OPEN TO ALL

MYERS PARK
BAPTIST
CHURCH

Inclusivity | Spirituality | Community | Justice

The Worship of God

THE FOURTH SUNDAY OF ADVENT

December 22, 2019 | 11:00a
Inspired by the bold and boundless hospitality of Jesus, we are “open to all,” which means we welcome and accept all people into the life of our Church without regard to race, gender, sexual orientation, age, economic status, political affiliation, physical or mental capacity, or religious belief. We believe that God’s call is given to all people, and we embrace the Spirit that continues to cross boundaries in order to unite the world.

Silent Meditation

I feel our nation’s turning away from love... moving into a wilderness of spirit so intense we may never find our way home again. We must yearn to end the lovelessness that is so pervasive in our society. To open our hearts more fully to love’s power and grace we must dare to acknowledge how little we know of love in both theory and practice. We do not have love. We choose to love. When we understand love as the will to extend one’s self for the purpose of nurturing our own and another’s spiritual growth, it becomes clear that we cannot claim to love if we are hurtful and abusive. Love and abuse cannot coexist. Love is as love does. Love is an act of will—namely, both an intention and an action.

-- bell hooks, “All About Love”

Ringing of the Angelus Bell

Prelude

“Pastorale” from Messiah

George Frideric Handel (1685-1759)

Call to Worship

Leader: The Lord be with you.
People: And also with you.

Childcare is available for children ages birth through five. Please meet our childcare staff at the rugs. Worship kits for children are available in the Narthex.

*Opening Sentences

Leader: O come, let us adore him—
People: whose coming was announced by the prophets.
Leader: O come, let us adore him—
People: whose message was proclaimed by the angels.
Leader: O come, let us adore him—
People: whose glory was hailed by the shepherds.
All: O come, let us adore him, Christ the Lord.

*Procession and Opening of the Bible

“One Come, All Ye Faithful”

ADESTE FIDELIS

*The Lighting of the Candle of Love

Leader: This is the day the Lord has made, the time to hear the story of salvation, to listen for the rustle of angels’ wings, and to run to the manger to see a newborn baby. Listen, those who have ears to hear. Look, those who have eyes to see. Behold the dawning of amazing grace!

People: O God, give us the humbleness of the shepherds who had ears to hear and eyes to see, in the cold December darkness, the coming of light and the Advent of Love!

(Lighting the Candle of Love.)
*Response: (Choir sings once, Congregation repeats.)

**The Kyrie Eleison**

The Kyrie Eleison

Prayer of Confession

God of compassion, you sent us Jesus who told us to love one another. Yet we have a hard time loving those who are not like us, who disagree with us, or who ask us to face truths about ourselves. You tell us that perfect love casts out fear. Yet, we confess that we are afraid to be uncomfortable; afraid of the unknown, and afraid of the perceptions of others. Forgive us, O God, and show us how to love the way you ask us to love. Release us from our judgement and fear. Open our hearts so that they might receive your perfect love for us, and empower us to offer it to the world. Amen

**Assurance of Pardon**
*The Canticle (Glory to God in the highest.)

GLORIA (Taizé)

Gloria, gloria, in excelsis deo!
Gloria, gloria, alleluia, alleluia!

Text: Trad. liturgical text; Music: Jacques Berthier, 1979
Reprinted under ONE LICENSE #A-729324

*Passing of the Peace

As the interlude begins, children ages 3, 4 and 5 will leave with childcare staff;
1st – 5th graders will leave for Children’s Worship with childcare staff.

Following worship, 3s, 4s and 5s may be picked up in Room 108;
1st – 5th graders may be picked up in the back of the Sanctuary.

Welcome of our Guests

If you are our guest today, please test “guest” to 474747 or fill out a guest card located
In the pew rack and place it in the offering plate during worship as your gift to us.

THE WORD OF GOD IS PROCLAIMED AND HEARD

Hebrew Scripture – Ruth 3:1-17; 4:13-17 (NRSV) adapted

Naomi, Ruth’s mother-in-law, said to her, “My daughter, I need to seek some security for you, so that it may be well with you. Now here is our kinsman Boaz, with whose young women you have been working. See, he is winnowing barley tonight at the threshing floor. Now wash and anoint yourself, and put on your best clothes and go down to the threshing floor; but do not make yourself known to the man until he has finished eating and drinking. When he lies down, observe the place where he lies; then, go and uncover his feet and lie down; and he will tell you what to do.” She said to her, “All that you tell me I will do.”

So Ruth went down to the threshing floor and did just as her mother-in-law had instructed her. When Boaz had eaten and drunk, and he was in a contented mood, he went to lie down at the end of the heap of grain. Then she came stealthily and uncovered his feet, and lay down. At midnight the man was startled, and turned over, and there, lying at his feet, was a woman! He said, “Who are you?” And she answered, “I am Ruth, your servant; spread your cloak over your servant, for you are next-of-kin.” He said, “May you be blessed by the Lord, beloved; this last instance of your loyalty is better than the first; you have not gone after young men, whether poor or rich. And now, beloved, do not be afraid, I will do for you all that you ask, for all the assembly of my people know that you are a worthy woman. But now, though it is true that I am a near kinsman, there is another kinsman more closely related than I. Remain this night, and in the morning, if he will act as next-of-kin for you, good; let him do it. If he is not willing to act as next-of-kin for you, then, as the Lord lives, I will act as next-of-kin for you. Lie down until the morning.”
So she lay at his feet until morning, but got up before one person could recognize another; for he said, “It must not be known that the woman came to the threshing floor.” Then he said, “Bring the cloak you are wearing and hold it out.” So she held it, and he measured out six measures of barley, and put it on her back; then he went into the city. She came to her mother-in-law, who said, “How did things go with you, my daughter?” Then she told her all that the man had done for her, saying, “He gave me these six measures of barley, for he said, ‘Do not go back to your mother-in-law empty-handed.’”

So Boaz took Ruth and she became his wife. When they came together, the Lord made her conceive, and she bore a son. Then the women said to Naomi, “Blessed be the Lord, who has not left you this day without next-of-kin; and may his name be renowned in Israel! He shall be to you a restorer of life and a nourisher of your old age; for your daughter-in-law who loves you, who is more to you than seven sons, has borne him.” Then Naomi took the child and laid him in her bosom, and became his nurse. The women of the neighborhood gave him a name, saying, “A son has been born to Naomi.” They named him Obed; he became the father of Jesse, the father of David.

Leader: For the Word of God in scripture,  
for the Word of God among us,  
for the Word of God within us.  

People: Thanks be to God.

*Sermon Hymn

“In Matthew’s Gospel There Are Five Faith Mothers”  
ST. LOUIS

In Matthew’s Gospel there are five faith mothers called by name,  
all ancestors of Jesus Christ, each held in some disdain.  
Now who would think such women would do all God had willed?  
How strange that they were chosen so God’s plan might be fulfilled!

The widow Ruth, Naomi’s kin, left her own land behind  
She went to live in Bethlehem, security to find.  
The child she bore in love helped the bitter women sing,  
and made this faithful immigrant grandmother to a king.

In Matthew’s Gospel there are five faith mothers called by name,  
all ancestors of Jesus Christ, each held in some disdain.  
If God could use these women despite their human plight,  
then we can dare to trust we too, have value in God’s sight.

--Text: Mary Nelson Keithahn

Sermon  
“Love Makes a Way”  
Rev. W. Benjamin Boswell

Musical Reflection  
“In dulci jubilo”  
arr. Kees Schoonenbeek (b. 1947)  
Liselyn Adams, flute; Janice Bradner, piano

THE CONGREGATION RESPONDS TO GOD’S WORD

Church at Prayer  
Allen Davis
The Lord's Prayer
Our God in heaven, hallowed be your name. Your kingdom come, your will be done on earth as it is in heaven. Give us this day our daily bread, and forgive us our trespasses as we forgive those who trespass against us. And lead us not into temptation, but deliver us from evil. For yours is the kingdom and the power and the glory forever. Amen.

Offering
Mobile giving is available – see page 8.
Gifts of loose cash in December benefit the Regional AIDS Interfaith Network, also known as RAIN. RAIN engages the community to transform lives and promote respect and dignity for all people touched by HIV through compassionate care, education and leadership development.

Anthem
“O Loving Parent of the Stars”
Chancel Choir
Joseph Martin
O loving parent of the stars, who spoke and there was light,
send to us your promised son to end the curse of night;
for in his eyes will shine the dawn to burn in us a living song.
Morning Star, shine in us, fill us with light.
Come, O come, Emmanuel.

For long the world had wandered in shadows and in fear.
A promise burned in faithful hearts that Christ would soon appear.
Bring the hope of glory near, bind the wound and dry the tear...

O come, thou dayspring from on high, and cheer us with your light.
Disperse the gloomy clouds of night, and death's dark shadows put to flight.
Come and fill our empty lives. Our hearts as one, are open wide....

*Presentation of Gifts
As the Deacons bring the offering forward, the congregation is asked to stand.
This presentation enacts our self-offering and gratitude to God.

*The Doxology
O Glorious God, to you we bring
All that we are as offering;
Spirit of love among us dwell;
Come, Jesus, our Emmanuel. Amen.

*The Prayer of Dedication
Rev. Leigh Anne Hagerman
THE COMMUNITY IS SENT INTO THE WORLD FOR MINISTRY

*The Procession into the World and Closing of the Bible
“People, Look East”
Number 82
BESANÇON

Benediction
Postlude
“In Dulci Jubilo”
Johann Sebastian Bach (1685-1750)

Following worship, 3s, 4s and 5s may be picked up in Room 108;
1st - 5th graders may be picked up in the back of the Sanctuary.
Leading worship today with Rev. W. Benjamin Boswell, Senior Minister, are Rev. Leigh Anne Hagerman, Church Administrator, Allen Davis, Director of Youth Ministry, and Amiya Davis, Member of the MPBC Youth Ministry.

The Chancel Choir leads worship through music with Dr. Matt Caine, Minister of Music and Worship, John Richardson, Organist, Liselyn Adams, flautist, and Janice Bradner, pianist.

The acolytes are Ian Hull, Addie Hull and Emma Gray Bachrodt.

The sound technician is Van Wilson. The webcast technician is Spencer Rackley.

The Season of Advent and Christmas 2019

**Tuesday, Dec 24 – Christmas Eve**
- Christmas Family Worship | 11:00a in the Sanctuary
- The Music of Christmas | 5:30p in the Sanctuary
- Candlelight Worship with Communion | 6:00p in the Sanctuary

**Sunday, Dec 29**
- Jazz in the Round | 11:00a in Heaton Hall

**Sunday, Jan 5, 2020 – Epiphany Sunday**
- Worship with Communion | 11:00a in the Sanctuary
THEOLOGY OF WORSHIP

Why do we worship?
Worship at Myers Park Baptist is the gathering of a diverse, intergenerational, ecumenical community of faith, celebrating God’s active and timeless presence in the world. In worship, God re-forms our hearts, minds and bodies, and ignites our imaginations with sacred stories—stories that invite us to question, explore mystery, express joy and grief, and deepen our faith. We worship to learn how to develop caring, empowering relationships with each other, and to stay centered in God as the world swirls around us. We worship to be inspired and prepared to exemplify the compassion and justice of Jesus in our church family and in the world. Through worship, God frees and transforms us in heart, mind and body, so we can make a difference within ourselves, in our relationships and in our community.

How do we worship?
Focusing on God, worship at Myers Park Baptist unfolds consistently with the Isaiah 6 scriptural model: praise, confession, pardon, calling to respond, commitment and sending out. All our worship services are built on this ancient structural form, regardless of worship style, venue or theme. Communal practices within worship—radical hospitality, confession and assurance of pardon, passing the peace, silence and listening, spirited hymn singing, presentations of gifts, and active participation in Communion—transform worshipers into newness with God and one another. Themes for services, based on lectionary scriptures, annually portray the narrative arc of God’s redeeming love for humankind.

HOW TO JOIN MYERS PARK BAPTIST CHURCH

Becoming a member of Myers Park Baptist is as easy as filling out a Joining Card. To receive a card or learn more, stop by the Welcome Table in the Narthex.

MOBILE GIVING

You can now text your contributions and offerings to MPBC! It is secure, simple, and efficient:

- Start a new text message to phone number 73256.
- In the message of the text, enter 1900Q, a space, and the amount you want to give (i.e., 1900Q 100).
- The system will return a message to you; click on the link provided and follow instructions.
- You will then receive a receipt to confirm your gift was received. It is that simple!
- Next time, since your setup is already done – just text “1900Q, a space, then amount you wish to give” to 73256.

Questions? Contact Rev. Leigh Anne Hagerman, Church Administrator, at 704.334.7232 x116 or lhagerman@myersparkbaptist.org

❖
Welcome. We’re glad you’re here.
If you are our guest, we’d love to hear a little about you!
• text “guest” to 474747 OR
• fill out a guest card located in the pew rack. Simply return the
  guest card in the offering plates during worship as your gift to us.
If you would like to learn more, stop by the Welcome Table in the
Narthex after worship to speak with one of us.

WEEKLY NEWS

TUESDAY, DECEMBER 24, 2019

CHRISTMAS EVE

11:00a Christmas Family Worship
5:30p The Music of Christmas | 6:00p Candlelight Worship

Our 11:00a Christmas Eve worship offers a kid-friendly, interactive worship experience for
all ages. You will be greeted with familiar carols played on steel drum and piano as you
arrive. The service will include the singing of beloved Christmas carols, the children
singing, a brief meditation by Rev. Ben Boswell, Communion, and candle lighting.

At 5:30p, the prelude to our 6:00p Christmas Eve service will begin with music of the season
presented through organ, piano, and vocal music. You’ll want to be early to hear the festive music
and get a good seat! Our Chancel Choir will lead us in singing beloved Christmas carols, providing
additional seasonal music, a Christmas homily by Rev. Ben Boswell, Communion, and candle
lighting. Rumor has it that a certain associate minister will also be singing!

LETS MAKE HISTORY

TOGETHER FOR MPBC!

Everyone can take part in spreading our message.

We need your help to spread the word about our new marketing campaign. Our goal is to
start a conversation about our church’s identity that reframes how people think about
what it means to be a Baptist, a church, and a religious community in Myers Park. Our
members and friends will always be our best advertisers and marketers. Statistics show
that even in our highly technological world, word of mouth remains the most powerful
tool for church growth. Please support our new campaign by sharing the messages from
our Facebook page on your own social media. Join us in spreading the excitement about
our church with the community and help us make history.
Sharing your financial gifts with our church helps us to embody the love, justice, and compassion of Jesus. Can you help us finish strong? It's not too late to make a stock gift, finish your 2019 financial commitment, or prepay one for 2020 in time to get a 2019 tax deduction. Checks must be postmarked by December 31 and received in the Finance Office by January 10. Stock gifts must be communicated to our office by December 30. To make a stock gift, call us at 704.334.7234 or make a gift through our website via credit card.

We hope you will join us for this casual service in Heaton Hall. Mia McClain will preach "The Year of the Dragon" based on Revelation 12. Our favorite jazz ensemble will provide festive music.

Every Monday and Saturday night, December through March, we host 14 of our homeless neighbors: men, women, children and/or families. Volunteers set up and make beds, drive the church van with our neighbors to and from the Urban Ministry Center, make/serve/share an evening meal, serve as overnight hosts, make sack lunches and provide hospitality for those who have no place to call home. Find more information and volunteer through our website.

What is Advent?
What do the colors of the candles mean?
Why are the scriptures in the lectionary so daunting?
Aren't we supposed be talking about the birth of Jesus?
Join Rev. Ben Boswell, Mia McClain, and Rev. Carrie Veal as they explore this sacred time of Advent amidst the commercialized Christmas chaos. They’ll be putting pop culture references in conversation with the revelatory lectionary passages that hint at a different kind of hope free from the fetters of end-of-the-year sales and obsessive gift-giving. In this dialogue, they hope to carve out a truer meaning of Christmas at what feels like the end of the world. All episodes of this 3-part series are available on our website and iTunes.

**LOOKING AHEAD**

**Mid-Day Women's Bible Study**

Wednesdays | Jan 8 & 22, Feb 5 & 29, Mar 4 & 18, Apr 1, 15 & 29, May 13 & 27 | 1-2:30p | Parlor

**YOUTH MINISTRY KANUGA**

JANUARY 17-19, 2020

Music, laughter and snow? This January, youth in grades 6-12 will retreat to the Kanuga Conference Center in the North Carolina mountains for a fun weekend of community building as we share and learn together. We will have small and large group sessions with plenty of free time throughout. All youth are encouraged to attend. Scholarships are available if needed. Contact Allen Davis for more details. The cost is $200 | discount available if you sign up for the Church-Wide Retreat, as well. Register through our website.

**CHURCH-WIDE RETREAT**

FEBRUARY 28 - MARCH 1, 2020 | MONTREAT, NC

When we went on our retreat in 2018, we were unsure what we should expect. And then any and all expectations were exceeded. Why? Because of those who were there! We were able to break away from our lives. We were able to watch children play, sit with adults and talk, and so much
more. Some went hiking; some took a nap; some went into town to explore. Whatever you wanted to do, you could!

As we are putting this year’s retreat together, we have a team who will be working together to make the 2020 retreat an even better experience. And we would love to hear from you! Let us know about activities you would like. Share an idea for our community play night. Offer your gift of music or worship leading. Maybe you want to give towards our scholarship fund. Whatever it might be, let us know. You can email Rev. Carrie Veal and she will pass along whatever you have to share. Registration is available through our website and we hope you will sign up soon!

Retreat Team: Janet Miller, Rex and Anne Jones, Wendy Strickland, Elizabeth Hunter, Tucker Pearsall, Artemis Elias, and Carrie Veal

COMMUNITY OPPORTUNITIES

MISSIONARY ROUNDTABLE

Rescuing the Need
Responding to the Need

Each Christmas, Missionary Roundtable supports agencies that need help in providing members of our community with fundamental items. This year they collected books and games for Greater Enrichment Program, an after-school program that touches over 500 children in kindergarten through 5th grade. They also collected food and household supplies for Gracious Hands, a ministry that supports homeless women and children by providing them a place to live while building life skills and finding stable employment, leading to stable housing.

This group is welcoming new members. They meet the second Monday of each month at 10:30 in the Parlor. Please contact Jill Kinney Weaver or Gretchen Allen gretnet@gmail.com
Learn more through our website.

COLUMBARIUM EXPANSION PROJECT

Our Columbarium has been at full capacity for several years. In our desire to be able to offer our church community a final resting place, the Board of Deacons recently approved a construction project which will expand our Columbarium by 204 niches, or spaces. We
expect construction to begin in the spring, but would like to offer the opportunity to purchase a niche now to reserve a spot. The cost is $2,500 per niche. One niche can hold the cremains of two persons. To reserve a spot, please call or email Leigh Anne Hagerman (704.334.7232 x 116 | lhagerman@myersparkbaptist.org).

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**FIRST MONDAYS AT 5:00P**

**HANG OUT WITH THE PASTOR**

**Monday, January 6 | 5:00p | The Common Market South End**

Our monthly hang outs will continue into the new year. We gather on the first Monday of each month at 5:00p at The Common Market in South End at 235 W. Tremont Avenue. All are invited to this casual time of fellowship! Bring the family, bring your appetite, or just come and hang out. There is something for everyone. We hope to see you there.

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**CONGREGATIONAL INFORMATION**

![FROM ALL OF US AT MPBC, CORNWELL CENTER & TTVS](churchlogo.png)

*We wish you a very Merry Christmas*

> May your holiday season be full of hope, peace, joy, and love.

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**Holiday Closings**

- **The Church Office** will be closed on Tuesday, December 24 through Thursday, December 26. For the New Year will be closed Tuesday, December 31 through Wednesday, January 1, 2020.
- **The Cornwell Center** will close at 5:00p on Monday, December 23 and will be closed Tuesday, December 24-26. For the New Year will close at 5:00p on Tuesday, December 31 and will be closed Wednesday, January 1, 2020.
- **Through-The-Week School** will be closed Monday, December 23 through Friday, January 3, 2020.

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**Grief Support Groups**

*now available through the Ministry of Congregational Care*

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 Rev. Joe Aldrich. Meeting dates and times to be determined.

SUNDAY SERVICES AND SERMONS
Did you miss a worship service or would you like to experience one again? Our services and sermons are available 24/7 on our website. Watch them or listen on the go. Sermons are also available on iTunes. We are updating our website to make accessing audio and video files even easier. So, check back often. Go to services and sermons now »

Looking for Our Schedule of Activities and Meetings?
An always-current calendar is available on our website and on the ChurchLife App. You can find out how to get the app by searching “Member Directory” on our website.
Access our online calendar

RECURRING OPPORTUNITIES

WEDNESDAYS

Our Wednesday programs and dinners will resume January 8, 2020.

Community Wednesdays
Start the new year off with Community Wednesdays! We have something for everyone.
5:00 Children’s Choir for ages TK - 5th grades
5:00 Awakening Bible Study with Mia McClain
5:00 Coffee Chat with Carrie Veal
5:00 Childcare for ages 3 and younger
6:00 Dinner for everyone

Unveiling Empire: A Study of The Revelation to John | An Awakening Bible Study |
Starting January 8 | 5:00p
Who wrote the Book of Revelation and when? Is it about the end of the world? What’s with all the dragons and sea monsters?
Your knowledge of the Book of Revelation may come from the early 90s rapture-focused series Left Behind, or films like Armageddon and I Am Legend. You may not have flipped through the book in a long time, if ever! Well, come dive into this fascinating apocalyptic letter penned by John of Patmos! Learn about the history, the context, and how John’s Imagery might speak to our current ecological, political, and economical crisis. You won’t want to miss this! Wednesdays from 5-6p.

Dinner
Wednesday nights have been so amazing and we want to keep it that way! We will be offering meals from Creative Catering, Tin Kitchen and more. In order to provide these delicious offerings we will need to increase the cost of our adult meals to $10.00/person. Kids are still $5 and there is a family max of $30. We encourage you to sign up for a month at time to be sure you name is on the list. Visit the church’s website to learn more!
Faith Formation Classes will resume January 5, 2020.
Adults | 9:45 - 10:45a | Education Building | Questions? Contact Mia McClain
Youth | 9:45 - 10:45a | Youth Hall | Contact Allen Davis
Children | 9:45 - 10:45a | Preschool and Elementary Hallways | Contact Rev. Carrie Veal

Children's Sunday Worship (Grades 1-5)
11:00a Sanctuary | pick-up after worship - Transept | Contact Rev. Carrie Veal

Youth Choir will resume January 5. Contact Charlotte Judge.
OUR COVENANT

We, the members of the Myers Park Baptist Church, are a people on a journey of faith. By God’s grace we are experiencing God’s love through Jesus Christ and in the community of the faithful. We are discovering in this experience our freedom to become new creatures and our responsibility to be faithful stewards of our lives and of this world.

We will be open to all new light, strengthened by God and each other in our faith. We will sustain a critical examination of Scripture, belief and ritual as interpreters of God’s active presence in the world. We will accept controversy as a reality of life together and an opportunity for growth toward maturity. We covenant to be a community of God’s new creation and affirm that we are open to all and closed to none.

We covenant to nurture this Church as a community of faith and as an instrument for reconciliation in this world: by worship, by Christian education, by the dedication of our personal and material resources and by all the other ways we express the significance of our lives with God and one another.

We covenant together to be priests celebrating God’s presence in community and in the world, believing we are participants in God’s kingdom on earth.

OUR MINISTERS

Rev. W. Benjamin Boswell
Senior Minister | bboswell@myersparkbaptist.org

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

Rev. Joseph D. Aldrich
Associate Minister | jaldrich@myersparkbaptist.org

Mia M. McClain
Associate Minister | mmclain@myersparkbaptist.org

Rev. Leigh Anne Hagerman
Church Administrator | lhagerman@myersparkbaptist.org

Rev. Carrie Veal
Minister of Children and Community Life | cveal@myersparkbaptist.org

John Richardson
Organist | jrichardson@myersparkbaptist.org

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

Allen Davis
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Pamela Handon
Director of the Cornwell Center | phandon@cornwellcenter.org

Belinda Geuss
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