

Madison Avenue Presbyterian Church

# PASTORAL STAFF LETTER

announcements, updates, and information for the weeks ahead



**April 29, 2021**

## **A Letter from Rev. J. Patrick Vaughn**

Dear Friends,

When it comes to church life, numbers cannot fully convey the spirit, the love, and the impact of a congregation's ministry. Story, art, and discourse are much more effective and evocative.

Sometimes, however, numbers can make a statement about a church's vitality.

What, then, might numbers tell us about how well MAPC has engaged in ministry during the pandemic?

Over the past week the staff and I have engaged this question. I think you will find the following information both interesting and encouraging.

Grace and peace,

Patrick

Over the past year the Day School has employed 25 teachers and nurtured 75 children.

20 members of the Church Choir and our Octet have met 22 times to safely rehearse and record hymns, service and choral music utilizing our Roof Garden and Sanctuary spaces for our pre-recorded worship services.

We pre-recorded six Saint Andrew Music Society concerts as well as our 16th Annual Carol Sing. To date we have had 3,762 combined views on YouTube and Facebook Live.

Since January, 15 people have regularly met on Sunday mornings to explore the gospels and the book of Acts.

For more than a year, between 6 and 24 individuals have met weekly to engage in the Anti-Racism study and discussion.

Between 8 and 15 in the Monday Evening Bible Study have continued gathering throughout the pandemic. They have focused on the Gospel of Mark, the Beatitudes, and 1 & 2 Samuel.

In the first few months of the pandemic Lectio Divina was offered twice a month on Thursday afternoons.

The Women's Bible Study continues their journey through the Psalms.

Afternoon Tea on alternate Thursdays was offered for the first few months of "staying home."

Wednesday Evening Lenten Series, "Praying with Scripture," regularly involved 6 to 10 people.

Except when the weather was unbearable, a group of 3-5 walked together through Central Park on Saturday mornings.

We held 2 Zoom Church Family Nights.

We offered 2 Saturday Crafturdays fellowship opportunities.

25 people attended our Halloween Gathering in Central Park.

Our Easter Festival in Central Park drew 50.

With 6 regular participants, the Mystery Book Group began meeting in February.

From the beginning of the pandemic through April 2021, Zoom Fellowship was held on Sundays at noon. Between 6 and 15 regularly participated.

We held two Zoom Moms' Nights Out early in the pandemic.

In-Person Morning Prayer on Sundays started on the Roof Garden in September and moved to the Sanctuary in November.

Trick-or-treating on the steps attracted children, adults and a few dogs from around the neighborhood.

On Ash Wednesday we offered the imposition of ashes on the steps outside the Sanctuary.

40 Advent Boxes with devotions and activities were delivered or picked up in November & December.

65 Lenten Devotions and "You Are Loved" MAPC mugs were either delivered or picked up in February & March.

From the beginning of the pandemic Daily Prayer Devotions were recorded and emailed to the congregation. We began with 5 per week, and, then, reduced them to 3 per week when we began holding in-person prayer services. We wrapped up our video devotions last week with a series on the Lord's Prayer.

Youth served as leaders AND recorded parts of each of the Vacation Bible School lessons over 5 weeks last summer.

11 elementary age children are regularly participating in two mid-week Zoom classes as an alternative to Sunday school.

6 eighth and ninth graders completed confirmation in May 2020. This year we have had 4 active participants. Each week 6 MAPC members (adults) join as mentors to the confirmands on Zoom.

Between September and November 2020 Youth on the Roof attracted between 6 and 12 high school students every week.

Between 4 and 10 middle and high school students join together weekly for fellowship, games, and Bible study.

3-8 young adults (plus 2 staff members) have met bi-weekly on Zoom on Monday evenings.

In 2020 MAPC received \$630,972 in offerings and tithes. Despite the loss of \$53,000 from several families who decided to withdraw from active participation at MAPC, \$620,134 was pledged for 2021.

Our NYCCC held over 200 in-person rehearsals on the Roof Garden, Parish Hall, and Sanctuary as well as more than 250 online

rehearsals.

The NYCCC participated in 10 virtual guest appearances including the TODAY Show and three Appreciation Performances for the NYC Department of Health Frontline Team.

The NYCCC offered 2 outdoor concerts for the James Lenox House and Open Table Dinner. 5 in-person concerts were held for families.

The NYCCC will hear over 200 in-person and online auditions in May and June.

The NYCCC was a semi-finalist in the American Prize Competition for Excellence in Choral Performance and the Ernst Bacon Prize for American Music.

The NYCCC is preparing for 6 in-person Spring Concerts and a virtual Spring Concert.

The NYCCC is preparing a tour for vaccinated choristers to Pennsylvania in August.

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## Worship

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### **Please join us for online worship.**

The Rev. Dr. J. Patrick Vaughn will be preaching Sunday, May 2. His sermon is entitled "Does Jesus Really Want You to Be Born Again?"

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### **Join us for in-Person Service of the Word at 10:30 am in the Sanctuary.**

We have expanded our in-person worship from a 30-minute Morning Prayer service to a 45-minute Service of the Word. The service includes a sermon in addition to the prayers, scripture and music that have been part of our Morning Prayer services for the past seven months.

We continue to follow the same stringent safety guidelines: masks completely covering the nose and mouth are required, physically-distanced seating will be observed, and we will refrain from greetings and conversation until we are out in the fresh air on the sidewalk after the service.

Please sign up for the service by clicking the link below so that we may monitor numbers.

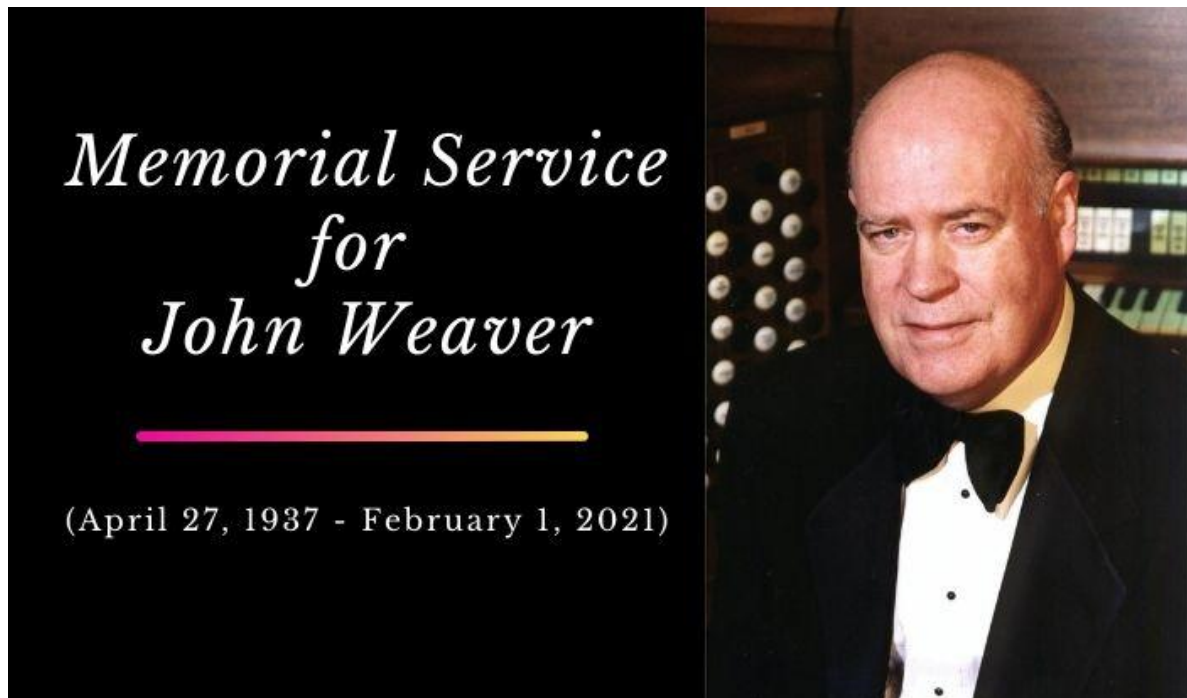
[Sign Up Here](#)

### Sunday Worship

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

[Click Here to Watch](#)

## John Weaver Memorial Service



For those who haven't yet watched the memorial service for John Weaver, MAPC's Director of Music & Organist Emeritus, a link to the virtual service is still available on our Vimeo page or you can click on the button below. The family also invites those who wish to view personal remembrances and photos of John on their blog at [johnborlandweaver.blogspot.com](http://johnborlandweaver.blogspot.com).

[John Weaver Memorial Service](#)

### Opportunity for Service - Help Out in the New Clothing Closet!



MAPC and St. James Episcopal Church are opening a free clothing closet for low-income New Yorkers in our former shelter space. If you can spare an hour after worship, please join members of the task force to sort through bags of clothing donations. We will sort from 11:45am-12:45pm in the basement of the church - coffee provided!

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## **Opportunities for Fellowship & Study**

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Zoom invites are sent regularly by email.

We are thankful to those of you who joined us for online fellowship this year. Now that we are worshipping in person, we look forward to seeing you face-to-face and on our other online gatherings.

## **A Walk in the Park - Saturdays at 9 am**

Join April Martin for a masked walk in the park on Saturday morning at 9 am. We will meet at the 72nd St. and 5th Ave entrance. RSVP to Lissette Perez-Erazo, [lgp@mapc.com](mailto:lgp@mapc.com), so we know who to look for this Saturday.

## **Church Family Zoom Night, Friday, May 14 -- 6 pm via Zoom**

It's time for another Zoom Church Family Night! We'll enjoy dinner together (at our own tables, of course) fellowship, games, and a short movie. The Zoom link will be sent out in an email that week. This is for the whole church family, not just those with children at home, and we hope you can join us for an intergenerational gathering.

## **Young Adult Gatherings on Zoom**

***Mondays from 7 to 8 pm: May 10 & 24, June 14 & 28***

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 May 10, read Chapters 11-13.

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](mailto:ceh@mapc.com)) or April Martin ([aem@mapc.com](mailto:aem@mapc.com)) and we will get you a copy.

## **Gospel Gatherings, Sunday Mornings at 9 am**

Gospel Gatherings will meet for four additional weeks to read and discuss the second volume of Luke, the book of Acts. Join us on Sunday mornings at 9 am via zoom for this fun discussion. For May 2, please read Acts 22-28! Starting May 16, we will begin a discussion of Genesis.

[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)

Sundays at 9 am

## **Sunday, May 9 at 9 am - Where Do We Go From Here?**

We encourage you to join in this discussion as we reflect on a year of living, and being the church, through the pandemic and what our lives will look like as we begin to emerge from it. We will use the following article from The Christian Century as our starting point for discussion:

<https://www.christiancentury.org/article/faith-matters/life-after-resurrection>

In preparation for the discussion please read the article and reflect on the following questions--both in terms of your own lives and the life of the church:

“What losses have we experienced in the past year?”

“How has this past year changed us?”

“What are our fears as we move into the next several months?”

“What are our hopes?”

“How will this past year change the life and ministry of the church going forward?”

Both Dr. Vaughn and Rev. Bartlett will lead the discussion on May 9th, and we hope you will join. A Zoom invitation will be sent out Sunday morning, May 9th.

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## **Mystery Book Group!**

### **Thursday, May 13th, 7 pm via Zoom**

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The Mystery Book Group is having a wonderful time reading and discussing good mysteries. Like most book groups the conversation broadens to cover other topics as well. The next book group meeting is May 13th, and our current mystery is "Full Dark House" by Christopher Fowler. If you'd like to know more, please email Rev. Bartlett, [bab@mapc.com](mailto:bab@mapc.com). An email with the Zoom link will be sent out the week of the meeting.

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## **Adult Education Opportunities**

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## **Anti-Racism Discussion Group, Sunday Afternoons at 5 pm**

The next group meeting is Sunday, May 2nd. We will begin discussing "White Too Long: The Legacy of White Supremacy in American Christianity" by Robert P. Jones. Please read through p.38 for the May 2nd discussion.

If you have questions, please contact Rev. Beverly Bartlett at [bab@mapc.com](mailto:bab@mapc.com).

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## **Bible Studies**

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### **Monday Evening Bible Study, May 3 at 7 pm**

The Monday Evening Bible Study group is 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 2 Samuel, chapters 7-12 in preparation for the discussion. Questions? Email Rev. Bartlett at [bab@mapc.com](mailto:bab@mapc.com).

### **Women's Bible Study**

The Women's Bible Study will meet by teleconference Monday, May 10 at 5:30 pm to continue their study of the Psalms. Please contact Lissette Perez-Eraza for more details: [lgp@mapc.com](mailto:lgp@mapc.com)

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## **Youth and Children at MAPC**

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### **Youth (Ages 6th - 12th Grade)**

#### CONFIRMATION:

Our confirmation class meets bi-monthly on Tuesday nights via zoom.

#### YOUTH IN 2021:

Wednesdays from 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.

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### **Virtual Children's Ministry**

Questions about Children's Ministry at MAPC? Contact Chesna Hinkley ([ceh@mapc.com](mailto: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 8-10 minute chat about the lectionary Bible reading and a related children's book.

### PRESCHOOL MINISTRY

(2-4 years old) We encourage you to **download** the Bible App for Kids at <https://www.bible.com/kids> and use it for at-home Christian Education for preschoolers. Search for fun, musical, 25-minute episodes in the app or watch in your browser at <https://bibleappforkids.com/parents/videos>. The video for April is "A Happy Sunday." Four weekly accompanying lesson plans and coloring pages can be printed below.

[Printable Coloring Pages](#)

### MONDAYS FOR KIDS

(K-2nd grade) **on Zoom**. Our Spring Session entitled, "Going to Church," will run May 10 & 24, and June 7 & 21 at 4:30-5:15 pm.

### PRETEEN CONNECT

(3rd-5th grade) **on Zoom**. Our Spring Session will run May 5 & 19, and June 2 & 16 at 4:30-5:15 pm. We will learn about worship, sacraments, and being members of the local congregation.

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## **Four Ways to Give to MAPC During this Time**

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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 four ways you can give:

[Give Now](#)

*Thank you for your faithful giving!*

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# Links for MAPC Worship Services

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## 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](#)

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## MAPC on Social Media

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### 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://facebook.com/MadisonAvenuePresbyterian/)

