

The Messenger

MOUNTAIN BROOK PRESBYTERIAN CHURCH

LANT'S LINES

A Message from our Pastor



For God so loved the world that he gave his only Son, so that everyone who believes in him may not perish but may have eternal life. John 3:16 (NRSV)

The Advent season at Mountain Brook Presbyterian Church is marked each year with our own special Hanging of the Greens worship service, which was written for us by Peggy Thompson. The service explains Advent and Christmas symbolism in the church, including bells, colors, candles, evergreens, the Chrismon tree, and others. We light the first of five Advent candles—one for each of the four Sundays of Advent (three purple and one pink) and the fifth, a white one, on Christmas Eve. As is explained in the liturgy of the service, the three purple candles symbolize the royalty of Christ and our penitential response to God's grace. The single pink candle, lit on the third Sunday of Advent, symbolizes joy, as by then we are half-way through the Advent season and are nearing Christmas. The lectionary texts for that Sunday also traditionally include a joyful reading. Of course, the white Christmas Eve candle represents the pure light of love that Jesus brings into the world. On Christmas Eve, the liturgical color changes from the purple of Advent to the white of Christmas.

The Advent wreath and candles are said to have originated with a Lutheran pastor in Germany, who used a wagon wheel with small red candles around the perimeter—one for each day of the season of Advent—and four larger candles for the Sundays in the season. Through the years, the tradition has spread worldwide, with each of the Sunday Advent candles coming to have its own symbolism (although different traditions understand the symbolism in different ways).

MBPC in its liturgy recognizes two traditions at the same time. Our banners identify the four Advent Sundays in the following order: "Watch," "Prepare," "Rejoice," and "Behold." Our written liturgy combines these words with another traditional listing—"Hope," "Peace," "Joy," and "Love." (Note that the third Sunday in each listing matches the "Joy" theme symbolized by the pink candle.)

While we all look forward to the arrival of Christmas, the Advent season has its own mystical joy. I invite you to participate in the spirit of the Advent season, thinking of each week's theme and considering how it might bear upon your own spiritual growth. And please remember next week's (Dec. 8) special celebrations—the children's pageant in worship and the Advent New Year luncheon that follows, this one also specially marking the 50th anniversary of our congregation's worship in the sanctuary.



*Mountain Brook
Presbyterian
Church
50th Anniversary
(1969-2019)*



*Sunday, December 8, 2019
11:00 a.m. until 2:00 p.m.*

Join us for lunch to celebrate MBPC's 50th Anniversary. **RSVP to Melissa Hall
at mhall@mbpcusa.org or 967-5037.**

The schedule of events is as follows:

10:45 Costuming for Children's Program. All May Participate!

11:00 Worship & Children's Program

12:00 50th Anniversary Luncheon 01:00 Youth: Christmas Craft

Workshop Adults: 50th Anniversary Program &
Stained Glass Window Tour

Mountain Brook Presbyterian Church
3405 Brookwood Road
Birmingham, AL 35223
(205) 967-5037 mhall@mbpcusa.org

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PRESBYTERIAN REFLECTION

SESSION SUMMARY

STAFF

PASTOR

REV. LANT B. DAVIS

DIRECTOR OF MUSIC

DEWIN TIBBS

ORGANIST

GARY SMOKE

DIRECTOR OF CHRISTIAN EDUCATION

SPENCER BISSELL

ADMINISTRATIVE ASSISTANT

MELISSA HALL

FINANCIAL ASSISTANT

BERNIE GREGSON

DIRECTOR OF PRESCHOOL

MARY LIZ INGRAM

BOY SCOUT TROOP 320

SCOUTMASTER: FRANK TYNES

CUB SCOUT PACK 320

CUBMASTER: JUSTIN KELLY



Sun	Mon	Tue	Wed	Thu	Fri	Sat
9:30am - Sunday 10:15am - Chancel 11am - Worship- 11:15am - Sunday	8am - Body Works	8am - Body Works 1pm - Worship Staff 6:30pm - Christian	9am - PEO Meeting 5pm - Hand Bells 6pm - Dinner & Table 6:45pm - Adults' 6:45pm - Children's 7:30pm - Chancel Choir	8am - Body Works 10am - Bible Study @	8am - Body Works	
Christmas 9:30am - Sunday 10:15am - Chancel 11am - Worship 11:15am - Sunday 12pm - Advent New 12pm - Finance 5pm - Session Meeting	8am - Body Works 6:30pm - Pack #320	8am - Body Works 1pm - Worship Staff	5pm - Hand Bells 6pm - Dinner & Table 6:45pm - Adults' 6:45pm - Children's 7:30pm - Chancel Choir	8am - Body Works 10am - Bible Study @	8am - Body Works	
9:30am - Sunday 10:15am - Chancel 11am - Worship 11:15am - Sunday	8am - Body Works 7pm - Rehearsal -	8am - Body Works 9:30am - Prayer Team 11am - Worship 1pm - Worship Staff 7pm - Rehearsal -	6pm - Christmas 7pm - Rehearsal -	8am - Body Works 10am - Bible Study @ 7pm - Rehearsal -	8am - Body Works 3pm - Amahl	
9:30am - Sunday 10:15am - Chancel 11am - Worship 11:15am - Sunday		Christmas Eve Church Office Closed 4:15pm - Prelude 5pm - Christmas Eve	Christmas Day Church Office Closed	8am - Body Works 10am - Bible Study @	8am - Body Works	
9:30am - Sunday 10:15am - Chancel 11am - Worship 11:15am - Sunday	8am - Body Works	Church Office Closed New Year's Eve				

MPBC member, **Drew Duncan**, will be singing for Opera Birmingham's ***Sounds of the Season*** concert at Samford's Brock Recital Hall on December 15th. Come out to see Drew perform!



The "First Sunday" Food Drive is still going strong. The items to donate December 1 is an 18 oz jar of peanut butter
Thank you for your continued support!



Join us at MBPC on December 20 for a performance of *Amahl and the Night Vistors*
Directed by Dewin Tibbs
Times are TBD



Christian Education



This time of the year is so exciting and packed with fun events! The first of these is the Christmas Pageant on December the 8th. The kids have been working hard to learn lines but I want to remind everyone that it is open for any child to join in! Even if they decide to join in on the morning of we will gladly put them in the cast of characters helping present the story.

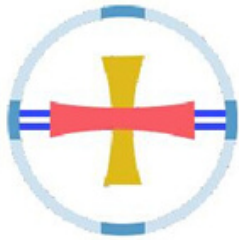
After the pageant, we will be having lunch but also a time for crafts.

Children will have the ability to do hands-on crafts for the holiday season. The next event to be watching out for is on December 18th. This is a Wednesday and instead of the regular Wednesday night program, we will be having a Holiday Season Grill-Out. We will be having hamburgers and hotdogs along with a bonfire outside with smores! Keep a lookout for additional information coming soon for this as the date approaches.

Christian Education hopes that everyone has a merry and joy-filled Christmas/Advent season!



Missions Committee Update



church of the reconciler

a United Methodist congregation with and for the homeless

During the month of October, the Mission and Outreach Committee sponsored a clothing drive to support the mission of Church of the Reconciler. This drive was for new men's underwear and socks.

Church of the Reconciler is a multicultural, multiracial United Methodist congregation, which maintains a unique ministry to the homeless in downtown Birmingham.

www.churchofthereconciler.com

The Mission Committee is pleased to report that our campaign was very successful and thanks the congregation for its great support. Over 100 pairs of new socks and underwear were collected and were gratefully accepted by Church of the Reconciler. In addition, the session and Endowment Fund Management Committee approved a donation in the amount of \$500 as additional support for this hands-on mission project.



Alan Speaker, Mission Committee Chair, presents MBPC's donation to Associate Pastor Jerry Stephens of Church of the Reconciler.

MBPC Preschool



MBPC Preschool

Christmas Program



Thursday, December 12th at
12:00 in the Sanctuary

Christmas Cookie reception to
follow in the Fellowship Hall

Presented by the 2 year old - 5K classes



Holly Jolly Days

A Memorable Holiday Event
at MBPC Preschool

Join us Monday, December 16 & Tuesday, December 17
for some creative and festive Christmas activities!

While your child has a blast creating with our fun teachers and friends,
you can use these extra days after school is out to get some shopping
done, or just take a Christmas breather.



9:00-1:00 for only \$35 per child
Current students, ages 3 months to 5K

Unique Christmas crafts & hand-made gifts,
snowman snacks & hot chocolate,
classic Christmas stories & songs!

Register online through our website: www.mbpccpreschool.com

Registration due by December 10th.

We WILL eat lunch as usual, & please dress your child appropriately—we
might get messy! There is NO Sunshine Bunch or Wee Play.



PRESBYTERY REFLECTION

By Sheppards and Lapsley Moderator, Susan Clayton

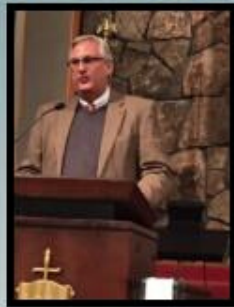
NOVEMBER 2019

HOST: OAKMONT CHAPEL PRESBYTERIAN CHURCH

Highlights of the November Presbytery meeting



The Lord's Supper
Rev. Paul Sherwood and
Rev. Lou Ann Sellers



Greg Goodwiller,
Synod Executive



PSL Musicians Revs
Yarboro and McLeod



Patti Winter,
Nominating Moderator

God Calls Us Together



The Presbytery of Sheppards and Lapsley met for its Stated Meeting on Thursday, November 14, 2019 at Oakmont Chapel Presbyterian Church in Hoover, AL. We received a very warm welcome from Oakmont Chapel's members and staff, who provided us a hospitable place to gather, delicious food for morning snacks and lunch, and many volunteers with ready smiles. Special thanks to their pastor, Rev. Paul Sherwood for welcoming us to their sacred space!

The meeting opened with prayer by the Moderator, The Rev. Susan Clayton.



The presbytery engaged in a very meaningful worship service, which included the Sacrament of the Lord's Supper. As has been our custom in 2019, our Anti-Racism Committee planned and led worship for us. It was our privilege to hear our guest preacher, The Rev. Dr. Bernard LaFayette, a Civil Rights Movement activist, minister, educator and lecturer and an authority on the strategy of non-violent social change. Dr. LaFayette delivered a powerful message to the presbytery using Psalm 23 as his Scripture passage for the day. He entitled his sermon, "The Shadow of Death."



After these small group discussions, the Anti-Racism Committee presented their report, detailing their recent work. The Executive Council of the presbytery recently approved moving the Anti-Racism team from the status of a Task Force to a permanent Committee of the presbytery. The Committee presented one item for action: That the Presbytery accept the invitation from the Presbytery of Saint Andrews in Mississippi to participate in an Anti-Racism partnership between our presbyteries, to begin with a joint meeting and racism journey encounter in Sumner, MS in 2020. The presbyteries will seek funding from Synod to support this gathering. This motion was approved by presbytery.

Presbytery Business



The business meeting reconvened following lunch with the report of the Commission on Ministry given by Rev. Jamie McLeod. We examined, approved and welcomed three new clergy colleagues to the presbytery: Sam Turpen for ordination; Caroline Barnett from Heartland Presbytery as Associate Pastor for First, Auburn pending her examination for ordination by her home presbytery; and Andy Spaulding for ordination and installation as Associate Pastor for First,

Tuscaloosa. It is a joy to welcome new ministers to labor among us!

Ministry Within our Presbytery



The Executive Council report followed, given by Ruling Elder Jane Clayton of the Montevallo church. Council moved the adoption of the 2020 budget of presbytery. This motion was approved. Presbytery Moderator Rev. Susan Clayton then presented a Resolution of Thanks for our retiring General Presbyter, The Rev. Dr. Jay Wilkins, and presented him with his certificate of Honorable Retirement. Jane Clayton reported that there are four applications for the position of

Transitional Presbyter and that interviews will commence soon.

We welcomed our new Synod Executive, The Rev. Greg Goodwiller from Mississippi, who brought greetings from the Synod of Living Waters.

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Our Volunteer Mission Coordinator, Ralls Coston, gave a report of the many good mission activities happening in our churches and in our region of Alabama. The churches of the presbytery are alive and well and providing meaningful service to those in need in their communities by sharing the love of Jesus Christ in word and deed.

We also heard from Belinda Dickinson of the Congo Team about their recent participation in the Congo Mission Network meeting and the good work being done in Congo. We are still raising money for the fund in memory of Jerry Vandegrift and contributions are encouraged and welcomed!



Doug Marshall, President of the Presbyterian Home for Children in Talladega told us of new ministries with adults who are deaf and/or blind who will now enjoy housing and social work services at the Home, in addition to the ongoing work with women and children. We give thanks for the good work of the Presbyterian

Home for Children.

Our General Presbyter, Jay Wilkins, gave his final report as our Presbyter before his retirement at the end of the year. Jay presented a document of "Separation Ethics" since he will remain in the area after his retirement. We are deeply grateful for Jay's five years of service and ministry among us and wish him much joy in his retirement. We are grateful he will remain in our midst.

The Stated Clerk's report contained reports on two Investigative Committees, one of which had concluded their work. In addition, presbytery approved an overture from the Session of Shades Valley Presbyterian Church with concurrence from the Sessions of Grace, Tuscaloosa; First, Birmingham; Southminster, Birmingham; and Immanuel, Montgomery; to develop a policy to mandate regular participation in healthy boundaries training for Ministers of Word and Sacrament, Commissioned Ruling Elders, and Certified Christian Educators engaged in active ministry within the bounds of our presbytery, with the policy to be presented for approval at the February 2020 meeting of Presbytery. The motion was approved.

We also heard Good News from a number of our churches about the ways in which they are living out their call to be faithful disciples to Jesus Christ in their

contexts. We are grateful to God for our common calling and for our connectional church. We are stronger in our witness together. Thanks be to God for all the Spirit is accomplishing in and through our churches!

Grace and Peace,

Susan Clayton, Moderator



Mo-Ranch Youth Conferences



Mo-TLC: Teen Leadership Conference
June 7-12



Youth Celebration
June 21-26



Jr. High Jubilee 1
June 28-July 2



Multicultural Youth Conference
July 2-5



Jr. High Jubilee 2
July 5-9

October Session Summary

Stewardship Committee

The stewardship campaign for the fall has ended and there will now be a follow-up period as we seek to receive all the pledges.

Finance Committee

Appreciation was expressed for the informal audit of the books completed by Frank Minter.

All tests of the electronic payment system have succeeded and procedures for using it will now be presented and explained to the congregation.

Personnel

Alan Speaker, Dick Trueb, and Lant Davis have briefed the Property Committee concerning the details of hiring Tim Keith of Keith Renovations on an exploratory basis. He will survey the property and prioritize our maintenance needs; he will supervise outside contractors for necessary projects; and he will prepare an estimate for repairing the walls in the St. Stephen Building after the remediation of the mold damage.

Education

The committee is working with the Welcome Committee on a Trunk or Treat project to be held in the parking lot on October 30, 2019.

Property

Alpha Tau Omega fraternity at Samford University has requested the use of the sanctuary, narthex, and reception room for their initiation rites on Sunday, November 17, 2019, from 7:00 p.m. until 10:00 p.m. Members have also requested the use of the fellowship hall on Monday, Tuesday, Thursday, and Friday from 5:30 p.m. until 8:00 p.m. from January 21, 2020, until February 5, 2020, for rehearsal for Step Sing at Samford. On motion duly made and passed, the session voted to allow the fraternity the use of areas as requested with the following stipulations: Spencer Bissell, a member of the fraternity, must be present for the initiation; cleanup must be complete; and the fraternity will make a donation of \$200.00 to the church.

Bob Marsten, a member of the choir and regular helper with vacation Bible school, has requested use of the sanctuary for a classical vocal recital on Thursday, May 14, 2020. On motion duly made and passed, the session granted his request.

Mission and Outreach

The committee recommends that the session approve its request to the Endowment Fund Management Committee in the amount of \$500.00 to support the hands-on mission project benefitting the Church of the Reconciler. The previously approved project is the collection of men's socks and underwear during October.

The committee also recommends the session's approval of a project in November to support the Emergency Shelter Gift Bags program of First Light, a shelter for women and children. The hands-on project is the collection of socks and gift bags, as well as a \$500.00 donation from the Endowed Fund Management Committee. The motion passed.

Welcome Committee

The session previously considered amending the Policy on Committees so that responsibility for "outreach" functions would belong to the Welcome Committee rather than the Mission Committee. Both committees have been consulted and have agreed to this change. Therefore, on motion duly made and passed, the session voted to amend the Policy on Committees to show this change.

The committee is also working with the Education Committee to plan activities, program, and publicizing for the fiftieth anniversary celebration of MBPC. The event will take place on Sunday, December 8, 2019, as part of the annual advent luncheon.

Preschool

The fall fundraiser for the preschool on September 26, 2019, was a great success and raised a record amount of \$12,200.00