The holiday season is upon us. The air is cool and crisp. We start to think about what this season means in terms of gratefulness. What are you grateful for? Family? Friends? Home? Church? Would you do anything in your power to help and support family, friends, and home? How about the Church? Would you like more programs in the areas of Music, Stephen Ministry, Youth, Elementary, and Seniors?

Merriam-Webster defines stewardship as: (1) the office, duties, and obligations of a steward; (2) the conducting, supervising, or managing of something; especially the careful and responsible management of something entrusted to one's care.

We have been entrusted with the care of the future of Myers Park Baptist Church. Our forebears started the Church in 1943 and continued its care over generations. We are volunteer caregivers, lay leaders striving to not only sustain the Church, but to foster a bold future as we move “forever forward.”

As you consider your estimate of giving for the coming year, ask yourself these questions:

- Why do I give? or Why do I not give?
- What are the most important things to me in the Church?
- What would I like to see in the future of the Church?
- What is my personal mission?

Just answering these questions will clarify some things for you. Hopefully, it will bring you an awareness of the importance of pledging and commitment. Remember the four principles of biblical stewardship as you ponder the answers. “Embrace” the principles of ownership, responsibility, accountability, and reward in order to “Empower” our community of faith.

Honor the Lord with your wealth and with the first fruits. Then your barns will be filled with plenty, and your vats will be bursting with wine.

Proverbs 3:9-10
The Season of Advent and Christmas Worship Services

(... continued from page 1)

This year, during the journey of Advent at Myers Park Baptist Church, we will seek to discover what it means to live out the words of the famous hymn *Joy to the World*: “Let every heart prepare him room.” Join us as we work to make room in our hearts, our homes, our Church, and our lives to welcome the God who comes to us as one unknown in the form of the stranger.

Sundays This Season

Lovefeast | Sunday, November 26 | 11:00am
Our Advent journey begins with a Lovefeast, a song service of hymns, the serving of a simple “meal” of a cookie and warm tea, a homily by Rev. Ben Boswell, the Chancel Choir singing the Isaiah 61 scripture text, and sharing the light of beeswax candles.

Advent I | Sunday, December 3 | 9:45am and 11:00am
Imam Ronald Shaheed, Rabbi Asher Knight, and Rev. Ben Boswell participate in an interfaith panel, moderated by Rev. Chrissy Williamson, on the traditions of Welcoming the Stranger in Islam, Judaism, and Christianity.

Imam Ronald Shaheed will preach in worship. Mark and Maggie O’Connor, violin duo, return to offer prelude music beginning at 10:50am. Cellist Alan Black and oboist Eric Myers join the Chancel Choir in their anthem *Long the Days Are Waiting*.

Advent II | Sunday, December 10 | 11:00am
Rev. Ben Boswell preaching. Selections from Handel’s *Messiah*: *Comfort Ye* and *Ev’ry Valley Shall Be Exalted* will be sung by Todd Geer, tenor, and the Chancel Choir sings *And the Glory of the Lord*.

Service of Nine Lessons and Carols | Advent III | Sunday, December 17 | 11:00am
Join us for this well-loved tradition led by all the choirs and lay readers. The entire biblical story of redemption from the Garden of Eden to the manger in Bethlehem is told through scripture and song.

Taizé Prayer Service for the Changing of the Seasons | Sunday, December 17 | 5:00pm | Chapel

Service of Lament and Loss with Communion | Advent IV | Wednesday, December 20 | 6:30pm
A combination of two liturgical traditions, the “Longest Night” service that takes place on the longest night of the year and “Christmas Services for Those Who Grieve.” Come surround your neighbors who are suffering with love as we bear one another’s burdens.

Christmas Eve Family Service | Sunday, December 24 | 11:00am
The Family Service will give children an experience of Christmas through placing figurines in the creche, familiar carols, scripture, Communion, and candle lighting, concluding with the singing of “Silent Night.”

Christmas Eve Candlelight Service | Sunday, December 24 | 6:00pm
An instrumental prelude will begin at 5:30pm with flute, violin, and organ. The service will continue with our favorite Christmas hymns, soloist Charlotte Judge, the Chancel Choir; a homily by Rev. Ben Boswell, and Communion. The service will conclude with the congregation lighting candles while singing “Silent Night.”

Christmas Eve Nativity Tableau | Sunday, December 24 | 7:30-8:15pm
A drop-in meditative time of viewing the Nativity scene, prayer, and Communion in the transept.

Christmas I | Jazz in the Round | Sunday, December 31 | 11:00am | Heaton Hall
Rev. Ben Boswell preaching. Charlotte jazz musicians will bring carols for us to enjoy and sing together.

Advent Spiritual Practice and Book Study:
During the season of Advent, the whole Church is encouraged to participate in a spiritual journey of “Recovering Hospitality as a Christian Tradition.” To do this, join Chrissy and Ben for an 8-week podcast study (beginning December 3) on Christine Pohl’s book, *Making Room*, and follow along in study guides that are available at the Church. Sign up with Caroline Manning (704.334.7232 x115).

Service of Lament and Loss
Wednesday, December 20 | 6:30pm

By Carrie Veal
As a people who are on a journey of faith, we are living and sharing life together. Part of being together means we share our joys and our concerns, bearing one another’s burdens and sorrows. We have all experienced loss -- death of a loved one, loss of a job, end of a relationship. This year we have witnessed mass shootings, natural disasters, and terrorism. These experiences shape us all and can feel so heavy to carry from day to day.

This is the season when any loss can feel heavier and more challenging. While our losses are different, we are all called to walk together.

Last year we offered our first Service of Lament and Loss. Again this December 20, on the longest night of the year, we will gather as a church for our Service of Lament and Loss. Together we will pray, meditate, and offer hands to hold and shoulders to lean on as we walk the journey together.

“I must say this service was the greatest gift of all last Christmas. In the dimly lit sanctuary we each lit a candle- a light in the darkness holding close in our hearts the loved ones we’ve lost, holding close to one another- loving, giving, and celebrating. I’ll be back.”

Nancy Gribble

“The service of loss and lament is so important for me in my grief process after losing Lee. The service gives me time to recognize his death and that it’s ok to still grieve 2 years later. It allows a chance to worship with others who also understand the holidays aren’t always laughter and smiles.”

Mary Ann Ciciarelli

Myers Park Baptist Church
**DEATHS — LOVE AND SYMPATHY TO:**

- Martha Braswell on the death of her husband, and Lisa and Hope Braswell on the death of their father, Paul Braswell, on October 23, 2017 in Charlotte, NC.
- Geoff and Sara Eloge on the death of his father, Skip Eloge, on October 24, 2017 in Savannah, GA.
- Laura and Todd Geer on the death of her uncle, Terry Pickering, on November 1, 2017 in Anderson Island, WA.
- Carrie Veal and Neal Chewning on the death of her great-aunt, Priscilla Jones on November 2, 2017 in Fayetteville, GA.
- Evelyn and Paul Hanneman on the death of her mother, Eileen Uttrup on November 6, 2017 in Raleigh, NC.
- Ted Phillips and Susan Furr on the death of his cousin, David Young, on November 7, 2017 in Daleville, VA.
- Jeanne and Doug Robertson on the death of her mother, Minnie C. Musgrove, on November 10, 2017 in Daleville, AR.
- Candice Rea Whiteside and Carolyn Rodd on the death of Candice’s mother, Gathea R. Price Whiteside, on November 10, 2017 in Kannapolis, NC.

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**Congregational Joys and Concerns (as of November 10, 2017)**

You likely enjoyed some good laughs in her heartfelt call to Stewardship in worship on November 19. And if you've ever been greeted with Judy Bratton's spunky enthusiasm, it's not hard to imagine what that sort of friendliness and warmth might bring at a time of grief, family loss, or the loneliness of isolation.

Judy continues to be a vital force behind the personal outreach efforts of MPBC's Ministry of Congregational Care, drawing on deep roots from her childhood home near Gaffney, SC. She grew up in a Southern Baptist church, participating with her parents from her earliest days in the unwritten responsibilities of providing for those who had a death in their family. “To me, it (Congregational Care) doesn't need a fancy word, it's how I grew up. It was just what you did,” she says. Even into her 90s, Judy's dear mother kept an icebox pie in the freezer, always ready when it was her circle’s turn to care for another. A member since 1984, Judy devoted her time in earnest to MPBC after retiring from Bank of America in 2005. “It's gratifying to know that a visit can make a difference to someone and that our being together made them smile.”

With a geographically widespread Church community that draws from all over Charlotte and beyond, Congregational Care is becoming more intentional and focused. Knowing that the act of giving - to those in need, to your Church family - is an onramp to friendship and fellowship, Congregational Care welcomes cooks and capable hands to build circles of support around our members. By seeing to those in need and tending to each of our members, we all have opportunities to model the boundless hospitality of Jesus, one plate of deviled eggs or one pound cake at a time.

In a perfect world, this article would be accompanied by Judy playing Amazing Grace on her ukulele. Rumor has it she takes requests.

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**Merry Christmas for unto us a child is born**

The Church Office will close at noon, Friday, December 22 and will be closed December 25 and 26 in celebration of Christmas.

The Church Office will close at noon, Friday, December 29 and will be closed Monday, January 1 for New Year's.

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**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 (ABC - WSOC | CBS - WBT | NBC - WCNC) 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 whenever the Charlotte-Mecklenburg School system cancels Wednesday classes.
May God Bless You With Holy Anger

By Tara Agnew Harris and Carol Reid Fricke

If we just talk of thoughts and prayers
And don’t live out a faith that dares,
And don’t take on the ways of death,
Our thoughts and prayers are fleeting breath.

Ben Boswell’s benediction asks God to bless us with restless discomfort, holy anger, the gift of tears, and enough foolishness to believe we really can make a difference. Are you wondering how you can personally make a difference in response to the recent mass shootings? While the Church is not endorsing the following groups, as lay leaders we offer this information for your consideration. We encourage you to do your own investigation, contact your legislators, and use your voice. Here are some places to begin:

- The Baptist Peace Fellowship recommends Faiths United
  http://faithsunited.org/about/
  Faiths United is a diverse coalition of more than 50 denominations and faith-based organizations united by the call of our faiths to confront America’s gun violence epidemic and rally support for policies that reduce death and injury from gunfire.

- Everytown For Gun Safety https://everytown.org
  Everytown is a coalition of Mayors Against Illegal Guns and Moms Demand Action for Gun Sense. More than 3 million mayors, moms, cops, teachers, survivors, gun owners, and everyday Americans have come together to make their own communities safer. And you can even get directly involved in one arm of Everytown, Moms Demand Action, which has a Charlotte chapter.

- Moms Demand Action for Gun Sense
  https://momsdemandaction.org
  Christy Clark, Mack and Deborah Moore Clark’s daughter-in-law, is the North Carolina Chapter Leader for Moms Demand Action for Gun Sense in America. Follow them on Facebook at www.facebook.com/MomsDemandActionNC. They are hosting a Meet and Greet on November 29 at 6:30pm at Birdsong Brewing. You don’t have to be a mom — everyone is invited to attend.

God, may our prayers and dreams and songs
Lead to a faith that takes on wrongs—
That works for peace and justice, too.
Then will our prayers bring joy to you.

~ Carolyn Winfrey Gillette

Strategic Plan | Goal 2 | Strategy 2

Journey Groups

By Carrie Veal

As the story of the Sutherland Springs Church Shooting was unfolding, we learned that domestic violence was a part of the story. The church where the shooting occurred was in a small town, and the congregation is small as well. I immediately began wondering if the victims of the domestic violence had shared with the church family all that they were facing. I wondered if they felt like their community was a place that was safe enough to share what was really going in their lives.

Most of us grew up being taught that you don’t tell all that you know and certain things are just private, family matters. Yet this family matter took a horrific turn that impacted many other families and an entire country. And yes, there are some things that are private, that each family must decide on their own how much they want others to know. But being a Church, being a people who are on a journey of faith together, means sharing together.

In our new Strategic Plan, Goal 2 is about Internal Community. Strategy 2 says we will “Create opportunities for members to gather and share their stories, life-long journeys, offering hope and faithful support through small groups.” The only tactic under this strategy is to create and launch long-term small groups. My goal is that by the fall of 2018 we will have 3-5 of these small groups in place. My dream, our Church’s dream, is that these small groups will be Journey Groups, as you journey with one another through life.

It will be a monthly commitment. It will mean creating a space for openness and honesty. These groups will focus on sharing life together. In the months to come, be prayerfully considering joining a group. There will be much more information coming!

Elevator Repair

By Leigh Anne Hagerman

The time is almost upon us to replace our struggling elevator in the Education Building. As was recently reported, this elevator is unreliable and has become a safety concern. Thanks to a generous donor, our Forever Forward campaign is funding this replacement. The company is set to begin work in mid-January and construction may take up to 8 weeks.

Several adult classes have been displaced to new homes during that time, and have already been contacted. The elevator project may be noisy during weekday working hours, and while we are sorry for the inconvenience the noise and displacement is causing, we are working with the elevator company to minimize the disruption as much as possible. We will keep you updated throughout the project.

For questions on room/class changes, please contact Events Coordinator Rainey Underwood (704.334.7232 x125).
**New Members**

**Add this page to your Church Directory**

On Sunday, October 29, we welcomed a new joining class into the life of our Church. We wanted to share more than just their pictures with you. Please be sure to introduce yourselves to these new members of the MPBC community. To reach any of our new members, please contact the Church Office or access the directory through myMPBC or the ChurchLife app.

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**Pirrie Bingham**

Pirrie and husband Marty have been a part of a number of churches and found Myers Park Baptist to feel the most like home. For them, the most appealing aspect of MP Baptist is the "open to all" philosophy encouraging dialogue, exploration of faith, and social justice.

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**Blake Bowerstock**

Blake grew up Presbyterian but is joining from a United Church of Christ in Chicago. Blake became involved in our Room In The Inn program last winter and realized he had found his faith home.

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**Zach & Sally Deason**

Sally comes from a Unitarian Universalist background. She is most passionate about finding a community that wants to see good acts done for those in need regardless of nationality, skin color or sexual orientation. Zach comes from a Methodist background. He was drawn to the Church for its progressive theology with a classic church feel.

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**Sarah Jensen & Hunter Marshall**

Sarah and Hunter both come from a Methodist background and love that we are open to all. Our progressive theology drew them to us.

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**Becky Lowe**

Becky comes from a Methodist background. When asked what she is excited about, Becky said she could list 100 things but summed it up this way: it’s the like-minded community that is embracing diversity and living out Christianity through service, open-mindedness, and social justice.

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**April McGinnis**

April comes from a Baptist background. She is passionate about helping youth discover who God has created them to be and looks forward to becoming involved in our youth ministry.

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**Andrew & Jenn McGuigan**

Jenn and Andrew are joining along with daughters Sarah and Annabelle. Jenn was raised in non-denominational churches, but we are the first church she has ever officially joined. She is thrilled to hear our interpretations of the Bible. Andrew was baptized and confirmed in the Catholic Church. He is excited to have a place where their children can develop their spiritual path.

(... continued on page 6)
Ashley & Daniel Norton

Ashley comes from a Methodist background, and Daniel from a Baptist one. They visited here and were struck by the openness and hospitality. They are excited about our focus on social justice and want to raise their daughter in a community that reflects Christ’s love to everyone.

Sheryl Owens

Sheryl was raised Lutheran. She decided to become more invested and join the Church following the Deep South Pilgrimage. She is passionate about the Church’s deep commitment to social justice and to leaving the world a better place.

Scott and Pat Smith

Unavailable for Photos

Scott & Pat Smith

Scott grew up in a traditional Southern Baptist church. He left that denomination and has been a part of a non-denominational church until now. Scott is excited to share his gifts for community building and small groups with us. Pat was born and raised in a Baptist family and attended Baptist churches until she and Scott started attending Port City Community Church in Wilmington. She was drawn in through the Cornwell Center and our Worship in the Round services. Pat is looking forward to being part of a community where people use their minds, bodies, and souls for the work of God that is ahead of us. She thinks MPBC is that community.

Cindy & Jeff Parsons

Cindy and Jeff both have a Methodist faith background and are moving from a Methodist church in Charlotte to MPBC. Jeff wants to put his faith into action through social justice initiatives in his local community. He is excited to have the opportunity to teach and facilitate small group discussions. Cindy is excited to be a member of a Church that reflects love to a hurting world.

Winter 2018

Family Dedication

Sunday, February 4 | During 11:00a Worship

If your family would like to participate in this special worship service, please contact Carrie Veal (cveal@myersparkbaptist.org | 704.334.7232 x 118).

Wendy Strickland & James McLachlan

Wendy comes from a Baptist background and James grew up Mormon. They came to MPBC via our Through-The-Week School. James and Wendy are excited to be in a Church that will help them and their children’s spiritual journeys grow.

(W...continued from page 5)
Church Prepares for Its 75th Anniversary Jubilee

By Bob Thomason

CHURCH EVENTS

January 21 | Founders Day - We’ll kick off our Jubilee on Founders’ Sunday with a special worship service. We’ll sing a new hymn commissioned especially for this day, We Are a People on a Journey. After worship, all are invited to a plated lunch in Heaton Hall. We will recognize our special guests who have joined us on this special day. A short program will showcase some of the highlights of our history.

February 23-25 | Intergenerational Retreats have been one of our most popular Church activities over the years. Join families young and old this weekend at the Kanuga mountain retreat near Hendersonville, NC. Our focus will be Sabbath – learning how to set aside time in our busy world for rest and worship.

July 25-28 | Jubilee Revival! - That’s right, our Church is going to partner with Mayfield Memorial Missionary Baptist Church for a four-day revival event. Ben will preach at Mayfield one day and Mayfield minister Dr. Peter Wherry will preach at MPBC. The third day will be guest speakers and music. On the final day, both congregations will join together for a picnic at WR. Davies Park as we deepen our relationship.

October 21 - Our final 75th Anniversary event will be our Jubilee Night Variety Show - a night of music, sing-a-longs, and skits. The extensive talents of our church members and staff will be on display.

To Be Announced - During the year, we will announce a special Jubilee Outreach Project, an Art Project, and an Environmental Project.

CHURCH HISTORY CELEBRATION

January 7, February 4 and February 11 - Take time after worship these Sundays to come downstairs in the Education Building to visit the Church Archives. See the original Church organ and page through scrapbooks of old Church memories. Long-time Church members will be there to answer questions.

Church History Interviews - We have videotaped about 30 Church history interviews with some of our older members as well as Church staff. These videos will be available on our website for everyone to view. We will also include highlights in short presentations throughout the year.

Church Stories - We want everyone to tell their Church stories. They are currently being collected in written form online (see our Church website) and via phone recording (704.334.7232 x175). These will also be available on a dedicated page of our Church website.

History Boards / Timeline - As always, our History-by-Year display will be set up in Heaton Hall. We will also have colorful displays of Church history organized by theme on the bulletin boards in Heaton Hall Foyer.

GUEST PREACHERS & SPEAKERS

January 28 - Our fifth Senior Minister, Rev. Dr. Steve Shoemaker, will be returning to the pulpit. In welcoming Steve back, we will recognize and honor his role in helping us grow and prosper during the tumultuous first decade of the 21st century.

February 4 - Rev. Dr. Amy Butler, Senior Minister of The Riverside Church in the City of New York, will preach. She follows in the footsteps of James A. Forbes, William Sloane Coffin, and Harry Emerson Fosdick - giants in modern church life. Amy is the church’s first female senior minister and since assuming her position in 2014, she has revitalized Riverside.

February 11 - Dr. Peter Wherry, Senior Minister of Mayfield Memorial Missionary Baptist Church, will preach. Dr. Wherry has participated in several events at our Church but this will be his first time in our pulpit.

April 22 | Earth Sunday - Dr. Fred Bahnson will preach. He is the Director of the Food, Health, and Ecological Well-Being Program and Assistant Professor of the Practice of Ecological Well-Being at Wake Forest University School of Divinity. He is a renowned expert on the intersection of ecology, sustainable agriculture, and contemplative spirituality. His book Soil and Sacrament tells the story of the church-supported community garden he co-founded in 2005. During this service, we will recognize and honor our Earthkeepers who have led our Church’s journey towards sustainability for over 15 years.

August 12 and 19 - Rev. Dr. Bill Leonard, Professor of Church History and Baptist Studies at Wake Forest University School of Divinity, is perhaps the most beloved guest minister ever to grace our pulpit. He has been a friend and supporter of MPBC for decades. We are fortunate to have Bill visit with us for not one, but two Sundays in August, including Talkback.

September 9 - Dr. Ched Myers and Elaine Enns will conduct a Forum and lead us in worship on this Start-Up Sunday. Myers and Enns are renowned theologians specializing in peacemaking and restorative justice. They are the coauthors of Ambassadors of Reconciliation which explores the ways in which the New Testament calls us to be peacemakers. Our choir will sing a newly commissioned Jubilee Anthem.

October 12-14 - Our Jubilee Jesus in the 21st Century (J21) speaker will be Rev. Dr. Eboni Marshall Turman. She is a noted African American professor at Yale Divinity School and has written extensively on issues facing African Americans, particularly women.

COMMUNITY EVENTS

March 22 - Our cornerstone Jubilee community event will be an evening with David Brooks, nationally known New York Times columnist and author. He will not only be speaking but will also answer questions and be available for book signings. The event will be held at Owens Auditorium and will be open to the public. Church members will get early access and discounted tickets thanks to a generous donation from a member who admires Brooks’ emphasis on character and his balanced approach to divisive issues.

April 21 - We will partner with Queens University and Judy Schindler for Dream America - Arts and Advocacy Conference on Immigration. We’ll explore immigration issues in workshops and presentations accompanied by poetry readings, storytelling, dance, and visual arts. There will also be music and multi-cultural food trucks.
What Are You Waiting For?

By Chrissy Williamson

After the Awakening to Racial Injustice series and the sermon on November 12th (“What Are You Waiting For?”), many of you have been asking about ways to get involved to create change. Here are some ways that you can join with others in the ongoing work of justice and peace in our world.

**RACIAL JUSTICE**

Mayfield Memorial Missionary Baptist Church and MPBC continue to build our partnership as sister congregations with a shared passion for justice and community across racial lines. We are currently working on organizing multiple events ranging from pastor/choir swaps and revivals to a summit on gun violence as we grow together on this journey of faith. Information about those specific events will be available very soon… stay tuned. In the meantime, if you would like to build relationships with members of Mayfield, consider reaching out to MPBC members who attended the Deep South Pilgrimage and work together to host dinner parties that include members from both congregations. For a list of Deep South Pilgrims, contact Caroline Manning (cmanning@myersparkbaptist.org).

**Incarceration.** As part of our Lenten study of Bryan Stevenson’s best-seller, Just Mercy, many of you have expressed a desire to become involved in some sort of prison or re-entry ministry. One starting place might be to reach out to Janet Miller (janetmiller1960@gmail.com) or Gensie Baker (gensiebaker@gmail.com), two members of MPBC who have been involved in this type of work locally.

**IMMIGRANT JUSTICE**

**A Tu Lado** is an accompaniment initiative that matches immigrant families with compassionate citizens who will help them navigate legal appointments, job searches, and a myriad of other situations that they face in their daily lives. By volunteering with A Tu Lado, you will get to know and be in an ongoing relationship with those who are most impacted by our immigration laws and policies. (“I was a stranger and you welcomed me.” –Mt. 25: 35). Contact Beverly Hester (beverlyrhester@earthlink.net) or Cynthia Aziz (cynthia@azizimmigrationlaw.com) to learn more.

**ACLU Court Observation** is another way that you can advocate for immigrants with your presence. After being trained as a court observer, you will sign up for Master Calendar Hearings and simply observe. ACLU benefits greatly from your reports about what you’ve witnessed and immigrants benefit when judges see that citizens are interested and concerned about how immigrants and their families are treated in our judicial system. Contact Lisa Bambach (lisa.bambach777@gmail.com).

**GUN VIOLENCE**

See article by Tara Agnew Harris and Carol Reid Fricke on page 4.

**EDUCATION**

Get connected at Pinewood Elementary through Freedom School (summers) or through weekly tutoring. Contact Karen Taylor (fitztaylor@aol.com).

**HOUSING**

It is no secret that Charlotte has issues with affordable housing. For this reason, MPBC is partnering with Mayfield Memorial on sustainable and long-term solutions. In the meantime, Room In The Inn season kicks off this month. This is our opportunity to host neighbors experiencing a crisis of homelessness throughout the brutal winter months. Sign-ups for this year’s RITI season opened on November 12, and there are a number of ways for you to join this effort! Contact Koren Cranford (cranford123@gmail.com).

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Awakening to Immigrant Injustice

By Chrissy Williamson

This fall, 65-75 people have gathered each month in Heaton Hall to learn about immigration. We’ve learned from local experts about terms related to immigration and documentation, the history of immigration, and the current state of immigration law. This month we will have two opportunities to more deeply explore our year-long theme of “Loving the Foreigner and Welcoming the Stranger.”

On December 3, we host Rabbi Asher Knight, Imam Ronald Shaheed, and Rev. Ben Boswell for an interfaith panel conversation that will explore the themes of welcome and hospitality in the three Abrahamic faiths. The panel will begin at 9:45am in Heaton Hall and is our final Faith Formation Forum for 2017. Following this event, Imam Ronald Shaheed will preach in our 11 o’clock worship service.

Later that week, on Wednesday, December 6 (6:30–8:00pm), we will be led by Queens University students and Dr. Maggie Commins in round-table, values-based conversations on immigration. The format mimics the deliberative dialogue model designed by the Kettering Foundation. A light supper of soup and bread will be provided. Please register online at www.myersparkbaptist.org or by calling Caroline Manning 704.334.7232 x115.

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Find out more about this exhibit on page 11.
Youth Ministry News

By Lynn Trenning and Allen Davis

Autumn is the season for overnight fun in the youth department. This past October, ten middle schoolers participated in a Friday night Youth Hall Lock-in, and a Saturday of team building at the U.S. National Whitewater Center. The youth discussed the importance of living in the moment and of creating memories among their Church peers that will last a lifetime. They decorated pictures of clocks to symbolize the importance of spending intentional time together. In November, the high school youth retreat took the form of a 12-hour all-nighter. A crew of 15 high schoolers stayed awake together from 6:00pm Friday until 7:00am Saturday. They kicked off the night in an escape room at Kinetic Heights, an indoor ropes course and team building facility. Once they entered the escape room they had an hour to solve puzzles and riddles to earn their release.

Additional nighttime activities included bowling and a scavenger hunt at Walmart. The youth were joined by Children Ministry’s intern Katie Hambrick, who led them in lessons about recognizing and honoring moments in their lives that will define who they will become. The all-nighter ended with breakfast at Waffle House. “This was about creating opportunities for high schoolers to fellowship together and create memories,” says Davis.

The fun continues in January as the youth department will launch the 2018 Discipleship class. Current 8th graders will have the opportunity to learn about their faith, religion, and the Church over the course of 3 months. Discipleship class ends with the youth making a decision on baptism and joining the Church. In December, the 8th graders will reach out to members to serve as mentors through their discipleship journey. Mentors provide crucial guidance along the way for our youth. If you are asked, we sincerely hope you will consider serving.

The annual youth retreat to Kanuga is scheduled for January 12-14. This is an opportunity for all youth grades 6-12 to experience God. “Kanuga is our time to talk about God while singing songs and having fun. I look forward to it every year,” says a member of the youth ministry. This year, we have a special surprise but you have to attend to find out. Registration is available through myMPBC.

Children’s Ministry News

By Carrie Veal

First Fridays Family Dinner

Coming in January, Children’s Ministry families will gather at a local restaurant for dinner. Our first outing will be Friday, January 5 at Moe’s on East Blvd at 5:45pm. Hope to see you there!

Advent Booklets

We will have Advent Booklets for families to use as you journey through Advent together. With a daily reading, reflection, prayer, and activity, families will engage with one another and the daily scripture. Booklets can be picked up in Heaton Hall Foyer and on the elementary hallway.

October Stewardship Report

By Leigh Anne Hagerman

But seek first the Kingdom of God and His righteousness, and all these things will be given to you as well. Therefore, do not worry about tomorrow, for tomorrow will worry about itself. Each day has enough trouble of its own. – Matthew 6:33-34

When we give to God through the Church, we get to wage war on worry by placing our possessions under God’s protection. God is our protector and defender. We find our security in God’s strength. We’ve partnered with the One who is bigger than anything that comes against us.

How was our financial faithfulness for the month of October?

Expenses met revenue, so the deficit did not grow, which is good news. Year to date, we have collected 74% of our budgeted revenue. This time last year, we had collected 75.5%. Pledges and envelopes are coming in a bit slower, so as the year comes to a close, we encourage you to fulfill your pledge for 2017 if you have not done so. We need your help to finish the year strong. On the expense side, we are under budget by 2.8%. What we spend on ministry at MPBC is far more than what can be shown on a budgeted statement. Of the $2,350,227 spent so far this year, 72% comes from the operating budget, with the remainder from endowment and designated funds. We are very blessed to have such a healthy endowment.

Make a World For Christ

By Leigh Anne Hagerman

Everything we do at MPBC is centered around this one important thing. From nurturing our littlest ones to know that God loves them, to helping our youth discover their gifts and navigate a difficult world, to helping our adults deal with the transitions and complexities of life...we are here to make ourselves, our community, and our world better. The financial gifts we offer to God are what make our impact so far-reaching. We need each person’s help in making a world for Christ. How can you help in 2018? If you have not already done so, please let us know by filling out a pledge card. You can do so online as well.
Through-the-Week School is excited about the upcoming holidays.
On Wednesday, December 13, children will enjoy the traditional "Story in the Sanctuary" with Rev. Carrie Veal. On December 14, Associate Director of Music Charlotte Judge will lead preschoolers in caroling in Heaton Hall. Parents are welcome to attend both events.

Community outreach is very important to TTWS and this year, from December 4-15, we will join the Church to help collect oatmeal and canned goods. Other outreach projects for this school year will include decorating Valentine cards in February for Levine Children's Hospital and holding a book drive in the spring to benefit Lakewood Preschool.

Through-the-Week School will be closed for winter break December 18 - January 2. The TTWS staff and all 193 preschoolers wish everyone at MPBC a safe and happy holiday season!
**Group Exercise**

**POP-UP Girls on the Bike** (ages 10-14)
Monday, December 4 and Wednesday, December 13 | 5:00-5:45pm
A new weekly session begins Wednesday, January 3, 2018 (5:00-5:45pm) for this popular new class!

**NEW* Boys in Fitness Boot Camp** (ages 10-14)
Starts January 3, 2018 | Mondays & Wednesdays | 5:00-6:00pm
Register for this multifaceted fitness boot camp in a safe and positive environment for boys ages 10-14.

**The Fitness Experience Team Welcomes Lisa Carpenter!**
Lisa’s path continues to unfold from her work with Cornwell Summer Camps and the Afterschool team. She’s worked with CMS and is Mom to beautiful Chloe! We’re all fortunate that she offers her bright smile and warm personality to members and staff alike.

**Youth & Childcare**

**Parents Night Out Pajama Jam**
Friday, December 15 | 6:00-9:00pm | $10 per child
Registration required
Here’s your opportunity, parents -- a chance to get away for the evening and maybe even get some Christmas shopping done! Children, wear your coolest pajamas and come to the most exciting party in town! Bring your child’s BFF, favorite cousin, and the neighbors. This is a party you don’t want to miss and dinner is included!

**Holiday Camp** (ages 3-5)
December 18-22 | 8:30am-12:30pm
$155 Cornwell Members, $185 Community | Registration required
When school’s out, send your kids to the Cornwell Holiday Camp where they will be safe and engaged in fun, healthy activities. Students remain challenged and active while in a safe environment. Space is limited, so we encourage you to register your student early.

**LIVE WELL (continued)**

**PHOTO Connections**
Wednesday, December 13 | 7:00-9:00pm
www.cornwellcenter.org/photo
The assignment this month is "Just Eyes" and all eyes look forward to seeing your creative ocular inspirations! Email 1-2 photos to jbambach@cornwellcenter.org by noon on December 12. All levels of experience and equipment are invited to join these FREE monthly meetings on the 3rd Wednesdays. We examine the basics of photography – composition, light, color, and subject.

**Two Exhibits for the Holidays**

**The Golden Palette Society**
Through mid-December, enjoy the diverse and varied works from this group of artist friends who study with Bruce Chandler. Their subjects and mediums vary and encouragement is given to paint for one’s self and be unique. Many of our award-winning artists have shown their works throughout NC. If you find that special holiday gift for someone on your list (or yourself!), a portion of all sales goes to the Cornwell Center.

**Families of Abraham**
During the season of Advent, catch *Families of Abraham* on display in the Cornwell Center. This photographic narrative explores the commonalities among Jewish, Christian, and Muslim faiths. Led by project director and curator Eleanor Brawley, a team of eight local photographers followed eleven Jewish, Christian, and Muslim families from the Charlotte area for one year, documenting their faith practices and daily lives. Photos were captured during Holy Days across the three religions, as well as special family moments and milestones. From this large body of work, images were selected to illustrate the many similarities and promote understanding of the differences across these three faiths.

Brawley’s work has earned her and the exhibit much recognition and attention. She has produced a television special on the exhibit, was selected for a panel on *Exhibiting Religion* at the American Association of Museums’ annual meeting in Philadelphia, and was featured on “The NEWSHOUR” arts blog. This traveling group of photographs is on loan from the Levine Museum of the New South to museums and colleges in North Carolina and around the country.

**SPECIAL HOLIDAY HOURS**
December 23 | Close at 6:00pm
December 24-26 | Closed
December 31 | Close at 5:00pm
January 1 | Closed | Happy New Year!

www.cornwellcenter.org
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Advent Lunch and Carol Sing

Sunday, December 10 | Noon | Heaton Hall

Join us for lunch, Christmas songs, and so much fun! This intergenerational, all-Church event is sure to help you get in the Christmas spirit while building community and deepening relationships.

Cost: $5/adult and $3/child

Menu: Chicken and Noodle Casserole, Stewed Apples, Green Beans, Rolls, and Dessert.

Please make your reservation by Wednesday, December 6: online, through myMPBC, or by calling 704.334.7232 x156