered garden.

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## Worship

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**Please join us for online worship.**

The Rev. Dr. J. Patrick Vaughn will be preaching this coming Sunday, October 25.

### Sunday Worship

Join us for pre-recorded services of worship on Sunday mornings. Find all our services here:

[Click Here to Watch](#)

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## Morning Prayer, Sunday, October 25 at 9 am on the Roof Garden

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As long as the city and state health guidelines allow, we will continue to offer Morning Prayer services on Sunday mornings at 9 am. If you are unfamiliar with this type of service--it is not that different from a regular Sunday service, minus the sermon and communion! It is about a half-hour long, and includes prayers, hymns, scripture readings and some time for reflection. We can accommodate 25 people (plus staff) and request that you sign up ahead of time.

We need to keep track of numbers and information for contact tracing. Masks covering both the nose and mouth must be worn at all times.

We will take temperatures and have those who attend sign a health attestation--which is the church's policy for everyone entering the building. Please note that we are following (and exceeding) the recommended safety guidelines for participating in worship and singing hymns together.

If you have trouble making your reservation, please contact Beverly Bartlett at [bab@mapc.com](mailto:bab@mapc.com).

Here is the link for signing up:

[Reserve Your Spot Here](#)

## A *Virtual* Music on Madison Series

As with so many aspects of our lives this year, the Saint Andrew Music Society will be doing something different this fall! We invite you to join us for a series of special online broadcasts on Sunday afternoons from the sanctuary of Madison Avenue Presbyterian Church. This coming Sunday's performance features French pianist Audrey Abela in an all-french program of works by Debussy, Ravel, Couperin & Rameau. While we'll be releasing the performance this Sunday afternoon, the concert will be available for future viewing anytime. Be on the lookout for an email blast this Sunday at 3 pm, check out the SAMS section of our [website](#), or "Like" our [Facebook](#) page.



## NYCCC on the GRAMMY Ballot

Congratulations to the New York City Children's Chorus on their album, *Christmas in New York*, being included on the GRAMMY ballot in the following categories:

Best Choral Performance  
Best Engineered Classical Recording  
Producer of the Year

Christmas in New York was recorded in MAPC's sanctuary in May, 2019, and has also received recent critical acclaim:

"This is a remarkable treble choir...the sound is a perfect balance between

blend and clarity" - Fanfare, March/April 2020

"Mary Wannamaker Huff builds a thrilling climax with exquisite tuning and a gloriously open sound." - The American Organist, October 2020

Congratulations to our NYCCC program!

Our *Christmas in New York* CD is available for purchase on the [NYCCC website](#) or wherever you like to purchase and stream your music online!

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## Daily Prayer

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**Daily Prayer – Monday, Wednesday & Friday**  
Find all of them here:

[Click Here to Watch](#)

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## Opportunities for Fellowship & Study

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Zoom invites are sent regularly by email.

### **Virtual Fellowship Hour**

*Sundays at 12 noon*

Please join us for Virtual Fellowship Hour. Every Sunday.

**\*\*NOTE:** An email with the Zoom link will be sent out on Sunday mornings at 8 am.

### **A Walk in the Park**

Since the staff are hosting the Halloween masked get-together from 4-6 pm this Saturday, we have decided not to do "A Walk in the Park" Saturday at 9 am. It is a joy to walk and chat with you and we'll look forward to bundling up and meeting again to walk future Saturdays.

### **Halloween Gathering in Central Park**

**It's Not Too Late to Sign Up! We Have Room for More.**

Since we cannot have our usual Halloween bash in the Parish Hall this year, we will have a gathering in Central Park for 25-30 people (that is the Park's limit for group gatherings). We have a permit for the lawn at Cedar Hill (use the entrance at E. 79th and 5th Ave.) from 4 to 6 on Saturday, October 24th. We'll have snacks, a craft, and some games. Please bring a blanket to sit on and your own beverages. Wear your costumes so we can all admire them! We ask that everyone, except babies and toddlers, wear a mask unless you are eating or drinking. **Please use the link below to sign up.**

If conditions worsen, we will follow the city guidelines and understand that all our planning for in-person gatherings are subject to change.



[Sign Up Here](#)

### **Trick or Treating on the Steps**

If conditions and safety guidelines allow, we will once again have trick-or-treating on the church steps from 4 - 6 pm on Halloween. We will do it a little differently this year--setting out a table with treats so we are not directly handing things to people. Watch this space for exact times. We hope this gives the congregation an opportunity to safely drop by and say hello!

*If you are able to drop off a bag or two of candy to contribute to our Trick-or-Treating on the steps, please leave them with the church receptionist. Thank you!*

### **Young Adult Gatherings on Zoom**

*Mondays from 7 to 8 pm:*

*Oct. 26, Nov. 9, Nov. 23, Dec. 7, Jan. 11, and Jan. 25*

Young adults will be studying Ephesians this fall. Bring your drink for a mid-evening happy hour and join us for fellowship and discussion.

Chesna Hinkley & April Martin will lead this group on Zoom. Please watch your email for the link and more information.

### **Adult Education Class, Sunday October 25th, 10 am via Zoom**

#### **The Remarkable Life of Anne Askew: Protestant Martyr and Early Feminist**

MAPC member and Reformation scholar Roy Lennox will finish his series on the English Reformation, begun last winter before the pandemic arrived, with a presentation via Zoom on Anne Askew, appropriately timed for Reformation Sunday!

Anne Askew was a remarkable young woman, martyred for her beliefs a few months prior to the death of Henry VIII. While imprisoned before her execution, she wrote an account of her experiences that told of her interrogation, some of it while she was illegally under torture in the Tower of London. Some of the questions Roy will address in this class include: Was Anne a proto-feminist? How did she impact the English Reformation? Why



did she choose to die for her beliefs? Watch your email for the Zoom link for the class.

## **Anti-Racist Discussion Group, Sunday mornings at 10 am *Resuming Sunday, November 1***

After taking a week off this coming Sunday, to enjoy Roy Lennox's presentation on Anne Askew, the Sunday morning Anti-Racism Discussion Group will resume meeting on Sunday, November 1.

The group decided to try two things over the next few weeks: The 21-day Challenge, and reading Ibram X. Kendi's book, "How to Be an Anti-Racist".

There are many versions of the "21 Day Challenge", and we thought we would try the one posted on the PCUSA website:

<https://www.presbyterianmission.org/ministries/matthew-25/racism/>

Rather than committing to doing something every day, we will try to do something on seven days over the next two weeks.

The original 21 Day Challenge was created by Eddie Moore, Jr., and you can find that here:

[https://www.eddiemoorej.com/21daychallenge/#connect\\_\\_It is a treasure trove of resources.](https://www.eddiemoorej.com/21daychallenge/#connect__It is a treasure trove of resources.)

You can check out an e-book version of Kendi's book from the NYPL:

[https://browse.nypl.org/iii/encore/search/C\\_\\_Sibram%20x%20kendi\\_\\_Ff%3Afacetmediatype%3Az%3Az%3AE-BOOK%3A%3A\\_\\_Orightresult\\_\\_U\\_\\_X0?lang=eng&suite=def](https://browse.nypl.org/iii/encore/search/C__Sibram%20x%20kendi__Ff%3Afacetmediatype%3Az%3Az%3AE-BOOK%3A%3A__Orightresult__U__X0?lang=eng&suite=def)

We will discuss the first two chapters of Kendi's book on November 1. *If you are not able to read the book, please do not let that keep you from joining the group!*

Feel free to jump in to any discussion as you are able. It doesn't matter if you can make each one. If you would like more information on this discussion group, or would like to be added to the group emails, please contact Rev. Bartlett at [bab@mapc.com](mailto:bab@mapc.com).

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## **Bible Studies**

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### **Monday Evening Bible Study**

#### ***1st and 3rd Mondays of the month at 7 pm***

The next Evening Bible Study will be Monday, November 2nd. We are studying the Sermon on the Mount from Matthew, using Amy-Jill Levine's book, *Sermon on the Mount: A Beginner's Guide to the Kingdom of Heaven*,

and will be discussing chapter 3 on the 2nd. You are welcome to jump into the Monday Evening Bible Study at any time--just contact Rev. Bartlett at [bab@mapc.com](mailto:bab@mapc.com) so she can send you the Zoom link.

You can order a copy (hard copy or Kindle) of Dr. Levine's book through Amazon, or order from [bookshop.org](http://bookshop.org) to support independent bookstores. Here is a link for both options:

<https://bookshop.org/books/sermon-on-the-mount-a-beginner-s-guide-to-the-kingdom-of-heaven/9781501899898>

[https://www.amazon.com/Sermon-Mount-Beginners-Kingdom-Heaven-ebook/dp/B0859M58ZL/ref=sr\\_1\\_1\\_sspa?dchild=1&keywords=sermon+on+the+mount+levine&qid=1600734777&sr=8-1-spons&psc=1&spLa=ZW5jcnlwdGVkUXVhbGlmaWVyPUEyWTdlWkEwOTk1VTthPjMvY3J5cHRlZElkPUEwNjM5NTAyMlJMWESyTDZVUF11QiZlbnNyeXB0ZWZlZkPUEwNzA5NjUyMkhCV05VSUVVVUJRQSZ3aWRnZXR0YW11PjNwX2F0ZiZhY3Rpb249Y2xpY2tSZWRpcmVjdCZkb05vdExvZ0NsaWNRPXRydWU=](https://www.amazon.com/Sermon-Mount-Beginners-Kingdom-Heaven-ebook/dp/B0859M58ZL/ref=sr_1_1_sspa?dchild=1&keywords=sermon+on+the+mount+levine&qid=1600734777&sr=8-1-spons&psc=1&spLa=ZW5jcnlwdGVkUXVhbGlmaWVyPUEyWTdlWkEwOTk1VTthPjMvY3J5cHRlZElkPUEwNjM5NTAyMlJMWESyTDZVUF11QiZlbnNyeXB0ZWZlZkPUEwNzA5NjUyMkhCV05VSUVVVUJRQSZ3aWRnZXR0YW11PjNwX2F0ZiZhY3Rpb249Y2xpY2tSZWRpcmVjdCZkb05vdExvZ0NsaWNRPXRydWU=)

### **Women's Bible Study**

The Women's Bible Study, which is currently studying the Psalms, meets by teleconference. The next meeting is Monday, October 26. Please contact Lissette Perez-Erazo for more details: [lgp@mapc.com](mailto:lgp@mapc.com)

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## **Youth and Children at MAPC this Fall**

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### **Youth (Ages 6th - 12th Grade)**

YOUTH ON THE ROOF! For ONE more Wednesday this fall, we invite all youth in middle and high school to join us *in-person* and *virtually* from 5:45-7 pm for food, fellowship, music, study, and fun. We will begin with a safely-prepared box dinner courtesy of Chef Jim. Masked study, fellowship and fun will follow, all keeping our physical distance, but strengthening our faith and friendships. Virtual youth are welcome to join from their homes, eating dinner and joining in discussion.

October 28.



**YOUTH IN THE GYM!** For two Wednesdays in November, we will meet *in-person* in the MAPC gym for safe games and pizza-to-go. Lots of fellowship, food, and fun!

November 4 and 18, 5:45-7 pm.

**YOUTH ON THE ROAD!** On December 9, we will carol outside for our neighbors who are staying "Safe at Home" during the pandemic.

December 9.

## Children: Faith and Fun (Connecting Virtually)

**MONDAYS FOR KIDS!** (K-2nd grade) **on Zoom**. This fall, we will learn about covenants. Mondays for Kids will meet **on Nov. 2, 16 & 30, Dec. 14 at 4:30-5:15 pm.**

Contact Chesna Hinkley ([ceh@mapc.com](mailto:ceh@mapc.com)) for more info and watch this space for updates!

**PRETEEN CONNECT** (3rd-5th grade) **on Zoom**.

This fall, we'll learn about the beginnings in God's story. Preteen Connect will meet **Oct. 28, Nov. 11, and Dec. 9 at 4:30-5:15 pm.** Contact Chesna Hinkley ([ceh@mapc.com](mailto:ceh@mapc.com)) for more info and watch this space for updates!

# Three Ways to Give to MAPC During this Time

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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!*

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## Links for MAPC Worship Services

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### **Sunday Worship**

See link for Worship above.

[Click Here to Watch](#)

### **Children's Worship**

Find all of our children's worship videos here:

[Click Here to Watch](#)

## Do You Need Tech Help to Connect with MAPC?

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If you or someone you know is unable to watch our worship services online or join in various fellowship gatherings or Bible study by Zoom because they are struggling with the technology, please let us know! We have tech-savvy staff, members and youth who would love to help. We don't want to leave anyone out during this time we must meet virtually. Please let us know if you are aware of someone that needs help connecting! Contact April Martin at [aem@mapc.com](mailto:aem@mapc.com).

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# MAPC on Social Media

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## 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/](https://facebook.com/MadisonAvenuePresbyterian/)

