



Morningside Messenger

PRESBYTERIAN CHURCH

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Serving You

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Church Office Hours 9 a.m.-4 p.m. Mon.-Fri.

November 2009 Worship at Morningside

November 1, 2009

All Saints' Day

Sermon: "Forward by Faith"

Text: Hebrews 11:8-16, 12:1-2

Joanna Adams preaching

The sacrament of communion will be celebrated.

November 8, 2009

Barbara Brown Taylor preaching

Congregational Meeting immediately following worship.

Congregational Birthday Lunch

November 15, 2009

Pledge Sunday

Sermon: "Honey from the Rock"

Texts: John 2:1-11; Psalm 81:1-16

Joanna Adams preaching

November 22, 2009

Christ the King Sunday / Retreat Weekend

Sermon: "Royalty Reinvented"

Text: Luke 23:33-43

Christopher Henry preaching

November 29, 2009

First Sunday of Advent

Sermon: "Unexpected Angels"

Text: Luke 1:26-38

Joanna Adams preaching

The sacrament of baptism will be celebrated.

Sunday Forum



Dear Friends,

One rainy evening toward the end of October, I attended what will probably be my last church finance committee meeting. Over the past 30 years, I have attended more than a few. As usual, the conversation revolved around the financial health of the church. The people gathered around the table in the Session Room worked hard to finalize the 2010 budget so that it could be sent to Session for review and approval. After the meeting as I walked to my car, I found my heart full of gratitude for the dedication of those committee members and for the dedication of so many of you who make time to serve your church in so many different ways. There's not much glory in church committee work, but by your efforts the church is made strong, members are nourished and encouraged in their walk with God, and Christ our Lord is glorified.

This Thanksgiving season, I am especially grateful for:

- The dedication of the Finance Committee, led by Jim Armstrong and Bobbie McCrackin.
- Randy Parrish, church treasurer, whose wisdom and commitment have been invaluable over the years.
- Your financial support, on which everything we do at Morningside depends. This fall, for the first time in more than five years, giving has slumped a bit. I am confident that you will catch up if you need to, then keep up until the end of the year so that Morningside can end 2009 in the black.

The 2010 challenge budget approved by the Session reflects an 8 percent increase, with emphasis on expanding our work with children and youth and in the area of mission. This is a modest increase (last year we grew the budget by 18 percent), reflecting the challenging economic times, but truly essential if we want to continue to grow in our love of God and outreach to our neighbors.

Let's make sure 2010 will be a year of promise. With Christ as our savior and God as our guide, there is nothing to fear and everything to hope for.

These words, written in 1636 by German clergyman Martin Rinkart, strike just the right chord for me this November: *Now thank we all our God with heart and hands and voices, who wondrous things hath done, in whom this world rejoices; who from our mothers' arms, hath blessed us on our way with countless gifts of love, and still is ours today.*

Your pastor,

Joanna

Elders on Call for November

Carolyn Morton	November 1-November 7
Bill Southwood	November 8-November 14
Lynn Hogue	November 15-November 21
Leslie Prince	November 22-November 28
Sarah Beth Gehl	November 29-December 5

Deacons on Call for November

Brad Odom	November 1-November 7
Collier Maxwell	November 8-November 14
Shari Tant	November 15-November 21
Tim Gargis	November 22-November 28
Nan Cunningham	November 29-December 5

'Biggest Weekend of Year' Comes to MPC Nov. 7-8

Bigger than a breadbox! More fun than a barrel of monkeys! All you can eat! One-time only! Pick your superlative, and it applies to everything going on at Morningside Presbyterian Nov. 7-8.

That Saturday is our next Big Fun Day for elementary-schoolers 10 a.m.-1 p.m. Besides general fun, there will be crafts making Christmas cards for seniors and mission projects benefiting the Druid Hills Men's Shelter. Most especially, parents are invited to join the kids for lunch at noon with Rev. Joanna Adams as we celebrate her ministry. RSVPs definitely required! Contact Caroline Tanner (caroline.tanner@hklaw.com or 404 898.8184) to see if you can still join in.



But wait! There's more! No one interested in MPC, its future, renowned preaching or excellent food and fellowship should miss being here Nov. 8. Our worship service will be honored by the presence in the pulpit of the Rev. Barbara Brown Taylor. She is the author of twelve books including, most recently, *An Altar in the World*, and teaches religion at Piedmont College and spirituality at Columbia Theological Seminary.

Next, our congregational meeting demands your presence. Look at this agenda: the vote to allow Joanna Adams to retire, the vote to approve Chris Henry's terms of call as Acting Head of Staff effective January 11, 2010, and election not only of deacons, elders and next year's Officer Nominating Committee, but also the Pastor Nominating Committee who will search for our next pastoral leader. Childcare will continue through the meeting.

And, after the work is done, another delicious lunch for all! How does this sound? Herb-roasted chicken, garlic smashed potatoes, sautéed green beans, spinach Gorgonzola salad, mac and cheese, and birthday cake. The Archive Team will showcase some of their work and the church's memories through the table decorations as we celebrate the church's birthday.

Volunteers are needed Big Time for Big Fun as well as to set up for Sunday's lunch on Saturday afternoon and to serve and clean up on Nov. 8. We really, really need RSVPs for lunch, too, says Program Director Melinda Sandkam who is taking sign-ups for all of the above. (See Page 10 for the Big Happening on Nov. 9!)

Morningside Milestones

- We're all so proud of Elder Sarah Beth Gehl's inclusion in Georgia Trend Magazine's list of "40 Under 40" influential up-and-comers. Sarah Beth's professional life at the Georgia Budget and Policy Institute centers around how governmental decisions affect low-income and most-vulnerable Georgians.
- We're also proud of our latest crop of new members: Eleanor and James Attwood and their eight-month-old Locke, Alan Bremer who with wife Kathy spearheads the new MPC Couples Group, long-time visitors Jeffrey Harris and Will Herndon, and Betty and Domenick Treschitta along with twin six-month-olds Nick and Candy.
- Proud? That also describes the smiles on the faces of Marlo and Todd McDonald at the baptism of their son, Gabriel Kirby, Oct. 18. And then there are members Whitney Maloy and Brandon Griggs who become husband and wife in our sanctuary Oct. 10.
- To continue the pride theme, congratulations to Shannon and Lisa Harris and all the walkers and contributors, who as of the morning before the Oct. 18 AIDS Walk had already raised \$4048 to fight this cruel disease.

Professor Will Provide Insight on Calvin's Biblical Theology

We're Presbyterians, following a tradition of Reformed Theology largely stemming from the teachings of John Calvin. Come learn more about what that means Sunday, Nov. 1, at 9:45 a.m. in Room 201 as Morningside welcomes a distinguished guest teacher, The Rev. Dr. George Stroup. He is the J.B. Green Professor of Theology at Columbia Theological Seminary and the author, most recently, of *Before God*. Dr. Stroup is an expert in the writings and theology of John Calvin, whose 500th birthday we celebrated earlier this year. The class that day will be titled, "Calvin on the Bible," If you've not attended the Morningside Bible Class, this would be a great day to experience it!

On Nov. 8 and 15, the adult group will study the Letters of John. Found near the end of the New Testament and among the briefest of all Biblical books, these three letters are often overlooked in the contemporary church. However, their relative brevity obscures the depth of theological truth and beauty of style that appear in First, Second, and Third John. We will read these letters in their entirety, focusing on what message they may send to the church today.

The Morningside Bible Class will not meet on Nov. 22, due to our Congregational Retreat in Montreat. Sunday, Nov. 29, begins our annual Advent Study, this year titled, "Advent Through the Eyes of Those Who Waited," a journey from the Old Testament Prophets to the crowded city of Bethlehem.

Men's, Women's Groups Announce November Topics

Theology on Tap invites all men Tuesday, Nov. 3, at 7 p.m. to the home of Philip Hawkins (4291 Briarcliff Road, 30345). After supper, Assoc. Pastor Chris Henry will lead a discussion, "Why We Give," on the role of stewardship in the Christian tradition and our own lives. We will share our own perspectives on this important topic and also examine the theological and biblical foundations of stewardship. For more information, contact Chris.

The next morning, Nov. 4 at 9:15 a.m. in Room 201, the Rev. Joanna Adams will discuss Jesus' anguished cry, "My God, my God, why have you forsaken me?" (Matthew 27:46), continuing her series on "The Bible's Greatest Questions." This is the next-to-the-last month for Joanna's Women's Bible Study! Come at 9 a.m. for coffee and pastry; drop the kids off in the nursery and share our pastor's insight into this heartfelt issue.

Final Sunday Forum Stresses Religious Interdependence

Dr. Laurie Patton, award-winning teacher and Charles Howard Candler Professor and Professor of Early Indian Religions at Emory University and former chair of the Department of Religion, at Emory, wound up MPC's Sunday Forum series on Morningside in Conversation with Other Faiths Oct. 18 with a compelling discussion of what's been termed "pragmatic pluralism." She calls it a moral obligation to study our own interdependence.

Following the example of biodiversity in nature, she argued that various faith traditions actually need each other to be more true to themselves. Dr. Patton collects instances of how this plays out in the real world, such as how a Muslim family traditionally holds the keys to the Church of the Sepulcher in Jerusalem because it assures all Christians equal access.

An individual option might be to have your own "secondary tradition," a faith you engage with to "keep you honest." Jewish by choice, Dr. Patton says her religion of conscience is Hinduism/Buddhism because of their emphasis on the removal of suffering in all creation.

Morningsiders Leave Soon for Church-wide Retreat

Some 60 strong, a contingent of Morningsiders will leave Friday, Nov. 20, for the church's first (at least in a long while) member retreat to the peaceful mountain setting of Montreat, NC.

On the theme, "A Gift to Be Simple," the retreat will be led by Rev. Joanna Adams and our guest speaker, the Rev. Dr. Thomas K. Tewell, executive director of Macedonia Ministries, a program for church renewal in the Presbytery of Greater Atlanta. Tom led this year's Session retreat at the Adams' mountain cabin.

Participants are asked to arrive by 6 p.m. on Friday. Montreat is about a four-hour drive from Atlanta. MPCers will stay at the William Black Lodge, a three-level stone building with fireplace and rocking-chair porch. Time has been built into the schedule for group and individual activities, which might include hiking, window shopping in nearby Black Mountain, a trip into Asheville to visit the Biltmore estate, a visit to the Appalachian folk-art center or just rocking and reading on the porch. Retreat organizer Sarah Brownlee reminds, "Dress for the mountains! In late November we could get anything from warm sunshine to snow."

The group will return after worship on Sunday, Nov. 22. Anyone interested in driving or riding in a carpool should contact Sarah at rsbrownlee1046@att.net.

Finance Committee Discusses What It Costs to 'Do Church'

Including salaries, utilities and our myriad of worship, educational and mission activities, it costs just under \$14,000 every week to operate Morningside Presbyterian Church. The latest Finance Committee report shows that as of Sept. 30, we were 3 percent, or \$14,778, below our planned budget for the year. Despite our best efforts at cost control, we've had unanticipated building costs, some associated with flooding, as well as removal of dangerous trees and overdue air-conditioning replacements.

Operations Ministries, which includes Finance, is looking for better ways to keep everyone informed about our church's financial status. In the meantime, everyone is encouraged to make up—or keep up—their pledged giving.

MPC Department of Connections

Nov. 8 – The RHO Readers push back their discussion of E.F. Benson's satirical novel *Miss Mapp* to 1:30 p.m. due to the congregational meeting and lunch.

Nov. 8 – Don't plan to Pick-a-Pan. Lydia's Circle will provide the lunch items for Common Ground for Nov. 10.

Nov. 15 – Don't miss the Cherub Choir during the morning worship service! And don't miss the epic contest between our fourth- through sixth-graders and Revs. Joanna and Chris in Fellowship Hall after worship as they celebrate Pizza, Ping Pong and Pastors.

Nov. 18 – Emilie Paille will share stories of her sojourn in Liberia this summer with the One Gray Hair luncheon attendees (noon in Fellowship Hall).

Nov. 23 – Rev. Noelle York-Simmons, associate rector at All-Saints Episcopal Church, will be guest speaker at the Women's Roundtable at the home of Lynn Young. (6:30 p.m. at 277 The Prado, 30309).

November Birthdays

1 Gabe Couret	6 Samuel Wingert	15 Rhonda McIntosh	27 Loretta Pinkston
1 Barbara Brooks	6 Lindy Menefee	17 Art Sweum	26 Jack Perez
3 Miguel Garcia	7 John T. Moore III	20 Anne Menefee	28 Tony Fishpaw
3 Ginny Fergus	8 Kelly Myers	20 Robert McIntosh	28 Bret Adams
3 Ann Benson	9 Anna Garcia	21 Nell Roberts	28 Richard Brownlee
4 Will James	10 Maria Ragland	22 Harrison Hackney	28 Kathleen Pramik
4 Tara Parrish	10 Malcolm Young	22 Clint Holmes	28 Mark Neill
5 Pamela Wilson	11 Amy DeBaets	23 Sherry Walls	29 William Hackney
6 Mac Frampton	11 Grace Howard	24 Geneva Bourne	29 Leslie Prince
	12 Amelia Weltner	24 Bradley Odom	
	15 Joseph Cochran	27 Laura Marshall	

‘Pew Crew’ Delivers TLC Every Sunday

Maybe your mother, like mine, accused you of waiting for some mysterious elves to come in and make the bed, pick up the socks and perform other often-shunned chores. The elves never showed up at my house, but at MPC we have the equivalent—our faithful Pew Crew.

You may have noted them moving up and down the rows after worship services, collecting friendship-pad sheets, discarded bulletins, communion cups and personal items left behind—more about that in a minute. True to their motto “Cleanliness is next to godliness,” they also straighten out the racks and replace hymnals and pew Bibles left askew. All stray paper is turned in to be recycled. As one member of the crew said, “It’s a satisfying way to indulge my OCD!”

Crew coordinator Faye McKay-Clegg is looking for a few more helping hands. She notes that the crew usually completes its work within 10 minutes after the worship service, depending on how many of the crew are present. Members don’t have to inform her if they’re going to miss any given Sunday; she says there usually is an adequate number of helping hands.

The current Pew Crew consists of Shirley Adair, Jim Antenucci, Ann Bowers, Lynn and Tom Daniel, Mary Leight and Bart Engram, James Klotz, Greg Morton and Maria Ragland. To sign up, contact Faye at JClegg2473@aol.com or 404 325.2622. And, while on duty, Pew Crew members get to wear nifty little badges!

As for those sunglasses, umbrellas, keys, cell phones, personal Bibles and the like left behind every week, most are stored in the office, in Church Administrator Anna Best’s upper left-hand desk drawer. Bumpershoots are hung on the office coat rack.

Next time you get your cell phone back or notice our ‘elves’ returning the pews and racks to order, take time to say thanks to the Pew Crew.



A few of the Pew Crew, l-r, Lynn Daniel, James Klotz, Tom Daniel, Maria Ragland, Jim Antenucci, Faye McKay-Clegg and Ann Bowers.



*Glory be to God for dappled things—
 For skies of couple-color as a brinded cow;
 For rose-moles all in stipple upon trout that swim;
 Fresh-firecoal chestnut falls; finches’ wings;
 Landscape plotted and pieced—fold, fallow and plough;
 And all trades, their gear and tackle and trim.
 All things counter, original, spare and strange;
 Whatever is fickle, freckled (who knows how?)
 With swift, slow; sweet, sour; adazzle, dim;
 He fathers-forth whose beauty is past change.
 Praise him.*

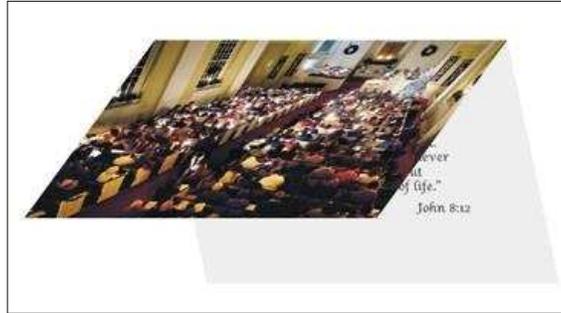
--Gerard Manley Hopkins

HAVE A SAFE, HAPPY AND BLESSED THANKSGIVING

Cards, Cookbooks Offer Help for Holidays, Help for Mission

Besides adding to the joy and spiritual nourishment of the holiday season, MPC has a couple of practical suggestions as well.

Instead of combing the card aisle for something unique, how about greeting your Christmas card list with a memory of the 2008 Service of Lessons and Carols in our Sanctuary? The full-color card captures our pastors, Joanna and Chris, passing the light down the center aisle and the inside features a quotation from the Gospel of John. Boxes of 15 cards are available from the church office and cost \$15, with proceeds over production costs benefiting mission projects.



And, even though you may already have given a copy of *Morningside Cooks* to everyone at the top of your gift list, they are still available for your new friends, housewarming or hostess gifts or an extra wedding or shower present. These recipes are all MPC tested and approved! Every cent of the \$12 cost goes to our mission work. The cookbook committee will be selling copies during the Fellowship Hour Nov. 15 and Dec. 13 or you can always pick some up in the church office. It's great to have a copy or two on hand for those last-minute gift needs.

Three-D Event Makes Wonderful Gift for Harried Parents

Morningside Presbyterian invites parents of infants through elementary-age kids to Drop, Decorate or Dine on Monday, Dec. 7, from 5 to 8 p.m. while church members gift them with free holiday babysitting. The babysitting event has become an annual MPC and preschool tradition where parents can Drop off the kids while shopping, Decorating, enjoying Dining together or just plain Dropping into an easy chair for a hard-earned rest.

Program Director Melinda Sandkam reports she's already started a list! She needs your reservations including the ages of your children—but she also needs volunteer signups from among those with no kids at home or whose kids are old enough to actually help with refreshments and activities. E-mail her at msandkam@morningsidepc.org.

Forum to Feature Juvenile Justice, Safety

The Scriptures resound with reminders we're obliged to care for the weak and vulnerable among us. MPC's Advocacy Committee invites everyone to learn more about issues surrounding our civic policies regarding children and youth and how to mobilize for improvement.

On Sunday, Nov. 29, our guest speakers for the Sunday after-worship Forum in Room 201 will be State Sen. Nan Orrock, who will give a legislative preview, and Mindy Binderman, advocacy director for Voices for Georgia's Children. Mindy will talk about JUSTGeorgia, a coalition working for a complete overhaul of the state's juvenile justice code. The Presbytery of Greater Atlanta and the Interfaith Children's Movement are members of the JUSTGeorgia coalition.

More Mission Memos

- ☐ Help the Hungry: Six big Atlanta Community Food Bank barrels will arrive Nov. 13. We have four weeks to fill them with canned and other non-perishable foodstuffs.
- ☐ Help the Homeless: Young Adults, you're up for November to provide dinner at the Druid Hills Men's Shelter. Coming up, signups for sleepovers at the Shearith Israel Women's Shelter Dec. 3-6.
- ☐ Help the World: We already did! Our Peacemaking Offering in October raised \$1750 and we added in \$250 from our Peacemaking budget to bring the total to \$1820, a practical addition to our prayers for peace on earth.
- ☐ Help the City: It's not until next Mar. 23-28, but we're committed to go to Washington, DC, to assist The Pilgrimage, an outreach of the Church of the Pilgrims. We'll be seeking 15 workers and the cost will average \$31 per day per traveler. Learn more at www.thepilgrimage.org and contact Brad Odom at jbradleyodom@gmail.com today to secure a spot.

Your Session at Work: October 19 Meeting

- The Facilities Expenditures Task Force, led by **Sarah Tomaka**, finished establishing and prioritizing needed work on church facilities. The task force used the Vision 2012 strategic plan to guide its work and also considered additional factors such as safety, energy cost savings, *A Time of Promise*, preventative maintenance, and improving building infrastructure and appearance. The task force handed off its work to Operations Ministries.
- Team leader for Operations Ministries, **John Watson**, reported that he and Facilities Manager **Randy Young** are tracking monies spent on facilities to identify trends and will report their findings to Session. In other words, the study identifies what have we spent to repair or replace at the church and when. John said that 2009, our first year since completion of work for *A Time of Promise*, has been a year of learning about the cost of operating and maintaining facilities at the church now and in the future. Findings will guide Operations Ministries as they do 2010 budget planning.
- **Bobbie McCrackin** reviewed the third quarter Treasurer's Report on behalf of Treasurer **Randy Parrish**. She noted that receipts were lagging despite a slight uptick in September. Bobbie and **Daisy Ottmann** agreed to start publishing pledges made/pledges paid updates in *Life @ Morningside*, this newsletter and the MPC e-mail "This Week at Morningside." Their objective is to keep members better informed about the church's finances and the importance of paying pledges on time and for non-pledgers to consider the importance of their contributions to the collection plates.
- Mission Chair **Sarah Tomaka** presented to the session proposed special offerings for 2010: the Souper Bowl offering on Feb. 7; One Great Hour of Sharing on Apr. 4; Mother's Day offering to Presbyterian Homes on May 9; Thornwell Home for Children on Aug. 29; and the Peacemaking offering on Oct. 3. Session unanimously approved the team's proposal.
- Session approved a plan to celebrate **Rev. Joanna Adams's** 30 years of ministry presented by **Bobbie McCrackin**. A gala dinner in the Lullwater Ballroom at the Emory Conference Center will be held Saturday evening, Jan. 9, 2010. Please be sure to save this date on your calendar.

Ruthlyn Newell
Clerk of Session

A Letter From the Editor

Dear Fellow Morningsiders,

Back (in the Dark Ages) when I was a little kid, putting a quarter in the collection plate on Sunday was a big deal for me. When I began attending this church some 40 years later, I still thought as a child. My weekly offering in no way reflected my gratitude for God's abundant blessings in my life, my current economic circumstances—or the church's needs to continue its mission to the glory of God and his creation. I've grown since then.

Maybe your journey's been like mine and you've never thought beyond putting a token gift into the plate on Sunday. Nov. 15 is the first day we'll be collecting pledges of money as well as of our time and talents for 2010. I urge you to read the stewardship brochure carefully and prayerfully. The need for Morningside Presbyterian to budget meaningfully for the services we all say we want depends upon being able to forecast what the church will receive. If you honestly do not feel you can commit to a pledge, no matter how small, please remember to honor that collection plate as it passes you.

In peace and hope,
Daisy Ottmann

Enjoy Early Thanksgiving with Family-Friendly Gathering

Once again, Morningside Presbyterian Preschool and Morningside Presbyterian Church are joining forces for an evening of fun, our second annual Thanksgiving Gathering to which everyone is invited. It's set for Monday, Nov. 9, from 5:45 to 6:30 p.m. in Fellowship Hall.

Besides a dinner all ages will enjoy, the evening will feature the young singers from our children's choirs, face-painting, crafts and story-telling.

The Thanksgiving Gathering wraps up a busy weekend for the Morningside community (see story on Page 3), but of course we need volunteers to make the event run smoothly and ensure that everyone has a good time. Find one or more of these volunteer opportunities that fits into your schedule and be in touch with Melinda Sandkam. Mimi Bittick is the Thanksgiving event chair.

Calling All Angels—and Shepherds, Magi and Sheep!

Sign ups for the annual Christmas Pageant—this year set for Dec. 20—are open through Wednesday, Nov. 4. Kids from age four through fifth grade will practice this month on Nov. 15 and Nov. 29, and Dec. 6, 13, 20 from 9:45 to 10:45 a.m and on Saturday, Dec. 19, from 9 to 11 a.m. Also, volunteers are needed to sew costumes, assist at practices and much more! See Melinda for details.

