

PASTORAL STAFF LETTER

announcements, updates, and information for the weeks ahead



January 14, 2021

A Letter from Rev. J. Patrick Vaughn

Dear Friends,

Are your heads spinning? Are you feeling irritated? Exhausted? Frustrated? Are you finding it difficult to sleep at night or concentrate on your work or enjoy a movie?

If so, you are not alone.

The images of the violence that erupted in the Capitol last week, emerging evidence that it was carefully planned, and the prospect of more violence in the coming days have deeply disturbed most of us. Our nerves are frayed, and our tempers are short.

Closely related to our political distress is the growing awareness in many of us of the profound horror and enduring legacy of racial injustice.

In this polarized environment conspiracy theories that would have easily been dismissed have proven resistant to rational discourse and critical thought.

And, lest we forget, we are still grappling with a lethal and politically charged pandemic that has isolated us and left us exceptionally impatient and annoyed with one another.

So, if you are feeling worn down, these are not signs of weakness. These are signs that you

Care about people

Grieve the loss of community and civility

Yearn for a different way of living together.

In other words, these are signs that you are human.

All of these intersecting and overlapping events have led me to ponder a series of questions. I am wondering how you would respond to these:

What is our unique calling at MAPC in this time and place?

How might we offer the gift of belonging to those in our city who are more alone now than ever before?

How do we comfort and reassure a hurting world even as we hold those in this world accountable for words and deeds that hurt and divide?

How might we share the hope and joy of knowing that all people are cherished by God?

We at MAPC have a strong and rich history of bearing witness to Jesus Christ. How do we stand on the shoulders of the saints who preceded us to offer words of grace and truth to our city today?

Let's find a time to chat. I would love to get to know you.

Thinking of you,

Patrick

P.S. Please consider joining our Gospel Gathering this Sunday at 9:00 am on Zoom. This week we are reading Mark 6-10. Click below to join the discussion.

[Click Here to Join Rev. Vaughn's Gospel Gathering](#)

Worship

Please join us for online worship.

The Rev. Dr. Patrick Vaughn will be preaching this coming Sunday, January 17. His sermon is entitled "Glorifying God in an Age of Conspiracy."

Sunday Worship

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

Find all our services here:

Morning Prayer In-Person This Sunday at 10:30 AM, Sanctuary



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 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.

[Sign Up Here](#)

Cold Weather Accessories Drive

Throughout the winter, we will be giving away gloves, mittens, hats, scarves and socks to our Open Table guests. If you are able, please ship something from [our Amazon wishlist](#) or send a monetary donation to the attention of the Outreach Committee.

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

Meet Beverly Bartlett this Saturday, January 16 at 9 am.

Please meet Beverly Bartlett at the 72nd and Fifth Avenue entrance to Central Park this Saturday! RSVP to Lissette Perez-Erazo so we know who to expect at lgp@mapc.com.

Upcoming Congregational Nurture Events

We have a long two or three months ahead of us. Most of us are tired of Zoom, but it is what we have, and even though it is on a screen, it is good to see each other's faces and hear each other's voices. The Congregational Nurture Committee has planned three fellowship events for the coming weeks, and a new book group that we hope will provide a chance for us to connect with each other and have a little fun:



Virtual Church Family Night - Friday, January 22, beginning at 6 pm

We'll have dinner together (in our own homes of course), conversation, games and watch a short animated film. There will be an opportunity for younger children and youth to spend time in their own breakout rooms, family time when we are all together, a few rounds of Scattergories, paper-snowflake making (you just need white paper and scissors) and conversation. Sign Up by clicking on the button below.

New Mystery Book Group

First Meeting - Thursday, February 11, 8 pm via Zoom

With the pandemic and national crises swirling around us, we all need to give ourselves a bit of a mental break each day. We are going to start a mystery book group--what better way to escape than into a good mystery? Our first book will be Anthony Horowitz's latest, *Moonflower Mysteries*. Beverly Bartlett will facilitate this discussion of the book on February 11--surely a month is long enough to finish a good mystery!

You can order the book through an independent bookstore by using Bookshop.org: <https://tinyurl.com/y2yweosv>

Or get it on Kindle through Amazon: <https://tinyurl.com/y28rbpl6>

Unfortunately, there is a long waitlist for the ebook from NYPL. If finances are tight--and we know for many people they are right now--and you would like to read it and join the group, please let Beverly Bartlett know, bab@mapc.com.

Saturdays Crafterdays

On Saturday, February 6 at 3 pm, we'll gather by Zoom to make Valentine's for some of our older members who are especially isolated during these times. You don't need to be artistic to make a Valentine's Day card! Just willing to enjoy some fellowship and make a greeting to let another church member know you are thinking of them. Here are some suggested supplies to have on hand:

--Construction paper: especially red, pink and white. But if you want to branch out into non-traditional Valentine colors--go for it!

--Scissors, ruler, pencil, pen, glue stick, colored markers.

--If you can order some of those heart-shaped paper doilies, you can use them to decorate your cards as well.

We'll have some ideas to follow, including some pop-up cards. We will also have a list of members and their addresses so you may mail your cards.

RSVP to Lissette Perez-Erazo, lgp@mapc.com.

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On Saturday, March 13 at 3 pm, let's get ready for St. Patrick's Day and make Irish Soda Bread together! We'll post a list of needed ingredients in a future newsletter.

Zoom links for these events will be sent by email as the dates draw near. It would be helpful to know who plans to come, so please respond to Lissette if you can.

Young Adult Gatherings on Zoom

Mondays from 7 to 8 pm: Jan. 25 & Feb. 8

Young adults are studying Ephesians. 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.

On February 22, we'll begin reading *Faith Unraveled: How a Girl Who Knew All the Answers Learned to Ask the Questions* by Rachel Held Evans. You can find it on Amazon or Bookshop, or email Chesna Hinkley (ceh@mapc.com) or April Martin (aem@mapc.com) and we will get you a copy.

Adult Education Opportunities

Anti-Racism Discussion Group, Sunday Afternoons at 5 pm

Please note the new time for this group!

The Anti-Racism Discussion Group is now meeting from 5 to 6 pm on Sunday evenings. We are reading Isabel Wilkerson's book *Caste*, and will discuss Part Two on the 17th. A Zoom link will be sent to the church email list that Sunday morning. All are welcome--whether you have previously been part of this group or not, we would love to have you join the discussion! If you have questions, please contact Rev. Bartlett, bab@mapc.com.

Curious About Jesus?

What did Jesus actually say? What did he actually do? Many of us are curious about Jesus but we tend to avoid Bible studies because we do not want to expose our lack of knowledge about scripture. Many of us are also interested in reading the Bible but we are not quite sure where to start. If you find yourself in this situation, you are invited to read the gospels with Reverend Vaughn. Beginning with Mark we will read one-third of a gospel each week. Then, on Sunday morning via Zoom at 9:00 we will gather together to share one or two passages that grabbed our attention. This is not a traditional class with a lecture. Instead, we will learn together as Patrick leads us in a conversation about the texts and questions that intrigue us. This is an opportunity to get a broad overall sense of the flow of the gospels. Questions? Write to Reverend Vaughn at jpv@mapc.com.

Bible Studies

Monday Evening Bible Study is on Hiatus

This Monday Evening Bible Study will resume on February 1 at 7 pm, via Zoom. We will be studying the Saul and David stories in 1 and 2 Samuel. As we are starting a new topic, this would be a great time to jump into this Bible

Study! Email Rev. Bartlett if you would like to join, and she will add you to the email list. As a companion book, we will be using Eugene H. Peterson's *Leap Over a Wall*. There are many used copies available on Amazon in addition to new copies and the Kindle version. If you would like to order it from an independent bookstore, here is the bookshop.org link:

<https://bookshop.org/books/leap-over-a-wall/9780060665227>

Women's Bible Study

The Women's Bible Study, which is currently studying the Psalms, meets by teleconference. The next meeting is Monday, January 25 at 5:30 pm. Please contact Lissette Perez-Erazo for more details: lgp@mapc.com

Youth and Children at MAPC

Youth (Ages 6th - 12th Grade)

CONFIRMATION:

Our confirmation class is in full swing. We are meeting on Zoom and look forward to exploring our faith bi-monthly on Tuesday nights!

YOUTH IN 2021:

January 20, 27, February 3 & 10, 6-7 pm

Middle and High school youth groups will meet with April and Chesna on Zoom.

Virtual Children's Ministry

Questions about Children's Ministry at MAPC? Contact Chesna Hinkley (ceh@mapc.com) for more information or to be added to the mailing list.

CHILDREN'S TIME

During every Sunday service, one of our pastoral staff teaches on the sermon text in a short time just for kids.

RECORDED CHILDREN'S WORSHIP

(Designed for 3-8 years old) Every Sunday, a member of the staff or congregation leads a 10-15 minute chat about the lectionary Bible reading and a related children's book.

PRESCHOOL MINISTRY

(2-4 years old) Sunday School in a Box is **delivered** quarterly during the pandemic closure for at-home learning.

MONDAYS FOR KIDS

(K-2nd grade) **on Zoom**. The Winter Session of Mondays for Kids will meet January 25, February 8 and 22, March 8 and 22, and April 12 at 4:30-5:15 pm. We will learn about what God is like.

PRETEEN CONNECT

(3rd-5th grade) **on Zoom**. Our Winter Session will meet January 20, February 3, March 3 and 17, and April 7 at 4:30-5:15 pm. (No class on February 17 due to NYPS Midwinter Recess). 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.

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

