

Madison Avenue Presbyterian Church

PASTORAL STAFF LETTER

announcements, updates, and information for the weeks ahead



February 25, 2021

A Letter from Rev. J. Patrick Vaughn

Dear Friends,

Throughout my ministry I have led a wonderful variety of churches: from a small rural congregation in NC to a large suburban church near Philadelphia, from beautiful Charleston, SC to the heart of bustling Manhattan. Some had one Sunday service, some had two, and one actually had four. Some congregations had no staff. Others had very large staffs.

As diverse as their contexts and as varied as their respective ministries, however, all of these congregations seemed to share a common purpose: gathered by God and gifted by the Holy Spirit they go into the world to bear witness to Christ.

I doubt any of them would describe their congregation using these particular terms, but for twenty years I have used gathering, gifting and going as a simple way to understand what church is all about.

They operate somewhat like a three-legged stool; all are needed to maintain balance. If even one leg has been cut short, a congregation or even a particular ministry would be weakened.

This model of gathering, gifting and going can even be helpful as we seek to identify how we might want to stretch and grow.

Take worship, for example. (Imagine that we have resumed in-person worship.) Looking at worship in terms of gathering, gifting, and going gives rise to certain questions. Does our liturgy maximize congregational participation? How well are we welcoming one another, especially guests? Are we intentional in identifying the gifts of our members for public speaking, singing, hospitality, or operating sound and video equipment? What are we doing to connect with those who join us online? How does our worship lead us to go into the world to serve as disciples of Jesus Christ?

Or what about one of our outreach ministries. How well are we gathering when we serve? That is, how are we seeking to involve more and more members and friends? How are we nurturing relationships among those who serve? How are we nurturing relationships with those whom we serve? What are they teaching us about faith?

What about a church choir? How often do we hold social events to tend to our relationships? Are we intentional about inviting others to sing with us? How are we growing in our appreciation that music is a form of prayer? How is God challenging us to offer our gifts to those outside the church? How might our music provide comfort and healing to the afflicted and suffering?

All of these questions are simply suggestions, of course. Take a moment to reflect on the ministry or ministries that you support with your time and passion at MAPC. What questions come to mind as you consider it in terms of gathering, gifting, and going?

After you have come up with some questions, would you please send them to me? I would enjoy hearing your thoughts about ministry.

Thinking of you,

Patrick

[Click Here to Join Rev. Vaughn's Gospel Gathering at 9 am](#)

Meeting ID: 875 9406 5461
Passcode: 908581

Dial by your location
+1 646 876 9923 US (New York)

Worship

Please join us for online worship.

The Rev. J. Patrick Vaughn will be preaching this Sunday, February 28.

His sermon is entitled "Gathering, Gifting, *Going*."

Sunday Worship

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

Find all our services here:

[Click Here to Watch](#)

Sunday Morning Prayer, 10:30 am



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.

--Please refrain from conversation with one another inside the sanctuary, and wait to greet one another after the service on the sidewalk. 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!

Please sign up here:

[Sign Up Here](#)

If you have trouble making your reservation, please contact Beverly Bartlett at bab@mapc.com.

Bishop Tolton Presentation Now Available on Vimeo

"Fear Not, The Movements Are Greater: Black Lives Matter, Pan Africanism & A 21st Century Christian Renaissance"

The recording of Bishop Tolton's February 21st talk on the global racial movement is now available for those who could not attend and those who would like to view it again.

[See Bishop Tolton's Presentation Here](#)

Wednesday Evenings in Lent A Lenten Spiritual Practice: Praying with Scripture



MAPC has a long history of a Wednesday evening Lenten series. Last year, we only got the first session in before we had to cancel the rest due to the pandemic. At that early point, we hadn't yet figured out how to do everything by Zoom! This year's series will look a little different: rather than a lecture series we will engage in the spiritual practice of praying with scripture, alternating between the contemplative practices of Lectio Divina and Ignation meditation. Praying with scripture is a different approach than Bible Study--it is sometimes referred to as being "formational" rather than "informational." We encourage you to join in these Wednesday sessions as a Lenten discipline. Zoom links will be sent out a few days prior to the meetings.

The dates for this series are March 3, 10, 17, and 24 and Dr. Vaughn, Rev. Bartlett and Ms. Hinkley will share in leading the sessions.

This Coming Sunday, February 28 at 5 pm, the Anti-Racism Discussion Group

The group will debrief and discuss Bishop Tolton's presentation. Anyone who attended the talk last Sunday, or who has had a chance to view the recording is encouraged to join in this follow-up discussion. A Zoom link will be sent to the church email on Sunday morning. If you have questions, please contact Rev. Beverly Bartlett, bab@mapc.com.

We will continue the discussion of Isabel Wilkerson's *Caste*, Part Six, on March 7.

Holy Week & Easter at MAPC!

Join us for Virtual and In-Person Worship

PALM SUNDAY, March 28



- A link to our Palm Sunday service of Word & Sacrament will be emailed at 8 am.
- 10:30 am Morning Prayer in the Sanctuary with appropriate and stringent precautions in place. **Advance registration for this service is required.** Please sign up by clicking the button below.

[Palm Sunday In-Prayer Sign-up](#)

MAUNDY THURSDAY, April 1



Our **Maundy Thursday Service** will take place at **7 pm via Zoom**, including a meditation by the Rev. Dr. J. Patrick Vaughn, music, and the celebration of the Lord's Supper, with optional Fellowship/Communal Dinner beforehand at 6:30 pm.

GOOD FRIDAY, April 2



- Our **Good Friday Tenebrae** service with a telling of Christ's Passion from the Gospel narratives and music sung by the Choir of MAPC. A link to the service will be emailed.
 - Our **Good Friday Family Service** will be held at 7 pm via Zoom. Everyone from our Church Family is welcome to participate in this service led by staff, children and youth of MAPC.
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EASTER SUNDAY, April 4

A Virtual Easter service of Word and Sacrament, two 30-minute identical prayer services in the Sanctuary and one 30-minute service with communion on our Roof Garden. Preregistration required.

Easter

April 4

- A link to our virtual Easter service of Word and Sacrament with a sermon preached by the Rev. Dr. J. Patrick Vaughn and music sung by the Choir of MAPC, with guest instrumentalists, will be emailed at 8 am.
- **We will offer two 30-minute, identical Morning Prayer Services in the Sanctuary at 8:30 am and 10:30 am**, with appropriate and stringent precautions in place. Both services will feature hymns, scripture readings and prayers, with music sung by members of MAPC's professional octet. **Advance registration for these services is required.** Please sign up by clicking either of the buttons below.

[Sign Up to Join Us on Easter at 8:30 AM](#)

[Sign Up to Join Us on Easter at 10:30 AM](#)

- **We will offer a 30-minute Service of Communion on the Roof Garden at 9:30 am**, with appropriate and stringent precautions in place. **Advance registration for this service is required.** Please sign up by clicking the button below.

[Sign Up to Join Us on Easter on the Roof at 9:30 AM](#)

Donations for Easter Flowers

We are now accepting donations in memory or in honor of loved ones for the

lilies and other flowers that will beautify the sanctuary for Easter. The suggested donation for each name is \$40. To make a donation you may make a contribution through our [website](#) (click “Give Online” and select “Flower Fund” from the drop-down list), adding your loved ones’ names in the “Note” field provided. You can also access a [printable form here](#) and return it with your contribution to the Church Office. **We will need to receive your donation by Monday, March 29 in order to include names of loved ones in our pre-recorded and in-person Easter services.**

An Update from Our Sponsored Seminarian in the Synod of Harare



As part of our mission partnership with the Synod of Harare, MAPC sponsors a seminarian at Justo Mwale Theological University College in Lusaka, Zambia. Our current student, Edson Makambure, was married over the Christmas holiday to Anne Lima John, who is now also in a Christian Ministry program at Justo Mwale. In his 2020 update to MAPC, Edson says his training has made him a different person. He writes about academic

growth, learning counseling skills, and getting acquainted with other cultures through the diverse student body. Edson asks us to pray for his strength to study, for economic stability in Zimbabwe, and that the church would continue to proclaim the gospel. Please keep the Makambures in your prayers.

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 will resume this Saturday

Please join April Martin for a masked walk in the park at 9 am. We will meet at the 72nd St. and 5th Ave entrance. RSVP to Lissette Perez-Erazo, lgp@mapc.com, so we know who to look for this Saturday. Bring an umbrella in case of rain. Hope to see you there!

Mystery Book Group!

**Next Meeting - Thursday, March 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 have started a mystery book group--what better way to escape than into a good mystery? Our second book is Peter May's, *The Blackhouse: Murder Comes to the Outer Hebrides* (Lewis Trilogy 1). Beverly Bartlett will facilitate this discussion of the book on March 11.

The Blackhouse is available as an ebook on the New York Public Library's Overdrive site, and for Kindle or in paperback on Amazon.

Saturday Crafterdays



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 Lisette if you can, lgp@mapc.com.

Young Adult Gatherings on Zoom

Mondays from 7 to 8 pm: Feb. 22, Mar. 8 & 22, Apr. 12 & 26

Young Adults are reading and discussing *Faith Unraveled: How a Girl Who Knew All the Answers Learned to Ask Questions* by Rachel Held Evans. Bring your drink for a mid-evening happy hour and join us for fellowship and discussion. For March 8, read the Introduction and Chapter 1.

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

See above for information about this coming Sunday's discussion.

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. This week, read Luke 9-16. Questions? Write to Reverend Vaughn at jpv@mapc.com.

Bible Studies

Monday Evening Bible Study, March 1 at 7 pm

The Monday Evening Bible Study begun reading and discussing 1 and 2 Samuel which contain the stories about the prophet Samuel, King Saul and King David, and the transformation that happened to Israel when they moved from a company of tribes to a nation ruled by a monarchy. Newcomers are always welcome! Please read 1 Samuel, chapters 16-21 in preparation for the discussion on March 1. Questions? Email Rev. Bartlett at bab@mapc.com.

Women's Bible Study

The Women's Bible Study is on hiatus for Lent and will have the next meeting on Monday, April 12 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 meets bi-monthly on Tuesday nights via zoom.

YOUTH IN 2021:

March 3, 10, 17 & 24, 6-7 pm

Middle and High school youth groups will meet with April and Chesna and adult volunteers for bible discussion and games 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 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 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.

Four 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/

