

Madison Avenue Presbyterian Church

PASTORAL STAFF LETTER

announcements, updates, and information for the weeks ahead



December 3, 2020

A Letter from Rev. J. Patrick Vaughn

Dear Friends,

With its greenery, red bows and beautiful poinsettias, our Sanctuary is now truly stunning. It is a visual reminder that despite the soaring number of infections, hospitalizations, and deaths due to Covid-19, Christmas is on the way.

Our celebration this year will be markedly different, of course. There will be no in-person Carol Sing or a Sanctuary filled with worshipers during Advent. There will be no large family gatherings or crowded department stores. But we do know that Christ is coming anew into the world. We might stammer and stutter and talk over one another, but through FaceTime and Zoom we will sing and worship and pray and eat and rejoice and tell stories and say, "Merry Christmas."

You know as well as I do that a church is not the building. It is the people. Still, we do have a building, and it is decorated for the season. It is a place where we have joined together to praise God and break bread and baptize babies and witness couples make vows and grieve the death of loved ones and watch children scurry down the aisles.

We can't all worship together but we do want to make it possible for you to spend a few moments in a familiar space, a safe space where God's people have gathered for more than a hundred years.

The Sanctuary will be open on the following days and times:

Monday, December 14, noon - 2:00 pm

Wednesday, December 16, 5:00 - 7:00 pm

Friday, December 18, noon - 2:00 pm

Monday, December 21, noon - 2:00 pm

Wednesday, December 23, 5:00 - 7:00 pm.

Come and sit in your favorite pew. Enjoy the beauty. Read scripture. Reflect on the devotion we will provide. Listen to God. Sigh. Hum a Christmas song. Shed a tear. Consider how God comes to us in the weakness and vulnerability of a newborn. Ask yourself how God might be coming anew into our world through weakness and vulnerability. Pray for friend and neighbors and strangers. Or, simply sit and allow your mind to wonder from one memory to another.

We will observe social distancing, and no more than 25 will be allowed to gather at any one time. Blue dots mark the places where you may sit.

We hope this time in our Sanctuary will prove to be a blessing as we prepare for the arrival of Christ.

Thinking of you,
Patrick

Worship

Please join us for online worship.

The Rev. Dr. J. Patrick Vaughn will be preaching this coming Sunday, December 6. The theme of the sermon is "When Jesus draws near."

Sunday Worship

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

[Click Here to Watch](#)

Morning Prayer In-Person, Sunday, December 6 at 10:30 am in the Sanctuary



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

Morning Prayer in the Sanctuary is going 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. We will continue to offer in-person Morning Prayer as long as the city and state health guidelines allow, and the positivity rate remains low.

If you are unfamiliar with Morning Prayer, 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, special music 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](#)

16th Annual Carol Sing

This year's VIRTUAL Carol Sing will be released next Sunday, December 13. The Choir of Madison Avenue Presbyterian Church, choristers from the New York City Children's Chorus, readers and instrumentalists have pre-recorded Carol Sing components with the help of professional videographers and audio technicians, and while we won't be able to gather together physically this year, we hope that you will enjoy watching, listening and singing along from wherever you are with an electronic device! Watch out for an email in your inbox or find the link on our [concerts page](#). We are grateful for the support of many donors who have contributed to the work of our Saint Andrew Music Society during this unprecedented year; if you have not yet made a contribution, and would like to, you can make a donation online through our [website](#) (selecting "Saint Andrew Music Society" in the drop-down list).

Donations for Christmas Flowers

We are now accepting donations in memory or in honor of loved ones for the poinsettias and wreaths that are beautifying the sanctuary during this Advent and Christmas season. To make a donation, you can access a form [here](#) and return it with your contribution to the Church Office; or you may make a contribution online through our [website](#) (selecting “Flower Fund” in the drop-down list) and sending an email with your loved ones’ name(s) to Andrew Henderson at ah@mapc.com. The suggested donation for each name is \$40. In order to include the list of names of loved ones in our pre-recorded and in-person Christmas services, we’ll need to receive your donation by Monday, December 21.

***Christmas in New York* by NYCCC**



Our New York City Children’s Chorus’s recording, *Christmas in New York*, was released last November and has received some rave reviews during the

past year! Copies of the CD can be **purchased online** with free shipping within the USA or for will-call pick-up at the MAPC receptionist desk. The recording can also be purchased on iTunes, Amazon, Spotify, or wherever you download your favorite music!

Church of Gethsemane Christmas Angels

The Church of Gethsemane will not be holding their annual Christmas party this year, and will not be able to distribute Christmas Angel gifts from MAPC. We'll return to this tradition next year! If you normally buy a gift for one of Gethsemane's kids, consider a donation to Yorkville Common Pantry (<http://nyccommonpantry.org/>) or the Urban Outreach Center (<https://www.uocnyc.org/>).

Christmas Joy Offering

The annual Christmas Joy Offering supports retired pastors and church workers in need and equips leaders in Presbyterian communities of color. We encourage you to give generously as we collect this gift during the Advent season. Please note "Christmas Joy" on your check or select Christmas Joy in the online giving drop down menu.

Wednesday Prayer

Weekly devotions will be posted on Wednesdays. 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 on the button below to find all of our videos.

[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, Dec.5 at 9 am, weather permitting. At this point it looks like a significant storm is coming our way, in which case we will stay inside where it is cozy and dry. If the weather forecast is wrong, we'll meet at the East 72nd Street and 5th Avenue entrance to Central Park. 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. We will try to let you know if we are cancelling--but if you wake up to a stormy day, please assume we are postponing to next week!

Young Adult Gatherings on Zoom

Mondays from 7 to 8 pm: Dec. 7, Jan. 11, and Jan. 25

Young adults are 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-Racism Discussion Group, Sunday mornings at 9 am

Sunday, December 6

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.

Please join on Sunday, December 6 as we discuss chapters 12, 13, 14 and 15 of Ibram X. Kendi's book, *How to Be an Anti-Racist*.

You can find a wealth of anti-racism resources on one of the "21 Day Challenge" websites. [Here is the link](#) to the PC(USA) version:

The original 21 Day Challenge was created by Eddie Moore, Jr., and you can find [here](#):

It is a treasure trove of resources.

You can check out an e-book version of Kendi's book from [the NYPL](#):

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 is on Hiatus

This Monday Evening Bible Study finished its study of the Sermon on the Mount this week and will be taking a break until after the holidays. In January, we will begin a study of 1 and 2 Samuel--the Samuel, Saul and David stories. More details coming soon!

Women's Bible Study

The Women's Bible Study, which is currently studying the Psalms, meets by teleconference. The next meeting is Monday, December 7. Please contact Lissette Perez-Erazo for more details: lgp@mapc.com

Youth and Children at MAPC

Youth (Ages 6th - 12th Grade)

YOUTH ON WEDNESDAYS: Please watch your emails for updates.

YOUTH IN 2021: In January, we plan to continue meeting via zoom. April is currently delivering youth bags with gifts and crafts which will accompany our Youth zoom meetings in 2021.

Children's Ministry (Connecting Virtually)

PRESCHOOL MINISTRY

Interested in Sunday school at home for 2-4 year olds? Sign up by December 6 to get our Winter Box with six lessons, including crafts and activities.

[Sign Up Here](#)

Contact Chesna Hinkley ceh@mapc.com for more info and watch this space for updates!

MONDAYS FOR KIDS! (K-2nd grade) **on Zoom**. This fall, we will learn about covenants. Mondays for Kids will meet **Dec. 14 at 4:30-5:15 pm**. The Winter Session of Mondays for Kids will meet January 11 to April 12. We will learn about what God is like. Make sure you sign up by December 6 to get a supply box!

[Sign up for a Box Here](#)

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 beginnings in God's story. Preteen Connect will meet **Dec. 9 at 4:30-5:15 pm**. Our Winter Session will run January 20 to April 7, when we'll learn about the Bible's call to gender equality, our place in God's plan, and using our gifts in the Body of Christ. Contact Chesna Hinkley (ceh@mapc.com) for more info and watch this space for updates!

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/



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