Open to all and closed to none.

Myers Park Baptist News

December 2016

Dreaming On!

By Becky Rizzo and Bob Bishop,
Co-Chairs, 2017 Stewardship Campaign

The official 2017 Stewardship Campaign has come to an end . . .

- A (non) Oyster Roast kick-off event that brought members, young and old, together for an evening of fun. See photos on the MPBC Facebook page.
- A compelling video that highlights the life of the Church and its congregation. Visit the MPBC Stewardship webpage to see the video.
- Coffee and Conversation in Heaton Hall.
- The Dream On! playlist on Spotify. A link to the music channel is on the MPBC Stewardship webpage.
- The Thanks-For-Giving Feast. Good food, good friends, a good time.

During this campaign, we heard from YOU! Thank you!

We heard your voice in the July survey to the congregation.
We read the dreams you wrote on the posters in Heaton Hall.
We listened to your inspirational music on YOUR Dream On! playlist on Spotify.
We published the dreams of staff and Church ministries in the 2015 Congregational Report.

We are not done.
We are still far from our goal, and even further from our dream goal. So the Dream lives on.
We still need your pledge to reach YOUR dreams: the dreams you wrote about in the July survey, the dreams you wrote about on the Dream On! posters, the dreams you think about when you are sitting in worship and listening to a sermon that inspires, and the dream that Ben spoke of in his sermons.

“A beloved community that is open to all and closed to none—... continued on page 11

Season of Advent

By Fran Morrison

The season of Advent is the beginning of the church year. Four Sundays plus their weekdays comprise a period of expectant waiting and preparation for the celebration of the Nativity of Jesus at Christmas. The term Advent is a version of the Latin word meaning “coming” or “arrival.” I hope you will join this family of faith as we prepare for the birth of the Christ child with hope, peace, joy, and love. Below you will find all our Advent and Christmas worship offerings.

November 27 (Sunday) at 11:00am
The Advent Love Feast service begins our Advent journey together. A simple meal (cookies and tea) will be served during the worship service, followed by the singing of Christmas carols, a homily by Rev. Boswell, the sounds of children singing, and anthems sung by the Motet Singers to help usher us in to the Advent season.

December 4 (Sunday) at 6:30pm – Carols in the Round
Hot apple cider and a candlelit Heaton Hall will set the mood for Christmas. Come enjoy the Motet Singers, soloists Todd Geer, Charlotte Judge, and Fran Morrison, and violinist Sacha Barlow as they gently lift you into the Advent season with new and familiar Christmas carols. You will be asked to sing with them occasionally, but most of all we want you to be a relaxed listener just enjoying the music of the season.

December 10 (Saturday) at 4:00pm
Children’s Christmas Pageant – “It’s a Super Christmas” in Heaton Hall.

December 11 (Sunday) at 11:00am
The Service of Nine Lessons and Carols is a well-loved tradition at MPBC. We will be led by the choirs, ministers, and lay readers as the entire biblical story of redemption from the Garden of Eden to the manger in Bethlehem is told through scripture and song.

December 18 (Sunday) at 11:00am
Kevin Sadowski’s Magnificat is a setting of Mary’s song of joy and praise from Luke 1, sung after she is told that she is with child. There are many musical settings of the Magnificat, but this one tells the story with choir soloists, and brass.

... continued on page 13
The Meaning and Purpose of Advent

By Rev. W. Benjamin Boswell

Advent is a corporate spiritual journey that calls for expectant waiting and readiness for the coming of Christ. Historically, the season has been marked by periods of fasting and penitence. When the church travels this journey and treats it as an intentional discipline of life and prayer, the joy of Christmas is immeasurably intensified. The word advent derives from the Latin Adventus, which means “coming.” During Advent, we anticipate and celebrate the many different “comings” of Christ. We anticipate the Christ who first came to us in the flesh of a man named Jesus, the Christ who comes continually into our lives through the power of Word, Spirit, and Church, and the Christ who will come again in glory at the end of time. Each year the season of Advent calls the community of God’s people to get ready and prepare themselves for these three comings of Christ.

For the four weeks before Christmas, our worship calls us into a time of waiting for the coming of the Lord. We begin at what may seem like a distance from the coming of Christ in Bethlehem, but we proceed closer and closer each week to the celebration of his birth. Worship during the first two weeks emphasizes the second coming of Christ and the need to prepare for his return. The biblical texts for the first two weeks focus on the prophetic Messianic promises, the coming of Christ in final victory, and on John the Baptist who was the great forerunner of our Lord and cried out from the wilderness, “Prepare ye the way of the Lord!” The preparations we make for the second coming of Christ are similar to the preparations Israel was making for the coming of the Messiah.

Advent focuses on themes such as hope, eager anticipation, longing, desire, looking toward the future, and watchfulness, which all help us to remember, participate in, and express the kind of inner feelings that the people of Israel had as they waited for the Messiah. Those descriptive terms also capture the feelings that we Christians have now as we await the consummation of history and the redemption of the world. However, getting ready and becoming prepared are more than just feelings; they also include moral and spiritual preparation. Therefore, we also find that a life of righteousness, justice, and peace is emphasized in the readings for the early weeks of Advent as well.

Starting in the third or fourth week of Advent, the emphasis shifts to feelings of joy. Since the day of Christ’s appearing is coming closer, the accent falls on what Christ will do in his coming. Both the first and second comings are related to the deliverance, liberation, salvation, redemption, and renewal of all Creation as well as the restoration of all things to God and the final destruction of death, darkness, and evil. Christ’s triumph over darkness makes way for light and joy, and those emotions are captured in the Scripture readings, antiphons, hymns, prayers, and instruction of the third week.

In the fourth week of Advent, we are ushered even closer to the event of Jesus’ birth. Consequently, the accent of our worship falls on the Incarnation: God with us; Emmanuel. In this service, we are drawn up into the rejoicing of those immediately involved in the events surrounding the miraculous conception of Jesus through the biblical texts. We listen or sing together the Annunciation to Mary and Mary’s incredible response, the Magnificat. These readings, together with the prayers and antiphons, bring us closer to Christ and increase our anticipation and hope for his birth.

During the season of Advent we read our lives and our world through the lens of the story of God’s people in exile and their longing for the Messiah. By intentionally placing ourselves in the position of those waiting in exile, we learn the most difficult virtue that eludes many during the holiday season—the virtue of patience. In learning patience through the intentional adventure of the season of Advent, we often discover that the hope, peace, joy, and love we are promised at Christmas are not sentimental feelings, but practices we achieve through attentiveness and mindfulness to God’s presence among us.

May this Advent be a journey of patience, preparation, awakening, and fervent hope for you, for our families, for our Church, and for our world. Emmanuel, God is with us!
DEATHS — LOVE AND SYMPATHY

- Todd and Lisa Rubenson on the death of his aunt, Lore Kawasaki, on October 8, 2016 in Brecksville, OH.
- Jennifer Troyer and John Teague on the death of her father, and Eleanor Teague on the death of her grandfather, on October 15, 2016 in Memphis, TN.
- Doug and Jeanne Robertson on the death of his sister, Linda Robertson, on October 27, 2016 in Houston, TX.
- Janice and Barry Bradner on the death of her father, and Abby on the death of her grandfather, Paul Bray, on October 25, 2016 in Charlotte, NC.
- Nancy Nicholson on the death of her uncle, and Sarah Nicholson on the death of her great uncle, Billy Williams, on November 3, 2016 in Meridian, Miss.

Inclement Weather Policy

Our Church policy for inclement weather on Sundays is to have 11:00am worship service for those who are able to come, except in extraordinary circumstances. Any cancellation of Sunday morning Faith Formation will be posted on the MPBC website. Local television stations will be notified of the decision.

Room In The Inn will take place despite weather conditions.

For Wednesday evening activities, we will cancel all Church events and Wonderful Wednesday dinner whenever the Charlotte-Mecklenburg School system cancels Wednesday classes.

Family Dedications - October 23, 2016

Joelle and Andrew Baysden bringing Marielle Louise Baysden

Joe Florence and Hannah Grannemann, along with Elliot Florence, bringing Nora Genevive Florence

Dan and Sarah McNeill along with Paige, bringing Maeve Kathryn McNeill

Not Available for Photo

Sacha Barlow along with TigerLily, bringing Dandelion Sage Olivia Barlow

Anna-Catherine Fowler and Keith Young, along with Conner, bringing Sawyer Brigman Young

Holiday Closings

The Church office will close at noon on Friday, December 23 and will be closed December 26 and 27 in celebration of Christmas.

The Church office will be closed Monday, January 2 for the New Year’s holiday.
Award Winning Members at MPBC:

Charlie Elberson
2016 McColl Center for Art + Innovation Luminary Award Winner

By Lynn Trenning

MPBC Member Charlie Elberson is the 2016 recipient of McColl Center for Art + Innovation Luminary Award. Charlie was presented the award by McColl’s President and CEO, Suzanne Fetscher, at the Ashes to Art Fundraiser in October. The award is given annually to a generous sustaining donor. Suzanne described Charlie as “a philanthropist, a Charlotte business leader, and a change-agent in the community.” She credited Charlie with “helping McColl Center continue to innovate and experiment in how to do our work better, and create deeper meaning and engagement for our artists and the community.”

Charlie serves as the primary trustee and advisor for the Reemprise Fund within the Foundation for the Carolinas. The fund was established by Charlie’s father, Bob Elberson, in 2005. The Reemprise Fund invests in entrepreneurial and innovative non-profit organization projects, and supports projects that are high risk and tend to fall outside the scope of an organization’s established program and service area. McColl Center for Art + Innovation is an artists’ residency program and gallery dedicated to promoting contemporary art and supporting artists regionally, nationally, and internationally.

Congratulations Charlie!

RAIN to recognize Award Winner Scott Crowder on World AIDS Day, December 1

By Debbie Warren

Many of us know Scott as the Captain of our annual AIDS Walk team or as Co-Chair of the Ministry of Outreach at MPBC. He is the driving force behind our clever AIDS Walk fundraising and the reason we raise more money than any other faith community every year. He is a long-time RAIN and MPBC volunteer, organizing workdays, site visits, breakfasts, parties, and anything he can to help people living with HIV.

Scott says “a wise friend told me years ago, 'to make the best of your journey, create authentic and lasting relationships with those smarter, kinder, and more generous than yourself.' This philosophy has guided and served me, especially in this case; my friends and faith community introduced me to RAIN and have supported my events and giving opportunities since 2006, enabling me to raise over $120,000.”

In recognition of Scott’s incredible achievements, RAIN (www.carolinarain.org) will honor him with the prestigious Red Ribbon Award at its annual World AIDS Day Luncheon on December 1.

Senior Adult Fellowship Update:
The Religion of Islam with Rose Hamid

By Joe Aldrich

On November 2, 2016, Rose Hamid, President of Muslim Women of the Carolinas, gave a brief lecture on the “Religion of Islam,” followed by a time of answering questions from our Senior Adults. We learned some interesting facts about the religion, about the Koran, about the commitment to regular prayer five times a day, about fasting, and about their belief in striving toward the perfect life while believing in God’s mercy.

Toward the end of the program, Rose was asked about violence and the religion of Islam. She explained that you cannot truly be a terrorist and Islamic. For example, Isis is a political movement and really has nothing to do with the religion of Islam. Political terrorists in the Mideast are just that, not "Islamic Terrorists.” The religion of Islam is a religion of peace. Rose Hamid complimented the group for asking such thoughtful questions. We were fortunate to have had such an informative time together.
Coping With Stress

In this world without quiet comers, there can be no easy escapes ... from hullabaloo, from terrible, unquiet fuss – Salman Rushdie

Is there a woman alive who doesn’t suffer from stress? If there is, seek her out and share her wisdom. When you find her, I’d be willing to bet she’ll offer the following suggestions:

Cultivate gratitude.
Carve out an hour a day for solitude.
Begin and end the day with prayer, meditation, reflection.
Keep it simple.
Keep your house picked up.
Don’t overschedule.
Strive for realistic deadlines.
Never make a promise you can’t keep.
Allow an extra half hour for everything you do.
Create quiet surroundings at home and at work.
Go to bed at nine o’clock twice a week.
Always carry something interesting to read.
Breathe deeply and often.
Move-walk, dance, run, find a sport you enjoy.
Drink pure spring water. Lots of it.
Eat only when hungry.
If it’s not delicious, don’t eat it.
Be instead of do.
Set aside one day a week for rest and renewal.
Laugh more often.
Luxuriate in your senses.

Always opt for comfort.
If you don’t love it, live without it.
Let Mother Nature nurture.
Don’t answer the telephone during dinner.
Stop trying to please everybody.
Start pleasing yourself.
Stay away from negative people.
Don’t squander precious resources: time, creative energy, emotion.
Nurture friendships.
Don’t be afraid of your passion.
Approach problems as challenges.
Honour your aspirations.
Set achievable goals.
Surrender expectations.
Savor beauty.
Create boundaries.
For every “yes,” let there be a “no.”
Don’t worry; be happy.
Remember, happiness is a living emotion.
Exchange securing for serenity.
Care for your soul.
Cherish your dreams.
Express love every day.
Search for your authentic self until you find her.

Tips for Saving Water

1. Take refillable water bottle on outings, to meetings, etc.
2. Take shorter showers.
3. Repair dripping faucets by replacing washers—easy to do and cost effective.
4. Sweep driveways and sidewalks instead of hosing them.
5. When washing car, use hose only for rinsing.
6. Catch rainwater or used dishwasher to water plants.

Wonderful Wednesday Dinner

Time:
Dinner is served from 5:45-6:30pm

Cost:
$6 adult / $3 child 12 and under / $22 immediate family max

Reservations:
by noon on Monday, December 12. RSVP online at www.mpbconline.org, email Rainey Underwood at runderwood@mpbconline.org, or call 704.334.7232 x156

Menu: Baked chicken with vegetables (kids under 12 - chicken sandwich), baked potato, rolls, salad bar, and desserts!

Wonderful Wednesday Programs

Adults: Awakening to Racial Injustice Series
6:30-8:00pm, Shalom Hall
Join us for a conversation about Faith and Race with Rev. Boswell and Rev. Dr. Peter Wheery. See page 6 for more information.

Children: Christmas Festival
6:30-7:30pm, Heaton Hall
Join us for dinner and stay for a night that has something for everyone. We will have crafts, games, and more. The evening will end with a viewing of A Charlie Brown Christmas.

December 14, 2016
5:45-8:00pm
Awakening to Racial Injustice

By Chrissy Williamson

In this fourth month of our year-long series, *Awakening to Racial Injustice*, we shift from our intellectual examinations of race to a more focused conversation about faith and race. On December 14, from 6:30–8:00pm, we will gather in Shalom Hall for a conversation with Rev. Ben Boswell and Rev. Dr. Peter Wheery, Senior Minister of Mayfield Memorial Missionary Baptist Church. Revs. Boswell and Wheery will help us to name the intersections of race and the practices of faith. They will also help us to unpack some of the theological and spiritual implications of the information that we have been taking in throughout this journey of *Awakening*.

We can rest assured that we will not be able to voice or respond to every question or perspective at this gathering, nor will we be able to fully unpack all that we are experiencing as we wake up to racial injustice. For that reason, I encourage each of us to take advantage of one of the following opportunities to go deeper with these issues:

1. **Journal.** Write down what you’re learning. Write down your discomforts with the new information. Write down where the tensions are. Write down your feelings. Don’t rush to quick fixes or intellectual remedies, just be as you are as you journal.
2. **Join an Awakening Covenant Group.** A week-night meeting group is now forming. Contact Anne Clarke (aclarke@mpbconline.org) if you’d like to join.
3. **Read** one of the books from the recommended reading list. Suggested for Advent: *Waking Up White* by Debby Irving
4. **Sign up for an Advent Awakening** conversation (see below) to take the themes from the sermons and the take-aways from the *Awakening* series to a common table shared with fellow journeys in your community of faith.

**Advent Awakenings**

The season of Advent is marked by themes of waiting, watching, and preparing for God to reveal God’s self in our world. As we remember the ways that Mary and Elizabeth prepared for their promised children, Jesus and John, we too watch and prepare. We do these things so that when the mystery of God does become known, we will be ready and willing to participate in the work of God in the world.

Like Mary and Elizabeth who waited and prepared together, this year, we hope that you will wait and prepare in community with one another at Advent Awakenings.

Advent Awakenings are opportunities for you to share a meal with others in this community of faith who are waking, waiting, watching, and preparing for God’s revelation in the world. *Advent Awakenings* happen in the following settings:

**Host homes:** Hosts graciously open their homes so that 8-10 people can share a meal and conversation about the sermon from the week. Discussion guides are available.

**Sunday Option:** If the most convenient time for you is right after church on Sundays, we’d love for you to join a Sunday Advent Awakenings group. These folks will walk across to the lunch room at Queens to share a meal and discuss the sermon. Discussion guides are available.

**Family Awakenings:** For many of you, just having a family meal around the table is a challenge. If this is you and adding one more thing to your schedule sounds more stressful than life giving, we invite you to set aside one night each week during Advent for your family to have a distraction-free meal together. Discussion guides with age relevant questions are available.

If you would like to sign up for an Advent Awakenings conversation (either in a host home or as a Sunday option), please call Anne Clarke (704.334.7232 x115) or visit the Church website.

If you want to commit with your family to Family Awakenings conversations, sign up by emailing Anne Clarke at aclarke@mpbconline.org.

Throughout the season, you can also extend the conversation on our Advent Awakenings Facebook page.

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**Discipleship Class**

By Chrissy Williamson

Each year our youth who have completed the seventh grade are invited to participate in the journey of the Discipleship Class. This experience is marked by focused study of the Bible, foundations of theology, and a survey of other religions and Christian traditions. Youth are encouraged to choose an adult from within our congregation to be their mentor and guide throughout the journey that will begin in January and culminate before Holy Week, when the youth will have the opportunity to make their own professions of faith, get baptized, and formalize their membership with this Church.

Eighth grade youth and their parents will receive more information about this class in the mail (USPS and email). In the meantime, if you have any questions about the Discipleship Class this year, please contact me at cwilliamson@mpbconline.org.

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**Connections Small Group Proposals Winter/Spring 2016**

**ATTENTION FACILITATORS:**

- Do you have an idea for a Connections Small Group?
- Are you willing to facilitate the group?
- Do you know someone who would?
- Submit your proposal for a winter Connections Small Group online at www.mpbconline.org.
- Accepting proposals for fall Connections Small Groups throughout December.
- Registration for winter groups will begin mid-January.

Questions? Contact Anne Clarke at aclarke@mpbconline.org or 704.334.7232 x115.
**Children's Ministry Happenings**

By Carrie Veal

**Christmas Pageant: It’s A Super Christmas**
Saturday, December 10; 4:00pm in Heaton Hall

**Family Advent Booklet**
Families have the opportunity to journey through Advent with this booklet. Each day has a passage of scripture, a short reflection, a prayer, and an activity. Paper booklets are available at the Church and there is a digital copy on the Church’s website.

**Christmas Breakfast and Party**
Sunday, December 18; 9:45am, Shalom Hall
Bring the whole family to this new tradition. Please sign up to bring a breakfast item to share.

**January Serving**
In January our preschoolers will learn stories of Jesus from his escape to Egypt to the teaching of the Beatitudes. This is a four Sunday commitment.

**January Family Dedication**
Sunday, January 29, 2017
If your family would like to participate in this special service, please contact me at cveal@mpbconline.org.

**Fifth Grade Faith and Sexuality Retreat**
Friday, February 3 – Saturday, February 4
All fifth graders are invited to this wonderful retreat led by Jenny Beaumont. More details will be coming, but be sure you have the date on your calendar.

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**Halloween Festival - October 26, 2016**

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**Listening to Our Voices**

By Carol Reid Fricke, Chair, Strategic Planning Council

Last spring, our Board of Deacons, through the Strategic Planning Council, began laying the groundwork to develop the strategic plan that will move us into the next decade. This plan will focus our vision of the future and ways we will strive to achieve it. We are re-examining fundamental questions, like:

1. What is happening in the Christian Church of the 21st century?
2. How is the Spirit of God calling MPBC?
3. How might we best live into our Covenant during the next decade?

All of us collectively have been thinking about these questions for years now, particularly during our recent interim period. We've heard the voices of our own ministers and our guest preachers. We've listened to sage advice from Susan Beaumont, Richard Rohr, Brian MacLaren, Barbara Brown Taylor, Amy Butler, and Robin Meyers.

Meanwhile, during the last two months, we asked the professionals at Charlotte’s The Lee Institute to collect and examine research results about our Church from a variety of voices:

1. The extensive Senior Minister Search Survey that we Church members completed several years ago. It’s rich, recent data and it’s thorough;
2. Fifteen hour-long interviews with people representing the diversity of our congregation and including several area ministers;
3. A short-answer survey responded to by all of our Active Deacons and Ministry Chairs, our entire Staff, and the Strategic Planning Council; and
4. A focus group of millennials as “secret shoppers” who visited our Church incognito during recent weeks and then met to share their experiences.

At several meetings during October and November, Church leaders looked at these findings for surprises revealed, challenges identified, strengths noted, and ways suggested that we might build on our rich history. Soon we will offer an online opportunity for you to hear directly about all of these research voices from the Executive Director of The Lee Institute, Andi Stevenson, who is working with us this entire year. Then it will be your turn to raise your voice!

We know many of you are anxious to share what you think should be our potential goals and you probably have some very specific strategies to suggest as well. And we are eager to hear from you! After the Advent and Christmas season, we will begin the New Year by asking YOU questions and gathering YOUR responses through small group Listening Circles.

The process of analyzing and planning will continue through next spring and into the summer. With God’s guidance first and foremost, and with respect for all our voices and history, we hope to challenge and broaden our thinking, question assumptions and habits, and welcome innovation that builds on our cherished legacy. We look forward to including your voice as we take this journey together through the coming year.
It's truly amazing what 137 "servers" can accomplish in 6 hours. Here's the rundown:

- We worked at the Habitat House in west Charlotte putting up a skirting board and roofing 4x8 panels, and caulking the inside of the house.
- We built a COMPLETE Habitat Shed at MPBC. Starting Friday night, we transformed 2x4s, nails, shingles, and plywood into a completed shed, and delivered it to the Habitat House that the other team built.
- Work at RAIN: We painted, constructed a bookshelf, entered data for their records, made condom kit safety bags, and separated raffle tickets for Gay Bingo.
- Ronald McDonald House: We decorated 50 baby onesies and assembled 50 hospitality bags for families staying at the house.
- MedAssist: We unpacked, sorted, and stocked the shelves with over the counter medicines for the OTC Give-Away.
- Friendship Urban Farm and MPBC Garden: We harvested peppers, eggplant, and squash. We also planted garlic, weeded, and spread compost at both the MPBC garden and the Urban Farm located at Garringer High School.
- YWCA Women In Transition: We made and decorated door wreaths and shared afternoon tea and treats with the residents.
- Pinewood Elementary: We cleaned, weeded, and prepared overgrown beds for spring planting. We pruned adjoining shrubs and trees, reconnected the irrigation hoses, and reinstalled them into the overturned beds. Children planted pansies in pots for the kitchen staff.

And the best part … We enjoyed the fellowship of each other and the agencies who do such great work in our community. And to top it off, we shared a wonderful lunch from Friendship Kitchens (an arm of Friendship Trays).

I am so grateful for all the hands that served and the hearts that reached out to each other. It was a great day.

The day can be summed up with the following comment from Joan Hope: "We are so fortunate that we GET to give and to be part of a faith culture of giving," I love that.

A special thanks to SOS captains: David Kroening, Steve Jennings, Steve Cranford, Daniel Osborne, Judy Morrison, Dianne Bobbitt, Karen Taylor, John, Emma and Avery Monfore, Scott Crowder, Ed Williams, Koren Cranford, Erica and Tara McGee, Saxby Chaplin, Laura Handler, and Tara Harris.
**Offering a Warm Heart to Comfort Cold Feet**

By Cher Lindblom

*Jesus began his life in homelessness.* How easy it is to forget this crucial fact. As I rush by my homeless neighbors during the holidays, I am laser focused - striving to make time to prepare my house, my gift-laden tree, and my shallow attempts to watch, wait and wonder. I look the other way, or perhaps do not even see the faces of my neighbors. I am too busy to pause and see those who are really struggling.

Yet, *Jesus began his life in homelessness.* I suspect how we care for our homeless neighbors matters to the one we follow - the Christ, who knew their concerns well.

Myers Park Baptist Church is committed to serving our homeless neighbors. It is a practical and meaningful way for us to live out our commitment to serve and to be the hands and feet of Jesus in our community. Our ongoing partnerships with Room In The Inn and Charlotte Family Housing (Family Promise) give us the opportunity to share out of the abundance of what we have been graciously given.

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**Family Promise at Elizabeth House - December 11-15**

MPBC serves families transitioning from homelessness through our partnership with Charlotte Family Housing (formerly Family Promise). This gracious group home on Hawthorne Street ensures that families have a safe, consistent place to stay while children attend school and parents pursue debt reduction, job placement, and independent housing — all with the help of professional social workers. MPBC enters into partnership by providing meals and spending the night as hosts.

There are several places for involvement: providing meals, making beds, transportation, or spending the night as a host. Simplified, the ministries are these: food, warmth, and a listening ear.

We cannot provide food, offer the warmth of our building, and offer hospitality to our neighbors if we do not have you. Kind words mean more with a meal, and a meal means more with kind words.

Job descriptions and the sign-up links for RITI and Family Promise are available at www.mpbconline.org. You can also sign up for RITI on the bulletin board in Heaton Hall Foyer. For specific questions about Family Promise at Elizabeth House, contact Cindy Clemens, cclemens@ci.charlotte.nc.us.

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**Room In the Inn**

Saturdays, December 3 - March 25

MPBC serves as a host site for RITI, an interfaith network of homeless support organized by the Urban Ministry Center. We provide a warm, safe place for our neighbors to sleep, three meals to eat (dinner and breakfast, plus a bag lunch), and transportation to and from our building on Saturday evenings through Sunday mornings. The purpose of the program is simple - to keep our city’s homeless neighbors from freezing on cold winter nights. Meeting new friends and building relationships with our homeless neighbors are what make this program so powerful.

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**Stocking Stuffers for the Center of Hope**

By Cher Lindblom

MPBC is partnering with Southminster Retirement Community to fill stockings for 200 children served by the Salvation Army Center of Hope Women’s Shelter. MPBC will help with supplies and Southminster will assemble the stockings.

Please help us bring the joy of Christmas to our young neighbors at the Center of Hope by donating the following:

- coloring/activity books
- crayons, markers
- colored pencils
- toothbrushes/toothpaste
- hair accessories for girls
- hats and gloves
- peanut-free candy and/or snacks
- age-appropriate toys for girls and boys ages 3-12

Collection bins are located in Heaton Hall Foyer and God’s Garden. Deadline is Monday, December 5.

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**MPBC Oatmeal and Staples Drive**

By Bob Bishop

This is a special year for MPBC’s Oatmeal and Staples Food Drive: our 10th anniversary of collecting oatmeal for the homeless in our city. We have donated over 860,000 pounds over the last nine years, and we are only 140,000 pounds away from reaching our goal of 1 million. The Oatmeal Drive runs through January 15 and we need your help to reach this historic number. Drop-off sites are available in Heaton Hall Foyer and at The Cornwell Center. Monetary donations can be made through myMPBC and at www.mpbconline.org. If you need further information, please contact Bob Bishop at bobbishopuk@gmail.com.

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[www.mpbconline.org](http://www.mpbconline.org)
Outreach Giving 2016
What Happens to MPBC Outreach Funds?

By Cher Lindblom

After the Stewardship Campaign closes, the Church budget is set and approved by the congregation in January. This is when the work begins for the Ministry of Outreach (MOO). Once MOO receives the amount of funds available to disperse, they begin the process of reviewing grant applications from returning and new agencies. The following questions are used to determine funding:

- How involved are we with this agency in terms of time committed by Church and committee members?
- Have we had a long-term relationship or helped in founding this agency?
- How well funded is the agency by other sources?
- How well does this agency respond to needs in our community?
- How will our contributions impact this agency?

There are five financial sources from which we fund agencies through the Outreach budget: Operating Budget (percentage of Stewardship Campaign), Loose Plate Offerings (each week, cash placed in the offering plate is designated for a specific recipient), Rice Bowl (monthly offering that is designated for local agencies such as Loaves and Fishes and international programs like STOP HUNGER NOW hunger relief), and the Five-in-One Special Offering. We also support additional agencies with gifts-in-kind (space for meetings, Saturday of Service, clothing, and food drives) and Emergent Reserve Funds.

We make commitments to agencies based on every member meeting their pledge commitments. Your generosity ensures MPBC honors the financial promises we have made to our partner agencies. Fulfiling your pledge allows the agencies that take care of our neighbors on the fringe of society to do their work.

2016 Outreach Budget

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<td>Loaves and Fishes</td>
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Looking Ahead:

Dinner and Conversation on Homelessness

Wednesday, January 11,
5:45-7:00pm

By Cher Lindblom

The Ministry of Outreach invites the congregation to a special Wednesday night Fellowship. Following dinner, we will engage in a roundtable discussion on homelessness, focusing on our preconceived notions and biases as we share our stories related to our homeless neighbors. How do we respond to the poverty we see around us? How can we show compassion and bring about justice? How do we set aside our assumptions and prejudice to fully serve our neighbors? We will also explore how MPBC RITI and Family Promise ministries provide shelter and other services to families and individuals.

Please save the date for an opportunity to enter into deeper understanding of serving those without a home. More details will follow in the January newsletter.

“Outreach is not only important to those we serve, but also important to our Church. It’s what we do together.”

~ Koren Cranford

Finance Report

Year-to-Date

October 31, 2016

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Financial Resources / Stewardship

Dreaming On!

(... continued from page 1)

that is the dream we are inviting you to invest in and to help build during this season of stewardship. It is the dream of a new community and a new city—a new Jericho where Zaccheaus is no longer rejected, or excluded—a Jericho where Zaccheaus does not have to climb a tree but can stand shoulder to shoulder with the crowd—a Jericho where no one is despised, discriminated against, or demonized as a sinner—a Jericho where no one is left out or marginalized—a Jericho where no one is judged by the color of their skin, or the customs of their occupation, but by the content of their character—a Jericho where everyone belongs. What will it cost us to build this new Jericho—to build this beloved community? It will cost our assumptions; it will cost our biases; it will cost our stereotypes; it will even cost some of our most deeply held beliefs; and it will most definitely cost our time, our talent, and our treasure. But the gift we receive from giving to this dream is something that Zaccheaus would tell us, if he were here today, that no amount of money can buy—it is the gift of acceptance, the gift of belonging, the gift of love, the gift of community, the gift of salvation. And friends, there is nothing in this world that is worth more than that. Amen.”

Here are the reasons you give:

“I haven't been able to attend all of the services, but seeing friends from Church post about them on Facebook, and my attendance this past Sunday, just reiterated why MPBC is the right place for me and the place I want my boys to develop their spiritual lives. I’m not there often enough, but when I am, I feel nurtured and challenged. I didn’t know that's what I wanted from my church until I received it.” ~ Casey Hickey

“Our dream is that all of you will feel boundless gratitude jumping out of your hearts. That you will think about what this Church means to you and your families. Just for starters, let’s all try to think about our Dream Pledge. Wow! Have you thought of that? Write down your Dream Pledge and then start giving towards it. Join us in committing to giving back to Myers Park Baptist a little of what it has given to you.” ~ The Haenni Family

Thank you for pledging!

Stewardship Kick-Off - November 5
In October's Newsletter, I listed for you the projects and tasks undertaken by the Ministry of Property and Grounds and Church staff over the summer and through September to maintain our Church, Education Building, and surrounding property. This month, I want to share with you some changes we have made to the Ministry to help us better manage this wonderful and beautiful facility.

At our meeting on October 13, we voted to change the name of the Ministry to Ministry of Facilities Management, and to establish several new Servant Leadership Groups (SLGs) to assist in managing all of the responsibilities of the Ministry. The reasons for these changes are as follows:

1. The name “Property and Grounds” always seemed redundant as the “Grounds” of the Church are part of the Church’s “Property.”
2. The name “Property and Grounds” does not align with all the responsibilities of the Ministry. To illustrate, in addition to the responsibility of managing and maintaining all the physical assets of the Church, the Ministry also has responsibility for the following:
   - Administration of the entire Church in conjunction with the Church Administrator, with the exception of human resources.
   - Rental of Church facilities, including the setting of fees and rental procedures.
   - Implementation of the new Alcohol Use Policy adopted by the Board of Deacons at its September 2016 meeting.
   - Coordination with other Ministries for approval of requested modifications or additions to the buildings, structures, or grounds of the MPBC campus.
   - Overall safety of the MPBC campus.
   - Environmental Stewardship, i.e. assuring that we do everything possible to be environmentally friendly in the choice of materials, equipment, policies, and other decisions that can reduce the Church’s carbon footprint.

We have created the following Servant Leadership Groups (SLGs) within the Ministry to provide more focused attention to the individual elements of our overall responsibility:

**BUILDINGS AND STRUCTURES SLG (new)**
Chair: Robert Barfield
Members: Kevin Pfahl, Ken Steiner, David Collins, Rick Bahnson (Special Projects)
Task: Responsible for managing and maintaining the buildings, related exterior systems (e.g. gutters, roofing, etc.), electrical and mechanical systems, and other structures that are the property of MPBC (e.g. Columbarium, Labyrinth, etc.).

**INTERIORS AND FACILITY USE SLG (new)**
Chair: Jenny Lou Wright
Members: Jill Kinney, Grace Mitchell
Task: Responsible for managing and maintaining the rooms and spaces (including kitchen facilities) within the buildings of the MPBC campus. Also responsible for the rental of specific facilities to members and the general public for functions that are in keeping with Church policies and procedures, and that support the overall spirit and intentionality of the Church Covenant.

**GROUNDS SLG (new)**
Chair: Jim Largen
Members: Tucker Pearsall, others to be determined
Task: Responsible for managing and maintaining the land and associated facilities that form a part of MPBC. This includes overall landscaping, all gardens, undeveloped or park areas, parking lots, walkways (including lighting), signage, etc.

**ENVIRONMENTAL SLG**
Chair: Debby Love
Members: Already established
Task: Responsible for managing and maintaining the Church focus on its adherence to environmental concerns to reduce the carbon footprint of the Church facilities in keeping with the Church Covenant.

**TECHNOLOGY SLG**
Chair: Jane Huddle
Members: Already established
* Will be transferred to Communications at the end of 2016.

**SAFETY SLG**
Chair: Dave Dougherty
Members: Already established
Task: Responsible for providing initial response for emergencies and providing recommendations and procedures for the overall safety of the MPBC Campus.

These changes must first be approved by the Governance Oversight SLG within the Strategic Planning Council before becoming official. However, I am optimistic they will be approved.

We are always looking for more involvement of the congregation. So, if you feel that you would like to assist us going forward, please let me or any of the SLG Chairs know of your interest.
Sometimes a person has to brag! Today’s my day and I must tell you about the diligent work of some dedicated volunteers who, behind the scenes over the past year, worked to keep our Communion services functional and beautiful. After careful study, research, and discussion, a special task force recommended refurbishment, not replacement, of our aging wooden cup trays. The task force added more volunteers who labored to clean and polish the trays, bringing the wood back into a beautiful state. Two volunteers went further, dedicating themselves to the handwashing of glass cups (when using the Church dish-washer is not an option) so we no longer have to wrangle with the spillage and mess caused by plastic cups. Beyond that, the entire team of regular Communion volunteers stepped up when new Communion services were added to the worship schedule this year. I’m thanking these wonderful people publicly, so you may also thank them: Ruth Burts, Jean and Ron Kauffman, Cathryn Rivers, Tina Fort, and Joe Florence, plus Hannah Grannemann, Elliot Florence, Betsy and Alan Peterson, and Jeanette Cox. Incidentally, if you want a place to serve, we have room and a need for you on the Communion team. Simply contact Tina Fort (Sacraments Chair), Joe Florence (Communion Sub-group Leader), or me to volunteer.

Season of Advent

December 18 (Sunday) at 5:00pm
Taizé Prayer Service for the Changing of the Seasons (winter) in the Chapel

December 21 (Wednesday) at 6:30pm, Sanctuary
This service of Lament and Loss is a new Advent service at Myers Park Baptist Church. It is a combination of two liturgical traditions, “Longest Night” services that take place on the longest night of the year and “Christmas Services for Those Who Grieve.” The holidays are a time when the losses we have experienced in the past year and those that we are currently experiencing can feel more present and painful. Sometimes the merriment of the season seems forced and inauthentic. Therefore, we offer this service for our whole community to gather together to name and lament our losses as a family of faith. Even if you are not currently working through loss, we invite you to come surround your neighbors who are suffering with love as we bear one another’s burdens. In addition, the practice of lament is an important one for all Christians to reclaim. This service will be a time when we remember the losses that have changed our lives and those who are no longer with us. We gather together during the Christmas season as a reminder that joy can be born among us despite our sadness, hope can emerge out of despair, that nothing can separate us from the love of God, and that light shines in the midst of our darkness.

December 24 (Saturday) at 4:00pm and 6:00pm, Sanctuary
Two Christmas Eve Services will usher in the wonder of Christmas. The Family service at 4:00pm will give children the experience of Christmas with a manger scene, familiar carols, and communion. The service will end with candle lighting and the singing of “Silent Night.”

The 6:00pm service will begin with a 5:30pm instrumental prelude of harp and organ. The service will continue with joyful Christmas hymns, soloists Todd Geer and Charlotte Judge, the Chancel Choir, a homily by Rev. Boswell, and Communion. The service will conclude with candle lighting throughout the congregation while singing “Silent Night.”

December 25 (Sunday) at 10:00am, Heaton Hall
Christmas Day Worship in the Round
A Service of Hope – Rev. Boswell preaching
Music with Erica McGee

January 1 (Sunday) at 10:00am, Heaton Hall
New Year’s Day Worship in the Round
A Service of Beginnings – Rev. Chrissy Williamson preaching
Music with Todd Geer

Loose Plate Offering

By Cher Lindblom
Gifts of loose cash in December will benefit NC MedAssist. NC MedAssist operates a community pharmacy that provides medications, healthcare advocacy, and educational support to low-income and uninsured North Carolina residents. Visit www.medassist.org.

Glass Cups and Paste Wax

By Deborah Moore Clark
Chair, Ministry of Worship and Music

Sometimes a person has to brag! Today’s my day and I must tell you about the diligent work of some dedicated volunteers who, behind the scenes over the past year, worked to keep our Communion services functional and beautiful. After careful study, research, and discussion, a special task force recommended refurbishment, not replacement, of our aging wooden cup trays. The task force added more volunteers who labored to clean and polish the trays, bringing the wood back into a beautiful state. Two volunteers went further, dedicating themselves to the handwashing of glass cups (when using the Church dish-washer is not an option) so we no longer have to wrangle with the spillage and mess caused by plastic cups. Beyond that, the entire team of regular Communion volunteers stepped up when new Communion services were added to the worship schedule this year. I’m thanking these wonderful people publicly, so you may also thank them: Ruth Burts, Jean and Ron Kauffman, Cathryn Rivers, Tina Fort, and Joe Florence, plus Hannah Grannemann, Elliot Florence, Betsy and Alan Peterson, and Jeanette Cox. Incidentally, if you want a place to serve, we have room and a need for you on the Communion team. Simply contact Tina Fort (Sacraments Chair), Joe Florence (Communion Sub-group Leader), or me to volunteer.
TTWS’ annual Festival of Friends fundraiser was held on October 15 in Burwell Hall at Queens University. The night was filled with amazing food, drink, and silent and live auction items. Through-the-Week School parents raised over $47,000 which will help enhance security efforts, continue Spanish, Science and Cultural Arts programming, and support ongoing capital improvements.

We are super excited that TTWS was recently awarded the annual Smarty Award, “Best Preschool” by CharlotteSmartyPants.com. Thousands of Charlotte moms view this website daily to gain information on topics such as local education, health, and book and food pictures. It is an honor to be recognized by these moms and voted as the top preschool in Charlotte!

Pictured is our current Transitional Kindergarten classroom. TTWS has a long standing tradition as having one of the most comprehensive TK classrooms which gives children another year to grow socially and academically before entering kindergarten. We will be hosting an information session on November 30 at 10:00am when parents can visit the classroom and speak to current TK teachers. Special guest, Pediatric Neurologist Dr. Melanie Powell, will be present to speak about the gift of a TK year. Please call the TTWS office at 704.377.1683 to RSVP.

Trinere McCreary
A Life Transformed by the Love of Jesus Christ

By Lynda Bell Anello

Sometimes all it takes to persevere is to hear the words, “I believe in you.” Just ask Trinere McCreary, Cornwell Center’s front desk staffer and assistant After School Program teacher, who was lifted from the dark and cold floor of a homeless shelter into the light by the words of a special friend – a stranger at the time – at The Harvest Center of Charlotte, a non-profit organization dedicated to community and transforming lives.

“From the very beginning, she told me that I was strong and that I could be somebody,” recalls McCreary about her (now!) BFF, Sherry Waters, who mentored her at The Harvest Center. “And I thought, ‘me?’ That’s crazy. Because when I came in I was so angry and hurt and felt so small.” But when Waters, The Harvest Center’s Development Director, met Trinere, she could see through to the curious, ambitious, strong individual we know and love today. “She was such a bright light,” says Waters.

At age 26, McCreary is the youngest graduate ever of The Harvest Center’s “Transformation Program.” Over a six-month period, participants are supported spiritually through daily devotions and Bible studies, emotionally with group and individual counseling, and professionally through life and job skill training.

“They saw something in me that I didn’t see in myself,” says McCreary. “I was able to discover myself in a safe, loving, and structured environment. It helped me build self-esteem, learn what I needed, and strengthen my relationship with God.”

McCreary says the encouragement from the staff and volunteers has given her the courage to greet each day with a positive outlook. “I am a new person now,” reflects McCreary. “I wake up with a smile and an excitement that I didn’t have before. Every day people are rooting for me to succeed.”

When a Cornwell member and Harvest Center volunteer approached Jenny Yopp, Director of the Cornwell Center, about a job for McCreary, the timing was perfect as a position was available. “Immediately, we were impressed with Trinere’s kindness, communication skills, and experience in customer service,” Jenny recalls. “Trinere adds a consistent, welcoming smile and demeanor for both her colleagues and our members.”

“At the Cornwell Center, I have the perfect job for me,” says McCreary. “It’s not just a job, it is a place of endless possibilities.” McCreary is refining her work ethic and professional skills and finds joy in her interactions and relationships with Cornwell members, staff, and the children she teaches.

Today, McCreary has only one direction — forward. “My dream is to remain humble and be accepting of God’s blessings. I want to get married and empower my family with love and grace. I am filled with God’s love and want to extend that love intentionally to other people.”
**What’s Past is Past**

An 1893 photo from Wilson County, NC, shows Monticello Boyette Lucas and her seven children, including a 3 year old Robert Theodore Lucas. After her husband’s unexpected death, “Montie” Boyette moved her family to the Central Hotel at the corner of Trade and Tryon, finally settling into a farmhouse on the old Wolfe farm.

This November, 2003 photo shows Robert Theodore’s grandson, Ted Lucas, sharing his passion for genealogy with others seeking their family stories. It was Ted who created our **Family Connections** series, only two months after the Cornwell Center opened its doors – our first such special-interest group. Starting with technology available in the then-new Learning Center, they’ve met monthly since then, with only summer sabbaticals.

Now this retired pediatrician and past-President of the Olde Mecklenburg Genealogical Society retires again. As of November, after thirteen years as our tour guide to the best ancestral resources on the web, Ted moves on to other missions. Thanks, Ted, for helping the Cornwell Center get rooted, and for helping so many of our community find their roots.

**LiveWell Cornwell**

How about that Kombucha? Me, either.

Turns out that Kombucha is a type of fermented, lightly effervescent tea with probiotic benefits. Learn more about this and other fermented probiotic foods, and their digestive benefits, with Marcy Luna.

- **Fermented Probiotics**, w/Marcy Luna
  - Wednesday, DEC. 7, 10a

Two things most of us expect during the holidays are food and stress. Join integrative health practitioner Tracy Larson, MD to learn more about the influence of long-term stress on metabolism, immunity, and chronic health conditions.

- **Small Changes. Big Results**
  - Tuesday, DEC. 13, Noon-1p

December’s photo assignment, **Emotions**, is a natural for the holidays. Try your hand at capturing some. Submit one or two for our December 21 holiday meeting, and join us. Bring a snack to share.

- **Photo Connections**, w/John Bambach
  - Third Wednesdays, 7–9p
  - www.cornwellcenter.com/photo
  - www.facebook.com/PhotoSIG

**Children and Youth**

Space is limited so register your children now for this popular offering:

- **Holiday Sports Camp** (ages 3-5)
  - Monday-Friday, DEC. 19-23
  - Register at the Welcome Desk or call 704-927-0774.

**Extended Child Care** service is available to Cornwell members. You can work out before preschool begins by checking your child into our childcare center. We’ll accompany them to their class.

Our Through-the-Week School (TTWS) After School Program (ASP) offers families an extra two hours of childcare after preschool lets out. A teacher accompanies your child to our childcare center. Call 704-927-0774, or email Sarah at kblake@mpbconline.org, for more info.

**Art**

Resident artist Greg Scott offers a variety of Winter art experiences for teens and adults including Beginning Wheel, Beginner Clay, and Holiday Hand Building. Classes run through the spring.

See the Art page on our website for class descriptions, fees, dates and times.

**Fitness**

Here’s the Holiday swim schedule at Queens University’s Levine Center:

- **Thanksgiving Break**
  - NOV. 22 (Tue.): 11a–1p, 7:15-9p
  - NOV. 23–26 (Wed.-Sat.): CLOSED
  - NOV. 27 (Sun.): 6-8p

- **Winter/Christmas Break**
  - DEC. 17 (Sat.) – JAN. 2 (Mon.): CLOSED
  - JAN. 3 (Tue.) – JAN. 6 (Fri.): 11a-1p
  - JAN. 7 (Sat.): 12-2p
  - JAN. 8 (Sun.): 6-8p

**Et cetera**

**Annual Oatmeal & Staples Food Drive.** Running through Jan. 15, we support this initiative that supports Charlotte’s homeless. You can help by donating these most-needed items including...

- oatmeal (Old Fashioned preferred)
- flour and grits (5 lbs or larger)
- sugar (white or brown, 5 lbs or larger)
...and any type of canned or non-perishable food. Collection bins will be located in the Cornwell Center foyer, and other locations around campus.

If you’d rather, monetary donations buy oatmeal at bulk prices! Go to [www.mpbconline.org](http://www.mpbconline.org) and click on the Oatmeal icon.

**Cornwell Holiday Schedule:**

- **Thanksgiving**
  - NOV. 23 (Wed.): CLOSE at 6p
  - NOV. 24 (Thu.): CLOSED

- **Christmas**
  - DEC. 23 (Fri.): CLOSE at 6p
  - DEC. 24–26 (Sat.–Mon.) CLOSED

- **New Years**
  - DEC. 31 (Sat.): CLOSE at 6p
  - JAN. 1 (Sun.) CLOSED

**New Opening Hours** – The Cornwell Center will open at 5a, beginning JAN. 2.
Ministers and Staff

The Rev. Mr. W. Benjamin Boswell  
Senior Minister

The Rev. Mr. Joseph D. Aldrich  
Associate Minister

Sharon Bremer  
Director of Stewardship

Mariah B. Currin  
Director of New Member Ministry

Allen Davis  
Interim Director of Youth Ministry

Belinda Geuss  
Director of Through-The-Week School

Charlotte C. Judge  
Associate Director of Music

Cher Lindblom  
Director of Outreach

Dr. Matthew Manwarren  
Organist

The Rev. Mr. Barry Z. Metzger  
Church Administrator

Frances L. Morrison  
Minister of Music

The Rev. Ms. Carrie Veal  
Minister of Children

The Rev. Ms. Chrissy Tatum Williamson  
Minister of Faith Formation

Jenny Yopp  
Director of The Cornwell Center

DEADLINE FOR THE JANUARY 2017 ISSUE IS 5:00PM, MONDAY, DECEMBER 12.
Max 450 words, subject to editing for space. Please email all submissions to the MPBC Communications Director, Laura Geer, at lgeer@mpbconline.org.

Carols in the Round
Sunday, December 4
6:30 pm
Myers Park Baptist Church
Heaton Hall
1900 Queens Road
(across from Queens University)

A concert of Christmas anthems sung by the Motet Singers and Christmas carols sung by everyone.
All are cordially invited to attend this free concert of Christmas music.

www.mpbconline.org