New and Trending at MPBC

CHURCH NEWS
October - November 2019

J21 SERIES | Faith at the End of the World | p 2
AWAKENING TO ENVIRONMENTAL INJUSTICE SERIES | Little Miss Flint | p 2 | Podcast | p 5
CONGREGATIONAL MEETING | Vote on the Revised Reimagining Lay Leadership Proposal | p 3
SEASONS OF GIVING | Sermon Series and Stewardship | p 4
WORSHIP SERVICES | World Communion and All Saints’ with a Musical Sermon | p 6 and p 8
ROOM IN THE INN 2019-2020 | Be part of this important annual outreach initiative | p 7

www.myersparkbaptist.org | @MPBaptist
Are these the last and evil days? Is this the end of the world as we know it? Is the climate crisis really a faith issue? What is truth? Who is God? Where is God in the midst of our suffering?

We invite each and every one of you to wrestle with these questions as we dive into an engaging weekend with Dr. Catherine Keller, apocalyptic theologian, author, and professor of Constructive Theology at Drew University in Madison, NJ. A contemporary theologian with concentrations in ecological justice and feminist thought, her teaching, lecturing, and writing embrace the relational potential of a theology of becoming. Dr. Keller has taught in the Theological and Philosophical Studies Area of Drew’s Graduate Division of Religion since 1986. After completing her studies at the University of Heidelberg and Eden Theological Seminary, she did doctoral work at Claremont Graduate University with John B. Cobb, Jr., and remains involved with the Center for Process Studies.

We are especially excited to welcome Dr. Keller during the year of our Awakening to Environmental Injustice. The breadth of her work contemplating our divine relationship to the earth will provide a wonderful theological foundation for our year-long exploration. Dr. Keller is the author of several publications, including On the Mystery: Discerning God in Process; Cloud of the Impossible: Theological Entanglements; From a Broken Web: Separation, Sexism and Self; Apocalypse Now and Then: A Feminist Guide to the End of the World; Face of the Deep: A Theology of Becoming; God and Power: Counter-Apocalyptic Journeys; and Political Theology of the Earth: Our Planetary Emergency and the Struggle for a New Public. The events of the week are listed below.

**APOCALYPSE AFTERALL?**
Friday, October 11, 2019 | Olde Mecklenburg Brewery
6:00 pm | Doors open
6:30 pm | Conversation commences
Meet & Greet immediately following program | Register here
Join us for an exciting evening with Dr. Keller as she shares excerpts from her forthcoming publication, Apocalypse Afterall. Bring a friend, grab a libation, and join the conversation as we bring together ecology and theology. Appetizers will be provided.

**WHERE IS GOD? — FAITH IN PROCESS**
Saturday, October 12, 2019 | Heaton Hall
9:00 am | Continental Breakfast
9:30 – 11:30 am | Workshop on Process Theology
Book signing immediately following workshop | Register here
Join us for a morning of faith and fellowship as we find our theologies in the midst of life’s chaos and complexities. This interactive workshop will be a conversational journey rooted in Keller’s 2008 publication, On the Mystery: Discerning Divinity in Process. To purchase a copy, please contact Caroline Manning (cmanning@myersparkbaptist.org | 704.334.7232 x 115).

**ECO-FEMINISM AT THE END OF THE WORLD**
Sunday, October 13, 2019 | Heaton Hall
9:45 am | Live Awakening Shalom Podcast Recording
Join Dr. Catherine Keller and Mia McClain for a conversation that centers the apocalypse at the intersection of ecology, process theology, and feminism.

---

**AWAKENING NOW! Youth-Led Environmental Justice Forum**

**Little Miss Flint**

Join us this fall for a youth-led environmental justice forum, featuring Amaryanna ‘Mari’ Copeny, popularly known as “Little Miss Flint.” In early 2016, this then-8-year-old from Flint, Michigan wrote a letter to President Obama describing the unending plight of her community, which had been living with lead-contaminated water since 2014. Since then, Mari has fundraised over $500,000 with the nonprofit organization Pack Your Back and has impacted over 25,000 children in Flint and beyond.

Come hear what “Little Miss Flint” and young activists across Charlotte have to say about the ongoing crisis and how young people can get involved in justice movements around the country. There will be a special musical performance, directed by Charlotte Judge and featuring the children’s choirs of Myers Park Baptist Church, Providence Methodist Church, Davidson United Methodist Church, Kirk of Kildare Presbyterian in Cary, NC, Pullen Memorial Baptist Church in Raleigh, NC, and Oakland Avenue Baptist Church in Rock Hill, SC.

This event is free and open to the public. All ages are encouraged to attend. Please register here. For more information, please contact Mia McClain (mmcclain@myersparkbaptist.org).
Following the death of a family member or friend, grief is something we cannot escape. When the loss sinks in, we do not know what to do. Grief affects every part of us, and we all grieve in different ways at different times. Though there is not simply one way to deal with our grief, being a part of a caring group of people who are also experiencing grief can help us realize we are not alone. If you are interested in being a part of a Grief Support Group, please contact me at jaldrich@myersparkbaptist.org. Meeting dates and times to be determined.

In the summer of 2018, members of our church embarked on a pilgrimage to learn more about the immigration crisis facing our country. The group followed the path of an immigrant detained by ICE, from Charlotte all the way to the infamous Stewart Detention Center in GA. At Stewart, they witnessed thousands of immigrants being forced to live in cramped spaces with no beds, limited bathrooms, unsanitary food, and no health care. These inhumane conditions awakened our call to shine light on these human rights violations. This past summer, Rev. Ben Boswell and Mia McClain sat down to discuss the need for Myers Park Baptist to organize around the issue of migrant justice, centered on the belief that all human beings are made in the image of God, and every person has sacred dignity and worth, regardless of their citizenship. Out of that, a new SLG was born, which will operate under the Ministry of Outreach.

The Migrant Justice SLG will focus on three areas:
- Resources for members to get involved in supporting migrant families waiting for hearings
- Education and Awareness
- Rapid Response

The Migrant Justice SLG will be chaired by Holly Wood and Sheryl Owens. For more information, please email Holly Wood (hollyboowood@gmail.com) or Mia McClain (mmeclain@myersparkbaptist.org).
Add this page to your Church Directory

On Sunday, October 29, we welcomed a new joining class into the life of our Church. We want-
The Lake Institute on Faith & Giving, a major center of research on church giving, states that while US charitable giving remains at near-record highs, religious giving has declined. And 1 out of 5 American Christians give nothing to the church at all. Not surpris-
ingly, church budgets have decreased over the years, as it becomes harder and harder for churches to continue the same level of worship, programming, and outreach to the community each year. Additionally, 54% of congregations do not encourage members to give. We know that we compete for your financial gifts with many other community and national charities and universities, especial-
during this time of the year. Yet we also know that we don't want to be, or feel like we can be, in the 54% of churches who do not talk about money. As Henri Nouwen reminded us, “Asking people for money is giving them the opportunity to put their resources at the disposal of the Kingdom.”

As the Administrator, I can tell you that there is certainly a business aspect to running our campus – ensuring we follow applicable laws and best practices in our human and financial resources, for example – but what makes my job so exciting is getting to see first hand how your generosity plays out. I talk with the men and women who count on us opening our doors for a warm place to sleep at night, or the children who leave a Faith Formation lesson having gotten the chance to ask questions about God, and I see the tears of our members when they are moved by an anthem sung by the Chancel Choir. These things are real and happen at Myers Park Baptist Church all the time.

As the Church Administrator, I am fortunate to understand in great detail the wonderful investments that have been made at Myers Park Baptist: in our beautiful facilities, our competent staff, our progressive programming, and our dynamic worship. The investments we all have made in giving continue to make all this possible.

As we head into the giving season, I ask that you be open to our desire for our church to not be in the 54% of those churches that don't talk about how your financial gifts make a difference, and how you can play a part in that. Seeing generosity at work, your own and that of those around you, continues to help set us apart in our community.

~ Leigh Anne Hagerman

---

The future of our church looks bright! Yet in order to live into the future God has called us to embody, we must understand our past and our present. For that we turn to the prophets in the Bible, who were not soothsayers or fortune tellers who predicted the future, but ordinary people, called and inspired by God, who possessed the unique ability to see the truth of the present reality and communicate that truth to others. As Abraham Joshua Heschel said, prophets earn their title by “witnessing the world around them with outstanding passion.”

This fall, during our stewardship sermon series, we will tap into that prophetic passion in order to see reality more clearly, take hold of our hope, and live into the good future that God has laid out on the horizon before us.

This fall, during our stewardship sermon series, we will tap into that prophetic passion in order to see reality more clearly, take hold of our hope, and live into the good future that God has laid out on the horizon before us.

We have reason for hope! Yet in order to live into the future God has called us to embody, we must understand our past and our present. For that we turn to the prophets in the Bible, who were not soothsayers or fortune tellers who predicted the future, but ordinary people, called and inspired by God, who possessed the unique ability to see the truth of the present reality and communicate that truth to others. As Abraham Joshua Heschel said, prophets earn their title by “witnessing the world around them with outstanding passion.”

This fall, during our stewardship sermon series, we will tap into that prophetic passion in order to see reality more clearly, take hold of our hope, and live into the good future that God has laid out on the horizon before us.

We have reason for hope! Yet in order to live into the future God has called us to embody, we must understand our past and our present. For that we turn to the prophets in the Bible, who were not soothsayers or fortune tellers who predicted the future, but ordinary people, called and inspired by God, who possessed the unique ability to see the truth of the present reality and communicate that truth to others. As Abraham Joshua Heschel said, prophets earn their title by “witnessing the world around them with outstanding passion.”

This fall, during our stewardship sermon series, we will tap into that prophetic passion in order to see reality more clearly, take hold of our hope, and live into the good future that God has laid out on the horizon before us.

We have reason for hope! Yet in order to live into the future God has called us to embody, we must understand our past and our present. For that we turn to the prophets in the Bible, who were not soothsayers or fortune tellers who predicted the future, but ordinary people, called and inspired by God, who possessed the unique ability to see the truth of the present reality and communicate that truth to others. As Abraham Joshua Heschel said, prophets earn their title by “witnessing the world around them with outstanding passion.”

This fall, during our stewardship sermon series, we will tap into that prophetic passion in order to see reality more clearly, take hold of our hope, and live into the good future that God has laid out on the horizon before us.

We have reason for hope! Yet in order to live into the future God has called us to embody, we must understand our past and our present. For that we turn to the prophets in the Bible, who were not soothsayers or fortune tellers who predicted the future, but ordinary people, called and inspired by God, who possessed the unique ability to see the truth of the present reality and communicate that truth to others. As Abraham Joshua Heschel said, prophets earn their title by “witnessing the world around them with outstanding passion.”

This fall, during our stewardship sermon series, we will tap into that prophetic passion in order to see reality more clearly, take hold of our hope, and live into the good future that God has laid out on the horizon before us.

We have reason for hope! Yet in order to live into the future God has called us to embody, we must understand our past and our present. For that we turn to the prophets in the Bible, who were not soothsayers or fortune tellers who predicted the future, but ordinary people, called and inspired by God, who possessed the unique ability to see the truth of the present reality and communicate that truth to others. As Abraham Joshua Heschel said, prophets earn their title by “witnessing the world around them with outstanding passion.”

This fall, during our stewardship sermon series, we will tap into that prophetic passion in order to see reality more clearly, take hold of our hope, and live into the good future that God has laid out on the horizon before us.

We have reason for hope! Yet in order to live into the future God has called us to embody, we must understand our past and our present. For that we turn to the prophets in the Bible, who were not soothsayers or fortune tellers who predicted the future, but ordinary people, called and inspired by God, who possessed the unique ability to see the truth of the present reality and communicate that truth to others. As Abraham Joshua Heschel said, prophets earn their title by “witnessing the world around them with outstanding passion.”

This fall, during our stewardship sermon series, we will tap into that prophetic passion in order to see reality more clearly, take hold of our hope, and live into the good future that God has laid out on the horizon before us.
Our yearly audit for 2018 has been completed and the report was exceptionally clean. This audit is for the church, Through-The-Week School, and the Cornwell Center.

Through July 2019, MPBC is running a $74,000 deficit. This is fairly normal for this time of year and no cause yet for alarm, but if we can please get our pledges up to date it would be very helpful. Thanks to savings due to staff transitions and the diligent work of our staff and lay leadership, expenses are down 14% from last year. We expect this percentage to decline through the remainder of the year as we have reached full staff and as fall programs are started. Revenue is also down by 15% from last year and 3.5% behind budget. The good news is that we have passed the historically low summer months, yet still have collected 50% of our total annual budget.

The Cornwell Center and Through-The-Week School are both operating with small surpluses as of July.

The Ministry of Facilities Management has been working on a much-needed boiler replacement project. This will be a major expense, reportedly somewhere in the $200,000 range. We likely have the funding worked out by utilizing the remaining surplus revenue we received at the end of 2018 along with remaining available endowment funds for 2019.

A resounding thank you goes to everyone who contributes to the financial health of MPBC. Without your contributions we would not be able to support our programming or facilities needs.

~ Tucker Pearsall, Chair, Ministry of Financial Resources

To accompany our year-long Awakening to Environmental Injustice Series, we are kicking off this conversation around all things Earth Justice on October 3. We have learned through our studies that environmental injustice dwells alongside creation care and climate change under the umbrella of earth justice. In this podcast series, we aim to explore how the mismanagement of natural and human-made resources are in direct relation to racism, classism, and disembodiment—how the misuse of our planet stems from a lack of seeing ourselves, our neighbors, and the earth as divine—sacred—holy. Our conversations will be rooted in the Awakening recommended reading list, current events, and relevant research.

The Ministry of Outreach strives to support advocacy and action based community involvement in our city and in our world. We have been working on several of the tactics in our church strategic plan, which include a narrowing of our focus to a few initiatives to maximize our impact in our community and a revision of our grant application process. Our themes include:

1. Housing initiatives that address homelessness and the growing affordable housing concerns in Charlotte
2. Educational initiatives that address the learning disparities present in school-aged children across the city
3. Overcoming Marginalization initiatives that address the ongoing need for inclusive services for LGBTQ+ people, holistic care for those reentering society following incarceration, and the humane support of migrant people

We have also reorganized our grant process to a 3-year commitment. Allowing space for unexpected changes, we can minimize adjustments to the yearly amounts we have committed to our partners, which will allow them to improve their planning. Our returning partners will still update us yearly on how our funds were used as well as any changes to their organization or goals. Our intention is to spend more time visiting our partners to learn more about our partnerships, including seeing the facility first-hand, meeting the staff, and learning how we can better engage with our volunteers to assist them with their mission. In the months to come, we have many opportunities to help our neighbors and we hope you will be a part of our outreach efforts!

Thank you!
Karen Taylor, Chair, Ministry of Outreach

~www.myersparkbaptist.org~

October - November 2019
World Communion Sunday
October 6

Join us at the table that is open to all and closed to none as we celebrate our diversity and interconnectedness with all. Participants in our spring Awakening the Body Pilgrimage to NC sustainable farms will lead our worship. We will hear from Phil Lesser, Carol Pearis, Nancy Walker, Katie Hambrick, and Becky Baker.

The music during worship will include children of the Carol Choir and Chapel Choir as they join forces to welcome us to the table; and the Chancel Choir accompanied by steel drum, piano, and percussion will use music from a Caribbean Mass to give beauty and depth to a diverse worship experience that you do not want to miss!

~ Dr. Matt Caine

All Saints' Sunday
November 3

WORSHIP
On this day where we remember those who are no longer with us physically but still connected to us through one spirit, we will read the names of church members who have died over the past year and honor their memory through a procession of banners created by our children's ministry. As a musical sermon, our Chancel Choir and members of the Charlotte Symphony will present Morten Lauridsen’s Lux Aeterna, a beautiful, modern, non-traditional Requiem using texts and music that focus on light and its relationship to the departed. Additional music will include Barber’s Adagio for Strings and Arvo Pärt’s Trisagion.

ALL SAINTS’ MEMORIAL BANNERS
Again, this year, the Ministry of Congregational Care and the Children’s Ministry will collaborate to create banners for our church members who have died since last All Saint’s Sunday. The elementary children will create the banners during children’s worship. The banners will hang in the Sanctuary on All Saint’s Sunday and will be given to the families to take home after worship. If your family would like to participate, please contact Rev. Joe Aldrich (jaldrich@myersparkbaptist.org) or Rev. Carrie Veal (cveal@myersparkbaptist.org).

~ Dr. Matt Caine and Rev. Carrie Veal

Our youth recently participated in an 18-month qualitative study funded by Lilly Endowment, Inc. that explores the relational experiences of young people, parenting adults, and community leaders in Christian, Jewish, and Muslim faith communities. Through focus groups and interviews, participants described relationships in their faith communities in Minneapolis, Minnesota, and Charlotte and brought fresh perspectives to how congregations nurture faith in our youth.

Through relationships in faith communities, young people discover who they are, develop abilities to shape their own lives, and learn how to engage with and contribute to the world. The five elements of these “developmental relationships” are:

- Expressing Care (Show me that I matter to you),
- Challenging Growth (Push me to keep getting better),
- Providing Support (Help me complete tasks and goals),
- Sharing Power (Treat me with respect and give me a say),
- and Expanding Possibilities (Connect me with people and places that broaden my world).

The preliminary findings of this study are a tribute to our youth leaders and the youth themselves. Our youth expressed that they feel a genuine sense that those in the congregation care about them and want them to be involved. They have met a lot of people through the congregation and have been greatly encouraged to join groups, volunteer, or assist with worship. The youth also find that there are many opportunities to be involved and serve at MPBC.

When asked if they had suggestions for ways MPBC could improve, our youth shared that they were unable to think of any. They reiterated that it is impactful to be a part of the church, and relationships here have shaped their faith. Their comments included: “Everyone here is so friendly and they really push to get you involved.” and “I think the church was pivotal in my understanding of what I believed.”

We look forward to sharing the full findings of the study when they are released in 2020.

~ excerpted from Search Intitutes "What Youth Say About Relationship in Faith Communities" September 2019

excerpt from "What Youth Say About Relationship in Faith Communities" September 2019

~ excerpted from Search Intitutes "What Youth Say About Relationship in Faith Communities" September 2019

~ excerpted from Search Intitutes "What Youth Say About Relationship in Faith Communities" September 2019

~ excerpted from Search Intitutes "What Youth Say About Relationship in Faith Communities" September 2019

~ excerpted from Search Intitutes "What Youth Say About Relationship in Faith Communities" September 2019
Get Ready for Room In The Inn!

ROOM IN THE INN IN CHARLOTTE

Since 1996, the Urban Ministry Center has partnered with colleges and congregations of many faiths to open their facilities to provide shelter and food for homeless people during the winter months, December 1 – March 31. Each site offers a warm, safe place to sleep, serves three meals (dinner, breakfast and bag lunch) and then returns guests the following morning to uptown Charlotte. The program offers a unique way for people of faith to become directly involved with individuals who are homeless. The basic goal is to keep homeless people from freezing on cold winter nights. A greater goal is to provide a more personal relationship to homeless people, at least for a night, and to foster a deeper understanding of the depth and complexity of the issue.

Myers Park Baptist Church has participated in Room in the Inn since its inception, making the upcoming 2019-20 season our 24th year.

Our new season is kicking off soon. To get more information about volunteering, contact Koren Cranford (cranford123@gmail.com) or Mia McClain (mmcclain@myersparkbaptist.org)

MPBC NEIGHBORS

- 230 guests
- 21 families
- 29 children

159 females, 70 males, 1 transgender...

...230 neighbors ages 0 through 89

MPBC VOLUNTEERS

- 167+ volunteers
- 462+ jobs done

Volunteer numbers are always “at least” - many more show up who don’t sign up

Bring your family, bring a friend, bring yourself: Myers Park Baptist Church Room in the Inn 2019-20

who & what

We shelter 15 of our homeless neighbors

when & where

Every Monday and Saturday night, December 2nd through March 30 in the kitchen and RITI room downstairs

why & how

Volunteers provide meals, shelter, and transportation to meet the basic needs of our guests throughout the winter

Bring your family.

Bring a friend.

Bring yourself.
Ministers and Staff

Reverend W. Benjamin Boswell
Senior Minister
bboswell@myersparkbaptist.org | x 111

Mia M. McClain
Associate Minister
mmcclain@myersparkbaptist.org | x 123

Reverend Carrie Veal
Minister of Children and Community Life
cveal@myersparkbaptist.org | x 118

Dr. Matt Caine
Minister of Music and Worship
mcaine@myersparkbaptist.org | x 158

Reverend Leigh Anne Hagerman
Church Administrator
lhagerman@myersparkbaptist.org | x 116

Reverend Joseph D. Aldrich
Associate Minister
jaldrich@myersparkbaptist.org | x 113

Charlotte Judge
Associate Director of Music
cjudge@myersparkbaptist.org | x 121

Allen Davis
Director of Youth
adavis@myersparkbaptist.org | x 112

John Richardson
Organist
jrichardson@myersparkbaptist.org | x 146

Pamela Handon
Director of The Cornwell Center
phandon@cornwellcenter.org | x 601

Belinda Geuss
Director of Through-The-Week School
bguess@myersparkbaptist.org | x 122

ALL SAINTS' SUNDAY, NOVEMBER 3
MYERS PARK BAPTIST CHURCH SANCTUARY | 11a

a Musical Sermon by
Chancel Choir and members of the Charlotte Symphony
See page 6 for details