

MAPC

LIFE

THE MAGAZINE OF MADISON AVENUE PRESBYTERIAN CHURCH | SPRING 2018

**Welcome
Jenny
McDevitt**
MAPC's New
Senior Pastor

**Update
from the
Synod
of
Harare**

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Transformation
of the
PTGMF**

**Devotions for
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from
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**New Year,
New Methodology:
How to Help Children
Contribute to a
Changing World**



FROM THE PASTOR



Dear Friends,

In writing to the church at Corinth, Paul describes the relation he and his successor had to the church. "What then is Apollos? What is Paul? Servants through whom you came to believe, as the Lord assigned to each. I planted. Apollos watered, but God gave the growth. [We had] a common purpose...For we are God's servants, working together; you are God's field, God's building." (*1 Corinthians 3:5-9*) Paul tells the fractious Corinthians this, admittedly, to lessen the conflicts in that church that were a result of people lining up on sides. But his point goes a lot farther than just that context. All pastors have a common purpose – the growth of the church that God, and God only, gives.

You and I have reached the goal we set out to achieve two and a half years ago. You are about to welcome a new pastor, and I am leaving. If you bear in mind Paul's claim, there is no irony in that statement. I am delighted that Jenny will begin her ministry in the season of Easter, the time that we celebrate the new life that God has begun in us. I hope I have done the watering that was to be done so that we could all come to this day. I hope, many years from now, Jenny will say something like this about her own ministry.

This is also a new beginning for me, as I retire. My last sermon will be on Easter. That seems appropriate. It is not the end of a career, but starting the things that I presently need to do to grow in grace. (A friend commented that his spiritual life improved immensely once he retired from active church service!) So, at this intersection of conclusions and beginnings, I would like to give some advice about going forward, and do some looking backwards.

Looking forward: I have served many churches. In some of them, the job was healing wounds left after a failed pastorate. Failed pastorates happen for many reasons. I don't think that you have to worry in the least about the worst ones. But, sometimes, it happens in happy churches that a new pastor does not last long and becomes an "unintentional interim." I believe this happens for a very common reason: the new pastor doesn't feel welcomed. How that plays out varies. Sometimes it is that folks really are cold and unreceptive. But it is usually more subtle. Sometimes, while the new pastor was selected because of her ideas, skills, etc., those things were never allowed to come into play. Frustration follows. The community is set, glad to have a new pastor come and fill the old one's empty shoes. But it won't make new room, adjusting itself to that person. In some ways, a church that had problems is easier. It knows it needs help and is willing to listen. New life needs new ideas; everybody realizes that. Too often, though, not everybody wants new life. They like the old one. But it is new life that is being offered, and, frankly, within the American church context and especially within a context such as that of New York City, new life is really needed. You aren't going to grow just by trying to recoup the people who have left. So, welcome the one who can bring new life to you. It will be a mark of how well you can welcome new members and grow.

That doesn't mean you should overthrow the old. You need to be rooted. You need, without being stubbornly reactionary, to tell your new pastor about the roots by which you draw sustenance. Together you can learn.

Now, to look backward. One of the great advantages of being an interim pastor is that you get a lot of different experience, and I have had it between here and Washington. More than places, it is the people. I am extremely grateful for the people I have worked with. I am grateful for all the elders I have known who are dedicated church people. These are the people who have, in the interim period, while a lot of folk are hiding in the weeds, led stewardship campaigns, answered every call to serve, served on numerous search committees, been encouraging, and provided genuine spiritual leadership. Without their examples, and their manifest witness, it would be very hard to think I was doing any watering at all. I am also grateful for the music directors I have known. I have had the opportunity to work with some of the best – Martin Tel at Princeton Seminary, Kevin Walters at Rye, Andrew Henderson here at MAPC, Mary Huff in directing the NYCCC. It may only be ministers who know everything these people do, and it isn't just music. They are colleagues in the best sense as one works with them in preparing liturgies for worship. These are not mere performers, they work to lift up our voices to God's glory, and they need to be thanked for that. Then, there are the associate pastors. They are often the institutional memory; they provide continuity, especially in pastoral care. They do so, even as they, too, wonder what the future will bring. Beverly has been a wonderful colleague and an important daily conversational partner. The business managers are much like that, too. A lot of the stability of a church that an incoming pastor needs comes from the decisions of such people. You have been blessed to have had Richard Frey for all the years you have. I am grateful for our educators, for Laura and Christina. And I am grateful for all the rest of the staff. They, too, wonder what is coming but make things go smoothly so that nobody else is anxious. Thank you, Lissette, Carmen, Arnold, Wendy, Servando, Guillermo, and Jim, and all the building staff.

And now, "May the grace of the Lord Jesus Christ, the love of God, and the communion and fellowship of the Holy Spirit be with you all."

Peace,

MAPC

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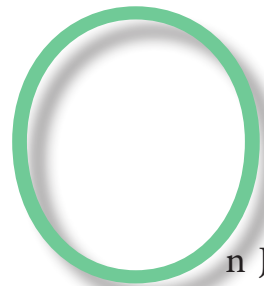
UPDATE

from the
PNC



Welcome Jenny McDevitt!

MAPC's New Senior Pastor and Head of Staff



In January 21st, the congregation of Madison Avenue Presbyterian Church voted affirmatively on the Pastoral Nominating Committee's (PNC) recommendation to call The Rev. Jenny McDevitt as the next Senior Pastor and Head of Staff. Below is a condensed version of the PNC's report to the congregation, given by Edward Kleinert, co-chair, and David Carleton, Elder and member of the PNC.

The MAPC Pastor Nominating Committee was elected by the congregation in May of 2016 and began their work in June. They met weekly (sometimes more often) over the next eighteen months. After preparing the MAPC Ministry Information Form (MIF), which describes our church and the position, the formal search process began. The PNC reached out to a broad range of candidates over most of the country, receiving referrals from candidates themselves, other church and seminary leaders, and members and friends of MAPC.

The committee reviewed a total of 225 candidates, including people of diverse race, ethnicity, age, gender, and orientation. After months of reading Personal Information Forms (PIFs), curriculum vitae, cover letters, and letters of recommendation; gathering information about candidates' current congregations and roles; and listening to approximately 1,800 sermons (on-line and in person), the PNC narrowed the field to seventeen candidates, held deeper conversations with twelve, and further advanced five candidates.

The process of discernment involved many conversations and meetings with candidates. Through prayer, and guided by the Spirit, the committee found itself converging on the belief that God was calling Jennifer McDevitt as our Senior Pastor.



The PNC's first contact with Jenny was last August when four of the committee members did an initial phone interview. That phone call went so well that Julian Schroeder, Nickie Christin and David Carleton flew to Kansas City the following Sunday to hear Jenny preach at Village Presbyterian Church in Prairie Village, KS, a 5,000-member church where Jenny was Pastor of Pastoral Care.

Julian arrived at the first service a half-hour early and watched Jenny start at the back of the large sanctuary and move slowly up to the front, talking to early arrivals and calling everyone by name, greeting at least 50 people before the service even began. Nickie and David joined Julian for the second service and heard Jenny preach a sermon that "hit all the right notes," as David said—full of Biblical references, addressing current events, with great storytelling and a deftly-applied sense of humor. "I was an engaged listener, all the while thinking that this sermon would play well in New York." After receiving her PIF, they were as impressed with her writing as with her preaching.

At such a large church, Associate Pastors take on a lot of administrative responsibilities. Jenny supervised her pastoral care colleagues and coordinated a volunteer base of 350 members. She also led over 400 members of Presbyterian Women in Bible study, writing the curriculum and training the group leaders. In the MAPC Mission Review conducted after Fred Anderson retired, many of our members talked about a desire to grow spiritually. The PNC feels strongly that Jenny can both lead and challenge us to deepen our faith.

Jenny came to New York in September to meet the entire PNC and key MAPC staff and to worship with us incognito, then we split into teams and called her references. Village Presbyterian's former Director of Music worked with Associate Pastors and Pastoral Care Pastors very closely, as they performed over 90 memorial services a year! He has known MAPC well for over 30 years, spoke highly of Fred Anderson and John Weaver and told us Jenny would be a good fit here. He commented, "Jenny knows how to listen, negotiate, arbitrate, and deal with thorny staff issues. She has head of staff skills that go back to a maturity that knows how to listen instead of talk."

The Sunday before Thanksgiving, the entire PNC heard her preach in a neutral pulpit here in New York City. David writes, "The next evening we met for a period of prayer and discernment. We listened to each other and then prayed for God to guide us. We asked ourselves, could we envision Jenny standing in this pulpit, forging another link in a chain of great preachers, leading us wherever God would have her lead us? We answered unanimously 'Yes!'"

We eagerly anticipate Jenny's arrival. Her first Sunday as Senior Pastor of MAPC will be April 8. The Sunday after Easter is traditionally known as "low Sunday" in the church—but we expect it will be a high point in the life of MAPC as we welcome Jenny and look with hope to the future of MAPC's ministry.

The Transformation of the Phillips Talbot Global Ministry Fellowship

By Eric O. Springsted



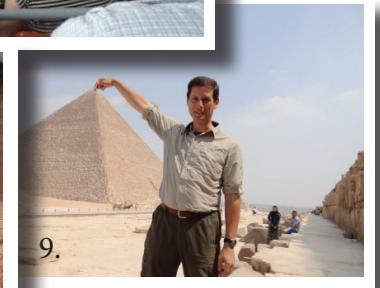
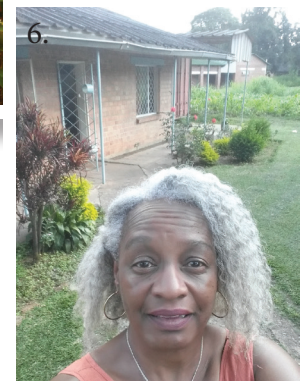
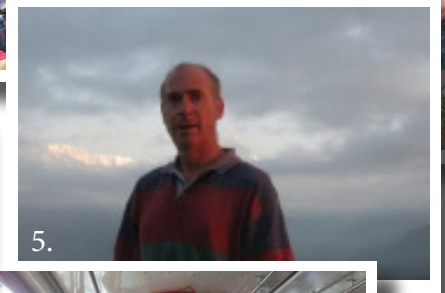
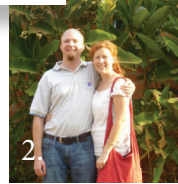
Phillips Talbot

Madison Avenue Presbyterian Church has had a long history of educating young men and women for ministry in the church. Many, many of them have served as seminary interns over the years, including many who went on to prominent careers in the church. A dozen years ago, due to an endowment that came out of the 921 Fund, a project was launched to ensure that MAPC would continue to provide this service to the church. In the hands of Fred Anderson and J.C. Austin, this took shape as the Phillips Talbot Global Ministry Fellowship.

The PTGMF program, as it has been known, sought promising recent seminary graduates who were committed to parish ministry. The successful fellow was ordained and served for a summer as a staff member here in New York, while he or she trained for service in Africa with Theological Education by Extension in Zambia. In September the fellow went to Zambia to teach with TEEZ, and remained there for a year. The fellow then began a three-month travel portion in the global south before returning to MAPC, where he or she again served on the staff until June of the next year, a time for reflection and to search for a pastorate back in the states. In some cases, they stayed longer to help with church programs, or even as an interim associate pastor.

The program has been a successful one, and has given eleven women and men profound experience in the global south that we hope will bring new perspective to their ministries in the US. However, after considerable prayer and thought, the program will undergo a change. We are immensely proud of all those who have served as fellows. Recent years, though, have seen a lack of applicants. Since 2014 there has been only a single applicant each year, and in 2016 there was no fellow at all, although the church financed a pastor from our partners in Zimbabwe to serve with TEEZ. Some reasons suggest themselves as to why this is the case: seminary graduates may have a lot of educational debt, and it is possible that the growth of semester-abroad programs in colleges and seminaries have satisfied the urge to travel. The two year time commitment in Africa is not for everybody. But, whatever the reason, this has made it difficult to sustain the program, especially as we have had at the same time to contemplate structural changes in the church's staffing. In conversations among Eric Springsted, Fred Anderson, the original donor of the program, and session members who were having to think about the shape and costs of our staffing in the church, it was decided that it was time to go in a new direction with the program.

Beginning this June, the PTGMF program will become the Pastoral Resident Program. It will maintain the original deep intent of the endowment, namely, to train recent seminary graduates for parish ministry. Passed by the session in November before we knew who our new pastor would be, we are blessed that the program will be under the guidance of the Rev. Jenny McDevitt. Jenny is excited by what the program will bring. She herself served in such a program in Ann Arbor, funded by the Lilly Foundation, and found it an immensely helpful beginning to parish ministry. She hopes that the MAPC program will do for others what that program did for her.



As Jenny has shaped it and describes it, the program will have three emphases: pastoral, congregational, and reflective. The successful candidate will be ordained to this call as a member of the pastoral staff of MAPC and will serve for three years. He or she will have responsibilities for Mission and Outreach ministries, including the Overnight Shelter Program, and will be a part of our ongoing partnership with the Synod of Harare in Zimbabwe. In addition, the Resident will give particular attention to attracting, welcoming, and creating community for visitors and new members. Other duties will be tailored to his or her abilities and interests. In addition, as Jenny describes it, the second emphasis is designed to help new clergy discover how people think and feel about faith and church, and how they strive to put their beliefs and values to work in their lives outside of Sunday morning. Finally, in addition, the Pastoral Resident will be asked to spend time reflecting on what ministry means and how one might best do it. This will be in guided supervision sessions with the Pastor.

Part of the restructuring of the PTGMF in this way also involves eliminating the second associate pastor position, which the new Pastoral Resident will, in effect, be replacing.

Session has formed a search committee that is reviewing applications which have been solicited from all PCUSA seminaries, as well all other major seminaries where aspiring Presbyterian pastors might be found: Union, Yale, Emory, Chicago, Vanderbilt, Fuller and others. The successful resident will begin in the early summer and continue for a period of three years.

Paula Cooper, our current PTGM Fellow, will continue in Zambia until September when she begins her travel portion of her fellowship. She will be back at MAPC in the beginning of December and be here until next June. Make sure to follow her blog.

This transformation brings exciting new possibilities for the MAPC community and provides a new way for it to serve the larger church. But it is also with sadness that we make the change as we think about all the GMFers who have served here and in Zambia. They have been an important part of the life of this church. We believe that the experience has made them better pastors in the places they are now serving.

1) Tyler Orem, 2) Brent & Erin Raska, 3) Andrew & Claire Ruth, 4) Carmen Goetschius, 5) Bob Lauer, 6) Paula Cooper, 7) Molly & Ryan Dowell Baum, 8) Meredith Loftis, 9) Andy Smothers, 10) Rebecca Jones

CHRISTIAN EDUCATION

Winter Education Highlights: “God with Us!”

The Annual Christmas Pageant

Church School and Kids Club participants spent the month of December working with stories from the Gospels of Luke and Matthew as they prepared for the annual Christmas pageant that took place on December 17, 2017. They studied the story and its context as they learned the scenes written by the Christian Education Committee

On top of this being a formative educational time for our children, it provided opportunities for the youngest of our Kids Club and Church School participants to get to know our Middle School youth who served as assistants to the classes. We hope that you enjoyed seeing this year's presentation of “God with Us.”



Upcoming Spring Christian Education Events

Adult Education, Sundays 10:10 am

“Reformed and Ever-Reforming: What Does It Mean to be Presbyterian?”

This past fall we traveled through time as we discovered nuances of the Reformation. Commemorating the past 500 years, reflecting on the present, and dreaming of the future offered a new approach to our Adult Education program.

This spring we are continuing our journey through time as we take a closer look at our particular place in history and society. The Presbyterian Church (USA) often gets charged with the inability to change. Many are familiar with the popular saying “the frozen chosen.” In fact, the history of our denomination is rich in diversity and full of change as it adapts to time and place. We hope that you have enjoyed this educational experience thus far, and will continue to join us on Sunday mornings during the 10 am hour.

After we discover the rich tradition and history of the PC(USA), we will reflect on what it means to be a part of this denomination in our unique context as Madison Avenue Presbyterian Church. This will be an especially fitting way to welcome Jenny McDevitt into our midst as we learn about MAPC's history, worship, and call to social justice.



A Look Into What is Coming Summer 2018

Iowa Mission Trip, July 12-16, Open to all High School Students

Seeking Community, Sharing God's Love

We are expanding our youth mission trip to include four churches! Madison Avenue Presbyterian Church, First Presbyterian Church in Jamaica, Spring Lake Presbyterian Church, and Lake Park Presbyterian Church will gather this summer for a time of fellowship and service to communities on the Iowa/South Dakota Border. Our time together will focus on building relationships with one another as we seek to share God's love with those we serve. We hope that you can join us. For more information please reach out to Christina Cosby by email cac@mapc.com or by phone 212-288-8920 x8480.

Christian Education Spring Calendar

Adult Education

Women's Bible Study: Second and fourth Mondays of the month year-round at 7 pm. All are invited to bring your dinner for a time of fellowship beforehand at 6:30 pm.

Reading Through the Bible: Meets every Wednesday at 12:30 pm in the Philips Lounge to read through scripture in community.

Lenten Study: Wednesday evenings during Lent at 7 pm; feel free to come early to share in fellowship. February 21, February 28, March 7, March 14, March 21, March 28

20's/30's Events

20's and 30's Bible Study: Second and Fourth Thursdays of the month at 5:30 pm year-round. All are invited as we read scripture, share a meal, and enjoy a time of fellowship.

Youth Ministry

Youth Worship: every Sunday at 9 am and 11:15 am in the Philips Lounge. This is an interactive worship service for 4th through 7th graders that takes place during the academic year.

Youth Hour: every Sunday at 10:10 am in the Youth Lounge.

Confirmation Classes: most Sundays 1-2 pm in the Youth Lounge

T(w)een Club: Meets every Wednesday 4-6 pm in the Church House. During our time together we connect our lives of faith to our world as we look at scripture through the lens of popular culture. Beyond our study of the Bible, we join together as we sing in choir, have fellowship, and enjoy a meal. You are welcome to join us any Wednesday through May.

Teen Brunch: March 18 and April 29

Pizza and Game Night: March 9, May 18, and June 22

Youth Sunday: both services on May 20

Summer Mission Trip to Iowa: July 12-16



Children's Ministry

Children's Worship: This is a year-round interactive worship opportunity for children in preschool through 3rd grade!

Church School: Takes place during the school year on Sunday mornings at 10:10 am on the 5th floor.

Kids Club: This is an after-school program on Wednesdays 4-6 pm for K-8th graders that focuses on building Christian fellowship, developing an understanding of Biblical stories, and singing praises to God in choir. Families are welcome to join any time during the school year!

Pre-School Ministry

Wee Kids: This is a time of learning a Bible story through play for the youngest members of our congregation. Families are welcome to join this ministry of MAPC anytime during the school year. It takes place Wednesdays from 4:30-6 pm.



Farewell Rev. Andrew Smothers

The Rev. Andy Smothers, who became our Interim Associate Pastor after his two years as the Phillips Talbot Global Ministry Fellow, has accepted a call with the Reformed Church in America to serve as Associate Pastor for the English Language Congregation of the National Evangelical Church in the Kingdom of Bahrain. Andy's last Sunday at MAPC was December 31st, and we held a farewell reception for him the following Sunday. We are grateful that Andy was available and willing to take on the Associate Pastor duties when Don Wahlig left. We are especially grateful for his leadership with MAPC's overnight shelter and other outreach ministries. We wish him Godspeed as he embarks upon this exciting ministry in a part of the world most of us know very little about!



DEVOTIONS FOR HOLY WEEK

From 12 to 3 pm on Good Friday, MAPC has a three-hour worship service, divided into 6 half-hour segments, where we read, preach and hear music based on the entire Passion narrative of one of the gospels—starting with the Garden of Gethsemane and finishing with Jesus’ burial. It is a three-hour pilgrimage through the Passion. I encourage you to incorporate all or part of this service into your Holy Week observations. You will find it moving and meaningful.

At this year’s service we will be reading Matthew’s account of the Passion. In keeping with that, the devotions that follow, one for each day from Palm Sunday through Easter, are also from Matthew, moving from Jesus’ triumphal entry into Jerusalem, through some of the events of that last week of his earthly life, his death, and resurrection.

It is a challenge to set aside a few minutes daily for a devotional practice. If you have not found a way to do that yet, I encourage you to carve 10 to 15 minutes out of each day during Holy Week. It will deepen and enrich this journey to the cross and the joy of Easter morning.

Palm Sunday, March 25

Read Matthew 21:1-11

Jesus is hailed as the Son of David, the Messiah, as he enters Jerusalem on a donkey. God’s people have been longing for a savior—but from what do they want to be saved? Their cry of acclamation, “Hosanna!” means “Save us!” They want a Messiah who will free them from Roman rule and restore Israel to its former glory in the days of David. That isn’t what Jesus came to do. That’s not the kind of savior he is. Think about how those jubilant shouts are going to change over the next few days, when they realize Jesus isn’t the kind of savior they wanted. Matthew tells us that though the crowds paraded Jesus into the city with triumphant shouts, “the whole city was in turmoil, asking, ‘Who is this?’” Perhaps that was the more appropriate response, since the crowds don’t seem to understand who Jesus really is.

Reflect: What kind of savior are you longing for? From what do you need to be saved? Jesus didn’t come to be a worldly king or leader, but to make us whole and one with God. Sit in silence for a few moments, acknowledging before God (and to yourself) the ways in which you are broken and need to be made whole.

Monday, March 26

Read Matthew 21:12-17

This is one of my favorite stories about Jesus. Oh, how I wish Jesus would come back and turn over some tables of those who take advantage of and oppress God’s people! But I better be careful what I wish for—

because I might find portions of my own very privileged life being overturned as well. I’m struck by the contrasts in this passage. Jesus goes from driving out the money changers and dove sellers to healing the blind and lame who flock to him in the temple, to being challenged yet again by the religious leaders who are upset about the attention he is getting and the fact that people are hailing him as the Messiah. At the end of this busy day that began with his entry into the city, he goes out of the city to Bethany, perhaps to the home of his friends, Mary, Martha and Lazarus, to spend what will be one of his last quiet nights.

Reflect: Those with relative power in this passage, the money-changers, merchants and religious leaders are all threatened by Jesus. Those who were hurting and on the margins of society came to him to be healed and continued to hail him as the Son of David. Where would you find yourself among these people gathered in the temple compound? Would Jesus be challenging you? Or would you be coming to him for healing? Take a few moments to identify those areas of your life that Jesus might overturn, and those areas he would heal.

Sit in silence and bring your reflections to God.

Tuesday, March 27

Read Matthew 25:31-46

This is the last of Jesus’ parables of the coming of the Son of Man in this chapter. This has always been one of my favorite passages. It makes it so clear that the way we are judged in the end is by how we have treated other people. Not whether our faith

was strong enough or we believed all the right things, but how we treated “the least of these.” Those who are being saved (and those who aren’t) don’t even know why they are saved, or lost. “When did we do all these things for you?” they ask. Or, “When did we not take care of you?” When they served the sick, hungry, stranger, or prisoner, they were serving Jesus. Conversely, when they ignored them, they were failing to serve Jesus. It’s that simple.

Reflect: Is it really that simple? Where would you place yourself? Of course, we all like to think we are among the sheep. But if we are honest with ourselves, there are probably many times we have neglected “the least of these.” Spend a few minutes thinking about it. Ask God to guide you in turning your life more fully into one that serves “the least of these.”

Wednesday, March 28

Read Matthew 26:1-16

Jesus affirms to his disciples that his time on earth is drawing to an end. In two days he will be handed over to be crucified. The religious leaders gather to conspire about how they can make that happen. In the midst the plot to arrest Jesus, we find him back in Bethany, at Simon the leper’s house. Stop and think about how remarkable that small detail is! He is in the home of a leper, perhaps one he had healed, which enabled Simon to host Jesus and the disciples. While there, a woman anoints Jesus by pouring a jar of very expensive ointment over his head. What a waste! That’s what the disciples think. The money that oil would bring would feed a lot of

poor people. But this act of love is a foretelling of what is to come. The disciples don't understand yet what is going to happen very soon, even though Jesus has told them. "She is preparing me for burial," Jesus says, "and she will be remembered for it." Then Judas goes to the religious leaders and offers to be their agent of betrayal.

Reflect: The disciples are not shown in a good light here. They are either obtuse or have turned against Jesus altogether, as Judas does. We see them in all their flawed humanity. Whereas the lone woman in this passage understands what is happening. She pours out her heart in pouring that costly oil over Jesus' head. How do you respond to the gift Jesus gave us in offering his life? What could you do that would reflect your gratitude? In silence, commit your response to God.

Thursday, March 29

Read Matthew 26:17-30

There is such intimacy and deep sadness to this story of Jesus' last supper with his disciples. Perhaps at a distance of 2000 years, and with a story that is so familiar, we don't always pay attention to that. Jesus is with his closest companions, sharing a meal that is one of their most important religious observances, telling them that one of them is about to betray him, then, through the bread and the wine, sharing with them that he is giving his very body and blood for them. They can't possibly understand just what he meant, but the gravity and grief must have been palpable. Yet, in the midst of the heaviness, there is a promise, "I will never again drink of this fruit of the vine until that day when I drink it new with you in my Father's kingdom." He will never share a meal on earth with them again, but they will drink wine together when all things are made new in the kingdom of God. This is an end, but not THE end. And with that, they sing a hymn, and go out.

Reflect: Take a few moments to imagine yourself in that room at that table. Use your senses: What do you see? Hear? Smell? Taste? Touch? Put yourself amongst the disciples. As one of Jesus' closest companions, what would you say or ask? Spend a few minutes in silence, listening for Jesus' response.

Good Friday, March 30

Read Matthew 26:31-27:56

This is a long reading—the entire Passion narrative. Try to give yourself the time to read it. If you can, come to part or all of the Good Friday service from 12 to 3, to hear this narrative read and preached on. As you read it, pay attention to what you may have never noticed or heard before. What part or parts of this narrative particularly jump out at you today? Re-read the section that most touches you. What might God be saying to you through the words or verses or scene that grab your attention? Spend time in silence, simply sitting with the story, being conscious of God's presence, and sensing anew the depth of God's love for us and the lengths to which God went to give us life and make us one with God.

Saturday, March 31

Read Matthew 26: 57-62

Joseph of Arimathea gets Pilate's permission to bury Jesus' body immediately, before the Sabbath begins, in accordance with Jewish custom. We don't know much about Joseph, but all four gospels tell us he is the one who buried Jesus. Joseph isn't the only one there; the women who faithfully followed Jesus are there, too. They watched him die, and now they watch as Joseph buries him. Nothing more can be done on the Sabbath. They must wait. The religious leaders are nervous, though, and they do take action on the Sabbath. They ask Pilate for a guard to ensure that no one steals Jesus' body away, so his followers cannot claim he has risen. Pilate has washed his hands of the matter, and says, "You have your own guards, go and make it as secure as you can." While Jerusalem takes a Sabbath rest, the guards of the chief priests and Pharisees seal the stone over the tomb.

Reflect: This Saturday between the crucifixion and the resurrection is a day in limbo. It is a day of waiting, and a day of preparing for what is to come on Sunday. Give yourself some time to simply wait today, to mull over the events of Jesus' last week and passion. Spend some time, like the women, just sitting opposite the tomb. What happened in that tomb on the Sabbath remains a

mystery to us, but it was not Jesus' final resting place. It received his body, but it did not retain it, it was a place of death and a place of rebirth, an in-between place, just as this is an in-between day. Whatever preparations you have to make for Sunday, try to keep this still place in your heart, or come back to it, knowing that there is something mysterious and wondrous that is happening in that place of death.

Sunday, April 1

Read Matthew 28:1-10

The women return to the tomb at dawn on the morning after the Sabbath, perhaps with the intention to properly anoint Jesus' body for burial. When they arrive, the stillness of dawn is shattered by a great earthquake and an angel that appears and looks like lightning. The guards either faint or are petrified by fear. The angel says what all angels say when they appear to humans, "Do not be afraid," and gives them the news that Jesus has been raised from the dead and is not there. On their way to tell the disciples, Jesus himself appears to them, they fall at his feet, and he echoes the angel's instructions, "Don't be afraid; go tell my brothers I'll meet them in Galilee."

Reflect: The impossible has happened. The women's and the disciples' lives will never be the same. And neither will ours. The resurrection is like an earthquake, a seismic shift, that shakes the very foundation of our being. We are no longer prisoners to death. No matter how dark the world seems, no matter how we struggle, life and love triumph, now and for eternity. Nothing, not even death, can vanquish God. If you can find a few moments of silence in this day of celebration, sit with the knowledge, the assurance, that this day brings: love, light and life win. Christ is risen! He is risen indeed.

by Beverly Bartlett

UPDATE

From
Paula Cooper

Phillips Talbot Global Ministry Fellow,
Serving with Theological Education by Extension
in Zambia (TEEZ)

Editor's Note: Paula continues to assist in preparing for and conducting trainings of lay pastors and seminarians with TEEZ. Here is an experience she wrote about on her blog and in her theological reflection paper submitted in December, which describes a particularly profound experience of ministry. Be sure to visit Paula's blog regularly! You can find it here: <http://www.mapc.com/outreach/blogs-from-africa/>



As I prepared for church on Sunday morning, October 22nd, I was miserable with the heat but was determined not to miss Ba Stephen Chileshe's farewell celebration at the United Church of Zambia Luangwa Congregation. As a seminarian, he has served the past year as an intern at Luangwa.

Ba Stephen and I shared a taxi, and when we arrived at the church, we were guided by a woman in a red blouse to the back of the church and to our seats in the chancel area. The women and men who wear the red blouses or red suit jackets are members of the United Church of Zambia's Women's and Men's Christian Fellowships (WCF and MCF). They are responsible for the social services of the church and the surrounding community.

I was amazed at the amount of people I saw - at least 1000 people in that sanctuary. It was packed, and more people trickled in. Rev. Changwe invited me to assist him in giving the elderly members - I prefer "seasoned seniors" - mealie meal, which is used to make a food staple in most countries in Africa. In Zambia, it is nshima. I accepted; I was honored to be asked, because it allowed me to participate in the worship service.

The praise choir was incredible—they sang to instrumental accompaniment, while the traditional and red-blouse choirs sang *a cappella*. What beautiful, harmonizing voices. Most of the songs were sung in their language, Bemba; yet, I felt as if the music, the lyrics, and the harmony had "opened the flood gates of heaven" for me. The songs and some of the affections of the people had ushered me into the Holy of Holies, to feel as if I was sitting in the Presence of the Almighty Himself.

The WCF had prepared the mealie meal in 10 kilogram bags which sat under or near the communion table. Rev. Changwe and I came down from the chancel area to stand in front of the communion table to hand them out. A young woman from the congregation came and stood behind the communion table to call the names of those who were to receive it.

They came forward. They were gray-haired, mostly petite, and some were frail and thin. They reached for those bags as if their lives depended upon them. I was moved with compassion to the point of tears welling up and flowing down my cheeks. The tears were a reaction to being a part of a worship service that was actually "feeding the least of these." As I was handed a bag to pass on to a seasoned senior, I touched or hugged him or her, saying, "Jesus loves you..."; "He gives this just for you..."; "This is a blessing from God...!!"; or, "God bless you!"

One woman came forward walking with a cane. As she approached us, she dropped her cane and began to dance saying, "I can still praise Him!" Oh, what a delight! We laughed! I cried! I remember thinking to myself, "Now this is what the church is supposed to be all about, taking care of 'the least of these.'" To actually witness the church, during a worship service, provide food to the seasoned seniors, the needy, was an illuminating moment. Jesus says we will be judged according to our deeds and responses to God's people who are truly in need - whether Christians or non-Christians. "When the Son of Man comes in his glory, and all the angels with him, then he will sit on the throne



of his glory. All the nations will be gathered before him, and he will separate people one from another as a shepherd separates the sheep from the goats, and he will put the sheep at his right hand, the goats at the left.” (Mt 25:31-46.) When Jesus returns, we will all be gathered unto him. How will we be separated?

By handing out the mealie meal, we were feeding those who were food insecure – the hungry, “the least of these.” The church had noticed that they were probably hungry or not able to provide for themselves, and responded to a need. Perhaps, during a pastoral visit the Fellowships’ leaders detected a problem or listened to the members as they shared their challenges; perhaps, they reported their findings or learnings to the church leadership. For me, to witness this act of benevolence during a worship service was evidence of what the church could be about. We should not only be providing the Word of God, powerful prayers, and melodious music to the people of God; but we should also provide them with the essentials that they need – that which produces fruit, positive outcomes. It is not enough for the people to be fed the Word. We need to fill their bellies, provide provisions, advocate to reduce unemployment, and fight against poor housing and unaffordable health care.

Jesus is trying to teach us what the Kingdom of Heaven wants of its followers. How do we deliver that message so that our members will witness the Kingdom of Heaven today, right here on earth, now? “Then the King will say to those at His Right Hand, ‘Come, you that are blessed by my Father, inherit the kingdom prepared for you from the foundation of the world; for I was hungry and you gave me food, I was thirsty and you gave me something to drink, I was a stranger and you welcomed me, I was naked and you gave me clothing, I was sick and you took care of me, I was in prison and you visited me.’ ” Will the church be on the right- or the left-hand side of Jesus, the Christ?

SYNOD OF HARARE

by Libias Boloma, Synod Executive

Church of Central Africa Presbyterian (CCAP) Synod of Harare thanks God for the new year, and we are so hopeful that it will be a better year than the previous one.



Purchasing a Synod truck: On 16 January 2018, with help from MAPC, the Synod of Harare purchased a very good and sturdy truck Isuzu KB 300, for church use. This came at a very appropriate time when the Synod was almost immobile with a worn-out Synod van, which was becoming an immense liability due to continuous breakdowns. We are very grateful for the financial assistance we received from our partners, Madison Avenue Presbyterian Church, to purchase this vehicle. It is very useful and makes it easy to do some church work. The Synod Office, being the Church's central nervous system, has the responsibility to oversee all its twenty-six congregations that are scattered across the country. The truck can also be used at Rock Haven to carry chicken feed and transport eggs to the market.



New Leadership Dispensation: The change of leadership in Zimbabwe happened peacefully, and all political parties got involved in the march which led to the resignation of the former president. All Zimbabweans are eager to see a better life and good service from the relevant authorities. The mending of broken relationships with the global community is anticipated to revive the economy, as investors are keen to once again do business in Zimbabwe. The banking sector, health care delivery and agriculture were the most affected areas, and were crippled to unimaginable levels.

CCAP Synod of Harare's Bi-annual Conference: May 2 - 6, 2018 we will have our Synod Conference at Rock Haven Center. At this conference, new officers, including a new Synod Executive, will be elected into office.

Retirement of the Rev Joseph Juma: The Rev. Juma officially retired on December 31, 2017 and will be relocating to Lilongwe in Malawi. The Synod of Harare is very grateful for his services. He served the church for 37 years.

The Egg Production Project: The egg project is still seeing positive results since its commencement on April 8, 2017. It is almost 10 months now since this project was established, with the help of MAPC. We continue to gain more knowledge and experience with this project, and it is being pegged as a viable business, which can be done at a larger scale to maximize profits.

Training Pastors locally: The CCAP Synod of Harare will begin to locally train its pastors this year through the establishment of a Theological College at Rock Haven. Plans are underway to open the Rock Haven Theological College (RHTC) in July 2018, which will be offering a Diploma in Theology. This shall begin with the enrollment of fifteen candidates into ministry. Some of those who will train as pastors are the evangelists who are already serving in the church. The college shall also be adding other disciplines under vocational skills training, such as tailoring, carpentry, bricklaying, metal fabrication, hotel and catering, plumbing, journalism and electronics.

Establishment of TEEZ Desk: With the training that Rev. Esau Mbondo got at Mindolo Ecumenical Centre in Zambia, he is very ready and capable of establishing this new desk for CCAP Synod of Harare. Many thanks to MAPC for affording us this opportunity, and we are hopeful that you will continue to support this new initiative.

Congregational Nurture

FRIDAY NIGHT FIRESIDE JAZZ



As you see from the photos, the Fire-side Jazz event on January 26 was once again a big hit!

Upcoming Congregational Nurture Events

Spiritual Growth and Faith Sharing Group—1st and 3rd Thursdays at 1 pm in the Library of James Lenox House. This is an open group, comprised of MAPC members and James Lenox House residents, that meets twice a month for reflection on a Biblical passage and prayer. Spring dates: April 5 and 19, May 3 and 17, June 7 and 21.

Church Family Nights—April 13 and June 1, beginning at 6 pm in the Parish Hall. We'll have dinner, a craft activity, a movie and time in the gym.

MAPC Book Club—Third Tuesday of the month, at 4 pm in the Hood Library. All are welcome! Spring dates: April 17, May 15, and June 19.

Senior Fellowship Lunch—Occasional Sundays, 1 pm in the Parish Hall. MAPC seniors, come enjoy a time of fellowship and a light lunch on April 15 and June 3.

Women's Fellowship Evening—April 16, 6:30 pm on the 5th floor, or, if it is balmy, the Roof Garden. This is a time of fellowship for women of all ages, and our new Senior Pastor, Jenny McDevitt will be us.

Men's Fellowship Evening, Cinco de Mayo—MAPC men, come enjoy Jim's Mexican cooking on the Roof Garden, weather permitting, starting at 7 pm.

Moms' Night Out—Monday, May 14th, at 7 pm. Extend your Mother's Day celebration with an evening out with other MAPC moms at an Upper East Side restaurant.

Families with Young Children—Come enjoy a family play date on the Roof Garden! We'll have coffee, tea, juice, bagels, and lots of fun. Our spring dates are April 21, May 19, and June 16 (with water play!!).

MAPC DAY SCHOOL



New Year, New Methodology: How to help children contribute to a changing world



Laura Graham
MAPC Day School Director

There's a lot of recent research which shows how essential it is to develop a different set of skills in children than we were led to as students. We need to teach skills that transcend boundaries we currently have, because the world is changing so rapidly. At MAPCDS, we understand that education must meet the needs of current students rather than rest comfortably on a now outdated model that served prior generations. Children don't need to be filled with facts as if they came into the world as empty vessels. Information is easily accessible now, so it's more important that we teach children how to process, evaluate and use that information to contribute to the world in meaningful ways.

Children are born with endless curiosity and need environments and people in their lives that allow them to discover meaning through everything they do naturally. In early childhood, and at our school in particular, that means learning through self-motivated play. Through play, we teach children to question, to pursue answers, and to think independently and critically. Our practice of crafting curriculum around our children's unique interests prompts their active engagement in this process. We take a holistic approach to education by recognizing and celebrating each child's unique spirit and developmental needs and following their natural inclinations. This is a time of rapid growth and discovery, both in the world and in very young children who are learning about themselves and how they fit into a greater scheme.

Our guiding methodology and philosophy supports this essential work as our children develop a range of interpersonal skills alongside age-appropriate cognitive skills. By fostering creativity and collaboration, we prepare children for a lifelong journey of connection and learning. We give unhurried time for children to practice the art of relating and working with others in pursuit of joyful discovery. This strong, unique foundation promises our children will continue to thrive when their journey takes them beyond our walls.



James Moran

MAPC Chef

James Moran has been the Chef at MAPC for over 4 years now. He is responsible for catering most of our biggest events as well as Thursday's Open Table night, Wednesday's Kids Club Dinner, Sunday's Fellowship hour and just recently our Friday Night Fireside Jazz event. Many don't know this, but James is also an accomplished artist, a gardener, and avid photographer. Thank you Jim, for all you do for the MAPC community!



MUSIC

Jocelyn Hagen

composer
with the
MAPC Church Chior



Composer Jocelyn Hagen works with the Church Choir in a rehearsal of her new anthem, which MAPC commissioned using funds from the newly created Gordon & Lillian Hardy Music Endowment Fund. Ms. Hagen discussed the craft of composition and her approach to the setting of texts as the Christian Education presentation on Sunday, February 4 – including a demonstration of the commissioned work, *Have You Not Heard?* by the Church Choir – which received its official premiere during the 11:15 am service that day.

New York City Children's Chorus

Building Improvements in Music
By Mary Huff

MAPC has long been proud of its music program. And for good reason! MAPC's organists have been among the country's finest organists for over a century. The choral music at MAPC is now known to be among the finest in the PC(USA), and the New York City Children's Chorus is fast growing its reputation as one of the outstanding children's choirs in this region of the country.



However, the state of our music facilities has been a bit shabby in comparison to the artistic quality of our music program. When Andrew arrived in 2005, the uncomfortable pews (ouch!) that occupied the choir room for decades were removed and proper choral rehearsal chairs were purchased. Lime green walls were painted; shelves that regularly collapsed were fixed; choir room and music office lighting and electrical service was improved; and hundreds of dilapidated music storage boxes have been systematically replaced over the past 12 years.

Happily, the NYCCC Annual Fund has funded a number of music facility improvements in the past three years. In 2015, a new piano was purchased for the 5th floor and the choir room bathrooms were updated for preschooler safety. In 2016, electric window blinds were installed on the 5th floor for NYCCC rehearsals, and specially-designed folder, robe, and music cabinets were built and installed in the choir room. In 2017, the choir room floor was repaired and an attractive marmoleum floor was installed (to replace the 1950s harvest yellow flooring), and additional musicians' chairs were purchased for the 5th Floor and Choir Room. The furniture and workstation capabilities of the Music Office continue to be improved for Mary Huff and Helen Karloski to match our expanding administrative needs.

With MAPC building funds and NYCCC Annual Fund monies, we hope that 2018 brings lots of painting! Just a quick glance at the Phillips Building staircase will leave no doubt in your mind that this space hasn't been painted in at least 50 years. We are grateful for MAPC's support of the ministry of the New York City Children's Chorus, and MAPC is likewise grateful for the financial support of building improvements that the NYC Children's Chorus has provided. We invite you to take a look around the music areas of our building to inspect the progress!

MUSIC

SAINT ANDREW MUSIC SOCIETY CONCERT CALENDAR Spring 2018

Sunday, March 25 at 3 pm

Bach: St. Matthew Passion
Saint Andrew Chorale & Orchestra
New York City Children's Chorus
Andrew Henderson, conductor

Friday, April 13 at 7:30 pm

Manhattan School of Music Recital
featuring students from
the Organ Department

Sunday, April 22 at 3 pm

Beethoven, Schubert & Liszt
Nadejda Vlaeva, piano

Sunday, April 29 at 3 pm

Violin Sonatas by
Mozart, Schnittke & Schumann
Lydia Chernicoff, violin &
Ronaldo Rolim, piano

Sunday, May 6 at 3 pm

"New York, New York"
New York City Children's Chorus;
Mary Huff, director



MAPC

LIFE

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Holy Week & Easter Worship Schedule

Palm Sunday - March 25

9 & 11:15 am- Services of Word & Sacrament

The Rev. Dr. Eric O. Springsted preaching

3 pm - Bach: St. Matthew Passion

Saint Andrew Chorale & Orchestra;

Andrew Henderson, conductor

Maundy Thursday - March 29

7 pm - Service of Word & Sacrament with Foot Washing

The Rev. Dr. Eric O. Springsted preaching

Choral Music by Ola Gjeilo

Good Friday - March 30

12 to 3 pm - Meditations on the Passion According to Matthew

The service is divided into six half-hour segments based on passages from the Gospel of Matthew, portraying our Lord's Passion beginning with his vigil in the garden of Gethsemane.

The Rev. Beverly A. Bartlett, The Rev. Christina A. Cosby, The Rev. Beverly Dempsey,

The Rev. Robert Foltz-Morrison, The Rev. Dr. Eric O. Springsted, The Rev. Denise A. Welsh

Choral Music by J. S. Bach, Pablo Casals, Bob Chilcott, Ken Dake, Herbert Howells,

Stephanie Martin

4:30 pm - Good Friday Family Service

An interactive, family-friendly Passiontide service especially tailored for children.

7:30 pm - Service of Tenebrae

A powerful, meditative service with a reading of the Passion story and the gradual extinguishing of lights and candles, ending in darkness and silence.

Choral Music by Chilcott, Sanders & Stainer

Easter Day - April 1

9 & 11:15 am- Festival Services of Word & Sacrament

The Rev. Dr. Eric O. Springsted preaching

Choral Music by Paul Halley, G. F. Handel &

Vaughan Williams & works for Trumpets,

Timpani & Organ