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Church Identity Project Update  
(as shared at the Congregational Meeting on June 2, 2019)

As a member of the Church Identity Task Force, I want to provide an update on some key points of our Church Identity Project (CIP). Many of you have been involved at various points during the project, and for that we are very grateful. The project has steadily continued its work and we have learned a lot. As a reminder, the task force team members are: Leader Chaz Seale, staff members Ben Boswell and Laura Geer, Tara Harris, Suzette Buchan, Dale Allison, John Hewett, Jane Huddle, Carol Reid, and Marcy McClanahan. The Candescence Strategy consulting firm has completed their work with us and the guidance and expertise they provided was extremely helpful.

I want to make sure you all know that this project has never been about seeking a change in our Church’s mission or purpose. The project’s goal has always been to develop an identity strategy that would be more exacting as to who we are and offer our Church an enhanced capability to attract new members.

In the previous congregational meeting, the following project steps were described as having been completed:

- Gathered input from project stakeholders
- Analyzed information on our current identity
- Analyzed identity information on peer churches
- Interviewed community leaders on our Church

Since then, these additional steps have been completed:

- Performed an outside Market Study
- Held a Branding Workshop with about 20 Church members
- Shared narratives on how we want to be known with five focus groups: one with long-term Church members, one with newer members, a Church staff group, and two outside groups.
- With these same five focus groups, solicited reactions on words that could define who we are.
- Completion of these last steps in particular revalidated our Church’s mission.

Here are some key points we learned from our completed steps:

1. Our Church is not known by its name in our city. The Market Study (completed by approximately 690 individuals within a 10-mile radius of the Church) asked participants to identify churches by name. Only 3% identified our Church by name. As a comparison point, 41% identified Elevation. Where we may have had name recognition in the past, in general, this is no longer the case.

2. What did we learn about the word “Baptist?” The most common perceptions from the Market Study were: conservative, strict in terms of scriptural interpretation, possessing an obedience to God, judgmental, and - maybe a little ironically - open and welcoming.

3. When selecting a church, denominational identification is not a significant factor like it may have been in the past. In fact, being identified by denomination can be detrimental. As an example, a Baptist church in the South most likely is perceived to be “Southern Baptist.” Another example is what the Methodist church is going through.

4. Another lesson we learned is that the word “progressive” doesn’t necessarily mean to others what we think it means. Our common thought is that it means “socially progressive.” Study participants saw it more as a church’s public or worship style – like having a band or an informal service.

5. In general, prospective members are not attracted to our Church by its visual exterior. It looks conservative and traditional. Different signage and a more identifiable logo and message would better show people who we are.

6. We are probably about 20 years behind in identification changes to depict who we are. We did not have an identifiable logo or tagline during most of this time.

So, what’s next?

The Identity Task Force and the staff realize that any change in the way we present our identity to the world needs careful discernment and should not be rushed. Therefore, the Church Identity Task Force will be taking the Church and the entire congregation through this process of education and engagement slowly. There will be no proposal or vote on this topic in 2020. Instead, we have decided to spend the entire year in a time of discernment and conversation. Project communication plans will be shared soon and sessions will be held for members to receive more information about the project and provide input and feedback. You are welcome to give feedback or ask questions to Task Force members at any time.

Jane Huddle, Co-Chair, Identity Task Force
New Church Logo Conveys the Mission of MPBC

by Rev. Ben Boswell

You may have noticed that we are using a new logo on all our printed and online media. This new logo is an homage to our past, a reflection of our identity in the present, and a vision for our future.

The design contains our name and the image of the compass rose that is embedded on the floor of Heaton Hall. When I first saw the image in Heaton Hall, I thought it was a Bethlehem star, but when I looked more closely I noticed that all the sides were equal and there was a dial around the circumference. I soon realized it is actually a compass.

Upon discovering the compass rose, I called the late Dan White and asked if he knew the history behind it. He did some research but could find nothing in his files, or in anything he inherited from architect Teebee Hawkins, that revealed the historical origins of this image. If you know any history about the design, please contact me as soon as possible! I’d love to hear from you.

Even though the origins of our compass rose remain a mystery, I believe it is a fitting image for us. It is wonderful that the most prominent image on our campus is an ancient directional tool that was used to guide people on their journeys. Whenever I see the compass rose, I am reminded of those wonderful words in our covenant: “We are a people on a journey of faith.”

In addition to the compass rose, the new logo includes the rainbow colors of the unity flag as the dial to convey those other important words of our covenant: “We are open to all and closed to none.” It also includes four words: “Inclusivity, Community, Spirituality, Justice” that reflect the core components of our mission as a church. We are an inclusive community for spiritual formation and social justice in Charlotte. These four words also correlate with the four goals of our Live Forward strategic plan, as well as what we have been learning about ourselves through the Identity Project.

We are incredibly grateful to our creative Communications Director, Laura Geer, who designed the new logo, and we hope that it will help to convey who we are as a church to our community in a way that is bold, colorful, and compelling.

Friends of the Covenant Event
Featuring Dr. Bill Leonard

Friday, October 18 | 6:00p | Burwell Hall at Queens University

by Bob Thomason, Chair, Planned Giving SLG

Every year, thousands of U.S. churches are closing their doors. The Myers Park Baptist Church Friends of the Covenant is a group of Church members who want to make sure our Church not only survives but thrives throughout the 21st century. Toward this end, we have made planned gifts to the Church endowment through our wills and other means. We want you to join us!

But why is it important that our church survive? Each of us has our reasons. I’ve listed mine below and invite you to think about what yours might be.

• The impact our church has had on my family. All the money in the world could not buy what my two boys received from growing up in our Church community. Our congregation is their extended family - their people. As a result, they know who they are and where they came from. That is so important in this age of small, geographically dispersed families.

• The friends I’ve made at MPBC. Even though I grew up in Charlotte and have no shortage of old friends around, some of my best and most interesting friends are people I met in Church. They have enriched my life and made me a better person.

• The way the Church has influenced my spiritual growth. We have been blessed with remarkable ministers and teachers over the decades - too many to name. The questioning, the challenging, the exploring, and the struggling with sacred texts to discern their meaning is a never-ending quest. I liken it to physical exercise. It’s hard work but the payoff is enormous. For me, the payoff is the ability to accept uncertainty and the incredible peace that comes with that.

• The Church's impact on the broader community. Our Church's history of trying to follow in the footsteps of Jesus makes me proud. From our support of civil rights in the 1960s to our more recent inclusiveness of LGBTQ+ persons into the full life and leadership of our congregation, we have been leaders in our community.

This last point deserves elaboration. Why is it important to the world that Myers Park Baptist continue its work? In addition to our outreach activities, why else do we matter outside of our own walls?

To help answer this, we have invited Dr. Bill Leonard back to Charlotte on Friday October 18 at 6:00p to speak to us on this topic. The Friends of the Covenant are hosting this event, which will be held in Burwell Hall at Queens University, and we want you to come! It’s a beautiful venue and we’ll have good food and music to accompany a short talk by Bill. Of course, our hope is that each of you will be motivated to make a planned gift to the Church.

To register, contact Carol Cedar in the Church Office at ccedar@myersparkbaptist.org or 704.334.7232 x 100. After September 1, you will be able to register online at myMPBC.
Dear Congregation:

We are moving swiftly through Summer, and I hope that you are finding ways to connect with God and each other this season. From Sermon TalkBack on Sunday mornings to camps and Vacation Bible School for children during the week, from podcasts on identity to reading with children at Freedom School -- there are more ways than ever to connect with God and each other. I invite you to join me in some restful “unplugging” this Summer while also staying “plugged in” at Church.

On June 2, we hosted a congregational luncheon and meeting and began the Church-wide process of discussing a proposal for some changes to our Church’s lay leadership structure (by lay leadership we mean the volunteer leaders, not the clergy). The proposal is entitled “Reimagining Lay Leadership” and it was brought forth by the Strategic Planning Council and by the Board of Deacons, who approved it during our April Board meeting. During the June 2 congregational meeting, we heard support for the proposal, and we also heard some questions or concerns about the proposal in three main areas:

- preserving diversity on the Board of Deacons and throughout the lay leadership of our church;
- the specificity of some of the new Board of Deacon positions brought forth in the proposal; and
- the group of Deacons that Myers Park Baptist calls “Life Deacons” (Deacons who have served as the Chair of the Board of Deacons or who have served five three-year terms as Deacons).

On June 2, we decided to table the proposal for further review so that we can answer questions raised by congregants and refine the proposal to improve it before bringing it back to you, the congregation, for a vote soon.

We are hosting three one-hour Town Hall meetings -- one took place in July and had a large attendance, and we will hold another one in August and one in September to accommodate the schedules of all -- to discuss the proposal and recent changes in view of the congregation’s feedback from the June 2 meeting. Our facilitators are excited about these meetings and will help us start and end on time, discussing the improved proposal that will come back before the congregation for a vote on October 6, 2019. The dates and times for the remaining Town Hall meetings are as follows:

- Saturday, August 17 | 10:00 – 11:00a
- Wednesday, September 11 | 7:00 – 8:00p

To register, please click on which meeting you’d like to attend (each meeting will involve the same content). We hope to see as many of you at these meetings as possible.

Happy Summer. May the God of the sunshine and the rain give you hope and peace on these beautiful Summer days.

In Christ,
Tara Harris, Chair, MPBC Board of Deacons

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**SPECIAL TIMES OF WORSHIP**

We have several extra-special times of worship approaching that we hope you will be able to attend!

**Sunday, August 4 | Jazz in the Round**
**10:00 a | Heaton Hall**
Spotlight on the Harlem Cultural Festival

The music for our August Diverse Worship experience will focus on the artists who participated in the 1969 Harlem Cultural Festival, a series of free Sunday afternoon concerts in Central Park that is often referred to as Black Woodstock. Dr. Bill Leonard will be our guest preacher for the day. Stay after worship for Sermon TalkBack.

**Sunday, August 18 | Pride Sunday Worship**
**10:00a | Sanctuary**
(see page 5 for more information)

**Sunday, September 1 | Rock n’ Roll in the Round**
**10:00a | Heaton Hall**

Join us on the Sunday of Labor Day weekend for a Diverse Worship experience as we welcome back Randy Franklin and the Sardines to lead the musical portion of our worship. Mia McClain will be preaching. To top off the wonderful morning of worship, stay for TalkBack and interact with Mia about the sermon of the day. This will be our final TalkBack for the summer.

**Sunday, September 8 | Startup Sunday Worship**
**11:00a | Sanctuary**
(see page 6 for more information)
What is PRIDE?

LGBTQ+ Pride is the positive stance against discrimination and violence toward people who are lesbian, gay, bisexual, transgender, questioning or queer, non-binary, and beyond. It seeks to promote self-affirmation, dignity, and equality while raising awareness about sexual diversity and gender variance. Pride, as opposed to shame and social stigma, is the predominant outlook that bolsters most LGBTQ+ rights movements throughout our country and around the world. Charlotte’s PRIDE Festival includes diverse national, regional, and local entertainers, musicians, and bands. It also hosts numerous vendor booths, including art exhibitors, area non-profits, political candidates, retailers, food stands, and more! Visit www.charlottepride.org/2019event for more information. As an act of faith and solidarity with all people, regardless of sexual orientation or gender identity, MPBC participates in Charlotte PRIDE each year. This year is special because we will be marching with our colleagues and students at Queens University.

How can I get involved?

Let’s come together in support of our LGBTQ+ community. We have two ways for you to be participate:

1. Serve at the MPBC Booth. Click here to learn more.
2. Walk in the Parade on Sunday, August 18. We want to know you are coming, so click here to sign up.

How will we recognize PRIDE during Worship?

Begin your Sunday celebration of Charlotte PRIDE with us during worship on August 18 at 10:00a as we celebrate our diversity and our MPBC community’s inclusive embrace of all people. Then, in lieu of TalkBack, everyone is invited to head uptown for the parade. Join staff members, church members, and friends as we represent MPBC. Wear your MPBC shirts as we show our solidarity and support. You can purchase shirts in the Church Office for $15.

Want to know more?

Contact Mia McClain, Nancy Walker, Lewis Bozard or Rev. Carrie Veal.

How is my sexuality related to my relationship with God? Is there relevant God-talk that centers on LGBTQ+ people?

On August 18, we will march as a people on a journey through the streets of Charlotte as we celebrate our PRIDE. In conjunction with that celebration, join us as we embark on a conversational journey that will center on Queer Theory and Queer Theology, rooted in groundbreaking publications that center the voices of queer-identifying theologians. This integrative dialogue will also highlight the 50th Anniversary of the Stonewall Riots, the Emmy Award-winning show, POSE, and other cultural and theological references. The 4-part podcast series begins August 8 and will be led by Rev. Boswell, Senior Minister, and Mia McClain, Associate Minister. Relevant publications for your library:

*Radical Love: An Introduction to Queer Theology*
written by Patrick S. Cheng, PhD, a pastor and theologian who offers us an excellent introduction to LGBTQ theology.

*Our Lives Matter: A Womanist Queer Theology*
written by Pamela R. Lightsey, PhD, a contextual theologian who explores the impact of oppression against Black LGBTQ women.

*Queer Theology: Beyond Apologetics*
written by Linn Marie Tonstad, PhD, a constructive theologian working at the intersection of systematic theology with feminist and queer theory.

With this 4-part discussion, we hope to expand your theological libraries and widen our God-talk so that we may continue to live out our mission that calls us to continually embrace inclusivity and diversity. You will find the series on iTunes and our website.

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First Annual Campus-Wide Block Party

Saturday, September 7 | Noon - 4:00p

We are planning a Campus-Wide Block Party to kick off the new Church year. Myers Park Baptist Church, the Cornwell Center, and Through-The-Week School are joining together for this event.

There will be food trucks, beer and wine trucks, live music by Randy Franklin and the Sardines, games for all ages, bounce houses, face painting, sidewalk art, yoga on the lawn, cornhole, prizes, snow cones, cotton candy, popcorn, and much more. This will be a fun-filled day you won’t want to miss! Come celebrate being back together after the summer. The community is invited, so bring your friends and make new ones while you’re here.

Start-Up Sunday, September 8

Join us as we start the new Church year:

9:45 - 10:45a  Faith Formation for all ages
11:00a - noon  Worship
Noon -12:30p  Punch on the Porch to welcome Matt and Mia
12:15 - 1:30p  Lunch and Ministry Fair

We begin our fall schedule with a worship service to kick off the program year. The Chancel Choir, fresh off its 53rd Annual Labor Day retreat, will enrich our worship with C. H. Hubert Parry’s beloved setting of Psalm 122, *I Was Glad*, and a new choral benediction: Leo Sowerby’s *Eternal Light*. In addition to inspiring music, we will be inspired and challenged through a sermon by our Senior Minister, Rev. Ben Boswell, titled “Let It Go.”

NEW! Midweek at MPBC This Fall

Looking for an opportunity to grow spiritually through the week? Interested in some God-talk while your child is in choir rehearsal? Would you like to just chat over coffee? Join us on Wednesdays for a variety of fellowship and faith-filled activities, starting September 11. Childcare will be offered from 5:00 - 8:00p.

5:00p  Children’s Choirs (resume September 11)
There are choirs for children in K - 5th grades. Check your email and the Weekly News for more detailed information.

5:00p  Coffee Chat
All are invited to come chat about minivans, the school year, your recent family vacation, or the complexities of life. Led by Rev. Carrie Veal

5:00p  Awakening Bible Study | Early Bird Special
This is an opportunity for people of all ages to gather and walk through scripture together, exploring all the ways in which the sacred texts come alive and speak truth to today. We will focus on texts that relate to the Awakening to Environmental Injustice series, beginning with an unpacking of the Book of Genesis. Led by Mia McClain

6:00p  Food and Fellowship Hour
Let’s break bread together and fellowship as a family. A catered meal will be available for purchase.

7:00p  Awakening Bible Study | Evening Hour
(Starting September 18)

Music and Choir

Dr. Matt Caine is excited for his first Start-Up Sunday and fall season as the new Minister of Music and Worship! The Chancel Choir will start off the new Church year with a retreat over Labor Day weekend at Montreat Conference Center. Then, on Thursday, September 5, the weekly Thursday night rehearsal schedule will resume. The Chancel Choir’s exciting fall will include musical offerings for World Communion Sunday, a major work with chamber orchestra (to be announced at choir retreat) on All Saints’ Sunday, November 3, and...
Lessons and Carols (along with our Youth and Children’s Choirs) on Sunday, December 15, and our 6:00p Christmas Eve worship service (pre-service concert begins at 5:30p). The rehearsal on Thursday, September 5, would be a perfect time to give Chancel Choir a try. Please contact Matt at mcaine@myersparkbaptist.org or 704.334.7232 x 158 for more information.

**Youth Choir (6th - 12th Graders)**
It’s almost time! Mark your calendars for Sunday, September 8 from 5:00-6:00p for the first Youth Choir rehearsal of the season. We will begin getting back in the groove and preparing ourselves to lead in worship. Bring your friends and let’s make this a wonderful year together! Contact Charlotte Judge at cjudge@myesparkbaptist.org or 704.334.7232 x 121 for more information.

**All Hands In with Youth Ministry**
Youth Ministry is about helping youth find meaning and purpose in life. It’s about developing a sense of community and deeper relationships to lead and serve others. Youth Ministry allows our youth to be listened to and heard in an environment of love and appreciation. Our Youth Ministry is even responsible for creating meaningful relationships with adults. Yes, it’s true! Teenagers long to have meaningful relationships with adults. Finally, Youth Ministry must help teens establish a deep-rooted faith – not built on their parents’ faith, but their own.

We believe everyone has something to offer and that everyone can serve in this ministry of our Church. Because God has entrusted us with these students, we are constantly looking for energetic and engaged people who might become leaders within our Youth Ministry.

We believe a healthy Youth Ministry is built on healthy relationships. Relationships are the key to our youth feeling loved and understanding God’s love in practical ways. We are looking for leaders who have a deep commitment and desire to care for our youth.

Myers Park Baptist Church is a great Church and MPBC Youth Ministry is a great place to make eternal investments in the lives of young people. We would love to meet with you and spend some time talking about your hopes and desires to lead in Youth Ministry. Email Allen Davis at adavis@myersparkbaptist.org and schedule a time to grab coffee and find a way for you to get plugged in.

**Children’s Ministry Faith Formation**
**A Weekly Journey of Discovery and Community**
From the founding days of MPBC, Children’s Faith Formation has been a priority. The founding families wanted a church where their children could ask questions, dig deeper, and discover who God is and what God is doing in the world. Over the years, we have made Sunday mornings the primary time when our children engage with the Bible, each other, and their faith.

This fall we are launching Faith Formation Teams, a throwback to the 1970s and 1980s when those who taught were a community among themselves. Starting with our three-year-old class and continuing through our fifth graders, we are assembling a 10-person team of teachers 2 per class/grade. Each team will teach one Sunday a month, staying with the same group of children all year. This approach was very successful in the past and I am confident it will be now as well.

You are invited to join our team. You can find a partner to join with you, or we can pair you with someone. We will have a kick-off training and each quarter we will get together for an hour to review lessons, talk about what’s working well, tweak any challenges, and build the relationships of the teams. Please sign up here.

This is a great opportunity for you to get to know the children and their families, meet new people, deepen relationships with other adults in the Church, and discover how you can expand your own faith formation. It’s also a wonderful way for you to live out our mission statement: Inclusivity, Community, Spirituality, Justice. Won’t you join us? Contact Rev. Carrie Veal at cveal@myersparkbaptist.org or 704.334.7232 x 118 for more information.

**Adult Sunday Faith Formation**
These are just a few of the spiritual formation opportunities available for adults of all ages, starting Sunday, September 8. Contact Mia McClain at mmclain@myersparkbaptist.org or 704.334.7232 x 123 for more information.

**Centerquest**
*Room 256 | Leader: Nancy Berry*
Centerquest is a group with mixed family status, ages, and interests who discuss a variety of subjects. Class leadership is shared among members. The class occasionally gathers for social activities and encourages involvement in Outreach. Recent classes have covered material from Joseph Campbell, Karen Armstrong, Marcus Borg, John Dominic Crossan, and Serene Jones. At times we have experiential learning, exploring nature and creativity. Where it fits, we use the Centerquest model, based on the work of Carl Jung.

**Explorers**
*Room 255 | Organizer: Jenny Martella*
The Explorers class was created over 10 years ago by a group of new members looking to form closer relationships with other MPBC members. We are proud of the diverse group representation in our class and we learn from each other. The class hosts conversations led by group members who have committed to leading one month at a time. Recent topics have included a discussion of author Richard Rohr, meditation, and the intersection of faith and daily life. Another popular source for conversations is the Wired Word, a weekly iteration of current events and how they relate to faith. We host a potluck dinner at member homes up to twice a year.

**Faith Development**
*Room 250 | Leaders: Jon and Teddi Benson*
This class is for those who want the opportunity to examine their personal faith system in community with others. Some individual sessions may be led by the ministerial staff. For more information, contact Jon Benson at jonathanbenson6@gmail.com.

**Fifth Dimension**
*Library | Leader: MaryAnn Largen*
A long-standing, traditional Sunday school class where we share pastoral concerns, sing hymns, and explore Bible lessons. Teachers include the ministerial staff at this Church and other Church members who love to teach.

(... continued on page 8)
LIFE Class
Coffee House | Organizers: Ed Hinson and Eleanor Brawley
The Life Class is a longstanding multigenerational class that works to create an atmosphere of free discussion and sharing while studying a wide range of topics, selected by the planning team for the class. Topics include biblical texts and themes, the teachings of important theologians, religious themes found in literature and plays, discussions of local, national, and international issues, and Christian responses and actions. The class always welcomes new participants. “We believe we are on a faith journey and that we can learn from one another and from outside leaders.”

Read the Bible Again for the First Time
Room 254 | Leader: Nancy Culp
Do you know where to find the story of Job or Jonah? Did you know there’s a book in the Bible named Habakkuk? Did you know the Bible has over 1000 chapters? Let’s read the Bible again, perhaps for the first time, and find the answers to these and many other questions. We will engage in an overview of all 66 books of the Bible. Keep in mind, this is not biblical scholarship or a “critical examination” of scripture. This is a surface dance, a mere glance, at Bible. The class always welcomes new participants. “We believe we are on a faith journey and that we can learn from one another and from outside leaders.”

Sunday Morning Yoga
Cornwell Group Exercise Room | Instructor: Katie Kucich
If you're interested in trying yoga as a spiritual practice that engages your body, mind, and spirit, join us! During our practice, we join in beginner-level yoga that will help you prepare for worship in new ways (and won't get you too sweaty).

Sunday Morning Welcome Desk and Greeter Team
Every Sunday, we have guests. Every Sunday, we have congregants with questions. Every Sunday, we need friendly faces who can help.
This year we are making it easier to serve on two teams that offer boundless hospitality to everyone on our campus. You can sign up to be at the Welcome Desk and be a Greeter on the same Sunday, or you can choose to do just one at a time.
Welcome Desk: You will need to be at the desk by 9:30a and be present and welcoming until 10:00a.
Greeter: You will need to be at an assigned point on the campus by 10:30a and be present and welcoming until 11:05a. Then you will will be needed in the Narthex after worship to help the ministers greet guests.

Trainig | Sunday, August 11 | 8:45a
This training is required for all Greeters and Welcome Desk Hosts. Please sign up here. To learn more, please contact Rev. Carrie Veal at cveal@myersparkbaptist.org or 704.334.7232 x 118.

LIFE Class Presents:
Judy Goldman's "Together" - A Story of True Love
Sunday, September 15 | 9:45a | Shalom Hall

She tells the story of this medical mishap’s impact on their marriage and how the resulting struggle revealed both shadow and light aspects of each personality. Judy describes their shared history through flashbacks that illuminate the character and development of their relationship.

Though there are missteps, it’s clear that Judy and Henry face their painful new reality courageously rather than avoiding it or redirecting their energies to useless ends. By committing to the long and difficult process of physical therapy and the psychological challenges in the aftermath of the paralysis, Judy discovered how love’s actions can deepen and transform us in any stage or circumstance of life -- if we have the faith and grit to see it through.

All are welcome to join us on September 15 at 9:45a in Shalom Hall for this special visit from a beloved friend to many and a superb literary artist.
Reconciling with the earth | Reconciling with each other | Reconciling with God

“Out of the ground the Lord God made to grow every tree that is pleasant to the sight and good for food, the tree of life also in the midst of the garden, and the tree of the knowledge of good and evil. . . The Lord God took Adam -- made from the ground -- and put him in the Garden of Eden to serve, work, and worship the earth.”

Genesis 2:9/2:15 (NRSV adapted)

We are a faith community that stretches beyond these walls -- beyond the lush campus grounds and the oak trees of all heights and girth that so graciously remind us of the diversity of God’s creativity. We are a people on a journey, and this fall, I eagerly invite you to join me on an exploration of environmental injustices in our city, state, country, and beyond.

We have come to know, through our previous series, that many of the injustices we’ve been awakening to are not merely tangentially related, but so interwoven -- so interconnected -- that to view them as separate issues is to do a disservice to the inherent nature of injustice, keeping disparity alive. From disappearing coastlines to the lethal and ongoing presence of contaminants in the water systems from Flint, Michigan to eastern North Carolina, we have been witnesses to the assault on the earth and how that subsequent devastation continues to negatively affect us and our neighbors across the globe.

From August 2019 to May 2020, we aim to explore how the mismanagement of natural and human-made resources is 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. From examining the deadly health issues that accompany illegal waste dumping on land and at sea, to probing the heightening pollution of the air through CO2 emissions, we will begin to dream up a more sustainable world for generations to come. Throughout our journey, I hope we can come to a point of collective reckoning as we reimagine our role as keepers of the earth while reconciling our relationship with all of the inhabitants thereof. I look forward to the voyage and trust that the still-speaking God will reveal fresh insight along the way.

Find our more about the series on our website.

Mia M. McClain
Associate Minister of Faith Formation and Community Outreach

Awakening Series Launch

Forum: Genesis and the Garden of Eden

Sunday, September 22 | 9:45a | Heaton Hall

Join us as we kick off our 2019-2020 Awakening series that will focus on creation care, climate change, and environmental justice. At this Sunday Forum, we will root ourselves in the book of Genesis as we explore the gift of the Garden of Eden and our growing separation from that gift. Led by Rev. Benjamin Boswell, Senior Minister, and Mia McClain, Associate Minister. This event is free and open to the public.

Awakening Now! Featuring "Little Miss Flint"

Save the Date : Saturday, November 2 | Noon - 3:00p

Join us this fall for our first ever intergenerational Awakening Forum, featuring Amariyanna "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 raised over $500,000 with the nonprofit organization "Pack Your Back,” which has impacted over 25,000 children in Flint and beyond.

Come engage with local environmental justice organizations and initiatives, and hear what "Little Miss Flint” has to say about the ongoing crisis and how young people can get involved in justice movements around the country. This event is free and open to the public. All ages are encouraged to attend.
At the start of each Church year, we all make plans and promises to attend worship on a more regular basis, to find a Sunday morning group to be a part of, to get more involved in Outreach. All of these are worthy plans and promises. We would like for you to consider adding one more: the SAFE Seminar.

Led by LeAnn Gardner, this approach is meant to equip adults with the tools they need to answer the questions that children will have, find the right words when teens need guidance, and be a safe space for all children and youth.

**Why Should Parents Attend?**

Let’s be honest, no parent wakes up one morning and says, "Hooray! Today is the day I have THE TALK with my child!” Yet as a parent, you know that you want your child to have correct information told in your words, not from someone else. The SAFE Seminar will challenge parents to think about the facts they must teach their children about such important issues. Even more importantly, through the seminar adults will dive into the “why” -- the narrative -- that provides the substance for these facts and how they fit inside your family’s unique story and belief system. It requires some intentional thought and action, but it is necessary to help our children on this journey of being a holistically healthy human being. We will discuss becoming the primary transmitters of information about sex and safety to our children, including education about sexual development, body awareness, and empowerment.

**Why Should Non-Parents Attend?**

As a Church, we commit to walk with families as they parent their children. We promise to be with them in the easy moments and the challenging moments. And we are all called to provide safety and care for the children and youth among us. At the SAFE Seminar, we will begin building a strong, supportive adult network to help us with this heavy responsibility of keeping our children and youth safe.

**Why Should Our Church Care?**

As we continue to be a Church that blazes trails in so many areas of life, the safety of our children and youth must be one of these trails. Every member has the opportunity to learn, prepare, and be ready to work with children and families in providing safety and wisdom.

Click here to register now through myMPBC. To learn more, please contact Rev. Carrie Veal at cveal@myersparkbaptist.org or 704.334.7232 x 118.

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In 2003, our Church adopted a Children and Youth Protection Policy. We were the first church in the neighborhood to have such a policy. As members of MPBC, we are all called to keep minors on our campus safe. From a Saturday basketball game at the Cornwell Center to a youth retreat at Kanuga, the children and youth who are part of our programming are part of this policy.

This year, not only those working directly with children and youth will be required to be trained in the policy. Those who serve on our Greeter Team, Welcome Desk, and the Health and Safety Team are also required to attend one training in order to serve. Rev Carrie Veal will offer trainings at different times. We have two sessions scheduled in August and one in September. The registration links are listed below.

If you have questions or need further information, please contact Rev. Carrie Veal at cveal@myersparkbaptist.org or 704.334.7232 x 118.

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**Children & Youth Protection Policy Training**

Register by clicking on the date you prefer: **Sunday, August 18 at 8:45a** | **Wednesday, August 7 at 5:30p** (this session is offered online and in person at the Church) | **Sunday, September 1 at 8:45a**
Self-Help Credit Union Grand Opening Presentation

By Rev. Ben Boswell

It was my great honor to help celebrate the grand opening of the new branch of the Self-Help Credit Union in Myers Park and to present a check for $100,000 on behalf of Myers Park Baptist Church as a deposit. This was our “welcome to the neighborhood” housewarming gift!

A few years ago, our Church was working on a new strategic plan at the same time that the city of Charlotte was working to respond to the Harvard study that ranked our city 50th out of 50 in economic mobility. This study led to the development of the Opportunity Task Force and the Leading on Opportunity report. At that time, our Church began developing a strategy to focus our outreach efforts by using the Leading on Opportunity report so that we can make a greater impact on the most pressing issue facing our community: economic mobility.

As we searched to partner with an organization in the city that was working on this issue, we found that Self-Help Credit Union was already doing incredible work to improve economic opportunity in our community. In fact, creating economic opportunity is their mission. They do this by providing loans for affordable housing, responsible financial services, lending to small businesses and nonprofits, developing real estate, and promoting fair financial practices.

While their work benefits the entire community, their focus is on those underserved by conventional lenders, including people of color, women, rural residents, and low-wealth families and neighborhoods. So, in addition to economic opportunity, we also see Self-Help Credit Union and their mission aligning closely with our Church’s mission to care for the poor, empower women, and promote racial justice and equity in our city.

The Bible says, “Let us provoke one another to love and do good deeds.” Therefore, it is our hope that our deposit will be a lead gift that provokes other individuals and communities of faith in Myers Park and around the city to join us in our financial support of Self-Help Credit Union. It is with great pride that we presented this check for $100,000 and I encourage everyone to join us as we work together to make Charlotte a place where there truly is economic opportunity for all people.

In February 2018, over 100 MPBC members and non-members traveled to Kanuga for our Church-Wide Intergenerational Retreat. Over the weekend, we played together, ate together, worshipped together, and learned together. As soon as it was over, many were asking, “When is the next one?” We are excited to announce that the next one will be Friday, February 28 – Sunday, March 1, 2020.

This year, we will be at Montreat Conference Center outside of Asheville. We will welcome back Rev. Dana Trent as our leader and Dana will lead us all in the topic of meditation. There will be programs for children and youth as well as adults. We will have free time and play time, all while deepening relationships!

Registration will open on Tuesday, October 1. To learn more, please contact Rev. Carrie Veal at cveal@myersparkbaptist.org or 704.334.7232 x 118.
The Ministry of Outreach is gearing up for our 24th season of Room In The Inn and we need your help! Since 1996, the Urban Ministry Center has partnered with colleges and congregations of many faiths that open their facilities to provide shelter and food for those who are housing-insecure during the winter months. Each site offers a warm, safe place to sleep, serves three meals, and returns guests to Uptown Charlotte the following morning.

We are planning some renovations to our guest quarters and refilling our supplies. Collection will begin on Saturday, September 7 at our Start-Up Weekend Block Party. Listed are some of the major items we need in order to provide a caring space for our neighbors. Please bring new items only. For more information, contact Mia McClain at mmclain@myersparkbaptist.org or 704.334.7232 x 123.

- Bed Sheets (twin)
- Blankets
- Pillows/Pillowcases
- Socks
- Sanitary Products
- Flip Flops
- Toothbrushes
- Towels (bath, hand)
- Soap/Body Wash (travel size preferred)
- Lotion (travel size)
- Shampoo (travel size)
- Conditioner (travel size)
- Toothpaste (travel size)
- Deodorant (travel size)

Updates on What's Been Happening This Summer

With Gratitude From Fran Morrison

Dear Congregation,

My heart is full of thankfulness for the many ways you supported my ministry here for the last thirty years. There were many hands in my final service and reception for whom I wish I could have thanked personally and individually. The worship service was beautiful; the reception, video, affirming words from friends and colleagues, and gifts were so appreciated. And I will never forget the sight and sound of you singing my favorite hymn “Be Thou My Vision” at the very end. What a special and heartwarming day! It has been a tremendous gift and extraordinary opportunity to serve on this staff. I have learned much through them as well as from talented and hard-working laity and also a host of parents over the years. Your friendships have nurtured and supported me, questioned and pushed me to always dig deep and reach for the best in me. Your personal notes and other ways of showing your gratitude have touched me deeply. The opportunity to share in your lives has been such an honor. I will always treasure and hold those memories close to my heart.

With much love and deep appreciation,
Fran Morrison

Westminster Choir College High School Vocal Institute

Anna Judge and Abby Smith were awarded full tuition scholarships to Westminster Choir College Vocal Institute (VI). These scholarships are held in the Alice and Michael Berman Endowment generously provided by Ron Stone. While at VI, Anna and Abby spent many hours each day singing and taking a variety of classes from yoga and movement to music theory. The two-week experience ended in two final concerts. The first, on Friday evening July 19, was the Voice Class recital. Abby sang with her group Soprano class, Anna with her group Alto class. This was a fun night of great music with a side of frivolity. On Saturday morning, the culminating concert began with selections from Vivaldi’s Gloria with orchestra and included a very poignant new piece, Stay Here by Runestad, which sets to music a reminder to “not make your worst day your last.” This was immediately followed by Total Praise, making a powerful statement to “lift mine eyes to the hills.” We are very proud of these talented young ladies who represented our Church well.
Every year, our Church goes on a pilgrimage at the conclusion of our Awakening series. This year’s series was all about the body. We learned to take care of our bodies, how to love our bodies, and what God says about our bodies. This pilgrimage was also a nice introduction to our next series. We visited sustainable farms where we helped pack food boxes for co-ops, picked garlic, connected with animals, and bonded over love for fellow humans.

Katie Hambrick’s favorite memory was of the first day "when we pulled into the first farm to find that a big table was set up under an old oak tree. Here we broke bread together and began our trip with the eucharist. It was a wonderful way to start."

Here are a few other responses from fellow pilgrims:

“The pilgrimage left me with a feeling that God’s creation provides us with everything we need. When humans disrupt the natural order of nature, we cause harm to earth and to all life dependent on earth’s bounty and life force. When we seek dominion over God’s creation, or when we seek to profit from the exploitation of its resources, we separate ourselves from God. At the first farm we visited, the leader asked if this were sin. I thought that a harsh concept at the time, but I’m letting that question marinate with me for awhile. Can we simultaneously seek to follow God’s command to love others when we destroy the earth that we all depend upon for life?” - Nancy Walker

“Being on a farm with animals was a return to my childhood and all the good memories connected with country relatives and their farming lifestyle. Mine has been a city life. I thought at the time that I should marry a farmer, but wanted the cows to live under the house or beside it so I didn’t have to go out into the cold to milk them. Working with others to fill boxes of food for those in need was a meaningful experience for me. Hearing the goal of the farmers we worked with was inspiring.” - Ann Spence

On World Communion Sunday, October 6, the pilgrims from the trip will share their experiences in worship as we focus on the theme of our communion with all God’s creatures and the good food God has given us to nourish our bodies.

VBS and Community Outreach Camp 2019

Neighbors are more than the people in our families or communities; neighbors include all of God’s children. This year’s "Who Is My Neighbor" VBS was a huge success! We sang, danced, learned, and laughed. As part of a new initiative, our 3rd through 5th graders engaged in an outreach camp. This was a big hit and the children learned how different organizations within our community are working to help all our neighbors. Plans for VBS 2020 have already begun!
Youth Summer Recap

This summer has been full of laughter and tender moments. From the fun of kickball games to Secret Saint prayers, it has been one of the best yet. Secret Saint prayers came about in a random coffee shop during Passport Camp. Devised by youth intern Katie Hambrick, the title harkens back to the Christmas game “Secret Santa” in which each participant receives the name of another, making them responsible for acquiring and presenting that person’s gift. Rather than buying gifts, the task in Secret Saints is to create a short prayer for the person whose name you draw at random from a hat. Those prayers - offered for each camper and chaperone - were then spoken into our small circle just before the final morning celebration. It made for one of the most sacred moments of the week.

The youth have had a summer filled with service as well, from volunteering at Freedom School to taking food to firefighters in Charlotte. This approaching school year will prove to be empowering and life-giving as we all are already dreaming about what the months ahead will bring. We hope that you will join us.

Music | Art | Drama (MAD) Camp 2019

MAD Camp featuring “Oh, Jonah” by Allen Pote was held in June. We had a great group of children attend. They were led by Allyson Ware, Natalie Secrest, Lindsey Bray, and Sherry Blevins. Lillie Judge served as the camp accompanist and many other volunteers and staff were on hand. Thank you to Carol and Richard Pearsall for providing a delicious dinner for parents and guests at our performance in Heaton Hall.

PASSPORTkids! Summer Camp

Nine of our 3rd through 5th graders went to Converse College for PASSPORTkids! Summer Camp July 20-23. They learned how to be "Fearless" in a world that tries to create fear. The campers bonded with each other and grew in their faith. Be on the lookout for next year’s camp dates!

Freedom School Thank You, Volunteers!

Karen Taylor, Laura Handler, and Mia McClain would like to express their deepest gratitude to all of the volunteers who shared time, talent, and resources to support our Freedom School scholars and teachers at Pinewood Elementary. From guest reading during Ha-rambee to buddy reading during D.E.A.R. time, to supply shopping, serving dinner, leading activities, chaperoning field trips, and so much more - we are grateful for your energy, time, and smiles that filled these six weeks. On Great Day of D.E.A.R (Drop Everything And Read), held July 17, we had over 25 MPBC friends and family join our scholars in an hour of reading and arts and crafts! Additionally, Rev. Carrie Veal led the children and families of Vacation Bible School in giving brand new backpacks and school supplies to our scholars in preparation for the coming school year. Thank you for making the summer special. We look forward to your continued support.

MPBC Supports Youth Beyond High School

We are thrilled to award $7,000 in scholarships through Scholarship Endowment funds. This year’s recipients, Wyndham Merrill and Julian Yocum, have been active in Youth Ministry and served on our Youth Leadership Council. Wyndham will attend UNC-Chapel Hill while Julian will attend Massachusetts Institute of Technology (M.I.T.). We are grateful for the chance to support our youth beyond the Youth Ministry and look forward to hearing about their experiences.

Applications are NOW available for the Meeks Hambrick Scholarship. This scholarship is for students pursuing post-secondary experiences who commit to serving in Youth Ministry during the summer of 2020. The scholarship supports a student’s year-round learning and experiences while strengthening the Youth Ministry with shared experiences. Interested candidates should email Allen at adavis@myersparkbaptist.org or stop by the office to talk.
Death — Love and Sympathy to:
- Mary Lou Buck on the death of her husband, George Buck, on June 4, 2019 in Charlotte, NC.
- Laura and Todd Geer on the death of her brother, Michael Lee Brown, on June 7, 2019 in Indian Land, SC.
- The family of Betty Bozeman McKenzie on her death on June 24, 2019 in Charlotte, NC.
- Kathy and Rick Bahnsen on the death of their brother, Larry Fowler, on June 29, 2019 in Charlotte, NC.
- Janice and Barry Brehmer on the death of his uncle, John Miller, on July 17, 2019 in Purley, NC.

Births — Congratulations to:
- Hannah and Sam Frink on the birth of their daughter, Mason Frink, on the birth of his sister, and Susan and Joe Aldrich on the birth of their granddaughter, Charlotte Elizabeth Frink, on July 2, 2019 in Smithfield, VA.

Weddings — Congratulations to:
- Claudette and Morris Green on the marriage of their daughter, Cherise Green, to Jeremy Beckett on Saturday, May 25, 2019 in Richmond, VA.

Through-the-Week School News

Through-the-Week School will begin its 64th year as a mission of Myers Park Baptist Church on September 3 with an enrollment of 200 children. This year we welcome Sarah Caine (MW toddlers/floater) and Katie Griffith (TTW toddlers) to our talented staff of 30 women. The 2019-2020 school year brings significant anniversaries of 30 years of teaching by Tammy Hull and Vickie Trotter (pictured). Tammy and Vickie have not only been teachers at TTWS for 30 years, but they have always taught together – that is a remarkable milestone!

A major change this year will be the movement of our carpool line from the Cornwell Center entrance to the brick patio drive. We hope that everyone will be conscious of not parking in this area during school hours (8:30a -1:00p). Thank you!

We have many exciting specials this year, including a visit by the InReach Puppeteers, a performance by the Children’s Theatre, Science with Ms. Huff, Music by Arts Plus and Ms. Holly, My Gym, and StoryBook Matinee with Ms. Seide. Many of our children also enjoy attending the wonderful after-school program at the Cornwell Center, yoga with Karry Tom, and tennis with ServeItUp Tennis Academy.

Our TTWS parents have been working all summer on our annual Festival of Friends fundraiser, which will be held on November 1 at Myers Park Country Club. This year we hope to raise funds to institute a Spanish curriculum, add toddler buggies, and continue to provide scholarship and outreach opportunities.

Come play with us at Through-the-Week School!

Cornwall Center News

Wellness Seminar: "Just-A-Dash"
Tuesday, August 20 | 12:00 - 12:30p
Led by Humana Representative, John Vandervoot
You will learn why your body only needs a dash of salt. Find out if there is too much salt in your body and what the symptoms are. How do you flush salt out of your body? What are the different types of salts and what effect do they have?

Paint and Sip Night Presents:
Twisted Palette with Resident-Artist Greg Scott
September 13 | 7:00- 9:00p
Cost $25 | Maximum 10 participants
Participants will paint a 11"x16" coastal landscape step-by-step with Greg’s instruction. BYOB/wine and beer and snacks. Under 18 must be accompanied by an adult. Must be 21 to bring alcohol.

The Learning Connection Presents:
"Putting your Best Foot Forward"
Wednesday, September 18 | 10:30a - Noon
Cornwell Conference Center
Dr. Richard Lind, DPM, Carmel Foot Specialists will be discussing taking care of your feet as you age and preventing falls.

Pump Up the Volume Dance Event
Saturday, September 26 | 10:00 - 11:30a | Cornwell Center Gym
Nina Perry with the "QC Steppers" will teach beginner to intermediate line dancing. Then Romina’s will continue the fun with an upbeat Dance Fitness that will get the body jamming with the latest moves. Finally, you get to experience the ultimate with Maria who will provide a little Zumba toning. Save the date to make sure you join in the fun! No registration required.

PHOTO Connections
Third Wednesdays | 7:00 - 9:00p | Cornwell Conference Center
Free and all are welcome to join.

August Assignment – "Architecture"
A photo might simply recognize the product of a creative architect, but opportunities abound for the creative photographer. Concentrate on subtle details, choose an angle of light or time of day, find unique ways to fit architectural shapes into our own rectangles, etc. Show your own take on a structure that inspires you.

September Assignment – "Humor"
It’s not about finding a funny sign and taking a photo of it. Capture a situation, an expression, or a juxtaposition of two subjects that become connected in your photo. Make us laugh.
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