

# *The Messenger* November 2017

## Mountain Brook Presbyterian Church

### *Lant's Lines*

#### A Message from Our Pastor



*I am the LORD your God, who brought you out of the land of Egypt, out of the house of slavery; you shall have no other gods before me. You shall not make for yourself an idol, whether in the form of anything that is in heaven above, or that is on the earth beneath, or that is in the water under the earth. You shall not bow down to them or worship them; for I the LORD your God am a jealous God, punishing children for the iniquity of parents, to the third and the fourth generation of those who reject me, but showing steadfast love to the thousandth generation of those who love me and keep my commandments. Exodus 20:2-6 (NRSV)*

Recently the Sunday lectionary has been taking us through the Old Testament book of Exodus, including the Ten Commandments, part of which is quoted above. This is the commandment to have no gods but the LORD and to have no idols—even of the LORD. I feel pretty safe in the conclusion that in the present-day United States we needn't worry too much about idols made out of wood or metal or plastic, images of birds or bears or bass. Yet a recent article about idolatry written by New York Times columnist and moderate Republican, David Brooks, rang true to me. Perhaps some of you read it.

The article ran on October 30, 2017, under the headline, "When Politics Becomes Your Idol" (<https://www.nytimes.com/2017/10/30/opinion/when-politics-becomes-your-idol.html>). Brooks wrote, "Today partisanship for many people is not about which party has the better policies, as it was, say, in the days of Eisenhower and Kennedy. It's not even about which party has the better philosophy, as it was in the Reagan era. These days, partisanship is often totalistic. People often use partisan identity to fill the void left when their other attachments wither away—religious, ethnic, communal, and familial."

Brooks reminds us that as Christians we have an identity and a community that transcends politics. As believers we acknowledge that we are living in God's realm. True, because governmental institutions can be used for good or ill, and because we want to influence government toward the good, politics will always be relevant to our faith. Yet, political parties or candidates do not hold our total allegiance, or else they become our idols. For us God must have first place. Because we have a higher allegiance, one of the remarkable things about the church is that persons of different political persuasions can come together and agree on the overarching truths of the Gospel. That's what we do here at MBPC. I'm so glad we are in this church together, with Jesus as our head.

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## Staff

Pastor  
Rev. Lant B. Davis

Director of Music  
Dewin Tibbs

Organist  
Gary Smoke

Administrative Assistant  
Sally Gregson

Financial Assistant  
Bernie Gregson

Director of Preschool  
Mary Liz Ingram

Youth Director  
Emily Frandsen

Boy Scout Troop 320  
Scoutmaster: Frank Tynes

Cub Scout Pack 320  
Cubmaster: Dave Caskey

## Contact Us

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Birmingham, AL 35223  
(205)967-5037

[sgregson@mbpcusa.org](mailto:sgregson@mbpcusa.org)  
[www.mbpcusa.org](http://www.mbpcusa.org)

Remember, we gain an hour  
on November 5.



*Daylight Saving  
Time Ends*

**MBPC Calendar, MBPC Preschool**

**Nov 2017 (Central Time)**

Sun	Mon	Tue	Wed	Thu	Fri	Sat
29	30	31	1	2	3	4
			Speech and Hearing Testing (Optional) PEO in Reception 4:30pm - Programs 5pm - Endowment 6pm - Dinner 7:30pm - Chancel	deposit 8am - Body Works 10am - Bible Study 6pm - Phi Mu	8am - Body Works 9:15am - Preschool	
5	6	7	8	9	10	11
10:15am - Chancel 11am - Worship 4:30pm - Birmingham 6pm - Cub Scouts in	8am - Body Works	8am - Body Works 9:15am - Lectionary 10am - Property 1pm - Worship Staff 6:30pm - Christian	4:30pm - Programs 6pm - Dinner 7:30pm - Chancel	Van reservations - Boy Scouts deposit 8am - Body Works 10am - Bible Study	Veterans Day - 8am - Body Works	
12	13	14	15	16	17	18
Van reservations - 10:15am - Chancel 11am - Worship 12pm - Finance 3:30pm - Pneumatri 4:30pm - Birmingham 5pm - Session	8am - Body Works	8am - Body Works 9:15am - Lectionary 1pm - Worship Staff	4:30pm - Programs 6pm - Dinner 7:30pm - Chancel	deposit 8am - Body Works 10am - Bible Study	8am - Body Works	Possible wedding--
19	20	21	22	23	24	25
Rothwell Boy scout 10:15am - Chancel 11am - Worship 2:30pm - Habitat 4:30pm - Birmingham	8am - Body Works	8am - Body Works 9am - Prayer Team 9:15am - Lectionary 11am - Worship 1pm - Worship Staff	Thanksgiving Holidays - No school 4:30pm - Programs 7:30pm - Chancel	deposit Office Closed 8am - Body Works 10am - Bible Study	Office Closed 8am - Body Works	
26	27	28	29	30	1	2
10:15am - Chancel 11am - Worship 12:30pm - Prepare	8am - Body Works 10am - Chancel	Conferences (3s, 4s, 5K) 8am - Body Works 9:15am - Lectionary 1pm - Worship Staff	Conference Forms 4:30pm - Programs 6pm - Dinner 7:30pm - Chancel	deposit 8am - Body Works 10am - Bible Study		

# *Acolyte Recognition and Commissioning*

Jesus said, "I am the light of the world; whoever follows me will never walk in darkness but will have the light of life." John 8:12

During worship on October 22, Pastor Lant Davis recognized and commissioned all MBPC acolytes.



**Left to Right:** Neal Wellman, Averie Plugge, Miles Plugge, Quinn Porter, Declan Porter, Ralph Cook and Seamus Porter.

Not pictured: Ava Garrison,  
William Kaiser, Rori Nicke,  
Arden Plugge and Zoie Terry

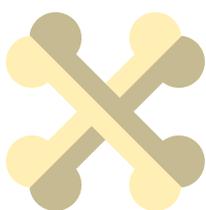


# Wednesday, October 25

Thanks to all who participated in our October 25 Wednesday night supper and programs. The children enjoyed learning about saints and eating yummy treats! A special thanks to our guest speaker,

**Rev. Dr. Cody Watson Jr.**, Associate Director of *Frontier Fellowship*.

For information on the mission of *Frontier Fellowship* and to find out how you can help, visit <https://frontierfellowship.com/>.





# *A Message from the Chancel Guild*



Decorating of the sanctuary and Christmas tree will take place after worship on **November 26**. We want to extend a special invitation to the children of our congregation and preschool to help us decorate.

This is a wonderful opportunity to take pictures of the children, so remember to bring your cameras.

The regular meeting of the Chancel Guild will be **Monday, November 27**, with the installation of the officers for 2018 and the class of 2020.

There will be a reception afterwards and will plan to finish (if necessary) any decorating of the sanctuary for the Hanging of the Green service on **Sunday, December 3**.



## *Poinsettias for the Sanctuary*



As we approach Advent, we hope you will consider providing **poinsettias** for our sanctuary.

These may be given in memory of loved ones or in honor of loved ones. The price will be \$12.00 and will include a red poinsettia, with green sleeves and white bows.

You may call the church office (967-5037) or Sue Wellman (967-3790) for ordering or for more information.



# Operation Christmas Child: Shoebox Gifts

Last year, we had the opportunity to participate in this mission project.

We had such a great response and we are looking forward to participating again this year! Please **take a box from the narthex** and **return it to the church** by November 15.

## HOW TO PACK YOUR SHOEBOX GIFT



1

Get a standard size shoebox to pack for a boy or girl. Need shoeboxes? Preprinted boxes are available online.

4



Most importantly, **pray** for the child who will receive your gift. Include a personal note and photo.

Select a quality **"wow"** toy such as a doll, soccer ball with pump, or stuffed animal.

2



5



A donation of **\$9** is critical to cover shipping and other project costs. Give online through **Follow Your Box** and discover the destination of your shoebox.\*

Fill with other fun toys, hygiene items, and school supplies.

3



6



Take your shoebox gift to a local drop-off location during **National Collection Week, the third week in November**. Visit our website to find one near you.

To Follow Your Box, visit [samaritanspurse.org/occ](http://samaritanspurse.org/occ)

# SHOEBOX GIFT SUGGESTIONS



## "WOW" ITEM

- outfit
- shoes
- musical instrument
- soccer ball with pump
- stuffed animal
- doll

## TOYS

- toy cars
- jump ropes
- yo-yos
- toys that light up and make noise (with extra batteries)

## ACCESSORIES

- socks
- hats
- sunglasses
- hair clips
- jewelry and watches
- flashlights (with extra batteries)

## NON-LIQUID HYGIENE ITEMS

- toothbrushes
- bar soap
- washcloths
- combs

## SCHOOL SUPPLIES

- pens, pencils, and sharpeners
- crayons and markers
- notebooks and paper
- coloring and picture books
- solar calculators

## A PERSONAL NOTE

- a message to the child
- a photo of yourself, your family, or group

*If you include your name and an address, the child may be able to write back.*

## QUALITY CRAFTS

- hair bows
- finger puppets
- friendship bracelets

*Check out the Operation Christmas Child boards on Pinterest for specific suggestions.*



**Do Not Include:** Candy; toothpaste; used or damaged items; war-related items such as toy guns, knives, or military figures; chocolate or food; fruit rolls or other fruit snacks; drink mixes (powdered or liquid); liquids or lotions; medications or vitamins; breakable items such as snow globes or glass containers; aerosol cans.



# *First Light Holiday Program 2017*



**Shopping Day:** For children 12-18 years old  
(toys, games, sporting goods, jewelry, books etc.)

**What you can do:** We encourage groups or individuals to contribute new unwrapped gifts. The staff sorts and arranges all the items according to gender and age group in our Program Room. The social work staff invites shelter guests, or participants in our housing programs, who are unable to provide Christmas to their children or grandchildren to come and select 2 to 3 items per child. Volunteers will be on hand to wrap those gifts - all ready for Christmas morning!

**When?:** All the new and unwrapped gift items should be delivered to the church no later than December 8.

## *A Financial Note*

### **YEAR END CONTRIBUTIONS**

Historically December is the month in which a significant amount of contributions are received. This is easily explained as many donors make large contributions in December to fulfill their pledge or commitment for the year. But with the hectic holiday season, sometimes the year end arrives without their pledge being fulfilled.

The IRS has certain guidelines in accepting year end donations. First, that if the check is mailed, it must be postmarked before the end of the year. Second, that if the check is delivered to the church, it must be received by the 31st of December.

Please help the church keep in good standing with the IRS by observing these guidelines.

### **STOCK DONATIONS/CONTRIBUTION**

The church has a new investment company and a new account number that must be used for all donations of stock. Any church member who wants to donate stock to the church will need the following information:

Broker Dealer: Cetera Investment Services

DTC/ Clearing Number: 0701

Account Name: Mountain Brook Presbyterian Church

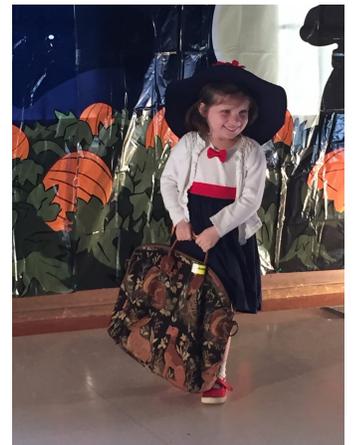
Account Number: 3RN53802

If you wish to donate stock, please let someone on the Finance committee know your intentions so your contribution can be allocated correctly.



# MBPC Preschool Halloween Costume Parade

October 31, 2017



## A Sage-ing® International "Beyond-the-Basics" Event



### "No Regrets - Living Well and Dying Well"

A  
Sage-ing® International "Beyond-the-Basics" Event  
at  
2305 Montevallo Rd., Birmingham AL 35223  
(Shades Valley Presbyterian Church)

Friday November 3, 2017 - 9:00 a.m to 4:00 p.m.

#### Workshop Description:

Fear of dying and avoidance of considering our own death keeps us from living fully. A healthy relationship with death and dying, on the other hand, helps us to live well. In this highly interactive workshop we will explore the last stage of life from a number of perspectives, including

- What we believe and feel about our own death and dying
- How we can talk to family about our wishes for our end of life
- What we will leave as a legacy
- What we can do now to prepare for our inevitable death
- How we can grow spiritually in our later years

Our materials are not specific to any religion but serve to enhance spiritual maturity for persons who embrace any faith or humanistic practice. Our programs are based on values and visions articulated in the best-selling book: [\*From Age-ing to Sage-ing®: A Profound New Vision of Growing Older\*](#) by Rabbi Zalman Schachter-Shalomi, which is recommended (but not required) as advance reading.

Come prepared to share your beliefs, explore new ideas, and expand your intellectual, practical and emotional understanding as well as *your ability to live and die without regrets.*

### Certified Faculty :

**Mary Porter, DMin, MDiv, MSW, MA, CSL**

Certified Sage-ing Leader Mary Porter has been teacher, social worker, pastor/chaplain, and music practitioner. She began her own Sage-ing while working for culture change in long-term care and creating (with ministry partner Lynn Bledsoe) the Birmingham AL nonprofit "[Ruth and Naomi Senior Outreach](#)". Sage-ing helped her know when it was absolutely the time to retire. Now 5 years into retirement, she wears the mantles of grandmother, writer, mentor, and workshop/retreat leader.



### Registration :

The fee of \$75 (\$80 after October 15) includes course materials. Lunch can be provided for an extra \$10, or brown-bagging is an option. A discount fee is available to those who have participated in a previous Sage-ing International event. Because Sage-ing events are small by design, registration is limited, so early registration is advised.

To Register online <http://conta.cc/2yOmVFq>

...or go to:

<http://www.sage-ing.org>

Questions? Contact Mary at:

[2harps1dog@gmail.com](mailto:2harps1dog@gmail.com)

or call her cell at: 205/994-5552.



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*Many other Sage-ing events and webinars are offered online and in numerous locations annually. For information, visit our webpage... <http://sage-ing.org>, and click on the "LEARNING" drop-down menu.*

*Sage-ing® International / PO Box 554, Beech Grove, IN 46107 - USA / <http://sage-ing.org>*

## *Habitat for Humanity House Update*

The Habitat house for the Horn family is getting close to completion. The last day for volunteers is Saturday, Nov.11, 2017. The next two Saturdays, the 4th and 11th, are almost full with singed-up volunteers. Thursdays and Fridays still have spaces for volunteers. We will have a **Dedication Celebration at the house (2761-20th Place, Ensley) on Sunday, Nov.19, at 2:30 pm.** Please come and celebrate what God has done. - Ralls Coston

# News and Updates

## Presbytery of Sheppards and Lapsley



**SAVE THE DATE!**

**Jr. & Sr. High Winter Retreat  
Feb. 2-4, 2018 at Living River  
More info to come later...**

SANCTUARY

SPIRITUALITY

SOCIAL JUSTICE

**DINNER  
AND  
WORSHIP  
TUESDAYS**

**6PM**

**HISTORIC  
HIGHLAND  
PARK**

**OCT. 31 - NOV. 7: INDEPENDENT  
PRESBYTERIAN CHURCH**

**NOV. 14 - DEC. 12: THE GARAGE AT  
HIGHLAND HALL**



THE PRESBYTERY OF SHEPPARDS & LAPSLEY PRESENTS

## **THE MAIN EVENT**

*Leadership Training & Development*



**February 23-24, 2018  
First Presbyterian Church  
900 Greensboro Ave  
Tuscaloosa, AL 35401**

OUR CHURCH'S CONTACT:

<http://pslpcusa.org/main-event>



### **Presbyterian Home for Children Thrift Store Monthly Donation Day at SVPC**

The next collection date is Saturday, November 4. Bring your usable discards, gently used clothing, etc., to the Presbyterian Home for Children's reception center in the rear parking lot, below the playground of Shades Valley Presbyterian Church. Terry Tingle will be serving as host.

Volunteers will be on hand to unload your vehicle and to give you a receipt for your tax-deductible donation. The center will be open from 8 AM - 12 noon.

To volunteer or for more information, email Terry Tingle ([terryjtingle@gmail.com](mailto:terryjtingle@gmail.com)).

# Gardening with MBPC Preschool



On Friday, October 16, we had our first planting day in the garden! Each class planted fall vegetable seeds in their own raised bed – peas, carrots, lettuce, turnips, lots of leafy greens and root veggies. We planted our herb garden so we can explore all the wonderful smells of lavender, mint, rosemary, sage, thyme and more. In our pollinator garden beds, we mounted bird houses, bug hotels and butterfly houses so come spring, we can see all the beautiful creatures that will come to our garden. Now we wait and watch things grow! –

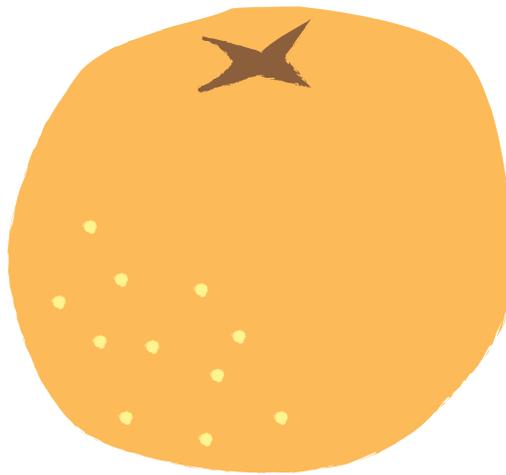
Mary Liz Ingram (Preschool Director)



# Mountain Brook Presbyterian Church Preschool Fresh Alabama Citrus Fundraiser

Chickamauga Farm in Mobile, AL grows all natural, pesticide free citrus fruit. They are pleased to partner with MBPC Preschool for a satsuma fundraiser.

Satsumas are a type of mandarin orange. They are juicy, easy to peel, and sweet. These make great snacks or gifts. The satsumas are sold in 5 pound bags for \$15. A portion of each sale will go to the preschool. They will keep in refrigeration up to 4 weeks. There are approximately 4 satsumas to a pound.



Orders will be taken until November 8. Delivery will be immediately following carpool at 1:00 pm on November 13, 2017.

\*\*\*\*\*

Name \_\_\_\_\_

Number of 5 lb bags \_\_\_\_\_ x \$15 = Total Cost \$ \_\_\_\_\_

Please include cash or check made payable to Kami Ralph.

# Youth News

Friends in Christ, I am excited for our church to host the Birmingham Youth Group in November and December!

We have adult volunteers set up through the month of November to provide and serve dinner to this group of 30.

But there is **still an opportunity to serve the youth** in the month of December. Please let me know if you are interested in loving the youth of our church in this way.

May you be surprised by the blessing that it brings you to see the future of the church in action on a Sunday night. - Emily Frandsen, MBPC Youth Director

**November 1:** 6:00-7:45pm - Wednesday night youth group

**November 5:** 9:30-10:30am - Mid-high & High School Sunday School Class (meets in the office building)

5:00-7:00pm - Birmingham Youth Group (BYG) meets at Mountain Brook Pres!

**November 8:** 6:00-7:45pm - Wednesday night youth group

**November 12:** 9:30-10:30am - Mid-high & High School Sunday School Class  
5:00-7:00pm - BYG @ MBPC

**November 15:** 6:00-7:45pm - Wednesday night youth group (help ready the church for the hanging of the greens!)

**November 19:** BYG: possible event at South Highland Presbyterian Church (details coming soon)

**November 22:** No Wednesday Youth Group

**November 26:** No Mid-High/High School Sunday School and No BYG

**November 29:** 6:00-7:45pm - Wednesday night youth group

**December 3:** 9:30-10:30am - Mid-high & High School Sunday School Class  
5:00-7:00pm - BYG @ MBPC

**December 6:** 6:00-7:45pm - Wednesday night youth group

**December 10:** 9:30-10:30am - Mid-high & High School Sunday School Class  
5:00-7:00pm - BYG @ MBPC

**December 13:** 6:00-7:45pm - Wednesday night youth group

**December 17:** 9:30-10:30am - Mid-high & High School Sunday School Class  
5:00-7:00pm - BYG @ MBPC Christmas Party Pot-Luck & White Elephant Gift Exchange!

**December 20:** 6:00-7:45pm - Wednesday night youth group

## Mountain Brook Presbyterian Church

### Session Summary

October 8, 2017

Church Library

Meeting called to order at 5:00 p.m. by moderator.

Drew Spransy gave the opening devotional and prayer.

Excused absences (Frank Semmes, Bob Dudelston, and Catherine Carter).

Agenda was accepted.

### Clerk's Report

- September minutes were approved as written.
- Responsibilities for November: Bob Dudelston, devotional, and Frank Semmes for Home Communion.
- Correspondence: Email from Hidenori Iwasaki thanking us for our hospitality and inclusion, Shepperds and Lapsley request for volunteers for the formation of education and action regarding anti-racism within our presbytery for 2018. Sally Gregson will place the anti-racism notice in the Messenger.

### Ministry Team Reports

#### Education, Catherine Carter

- Adult Sunday School to be combined at 9:30 a.m. with Lant Davis and Larry Harper. 7 p.m. Adult Class on Wednesday nights will be studying the book *Celebrating the Disciplines*, by Richard Foster.
- Grace Notes Choir to perform "Spirit of the Living God" and "This Is the Day the Lord Has Made" on Sunday, October 15.
- October 25th Wednesday night there will be a Halloween costume party, with several "saints" in costume around the tables that the children can visit and receive treats.
- Cody Watson from Frontier Fellowship to speak on October 25, adult 7 p.m. class.
- Church position for Sundays to watch infants and children from 9:30 to 12:30 is available. See Catherine Carter if you know someone who might be interested in this position.

#### Personnel, Frank Semmes

- Question has arisen of how to calculate hours for the Youth Director when she is working overnight or week-long events. The session took no action on this and asked Personnel to continue reviewing the matter and to make a recommendation.
- The session approved the continued offering to eligible church employees participation in the church's 403(b) retirement savings plan, provided there is no additional cost to the congregation.

#### Property, Scott Miklic

- Session approved the use of our parking lot for IPC's Holiday House Tour on Saturday, December 9, from 10 a.m. to 4 p.m. and Sunday, December 10, from 1 to 5 p.m.
- Most of the lights in the narthex, sanctuary, and hallway to fellowship hall have been replaced. Thanks to Buddy Hayes and Harold Faught.
- Scott researching flood lights and post lights cost.

Finance, Bob Dudelston

- The session received the church's financial report prepared as of September 30, 2017.
- The session approved the description of restricted funds contained in "Restricted/Special Purpose Funds Spreadsheet" prepared by the Finance Committee, with an amendment to Fund #8118 (Wedding Fund) concerning approvals of expenditures from the fund: which, as amended, will read "Chancel Guild for exp. of particular wedding. Residual for Chancel Guild purposes." A copy of that spreadsheet is in the session materials.

Worship, Nancy Harper

- Recommendation of expenditure of up to \$250.00 from the Music Fund (#1-8008) for repair of the handbells and related items was approved.
- Communion was served to the congregation during morning worship on October 1; Home Communion was served to homebound members on October 11, with Norton Montague assisting Lant.
- Dates to remember:

October 22 - Acolyte Recognition

October 22 - Stewardship Sunday (Pledges received)

November 26 - Decorating sanctuary after church

December 3 - First Sunday in Advent, Hanging of the Green

December 10 - Advent Luncheon after worship

December 25 - Christmas Eve Candlelight Service at 5 p.m. Special music at 4:30 p.m.

Communion will be served.

- The beginning of the Sunday worship service will change slightly, starting in November. The purpose is to get to the main part of the service sooner. Announcements will be done after the sermon, and the organ prelude will precede the chiming of the hour.

Missions and Congregational Care, Drew Spransy

- Advent Luncheon after church service on December 10, 2017.

Stewardship, Norton Montague

- Letter to congregation including "narrative budget" pledge card and "giving pyramid" to be sent by October 11, 2017.

Preschool, Frank Semmes

- Approved by session - Satsuma Citrus sale fundraiser. Garden Party Fundraiser a big success with over 200 attendees. Preschool netted approximately \$4,000.00.

PneuMatrix, Davis, Huddleston, Montague, and Ogle

- Gathering ideas and narrowing down options for some new initiatives in outreach.

Moderators Report

- The moderator led a discussion of the proposed new governance documents that were circulated before the September session meeting. It is important to take some action on these soon so that they may be presented to the congregation.