

Notes about Worship at MPC

Welcome! We are so glad you are here. For those who are visiting MPC, please stop by and introduce yourself to our pastor, Courtney Pittman, or to one of the ushers. We want to celebrate your presence! We know there are a lot of demands on your time, so we are thrilled that you have chosen to spend your Sunday morning at MPC!

Children's Church—Children age 4 and up are invited to join our leaders for fun and faith in Children's Church located in the fellowship building following Let the Children Come. Pick up is immediately following the service in the fellowship hall. There is a nursery available for children under 4.

Stewardship—Should you feel called to give today, ushers will be passing around the offering plates during the Invitation to Generosity. Giving is also available online at <https://madisonpresbyterian.church/generosity>.

Language—The words we use are important! So often we go into "autopilot" during worship and we miss the meaning of the words we say each Sunday. In an effort to be more conscious of the language we use during worship, some words in our liturgy will change monthly; but please know that you may pray in whatever way you feel comfortable. We are family here!

Coming Up in the Life of the Church

Wednesday Morning Bible Study: The Bible—it's one of the most influential books in human history. It explores the big questions of why we exist. It's inspired many people to do amazing things...and it has confused many others. And you've probably got at least one Bible sitting around somewhere. Many of us have read the Bible or heard parts of the Bible read all of our lives...but what is it exactly and where did it come from? Join the Wednesday morning Bible Study as we learn about the Bible—the different literary styles, the plot, the characters, and how it all fits together to tell one big unified story. This is for everyone who wants to know more about how to read the Bible and get the most out of it. Beginners and more experienced readers will find a deeper level of appreciation and understanding of this most powerful and life-changing book. Each Wednesday, **10:00 am—11:30 am in the church library**. Come and bring a friend.

Young at Heart will meet Thursday, March 14, 11:30 am at Cracker Barrel followed by dominoes and canasta in the fellowship hall. For more information contact June Jones at cjwjones0@gmail.com.

Looking ahead.....for our Easter services, we will be collecting **new t-shirts and athletic shorts (for men, women, and children—all sizes) for the Family Protection Center in Morgan County**. The center handles sexual assault cases for adults and children—from initial intake and forensic exams/interviews all the way through assistance with the judicial process. These donations will be given to men, women, and children following forensic examinations.

Opportunities for Outreach and Mission

Ministry Bags for March: We will be collecting items for Pup Packs. Pup Packs began as a ministry of the Episcopal Church of the Advent in 2009. In an effort to combat childhood hunger and improve school performance, this ministry provides supplemental food over the weekends for children who might not have the food they need at home. For over 50% of the children in Morgan County Primary and Elementary Schools, school meals may be the only food they have. Pup Packs is run entirely by volunteers and has no overhead other than the cost of food. Donations of money and food enable the program to run. Volunteers shop for the food and then groups of volunteers meet on Fridays to pack the bags and deliver them to the primary and elementary schools. Once delivered, school counselors discreetly distribute them to the children who have been identified as needing the extra help provided by Pup Packs. Siblings who do not attend the elementary or primary schools are included and so many of the participants carry home two or more bags each weekend. Currently and overage of 160 children are served each week. Please choose from the following list to put in your Ministry Bag: pop-top chicken noodle soup or ravioli, instant oatmeal packs, small boxes of raisins, small containers of applesauce, cereal bars or peanut butter crackers.

Our Outreach Ministry is providing opportunities throughout the year to serve with nonprofit organizations in our community. For the month of March, they are spotlighting Habitat for Humanity. Our church has a long history with Habitat for Humanity. When Habitat for Humanity of Morgan County was first organized, founding board members and the Lead Builder were from Madison Presbyterian. Today, Habitat's Board includes four church members and our Lead Builder is Hiram Johnston. Our MPC Outreach budget includes supporting Habitat for Humanity financially. On any given Saturday morning, you will find five or six church members volunteering on the Habitat build site. Habitat's mission: Seeking to put God's love into action, bringing people together to build homes, communities and hope. Home ownership starts with applicants qualifying for a loan. Once approved, the selected home owner, along with friends and family, are required to put in at least 200 hours of sweat equity building. Then, the family moves into the home, leasing from Habitat for six months. Finally, the home owner meets with a closing attorney to close on their home, becoming a proud homeowner with a mortgage. Our church family (16 years and older) are invited to participate in our current home build at 1190 Wheat Street in Madison. Please join us on Saturday morning, March 16, 8:30 am—12:30 pm. We are in the final weeks of this build and anticipate volunteers will be painting and landscaping. We'd love to have a big group representing Madison Presbyterian and supporting this ministry. If you have any questions, please contact Christie Jones at chris

Sunday, March 10, 2024
11:00 AM
The Fourth Sunday in Lent



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(706) 342-4350 fax
www.madisonpresbyterian.church

Gathering as God's Beloved

Gathering Music

Chiming of the Hour

Prelude

Welcome

*Call to Worship

On our worst days,

God is good.

On our best days,

God is good.

When life is consistent,

God is good.

And when life turns on its head,

God is good.

Day and night, Monday through Sunday,

God is good. God is here. God is love.

Hold tight to that good news. Let us worship God!

Rev. Sarah A. Speed/A Sanctified Art LLC/sanctifiedart.org

*Hymn 634

To God Be the Glory

*Confessing Together

Rev. Sarah A. Speed/A Sanctified Art LLC/sanctifiedart.org

Holy God, we often find ourselves moving through a world that does not make sense. Like Peter, we want to yell out, “This should not happen!” We want to control scenarios beyond our reach. We want to hold your world in our hands. Forgive us for the moments when we lead with declarations instead of curiosity. Forgive us for arguing when we could listen. Forgive us for fixating on one truth, when we could open ourselves up to many. Soften our hard edges and teach us how to listen. With hope in our hearts we pray... (We continue in silence....) Amen.

*Assurance of God's Love

Adapted from Rev. Sarah A. Speed/A Sanctified Art LLC/sanctifiedart.org

Friends, no matter how many times you have dug your heels in, no matter how many fights you have wanted to pick with God, no matter how many times you have disagreed, raged, or clung to what you know instead of embracing holy change—we worship a God of grace. Nothing can separate us from God's love, not even a stubborn attitude or a tense heart. So hear and believe the good news of the gospel: God's love for us will always be deeper than we can imagine. We are seen. We are loved. And we are forgiven. Now follow Peter, and go be the Church in the world. **We are free to try again. Alleluia, Amen.**

*Response to God's Grace (Hymn 582, verse 1)

Glory to God, whose goodness shines on me, and to the Son, whose grace has pardoned me, and to the Spirit, whose love has set me free. As it was in the beginning, is now and ever shall be. Amen.

*Passing of the Peace

May the peace of our Lord Jesus Christ be with you all!

And also with you!

Proclaiming the Word

Let the Children Come!

Prayer for God's Wisdom

First Reading: Psalm 107:1-3, 17-22

Holy wisdom, holy word. **Thanks be to God.**

Anthem

Surely He Has Borne Our Grievs

Lloyd Larson

Second Reading: Matthew 16:21-23

Holy wisdom, holy word. **Thanks be to God.**

Sermon

Responding to the Word

*Hymn 475

Come Thou Fount of Every Blessing

*Affirming our Faith

Rev. Sarah A. Speed/A Sanctified Art LLC/sanctifiedart.org

I believe in a God of second chances, a God who sees through my stubbornness and holds my fear with tenderness. I believe that this God of second chances uses ordinary people like Peter to do good in the world. Therefore, I believe and hope that God can use me too. I believe that from time to time, God invites us to imagine the impossible. I believe that from time to time, God invites us to change our minds. This change is holy and important work, although challenging. When fear and scarcity plague me, or when the impossible feels out of reach, I believe that God meets me with grace and invites me to follow. Thanks be to God for a love like that. Amen.

Prayer of the People and Lord's Prayer

Our Creator who art in heaven, hallowed be thy name. Thy kingdom come, thy will be done, on earth as it is in heaven. Give us this day our daily bread; and forgive us our debts, as we forgive our debtors; and lead us not into temptation, but deliver us from evil. For thine is the kingdom and the power and the glory, forever. Amen.

Invitation to Generosity

Offertory

*Response (Hymn 606)

Praise God, from whom all blessings flow;

Praise God, all creatures here below;

Praise God, above ye heavenly host;

Praise Father, Son and Holy Ghost. Amen.

*Prayer of Gratitude

Being the Church in the World

*Hymn 720

Jesus Calls Us

*Charge and Blessing

Postlude

*Please stand in body or in spirit

Serving in Worship

Rev. Dale Chapin —Guest Pastor

Rev. Peter Thornton—Guest Pastor

Karisa Seymour—Music Director

Meghan Shafer—Accompanist

Auja Stearns—Acolyte

Tommy Arthur—Communications Technologist