

Madison Avenue Presbyterian Church

PASTORAL STAFF LETTER

announcements, updates, and information for the weeks ahead



November 5, 2020

A Letter from Rev. Dr. J. Patrick Vaughn

Dear Friends,

For the first time in many months, we held a service in the sanctuary last Sunday. We had been meeting in the Roof Garden but with the weather turning cooler, we moved the service to the Sanctuary. I am very pleased with how well it went, and we plan to continue to hold these prayer services on Sundays at 10:30 am.

When will we all once again be able to join together in worship? Well, we simply don't know. There are however, three questions, we can keep in mind when we begin to ponder our return.

What are the risks of transmission? Here, we need to heed the counsel of scientists and physicians. This is their area of expertise. For example, the protocols we have established for our Sunday morning prayer service exceed recommended guidelines. We are limiting the service to 25 minutes as well as 25 participants. Blue dots on the pews indicate where we may sit, and they are spaced seven to eight feet apart. Whether it's worship or any other activity at the church, our first objective is to keep everyone safe.

Will in-person worship be as meaningful as online worship? I have a colleague in Florida who recently resumed in-person worship, and she has described it as depressing. Their protocols are similar to what we have established for our prayer service. Participants are not allowed to engage one another. There is no opportunity for the Passing of the Peace or speaking with a fellow congregant over coffee. Children are not allowed to roam freely. Singing is significantly limited. Can you imagine a regular worship service that does not include the choir or a children's message or an opportunity to shake hands with a guest or hug a grieving friend? I can't. It would leave

many if not most of us feeling empty and discouraged. Until we can offer a service that is as rich and meaningful as our online experience, it would be wise for us to refrain from returning to the sanctuary for our regular worship service.

How faithfully are we bearing witness to Christ? This is a question that is rarely raised in the growing number of articles regarding worship during COVID-19. Yet, it is central to our identity and our mission. We exist as a church to communicate the good news of God's love for the world. In all that we do and all that we say we seek to point to Jesus as the way, the truth, and the life. As Jesus' people, we wear masks because we are called to love our neighbor. We stand six feet apart because we do not want to risk unknowingly infecting another person. Before the pandemic through our worship and ministry, through our fellowship and our joy we communicated to the world that we worship a God who treasures all people. Despite our wants and desires, we refrain from worshipping to communicate faithfully God's love for all people. In other words, as we know from Reformed heritage, worship is not about us or what we want. It's about God and what God wants.

I am looking forward to the day when we will be able to gather in the sanctuary. It is beautiful, and I miss preaching with a live congregation! Until then I am thankful to be part of a church that is as caring, dynamic, and loving as Madison Avenue.

Thinking of you.

Patrick

Looking Forward to Advent



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. Below is a link to sign up for a box for yourself/your family. The box will have a variety of items to help you observe the season--simple Advent candles, Advent devotions, craft activities, alternative Advent calendars, and a booklet created by

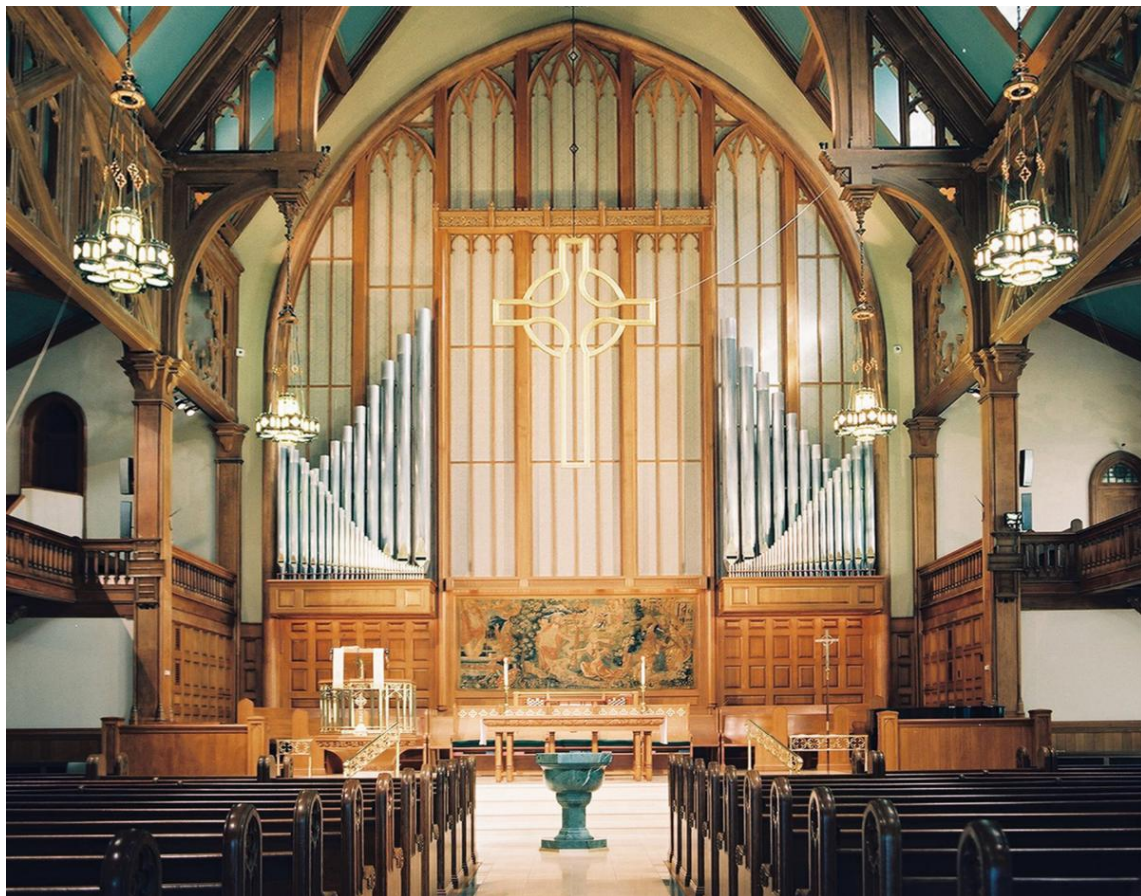
YOU!! Please send a favorite cookie or other recipe or seasonal tradition (i.e. movies you watch, books you read, music you always listen to, activity your family enjoys) by email to April Martin, aem@mapc.com. We will assemble them into a booklet to include in the Advent boxes.

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 from 4 - 6 pm each afternoon. Please sign up for one here--note you have choices based on your family configuration and preferences--and indicate whether you can pick up or need your box to be delivered. Thank you!

[Sign Up for an Advent Box Here](#)

2020 Stewardship Campaign



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). *Four of these gatherings remain at this point!* 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.

Worship

Please join us for online worship.

The Rev. Dr. J. Patrick Vaughn will be preaching this coming
Sunday, November 8.

Sunday Worship

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

[Click Here to Watch](#)

**Morning Prayer, Sunday, November 8 at
10:30 am in the Sanctuary**

Important Note--Please note the new time for Morning Prayer is 10:30!!

Last Sunday we moved Morning Prayer into the Sanctuary, and it went very well. Physically distant spacing is marked. Please enter through the Church House to have your temperature taken and sign the symptom-free attestation. An usher will dismiss worshippers by pew, and we ask that you wait to say hello and speak to others until you are back outside in the fresh air.

The Morning Prayer service, described below, will be similar to the service we have been offering on the Roof Garden.

As long as the city and state health guidelines allow, we will continue to offer Morning Prayer services on Sunday mornings at 10:30 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 25 minutes 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.

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 is 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 pianist and longtime MAPC member Margaret Mills, performing works by Mozart, Beethoven, Brahms and Chabrier. 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.



Wednesday Prayer

We hope that with Wednesday devotions, Morning Prayer in person on Sundays and our recorded Sunday worship service you will find devotions and worship opportunities that help sustain you during these times.

[Click Here to Watch](#)

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.

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

A Walk in the Park

Beverly will lead "A Walk in the Park" this Saturday, Nov. 7 at 9 am. We'll meet at the South corner of 79th Street and 5th Avenue. Please let us know you plan to come, so we will know who to watch for. RSVP to Lissette Perez-Erazo at lgp@mapc.com. See you there!

Trick or Treating on the Steps

Here are some photos from Halloween, Trick-or-Treating on the church steps.



Young Adult Gatherings on Zoom

Mondays from 7 to 8 pm:

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.

Anti-Racist Discussion Group, Sunday mornings at 9 am

Sunday, November 8

Please note the new time, 9 am, for the Anti-Racism Discussion. We hope this will allow people to participate in the discussion, then get to Morning Prayer if they like.

This Sunday, November 8, we will discuss chapters 3, 4, and 5 of Ibram X. Kendi's book, "How to Be an Anti-Racist".

Some group members are also working through the 21 Day Challenge, and sharing what they learn or were able to do.

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/>

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

https://www.eddiemoorejnr.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

Please feel free to join in this discussion even if you have not been able to do the reading!!

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.

Bible Studies

Monday Evening Bible Study

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

The next Evening Bible Study will be Monday, November 16. 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 4 on the 16th. You are welcome to jump into the Monday Evening Bible Study at any time--just contact Rev. Bartlett at 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 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=ZW5jcnlwdGVkUXVhbGlmaWVyPUEyWTdIWkEwOTk1VThPJMVuY3J5cHRlZElkPUEwNjM5NTAyMlJMWESyTDZVUFIIQiZlbnNyeXB0ZWRBZElkPUEwNzA5NjUyMkhCV05VSUVVVUJRQSZ3aWRnZXROYWl1PjNwX2F0ZiZhY3Rpb249Y2xpY2tSZWRpcmVjdCZkb05vdExvZ0NsaWNrPXRydWU=

Women's Bible Study

The Women's Bible Study, which is currently studying the Psalms, meets by teleconference. The next meeting is Monday, November 9. Please contact Lissette Perez-Erazo for more details: lgp@mapc.com

Youth and Children at MAPC

Youth (Ages 6th - 12th Grade)

YOUTH! For one more Wednesday in November, we will meet *in-person* for safe games and pizza-to-go. Lots of fellowship, food, and fun! Meet in the Church House Lobby right at 5:45.
November 18, 5:45-7 pm.

YOUTH ON THE ROAD! On December 9, we hope to 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 **Nov. 16 & 30, Dec. 14 at 4:30-5:15 pm**.

Contact Chesna Hinkley (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 **Nov. 11, and Dec. 9 at 4:30-5:15 pm**. Contact Chesna Hinkley

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!

Links for MAPC Worship Services

Sunday Worship

See pre-recorded services of worship below.

[Click Here to Watch](#)

Children's Worship

Find all of our children's worship videos here:

[Click Here to Watch](#)

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/

