



December 10, 2020

A Letter from Rev. J. Patrick Vaughn

Dear Friends,

On December 13, 1973 my brothers and I arrived home from school, grabbed a couple of snacks, and plopped down in front of the television to watch an episode of "The Munsters." The phone rang, and our mother answered it. A few seconds later she dashed into the den and told us to run to the basement. Immediately!

Down the steps we raced, and as soon as we closed the door, it hit. A tornado. The house shook violently, and the noise was deafening. Yes, it really does sound like a freight train. It lasted only a few minutes but they were very, very long minutes.

The power of the storm was evident in the destruction it left behind. A huge tree slammed on our home damaging the roof and destroying our car. Another large tree lay beside our driveway. Limbs and debris filled our yard, and our Christmas tree was missing. We had cut it down the previous day and had placed it on our patio in a bucket of water.

I'm not sure why I asked this question, but I turned to our mother and said, "Are we still going to have Christmas?"

She smiled and said, "Yes. We are going to celebrate Christmas."

And, we did. Except for the fact that we found our tree, I don't remember anything else about that Christmas. The storm claimed two lives in town, turned our world upside down, and left us with a visceral appreciation for our mortality.

Christmas came, nevertheless.

It will this year as well. Certainly, our celebration will be different but we will once again rejoice in Christ's coming into our world.

Many of you are using our Advent boxes to prepare for Christmas.

Yesterday, our New York City Children's Chorus stood in the cold darkness of 73rd Street and sang carols for residents of Lenox House.

On Sunday afternoon our annual Carol Sing will be available on Vimeo at 3 pm.

On Monday we will begin opening our sanctuary for you to spend some time in prayer and meditation. (The schedule for these opportunities can be found in this newsletter).

And, we are still planning to hold two thirty-minute prayer services on Christmas Eve.

Remember, Christmas comes not *in spite* of the brokenness and disease of the world. Christmas comes *because* of them.

Thinking of you,

Patrick

PS: Of the 67 who have submitted their pledge cards for 2021, 47 have increased their pledge. That is wonderful! Thank you! If you have not yet made your pledge, could you turn it in this week? (With so much going on at this time of year, we know that this is easily forgotten.)

Worship

Please join us for online worship.

The Rev. Dr. J. Patrick Vaughn will be preaching this coming Sunday, December 13. The theme of the sermon is "Hey! Who's Missing?"

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 13 at 10:30 am
in the Sanctuary**



Please Note--Please note there will be no in-person Morning Prayer services on December 27 or January 3.

We will continue to offer Morning Prayer on Sundays as long as the public health guidelines allow for indoor gatherings of more than ten persons. Continuing any form of in-person worship also depends on worshippers following the church's guidelines below:

--Please use the Sign Up Genius link below to sign up. Since we must limit the number of people in the sanctuary, we need to know how many people plan to attend.

--Masks completely covering both the mouth and nose must be worn at all times.

--Seating is marked, and worshipers may sit where the blue dots on the pews are located. If a couple or family occupies a blue dot, then the adjacent dot needs to be left vacant to allow for adequate physical distancing.

--As hard as it is, refrain from greeting and speaking with one another inside the sanctuary. Hold your conversations for outside on the sidewalk after the service. Talking together outside is exponentially more safe than inside.

--As much as we want to connect with one another, it is simply not safe for hugs, handshakes or other physical contact beyond the members of one's household. Please greet each other from a safe physical distance!

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 this 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).

Open Sanctuary in Advent

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 friends 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.

Year-End Giving--Business Office Closing at 1 pm on December 31st

This is our annual reminder of the IRS rules concerning year-end contributions of cash and securities. In general, the delivery date determines the year in which a contribution can be claimed as a deduction. Checks mailed with a postmark of December 31, 2020 or earlier, or hand-delivered by December 31, 2020, will be credited as a contribution in 2020. Please note: The Church House and Business Office will close at 1 pm on December 31st! Please contact our Director of Administration & Finance, Roger Pierce or our Bookkeeper, Carmen Olmeda, by December 31st, if you wish to make a contribution or need assistance in making one. After January 1, 2021, contributions will be credited as contributions for 2021. For gifts of

securities, the date of mailing is the delivery date; if hand-delivered, the date of receipt by the charity is the delivery date. When securities are delivered from a donor's bank or broker, the delivery date is the date the securities are transferred to the charity. The Church Business Office can assist you in making year-end gifts of securities by using its account with Merrill Lynch. Please call Roger Pierce, the Director of Administration and Finance, at 212-288- 8920 for the Church's account number and the bank DTC number, so the transfer of shares can be made electronically. Please note that you can also make your year-end gifts online through our website at <http://www.mapc.com/giving>. Thank you!

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!

Cold Weather Accessories Drive

Throughout the winter, we will be giving away gloves, mittens, hats, and scarves to our Open Table guests. If you are able, please drop off a few pieces at the church reception desk or send a monetary donation to the attention of the Outreach Committee.

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. 12 at 9 am, weather permitting. 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 whom 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: 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 13

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 13 as we discuss chapters 16, 17 and 18 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

Sunday School in a Box is delivered quarterly during the pandemic for at-home learning.

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.

Contact Chesna Hinkley (ceh@mapc.com) for more info.

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

Our Winter Session will run January 20 to April 7. We will 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.

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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