By Everett Goodwin

“A trial lawyer, a stand-up comedian and a Baptist minister go into a bar…” Sounds like the beginning of a joke, doesn’t it? In the person of the Reverend Susan Sparks, our guest preacher on July 27, all three describe her accurately. As a provocative and inspirational preacher, her several talents and careers merge into one.

Susan is a Charlotte native and a graduate of Myers Park High School. After ten years as a trial lawyer while moonlighting as a comedian, Susan left her law practice and spent two years on a solo spiritual hegira around the world, including working with Mother Teresa’s mission in Calcutta. Upon her return, she enrolled in Union Theological Seminary in New York City to earn an M. Div. degree. Naturally, she wrote her honors thesis on humor and religion. That’s where we encountered each other: Susan was assigned to me as her mentor for the ABC/USA ordination process and we have remained friends as well as colleagues.

After her ordination, Susan became the Senior Pastor of the historic Madison Avenue Baptist Church in New York City which is in the shadow of the Empire State Building. She is the first woman pastor in its distinguished 165-year ministry. Susan’s leadership there is reflected in MABC’s current bold property development.

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Financial Update

By Richard Harris
Chair, Finance & Budget SLG

The Finance and Budget SLG is very encouraged by your financial support during this church year. At the end of May 2014, year-to-date actual giving was running very close to the year-to-date budgeted amount. The most important financial highlight is that your support of the 5-in-1 Unified Missions Offering eclipsed the annual budgeted amount! It should be noted that the Ministries and Church Staff continue to diligently manage expenses – most are running under budget. These are all excellent examples that show your dedication to our Church and its mission.

As we move to the summer months, please continue your steady giving. The summer months can be a lean time for most houses of worship, MPBC included, as contributions sometimes fall. Let’s stay focused on our goals and help MPBC buck this trend. Not only will this alleviate much stress and hand-wringing over the budget, but it will also allow us to show our Senior Minister candidates that MPBC is financially sound. We can make that happen!

Many thanks for your financial gifts.

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Inside This Issue:

- Interim Senior Minister’s Column
- Community Life
- Faith Formation
- Outreach
- Property & Grounds
- Worship & Music
- Cornwall Center

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Our Guest Preacher
Sunday, July 27:
Rev. Susan Sparks

By Cheri Lindblom

By the time this newsletter reaches you, MPBC will be two weeks into our Freedom School partnership at Pinewood Elementary. But that’s not our only outreach project this summer. We are also excited about our long-standing (5-year) outreach commitment with Family Promise (Charlotte Family Housing). The addition of our Freedom School partnership helps to affirm our commitment to families in our community.

Since that first week in August 2009, Family Promise has evolved from providing transitional housing in the MPBC Youth Hall for homeless families, to housing them in a “permanent” transitional home known as Elizabeth House (located at 715 Hawthorne Lane). MPBC’s commitment to this project has provided both financial resources, (through the July Loose Plate offering) and service by our volunteers.

Our next Family Promise Week of Service will be July 13-20. There are several ways for members of our congregation to serve -- from providing a meal, to spending the evening as a host. Our involvement offers support to families who are transitioning to self-sufficiency.

Below is the schedule and a list of volunteer opportunities along with job descriptions:

Sunday July 13
- Dinner (drop-off late afternoon)

...Continued on page 9
Overcoming Trauma

By Everett Goodwin

One result of a lengthening ministry in interesting cities and contexts has provided the opportunity to connect with some interesting people. Most of them I distinctly remember and many of them remain friends.

One of them is Rev. Susan Sparks who will be our guest preacher on July 27, who I have introduced elsewhere in this newsletter. Another is Bob Levey, a classmate at the University of Chicago. As a journalist, he worked for the Washington Post for over thirty years and for most of those years was a nationally acclaimed columnist writing a daily column titled "Bob Levey’s Washington." I am delighted to be able to introduce Bob to you on September 17-18 when he will speak to a "Wonderful Wednesday" gathering and an additional morning gathering on Thursday.

I have learned from this growing list of friendships. I have rejoiced in their achievements. A common theme often defines what they have accomplished. Many of them have overcome early or middle-life obstacles from which they have moved. Susan Sparks, for example, could share with us her journey from a time of spiritual emptiness to her present ministry. I have been awed by friends who have overcome enormous birth defects, astonishing obstacles, moral or social lapses and circumstantial disasters that threatened to end their careers or life opportunities.

In this time of military conflict in several parts of the world we have become familiar with the term "post-traumatic stress disorder" or "PTSD." It refers to the psychological, social and biological distress that often debilitates people who experience life threatening events. PTSD can result from natural disasters, military combat, terrorist incidents, violent personal or sexual assaults and other disruptive events in life.

PTSD is often characterized by flashbacks and nightmares, sleeping disorders and socially disruptive behavior. Some people with PTSD simply cannot function in community and family life. It is a real and demonstrable problem. Sometimes it results in a life that is best defined as "victimized." But it is amazing that most people who survive extreme traumas do not develop chronic mental health problems, lose their ability to function or find it difficult to continue with their lives.

Researchers are now studying the more than two-thirds of people who don’t develop debilitating PTSD from their suffering. They are increasingly interested in what some call "post-traumatic growth" and are currently reviewing the experiences of those who emerge from severe life crises feeling enhanced rather than diminished. Some report spiritual development, stronger personal relationships, greater personal strength, deeper appreciation of life, and great clarity about priorities.

Dr. Lawrence Calhoun of the University of North Carolina reports "positive change that comes about as a result of a struggle with something very difficult." He suggests that some people bring a fuller sense of security in life from a trauma. They have a better support system, and they are often people who rely more on God than on self.

In several contexts I have had the opportunity to be involved with people in times of severe life crises: a dear friend from half my lifetime ago who overcame extraordinary birth defects to achieve professional excellence; young parents, male and female, who were left to deal with children's lives without a spouse who was suddenly and unexpectedly claimed by death; both males and females who experienced re-assignment of gender identity; partners of victims of AIDS living in hostile social environments; the dashed dreams of retirees whose retirement plans were destroyed by illness or financial reversals; total career disasters as a result of the "Great Recession;" veterans of combat from wars from World War I to the present; career dislocations resulting from unexpected election results, and many more.

Many of these people endured, triumphed, and went on to offer greater service than they previously imagined or planned. They have often inspired me.

I have learned this from them: God created body, mind and spirit to be astonishingly resilient. Combat or crash, divorce, bankruptcy, cancer or a loved one’s death and more -- each has the power to crush us and disorient us forever. But each and all of these things can also dignify and reorient us to the things that matter most. The capacity to overcome is from God. We are much more likely to activate that capacity when we are seeking God rather than fleeing from God in confusion and frustration.

"Be still and know that I am God," the ancient texts report God to say. "I will not leave you comfortless," said Jesus. Tragedy may have no mercy. But grace withholds nothing that we need in bad times.

Guest Preacher
Rev. Susan Sparks

...Continued from page 1

Rev. Sparks has been featured in The Oprah Magazine, the New York Times and on CBS, ABC and CNN. Her book, Laugh Your Way to Grace: Reclaiming the Spiritual Power of Humor, was named one of the best spiritual books of 2010 and has sold 15,000 copies to date. She is working on a second book tentatively titled “Sole Searcher,” a memoir about finding God in cowboy boots – which she almost always wears. She is a motorcycle enthusiast, and even with her schedule, she still does club performances.

Broadway Producer Tom Giles once described Susan as a “cross between Nancy Grace, Joel Osteen and Ellen DeGeneres.”

When Susan told me she would be in Charlotte as the featured speaker at the Ninth Triennial Gathering of the Women of the ELCA (Evangelical Lutheran Church) to address over 2000 women, I immediately asked, “What are you doing on Sunday morning?”

Her sermon is titled “The Mulch Pile” based on Colossians 3:1-14. Mark your calendar and set your clocks. You won’t want to miss Susan in our MPBC pulpit.
Milestones
(as of June 15, 2014)

DEATHS/LOVE AND SYMPATHY TO:
• Christa Overcash and her family on the death of her brother, George Anderson, of Dunnellon, FL, on May 27, 2014.
• Bill Daniel, Jr., on the death of his wife and Jim Rayburn on the death of his sister, Judy Rayburn Daniel, of Charlotte, NC, on June 4, 2014.
• Camille Coers and her family on the death of her mother, and Abbey He and her family on the death of her grandmother, Glenna Smith Florence, of Charlotte, NC, on June 4, 2014.
• Tim Martin and his family on the death of his mother, Sylvia Walker Martin, of Charlotte, NC, on June 7, 2014.

WEDDINGS/CONGRATULATIONS TO:
• Emily Marie Mayer and Scott Russell Childs on their wedding on June 7, 2014.

Senior Minister Search Group Update

By Skip Gribble

Don’t you love to hear the word “delighted?” It’s not used lightly. A proud mother mentions being “delighted” with her sparkly-eyed child who has just learned to read. A grateful dinner guest sends a note saying how “delighted” he was to be in your home—making you feel quite the same way.

Interestingly, this word has surfaced over and over in our recent work together as a Senior Minister Search Group. While our task is an important one, and our road may be a long one, our group continues to be delighted to work together, tending to the holy business of hearing God’s call regarding our next Senior Minister. Lately, when we hear from referral sources, they mention how delighted they are to have the chance to make candidate recommendations, feeling a sense of kindred spirit with our Church.

Psalm 37:4 calls us to delight ourselves in the Lord, and God will give us the desires of our hearts. This summer, we pray that you too will experience a sense of delight wherever you are on the journey—delight in the opportunity to try some new things during our Church’s time of transition; delight in knowing that God’s Spirit is moving each day within this community of faith; or maybe delight in some simple pleasure like taking a long hike, enjoying a cold ice cream on a hot day, or lending a helping hand to a neighbor in need. We ask that you also keep our group and our task in your prayers. Thank you for your continued support.

Endowment Spotlight: The Hunter Sabbatical Fund

By Laura Kratt

As the MPBC congregation changes and evolves, there is an ongoing need to evaluate and often reinvent our programs to keep them relevant and engaging. The operational budget often cannot expand to tackle these special projects so the Endowment plays a vital role in this adaptive process.

About 12 years ago, Sharon Doar was granted the opportunity to explore ways to develop the curriculum for the Elementary Education program. She traveled to Chicago to study with Mickie O’Donnell, a leader in creating a learning model that rotates students through multi-dimensional learning environments. That sabbatical led to MPBC adopting the Workshop Rotation Model used today in God’s Garden. This innovative approach in Christian education allows children (and their teachers) to experience the stories of the Bible through hands-on participation. It provides a path for growth and an exciting way to experience faith.

~ Made possible by The Helena T. and G. Patrick Hunter, Sr. Sabbatical Fund

Summer Patio Breakfast

By Jeanette Cox

Please come and join us for this summer tradition of great food and fellowship on Sunday mornings at 9:15 in Heaton Hall Foyer. The Ministry of Community Life is pleased to announce the hosts for July:

July 7 NO Breakfast
July 13 Explorers Class
July 20 Board of Deacons
July 27 LGBT Fellowship Group

There is a suggested donation of $3 minimum per person for missions. The complete schedule is available at www.mpbconline.org.

July Loose Plate Offering Recipient

By Cheri Lindblom

The Loose Plate recipient for July is Family Promise (Charlotte Family Housing). The mission of Charlotte Family Housing is to empower homeless families to achieve long-term self-sufficiency through shelter, housing, support services and advocacy.

Financial Report
(as of May 31, 2014)

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www.mpbconline.org
Tell us about your background. Charlotte is my home town. My grandparents, Harold and Ina Short, and my Dad, Ralph Short, were charter members of MPBC and my Mom, Lauretta Bombara Short, came to Charlotte to be our Church’s first organist. I have said many times that MPBC is the reason I exist, literally. My brother, Randy Short, and I both feel so blessed to have been born into this wonderful family.

Tell about your family. Richard Pearsall and I were high school sweethearts. We married in 1970. We are so proud of our two sons. Amazingly enough, all four of us were born at Presbyterian Hospital in Charlotte.

Our son Tucker and his wife Jennifer are the proud parents of our grandchildren Tucker and Lucy Mae. Our son Travis and his wife Cara are the proud parents of our grandchil-
dren Mason and Walker. My father, uncle, brother, cousins and I all attended Myers Park Elementary. I also attended AG Middle, Myers Park High and Columbia College.

I know you’ve worked at a variety of jobs over the years. In my professional life I have worn many hats. I began long ago as a retail sales person; then I was an orthodontic assistant; then an assistant for a construction company; then in promotions and sales at Coca-Cola; then in real estate sales; and now as a title curative specialist for a law firm.

Is there anything you’ve learned in life that you’d like to share? One epiphany for me long ago was the realization that being comfortable, though it seems to be what we all strive for, is not necessarily the best thing for any of us. Being uncomfort-
able often heightens my awareness of being alive. My son once reminded me of one of my mottos I shared with him: Do all you think you can and then do just one more. Maybe this should have been, Then let God, through you, do just one more. So if you see me a lot around the Church involved in quite a few activities, this explains why.

What draws you to this Church? What is most significant to me about MPBC is the openness to all, and the opportunity to wrestle with what I believe as I go through the “journey of faith” in a community of ac-
cepting people who I care deeply about, and who I believe care about me as well.

What are your hopes for the future of Myers Park Baptist? My hope for our Church is that we will adapt as needed in a way that enables us to continue to be the beacon we have been for people who have reached a stage of faith where they are seeking caring acceptance of their particular personal journey.

Are there any particular values you think we should keep in mind? Because of my strong family heritage at MPBC, I hope that as we adapt we will hold forth some of the faith values that I believe are the rock upon which this Church was established. One value I remember often, and hope will never be forgotten, is the faith value that we give generously our time and our gifts, both personally and monetarily, with recognition only to God. Originally, there was a guideline that there would be no need for any fund-raising activities at this Church because we would all give gener-
ously and freely without being prodded to do so. Though all our founders were highly successful in their vocations, the ones I re-
member most also held the vision that God was the center of their world and that the recognition of all they had and all they were belongs to God. That’s quite a meaningful God-centered heritage for us to continue.
Now, hear this!

By John Bambach
jbambach@mpbconline.org

It’s called a neck loop and it may be a solution for those of you with hearing aids who are still having trouble understanding speech clearly in our Sanctuary.

Last month we received an email about a long-time member who, in spite of a perfectly fine hearing aid, was having so much trouble with intelligibility during services that he was about to give up attending. He’s not alone with his hearing limitations and there are more of us on the way.

Now, we already have hearing assistance devices available in the Narthex each Sunday. They’re small, portable receivers with ear buds, worn much as you would an iPod. These receivers get their sound from the microphones used in the Sanctuary during services and are a great help in hearing speech while isolating you from ambient noise, even the Sanctuary reverberations. Ask an usher for one if you think you could use the help. In the case of our friend, it was of little help.

A problem for some users is that the ear buds go in the ear where there may already be a hearing aid so, in such cases, you may use one form of help but not both. Also, unlike your hearing aid, the sound you get isn’t tailored to your specific hearing needs. The better approach would be something that would transmit clear audio through your own, personalized hearing aid.

From time to time we get a question about whether our Sanctuary is, or could be, wired for T-coils. Such installations use special wires to “broadcast” sounds directly to your own, T-coil equipped hearing aid. About 70% of hearing aids are so equipped, including virtually all those currently available. It seems an ideal solution.

We looked into it a few years ago and found it to be architecturally and financially prohibitive for us.

Enter the neck loop. It operates on the same principle, broadcasting clear sounds directly to your hearing aid, and it simply plugs into our existing receivers in place of the ear buds. It’s just a loop of thin cable that slips over your head, without messing up your hair or interfering with clothing.

Before you can use it, speak with your audiologist and make sure that:

• you have the T-coil in your device
• there’s a program setting for it, and
• you know how to access that setting.

Then, ask about it next time you’re at services. We’ll be glad to hear from you… and from us.

Call For Proposals

By Carol Reid

The Connections Servant Leadership Group Wants YOU!

WANTED:

• Ideas and Facilitators for 2014-2015 Connections
• Do you have an idea for a Connections group?
• Would you facilitate for us next year?

We are planning now for fall 2014 and winter/spring 2015. Whether you are a previous facilitator or are ready to try it for the first time, we want to add you to our contact list and send you further information. Email: creid1@carolina.rr.com.

TO SUBMIT A PROPOSAL:

• Go to the Connections Logo on our MPBC homepage (www.mpbconline.org)
• Click on FALL 2014 PROPOSALS to submit booklet information about your proposed small group
• Don’t wait to be invited; submit your proposals before August 1

Friends of the Covenant Update

By Sharon Bremer

The Planned Giving SLG would like to thank all the members who responded to our Planned Giving mailing to join MPBC Friends of the Covenant.

We have had, and are still having, a positive response to Friends of the Covenant, which recognizes and honors church members who make a planned gift to show their commitment to ensuring the legacy of Myers Park Baptist Church. As one FOTC member said “This is a wonderful way to continue what our forefathers started and dreamed of when they built Myers Park Baptist Church.”

To date we have 36 members. To them we say "thank you" and look forward to seeing you at the celebratory event in April 2015.

If you are interested in learning more about joining Friends of the Covenant or have questions about Planned Giving, please contact Mack Clark at clark.mack@principal.com.

Family Dedication

Tim and Jessica Martin, bringing Kathryn Amelia Martin on June 15, 2014.
**Men's And Women's Retreats**

By Chrissy Williamson

**Women:** Save the dates, September 26-28 for our Women’s Retreat in Black Mountain, NC. In our time together, we will engage in conversation aimed to connect us more deeply with ourselves, with one another and with God on the spiritual journey. The weekend will include time for group sharing, social gathering, personal reflection, movement, prayer, and worship. Give yourself the gift of a weekend with other women from your community of faith. Join us in September. Registration information coming soon!

**Men:** Save the dates, October 24-26, for our retreat to Blue Ridge Assembly in Black Mountain, NC. Topics will include the idea of covenant in church life, journey of faith, and our own personal life journeys. Save the dates! Set aside time for yourself to connect and deepen your relationship with God and with other MPBC men.

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**A big THANK YOU...**

By Sharon Doar

... for the exquisite Waterford bowl, generous check and the many wonderful letters, notes, drawings from the children and tons of well wishes that I have received from you all at my retirement reception and in the following days. No one could have felt more loved and appreciated than when you expressed your affection and memories to me. I bask in the glory of my time here on staff and in your midst. Gene and I will still be around to bring our little grandson Liam to his first Sunday school experiences as we anticipate his little brother in late fall. For now, we will be off to participate in the marriage of our son, Brett, to Heather Robinson in Morristown, New Jersey on June 28. Who could ask for better?

Blessings,

Sharon

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**Children’s Ministry**

**Family Picnic**

Sunday, July 20, 12:00 – 3:00

By Carrie Veal

Summer is in full swing and what’s more fun than a picnic? Pack a lunch, a chair or two, throw in a blanket and bring the whole family to Freedom Park for a time of community building and connecting with one another.

We will meet at Shelter #6 which is near the amphitheatre and the Cumberland Parking Lot.

While we are together, parents will have the opportunity to share their hopes and dreams for the Children’s Ministry. We will also have some information about what’s coming in the fall. No need to RSVP.

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**God’s Garden**

**God’s Garden Elementary Sunday School Resuming in September**

By Carrie Veal

God’s Garden is entering its eleventh year at Myers Park Baptist Church. What a wonderful experience it has been for our elementary children. I have heard that it’s been a wonderful experience for those adults who have been involved as well.

For many of us it’s hard to think about Sunday School in July. But I am asking you to take a moment and think about it. Think about how you can be involved. Maybe you love to cook or you are very artistic. Maybe you love storytelling or watching movies. We all have a way we can be involved. I hope you will think about your role in God’s Garden for the 2014-2015 church year. It’s going to be wonderful!

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**"I Can Make A Difference . . . And So Can You!"**

**Mini-Vacation Bible School**

August 6-9

By Carrie Veal

This August children ages 3 years – 5th grade will discover and share how they can make a difference in their Church, their neighborhood, and the world. What difference will you make during this VBS week? Volunteers are needed in a variety of ways from being shepherds (take a group of children from one rotation area to another) to teaching a Bible story, to bringing some snacks. Whether you can serve for a day or just an hour, we need you to make a difference in the lives of children. Parents and grandparents have already signed up, put in for vacation time at their jobs, and are dedicating their time for those days in August. We hope you will too.

Go to the Church’s website (www.mpbconline.org) to sign up. For more information please contact Tara Harris (taraagnew@hotmail.com). Together we can all make a difference.
In lieu of a sermon, on Senior Sunday, the members of the class of 2014 elected to let 5 seniors do the talking! The result was a moving time of shared testimonies. Their words were so beautiful, we’ve decided to share them again with you. You will find 3 testimonies printed this month and 2 more in our August Newsletter.

By Abbie Largess

My first memory of Myers Park Baptist Church is not a happy one. I was maybe 7 or 8 years old and my family was “sampling” churches in the community looking for one to settle at. Some friends of ours invited us to come to the Christmas Eve service.

We were sitting in a pew by the far aisle when the choir wrapped its way around the congregation. The singer closest to us had the loudest, most operatic voice I had ever heard. So naturally, I was absolutely terrified. In hindsight, I now realize that she was incredibly talented but in that moment that did not register. I remember walking out of the church telling my mom that we were never going back there again. Clearly, you can’t take anything I say for granted because here I am on Senior Sunday talking about how much I love this Church and what it means to me.

Whenever I am asked what church I belong to, I proudly say Myers Park Baptist. If the inquirer isn’t familiar with our Church’s progressive reputation they usually retort, “You go to a Baptist church?” I’m known as a bit of liberal. It is not often in my life that I am proud of being kicked out of things, but I can’t help but boast that we got kicked out of the Southern Baptist Convention for being too open-minded. An open-mindedness that I know from personal experience, because on the way to Kanuga in 6th grade, Marissa and I sang Hannah Montana at the top of our lungs the entire way there – and no one complained . . . to us at least. And of course over the years, my understanding of tolerance has broadened far beyond people accepting twelve year-olds imitating pop stars off-key.

Many people have a stereotype of Southern Christian. I’m from the South and I believe in the Christian God and Jesus, yet I don’t fit that mold. Our youth group allows everyone and anyone to come and find a safe place – not one where they learn from a set of guidelines and restrictions about the Bible – but one where every individual is able to find and mold their beliefs and spirituality into what suits them. For me, being close to God and finding myself in religion is about fellowship, laughter and loving everyone you meet.

I was recently pondering the concept of where I find peace. Many people would say they find it in religion. I find it in the simple and yet magnificent qualities of the environment, the infinite potential of humanity, and simple human interaction – all of which I have experienced in the embrace of this Church. I then realized that my peace was in fact in religion, just in a different form. I have found comfort in God’s creations during an afternoon hike in the crisp, mountain air at Kanuga. I have witnessed humanity’s potential in the kind gestures of my peers during mission trips and everyday occurrences. And I have had no shortage of human interaction; from laughter to tears – this youth group has experienced them all – quiet moments are hard to come by. God is never closer to me than with this youth group and the experiences it provided. And while it may no longer be a constant in my life, I know that moments similar will, but they may be harder to find. We are lucky enough to have easy access to them in the loving community of Myers Park Baptist Church, and that is something that I will always cherish.

As I graduate and go on to do, so called, bigger and better things, I want to tell you one thing: I love all of you and I am so grateful for all you have done for me over the years. Whether or not we have even interacted, you have all touched my life in some form or another and have consequently shaped me into who I am today. Hopefully, that’s a good thing. Personally think it is.

In my mind, you have taught me to be a loving, and I hope humble, individual who – as our Church Covenant famously says – is open to all, closed to none. Thank you for that.
By Marissa Jennings

As cliché as this may sound, I can’t believe that I am standing here right now in front of y’all and that this day has finally arrived. As a 6th grader sitting in those pews watching the seniors stand in this very spot I couldn’t help but think there was no way I could ever be that big, or that old. And yet here I finally am, surrounded by my second family.

“We walked together at the house of God.” I particularly like this phrase because everything we have done here, we have done together, and we have done it in the name of God. It doesn’t matter if it was Sunday school, big church, acolyting, service trips, or even just beach trips…we walked together at the house of God.

I can honestly say though, most of my favorite moments I have shared with this youth group have been on the trips. Some of them are pretty silly -- like running through screen doors or trying to play basketball with your overalls attached to someone else’s -- but many of them were unique and heartfelt. One such particular memory I can recall is from the Appalachian Service Project we served in a couple of summers ago. Here I was, sitting on a ladder and painting the homeowner, Dean’s, trailer. A popular song came on the radio, and I started to sing along as I worked. Well, Dean came walking over, grabbed a paintbrush, and started singing and painting right alongside me. It may be something simple, but it reminded me that no matter what our backgrounds or our life situation may be, we are all children of God. And on that hot afternoon under the July sun, I felt it and rejoiced in that simple moment.

Now I would not only like to address the congregation as a whole, but more specifically, the younger kids in the youth. This place is a second home. If you are ever hurt ing, need a place to go, or just want to hang out with some friends…this youth has got you covered. I have been through my fair share of hard times, and I honestly would not have been able to make it through without the support system from this youth. Everyone here will go out of their way to keep you included, happy, and you will develop lasting bonds here.

With that said, I want to extend my gratitude to all of the members of this Church. You have watched me progress through the years, picked me up when I fell down, and have always been nothing but incredibly kind and loving towards me. You have helped me grow in my faith and in the ways of God, and I will carry his words and your love with me as I move into this next chapter of my life. I have no idea what the future has in store for me, but I know I will always have this to come back to. Thank you.

By Mary Charles Byers

It’s strange to think that I’m old enough to be up here right now. When I thought about what I wanted to say in this moment, it took some time. I’ve practically been preparing for this since the 6th grade when I witnessed the seniors who were in my position reminisce about their time in the Church. So I figure I can approach this situation in one of two ways -- I can make all of you cry or I can make all of you cry… from laughter. So I think I’ll just start by giving you a little synopsis of the last few years here at the Church (and by few years I mean 18 years). My life at Myers Park Baptist started right about the time that I was started. I was dedicated into the Church as a baby, attended Through-The-Week School, participated in children’s choir and youth choir, was baptized in the 8th grade, went on youth retreats, and was a member of the Ministry of Worship and Music for three years. I truly considered myself a strong, active member of the church up until these last couple of years when school, work, and other distractions created distance between this personal sanctuary and myself -- and let me tell you, distance from the Church is not something that’s easy to get away with. Without fail, the Sunday’s that I did decide to attend, Joe Trenning would always come up to me saying “Well, look who decided to show up this morning.” reminding me that I was being uncool and should probably boost my attendance. Though I can’t say that not being as involved is a big regret of mine, I still feel as though I wouldn’t be the same person without these last 18 years here. Being a part of a community such as this, where I can count on unconditional love and support from friends, adults, and mentors is a rarity and it’s the experiences within this community that I’ll remember more than anything. I’m proud that I’ve grown up in a place that is truly open to all and closed to none. I’ve been taught values that are significant in all aspects of life and through all of this I’ve had these fellow seniors by my side. My life started here in Through-The-Week School when the teacher would put me in charge of my class because I was “just bossy enough,” it kept going when I was in middle school thinking I wanted to go to attend divinity school and cried during my baptism because I had never felt so close to God; and now my life is still going in this moment. I’m a graduating senior who is unsure of my religious values all together and still hasn’t been the captain of the acolytes because I’m afraid I’m not strong enough to hold the banner. My dynamic progression is representative of the progression that I’m sure every other senior can attest to throughout their time here at this Church, and despite the inevitable truth that we are all parting ways, Psalm 5 reassures what my memories of this Sanctuary will be. It is you, all of the seniors, adults, and parents whom I’ve grown up with, my companions, my close friends, with whom I once enjoyed sweet fellowship at the house of God as we walked about among the worshipers. My thanks to Myers Park Baptist will forever remain infinite.
Family Promise
...Continued from page 1

- Overnight host (1)

Monday, July 14
- Overnight host (1)

Tuesday, July 15
- Dinner
- Childcare (2 adults)
- Overnight host (1)

Wednesday, July 16
- Overnight host (1)

Thursday, July 17
- Dinner
- Overnight host (1)

Overnight Host 8:00pm-7:00am: Hosts stay at the house. A private bedroom with separate bathroom will be provided for hosts. I can attest to the fact that this is almost a mini-vacation. The families retire to their rooms by 9:00pm and you are free to relax in a quiet, and comfortable environment. I almost didn’t want to have to wake up and leave in the morning. I enjoyed spending time with the children as they followed their own nighttime routines. It was a gift to host. (Charlotte Family Housing will need to perform background screenings for all overnight hosts.)

Dinner: Provide and serve dinner for approximately four families and hosts. Sharing the meal offers a chance for fellowship. (Donations of healthy snacks, breakfast and lunch items are also welcome.)

Cindy Clemens continues to serve as our faithful leader of Family Promise. Please contact her to volunteer for any of the above service opportunities at ccelemens@charlottenc.gov or 704.622.3175.

We encourage our members not to think of our two summer outreach projects as "either-or," but as "yes-to-both." There is a place for everyone to serve.

For more information about Family Promise, please feel free to visit their website, www.charlottefamilyhousing.org.

5-in-1 Unified Missions Offering Update

By Cheri Lindblom

As of June 15, we have received $28,500 towards our 5-in-1 United Mission Offering. I have been amazed at the support our congregation has shown to this one-time offering which supports our outreach partners.

The following agencies are our 2014 recipients:
- Lakewood Cooperative Preschool
- Crisis Assistance
- Freedom School at Pinewood
- RAIN
- American Baptist Churches and Alliance of Baptists.

Thank you to all who were called to offer bountifully and share abundantly, knowing that you are helping change lives.

D.E.A.R. Lunch Buddy Readers:
(11:30-11:45am, and then stay for lunch)
This is one-to-one reading with our scholars while they "Drop Everything and Read."

Cane Creek Chaperones and Grillers:
Wednesday, July 23
The Field Trip to Cane Creek (located in southern Union County) will be a day of fun and outdoor activities for our scholars. There will be a picnic lunch. Food will be provided for all. We just need a couple folks to grill.

For these, and other opportunities, please visit the Church website (www.mpbconline.org) and click on the "For more on Freedom School" link on the front page. While you are there, sign up to volunteer by clicking on the "Volunteer Sign-Up" link.

MPBC at Charlotte Pride Festival

By Ryan LaPrade

Charlotte Pride event's mission is "Empowering all LGBTQ and allied peoples to stand as unique individuals and together as a community, with the purpose of uniting as a creative, social, economic and influential force."

MPBC will host a vendor booth August 16 and 17 and we are looking for volunteers. If you can commit to 1.5 hours in our booth, please email me at ralaprade@gmail.com. It is nothing overly formal, you just need to have a smile, be welcoming and pass out information about our Church community to those interested. On Sunday, August 17 we will be walking once again in the parade which starts at 1:00pm. Come one, come all, if you would like to participate or if you can help in the booth!
**Technology Update**

By Jane Huddle  
Chair, Information Technology, SLG

Technology improvements have continued through May and June. A display monitor has been mounted on the wall in the Education Building Conference Room and can be used for meeting presentations and other needs. Workstation replacements including an Office upgrade have started and will be completed for Church staff by the end of July. Stop by sometime and see the workstation set-up that both Laura Geer and Amy Jones have now thanks to your generosity. The upgrade to the Church website is nearing completion (Thanks Lou!!) and Church staff members are finalizing the content. Plans are to implement the upgraded website this summer. More information will be shared later on a couple of other upgrades being planned. Thanks also goes to the Ministry of Property and Grounds who has supported the IT SLG for the implementation of these improvements.

**Royal School of Church Music Returns**

By Jonathan Crutchfield

Again this year, the Sanctuary will be filled with the vibrant choral sounds of the voices of children, youth and adults Sunday afternoon, July 20. The Royal School of Church Music, Charlotte Chapter, returns to MPBC for a week-long music training event that culminates in a free Evensong service at 4pm on the 20th of July. You are cordially invited to attend this free service of worship. Produced each year by Organist/Choirmaster Alan Reed of St. John’s Episcopal Church (Charlotte) and his wife, Tracy, this RSCM event draws hundreds of singers from nearby states because of its clinicians and its musical quality.

This year the week will be led by Dr. Bryan Mock, Organist-Director of Music at Christ Church Glendale, near Cincinnati, Ohio, since 1983. There he has developed a comprehensive music ministry that involves many volunteer musicians in four choirs. He has also worked with the Cincinnati Boys’ Choir. In addition to his duties at Christ Church Glendale, he is a Past President of the Association of Anglican Musicians.

Dr. David Arcus will serve as course organizer this year, accompanying the choir and teaching two organ scholars. Until February, 2014, he served as Duke University Chapel Organist and Associate University Organist, where he played for nearly two hundred services a year held in Duke Chapel, and served as accompanist for the Duke Chapel Choir.

**MPBC Arts Festival**

By Jonathan Crutchfield

The Music and Worship Ministry was very pleased to present an arts show in June that highlighted some of our talented congregational members. Calls for works of art of all types brought forth an outpouring of creativity. Original artwork was the main criteria for the show. Paintings employing various media; bead work; creative uses for old business cards; photographs; pottery; painted eggs; a handmade Afghan; painted woods; a Bonsai tree and a metal sculpture were among the art pieces displayed. Other shows of this type may soon follow with the hope that the artwork of our children and youth will be displayed along with other adult artists. The Worship and Music Ministry is grateful for the outpouring of support for this project.
**Art & Design**

We hope you enjoyed both our recent gallery shows from the *Pastels Society* and the *Guild of Charlotte Artists*. With summer in full swing our gaze shifts to Art Camps:
- **Cornwell Studio Clay Play (3-5yrs.)**
  - Session 2: July 7-11, 9a-12:30p
  - Session 3: July 14-18, 9a-12:30p
  - Session 4: July 21-25, 9a-12:30p
- **Cornwell Studio Clay Kids (6-11yrs.)**
  - Session 2: July 28-Aug. 1, 9a-12:30p

For adults with adult schedules, Greg Scott is offering something for both potters and painters needing flexibility in their artistic pursuits: **Independent Study**. A monthly fee of $125 provides four hours of critique and full studio use for 30 days.

**Children and Youth**

Registration for our elementary **After School Program** for the 2014-15 school year has gone so well we’ve started a waitlist! Think of the door being more ajar than closed, with openings now limited. As this is being written Through-The-Week-School (preschool) After School availability is still wide open. Elementary school families will want to check with Lauren Klitzsch for available openings on specific days. She’ll be glad to answer any questions.

**Group Exercise**

Here’s a new offering from Arthur Pulley, former football coach, personal trainer and current group exercise guru. Arthur takes you through an intense strength and cardiovascular workout with this new offering. What’s more, his motivation, encouragement, personality and megawatt smile, make this class **FUN**. You want to work hard for this coach.

- **BOOT CAMP in the GYM**
  - 5:30-6:30p
  - Thu’s

Beginning July 10th, Mike Gentile’s **Tai Chi** will become a specialty offering, open to members and non-members alike with a small fee per class. Passes available at the front desk.

**Learning, Technology, etc.**

Ever wonder how to turn video gaming into serious learning activity that promotes both imagination and logical thinking?

Thanks to this creative, new set of offerings by **TechStars** our Summer Camps this year extend to kids and technology.

First is this two-part, morning camp that lets kids create games with characters and story lines, choose levels of difficulty, and challenge friends. The second part lets them craft animated 3D movies featuring sea and jungle-dwelling characters.

- **Video Game Design, and 3D Glasses for 3D Fun (5-8yrs.)**
  - July 28-Aug. 1, 9a-12p

The afternoon camp adds challenges for older children who’ll build dynamic characters that sing, dance and interact. Programming with the kid-friendly, MIT-created language, **Scratch**, sound effects and music are part of this mix. Online sharing makes the results available to family and friends.

- **Video Game Animation (8-12yrs.)**
  - July 28-Aug. 1, 9a-12p

Our photo group continues throughout summer with updates on our Facebook page: [www.facebook.com/TheCornwellCenter](http://www.facebook.com/TheCornwellCenter)

Come by and check us out.

- **PHOTO Connections**
  - with John Bambach
  - Third Wednesdays, 7-9p

In June, our church recognizes the volunteers who enable so many of the operations we’ve come to depend on. Among those services are the weekly audio support during worship and special events, video webcasting to those who access us on the web, and the CD duplication for those who request recordings.

We tip our hats now in recognition of these dedicated folks who include Eric Roberts, Spencer Rackley, Van Wilson, Scott Terry, Bob Scherman, and Bill Snipes. We look forward to this coming year with newcomers Rich Wheeler. Thanks, folks.
DEADLINE FOR THE AUGUST 2014 ISSUE IS 4:00PM, TUESDAY, JULY 15.
Max 450 words, subject to editing for space. Please email all submissions to the MPBC Communications Director, Laura Geer, at lgeer@mpbconline.org.

Meet our Freedom School Staff

Thank you to all of our set-up volunteers!

Freedom School Partners

The Rev. Dr. Everett C. Goodwin, Interim Senior Minister
The Rev. Mr. Joseph D. Aldrich, Associate Minister
Sharon Bremer, Director of Stewardship
The Rev. Ms. Robin Paterson Coira, Executive Minister
The Rev. Dr. Jonathan E. Crutchfield, Minister of Music
Mariah B. Currin, Director of New Member Ministry
Belinda Geuss, Director of Through-The-Week School
The Rev. Mr. R. Christopher Hughes, Minister of Youth
Cheri Lindblom, Director of Outreach
Dr. Matthew Manwarren, Organist
The Rev. Mr. Barry Z. Metzger, Church Administrator
Frances L. Morrison, Associate Minister of Music
Deborah A. Steiner, Music Associate for Children
The Rev. Ms. Carrie Veal, Children’s Minister
The Rev. Ms. Chrissy Tatum Williamson, Minister of Faith Formation
Jenny Yopp, Director of The Cornwell Center

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Charlotte, NC 28207-2582
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mpbconline.org

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