

Mt. Pleasant UMC Newsletter

February 2019

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Announcements:

Inclement Weather - If the church services are to be canceled, the trustees will send an announcement on the MP Announcements email.

Sermons can now be heard on line.

Bible Study: A Bible study of Isaiah is being planned. It will be on Mondays from 7-8 pm. Pastor Tony said Isaiah is considered the Gospel of the Old Testament. Please contact Gail Mayner at 703-431-2931 or maynerz2@maynerz.com to order a study book and please read through Isaiah to get an overview before we begin. We will come together to find strength and comfort in times of trial, to conquer fear when our world is shaking, to enjoy a rich worship experience with God, and to experience God's comfort and love.

Do Circumstances frighten you? Does sin make you feel guilty? Are your plans falling apart? "Comfort, comfort My people!" was the good news the Prophet Isaiah proclaimed to God's people centuries ago and his message still applies today. Isaiah not only reveals God's prophetic plan for Israel, but also God's power and peace for all who trust Him. Please join us for this study.

Backpack Buddies: We are joining Mt. Olivet in the back pack buddies project by providing 30 bags the third week of each month for needy kids at Lovettsville Elementary School. We plan to assemble these bags after our third Sunday brunch. Sue Cangemi is the contact person to contribute the following items for each bag:

- 1 hot meal (such as single serve of Chef Boy R Dee, mac & cheese, etc.)
- 1 breakfast item (individual box of cereal or oatmeal)
- 2 juice boxes
- 1 individual fruit cup or applesauce
- 1 snack/cookie package

Ben Seidle will discuss his work in Germany on Tuesday, February 19th. Stay tuned for more details.

Dear Members and Friends of Mt. Pleasant-Mt. Olivet UM Churches,

Greetings in the name of our Lord, Jesus Christ.

It is a distinct pleasure to have been appointed by Bishop Sharma Lewis as the interim pastor of Mt. Pleasant and Mt. Olivet UM Churches. Having served as your Winchester District Superintendent for the past 8 years, I am somewhat familiar with the two churches and the community. Yet, during the first month of my appointment I have arrived at a much deeper appreciation for the ministry of both. Being in the northern Loudoun County area on a regular basis, meeting with members, worshiping together, praying together and exploring God's call upon us as disciples of Jesus have served to inform me of the vitality and importance of our call to ministry in this part of God's world.



I wish the Rev. Tony Forstall all the best in his retirement. I am blessed by his ministry among us and count him a dear friend. I pray that God will continue to bless him and use him in his call to ministry in retirement, whatever that may be. I look forward to ministering in Word, Sacrament, Order and Service. Being part-time will be something new to me as well as for you, the members. I'm certain a new rhythm of ministry will develop that will allow for God to continue using us in making disciples for the transformation of the world.

It is an important time in the life of our United Methodist Church and as such, it is an important time in the life of Mt. Pleasant and Mt. Olivet. Thus, I invite you to join me in the following:

- I invite you to be in daily prayer for the called General Conference of the UMC which will meet in St. Louis, February 23-26, 2019. This is the body of our Church which will determine our way forward around the issue of human sexuality, marriage and ordination. Please join me in praying that God will do a "God thing" providing us a way forward together as a truly "united United Methodist Church."

- I invite you to join Bishop Sharma Lewis in reading the Holy Scriptures together this year using the daily readings our Episcopal leader has put forward at the following link:
<https://www.vaumc.org/pages/bishop-lewis/2019biblechallenge>.
- I invite you to pray daily that God will begin even now to raise up the next appointed, full-time pastor for our church. The Bishop and Cabinet will be meeting during the next few months making appointments with our new pastor arriving on July 1. The Bishop and Cabinet desire and need our prayers.

I look forward to a fruitful 6 months of ministry together with you. Thank you for your hospitality in receiving me. Pray for me. Keep telling me your names. Invite your family and friends to worship. Serve the Lord with gladness.

May the peace of Christ be with you, now and forever.

In Christ's Service,

Larry Thompson
Interim Pastor

Our Annual Santa Visit

by Debbie Ridgeway

Once again Mt. Pleasant had its annual visit from Ole Saint Nick. What used to be an enjoyment for the children at Mt. Pleasant is now more of a joy for the older generation and senior citizens. We still enjoy getting our orange and our box of candy from Santa's helpers and we still enjoy getting our picture taken and hugs from Santa. I've been racking my brain on how long Santa has been visiting Mt. Pleasant and I know for sure it's been at least 36 years, because that's how old our oldest son is. We've enjoyed each and every Santa that has ever shown up at Mt. Pleasant. A BIG THANK YOU to the Santa's that have blessed us year after year. Here's a little story I found and wanted to share it with all you.



HOW DAN PERKINS, EXECUTIVE PASTOR OF WESTGATE CHURCH, BRINGS SANTA TO CHURCH

One Sunday, Pastor Perkins was stepping off the stage when he noticed a great man on the front row. He had a bushy white beard and even wore a red sweater. Perkins couldn't help but ask him if he had ever played Santa Claus. He laughed— "Ho Ho Ho! No, I haven't!"—as if it were an odd idea. "Can you act?" Perkins asked.

He replied he couldn't. But why act when you're the genuine article?

The gentleman's name was Mel, and that meeting launched his career as St. Nick. As a worship pastor, Perkins has written and produced over a dozen original shows for churches. These have been staples in WestGate's outreach ministry. To reach a professional-level production value, WestGate "would spend hundreds of thousands of dollars on shows," says Perkins. However, the turnout was usually good. In *Do You Believe?* Perkins featured Santa Claus as the narrator, played by Mel. The story is modern-day and based on true events, but it has a clear gospel lesson—a lesson an entire community hears from the mouth of Santa Claus.

"The church needs to use this kind of devices that are already attractive to the world," says Perkins. Santa is a familiar, generally-liked face with a backstory everyone already knows. He's a pre-packaged mouthpiece for the gospel.

Mel was really getting into character. In fact, he was becoming so popular that WestGate hosted a "Breakfast with Santa." After children scrambled onto his lap and told him what they wanted for Christmas, "Santa" would listen carefully, and then he would ask them: **"Do you know what Santa wants for Christmas? He wants everyone to know that Christmas is about Jesus."**

Mel took the red suit beyond WestGate. He and his wife, Linda, frequently volunteer for the Indio Youth Task Force, a nonprofit based in Indio, CA, where they deliver toys and food to hundreds of needy families while—you guessed it—dressed convincingly as Mr. and Mrs. Claus.

Should Santa Claus come to church? In Dan's view: Yes, if he declares the gospel.

Saying Farewell to Pastor Tony



New Awning



By Debbie Ridgeway

One of the items on the Trustee's list that was agreed on was to design and install an awning for the church basement door that could keep you dry when opening the door. Many thanks to David Wilt who designed it, built it, and installed it. Also, kudos to Randy Coates in helping with the installation on January 26

Trustees Committee Update

By Terry Ridgeway

The Trustees wanted to report on some completed and upcoming projects that have occurred since the last newsletter.

1. Dead Ash tree trunks are still standing and anyone who is looking for firewood is welcome to cut on remaining trees. Contact a trustee if interested.
2. Getting estimates to maybe replace the church basement floor.
3. Completed electrical issue and now the lighted church cross and church fans are on separate circuits.

4. Installed a plaque on the new playground swing set in memory of Rudy Wilt. When the weather warms up we will dedicate the swing set by Pastor Larry.
5. New kitchen faucet installed and drain fixed.
6. New door handle/lock installed on upstairs restroom.
7. Power washed brick steps and sidewalk going from front of church to basement.
8. Trustees at this time are in charge of the Columbarium details and people purchasing niches. Church members can purchase a niche for \$750, and Non-Church members can purchase one for \$1500. A fee of \$50 for opening/closing the niche applies. Purchaser contacts Enders and Shirley in Berryville for engraving and they pay \$225 for single engraving and \$275 for double.
9. Basement door awning being planned to keep rain/snow off persons when entering basement.
10. Revisiting the cost of a new information sign that goes in the rock/stone monument in front of church.
11. May replace the church oil tank because of sediment in bottom of tank or reroute the exit line higher in the tank to solve issue.

In case you do not know who the current Trustees (listed below) are, you may contact a trustee for any issues within the church, (i.e. air conditioner or furnace not working, plumbing problem, lights not working, etc.). Also, if you have a good idea/suggestion that can make the church a better place for each one of us, feel free to contact a trustee and we will listen to your idea. All Trustee projects go to our bi-monthly meeting and then to the Administrative Council meetings for final approval and vote.

Billy Coates - Chairman
Terry Ridgeway - Vice Chair & Secretary
Kevin Barr
Donald Fletcher
Mark Ridgeway
Rex Shipley
Jim VanWagoner
David Wilt

Wonders of God's Creation:

By Charlie Talbot

I know I'm usually pretty goofy, but this one is a tad more serious, Especially for all of us living out here in the country. I read in "Handyman" magazine that we should not kill house centipedes because they are known for killing unwelcome pests in your home. They kill roaches, moths, flies, silverfish and termites, to name a few. They don't create any type of nest or webs, nor do they eat wood or wool. They don't carry fatal diseases and just want to go after the "bugs". Not to mention that they move like lightning when threatened.

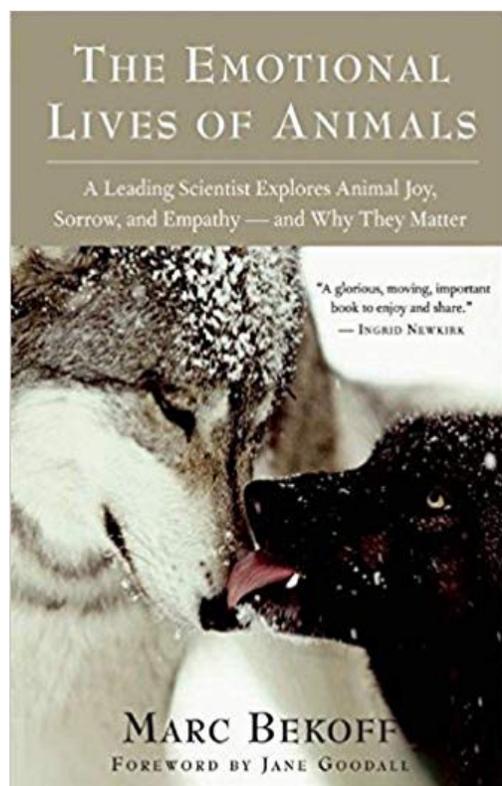
The Emotional Lives of Animals

A Leading Scientist Explores Animal Joy, Sorrow, and Empathy - and Why They Matter

By Julie Yanekian

A book review in the form of a conversation.

In this book, Emotional Lives of Animals, a leading scientist and professor emeritus of ecology and evolutionary biology at the University of Colorado; and one of the foremost experts on animal emotions, shares that animals can feel joy, love, anger, pleasure sorrow, and empathy and why it is important to us, as humans. This is an easy read and it is relevant. Just as God created people and knows each and every one of us, so God created the animal kingdom and continually enjoys his creation. Just as each child is valuable to God, so is the life of each animal. To understand and accept that animals feel joy, depression, love, anger, frustration, empathy, happiness, and sadness, in very similar ways to humans, is to accept the



responsibility that we have for caring for our pets, the animals we keep for work and for food, as well as the responsibility we have for treating wild animals with respect.

Do animals have feelings and emotions?

"Scientific research in evolutionary biology, cognitive ethology and social neuroscience supports the view that numerous and diverse animals have rich and deep emotional lives..." Beginning with Charles Darwin, whose ideas strongly argue for the presence of animal emotions, empathy and moral behavior, to more recent scientists who have found that emotions and knowing right from wrong are keys to survival.

Do animals have the physical capability of having emotions and feelings?

Animals have the neural apparatus necessary for the evolution of emotions. They have the same neuro-chemicals, such as serotonin and testosterone, and they have the same brain structures that we do. These structures are important to the expression and feelings of anger, aggression, and revenge. All animals, including humans have a hypothalamus where feelings and emotions are developed and stored. Some animals like whales have a very large hypothalamus, much larger than ours. So it stands to reason that they may have a larger capability for more emotions and feelings than people do.

Can you tell us some of your favorite stories about observing animal's emotions?

The internet is filled with many stories about animals showing love and seeking companionship with other animals. There are many, many stories about mother animals caring for young and animals of one species seeking companionship with another animal species, as well as angry animals.

Foxes crows, magpies, elephants and chimpanzees have been documented showing grief when a friend or relative dies. One day as my friend and I were biking around Boulder, we watched as four magpies circled a dead magpie on the road. The dead magpie had been killed by a car and each magpie took turns coming up to the dead one, touching it with its beak and going back to its place in the circle. Then one magpie picked some grass and set it next to the dead one. Then another magpie did the same. Eventually the live ones flew off.

I have watched a fox do much the same thing and bury her mate.

From a viewpoint of survival, why would it be important for animals to have emotions and feelings?

"Animals have complex and varied social interactions. Emotions have evolved as adaptations in numerous species, and they serve as a social glue to bond animals with one another... Emotions, empathy, and knowing right from wrong are keys to survival, without which animals - both human and nonhuman - would perish."

Why do animal feelings and emotions matter?

"Recognizing that animals have emotions is important because animal feelings matter. Animals are sentient beings who experience the ups and downs of daily life, and we must respect this when we interact with them.... Humans have an enormous power to affect the world anyway we choose. Daily, we silence sentience in numerable animals. However, we also know that we are not the only sentient creatures with feelings, and with this knowledge comes the enormous responsibility and obligation to treat other beings with respect, appreciation, compassion, and love.... Emotions are the gifts of our ancestors. We have them and so do other animals. We must never forget this.

So why is this important to us as Christians? After all God gave us dominion over all of the animals.

As Christians this is especially important to us because God gave us the responsibility and the understanding to relate to nature respectfully.

Jokes

The Bible According To Kids:

Children say the funniest things about Scripture. Here are a few examples.

"Adam and Eve were created from an apple tree."

"Solomon, one of David's sons, had 300 wives and 700 porcupines."

"Noah's wife was called Joan of Ark. Noah built an ark which the animals came on to in pears."

"Jesus said you must love your neighbor even if you hate him."

"St. John, the blacksmith, dumped water on Jesus' head."

(Source unknown)

--Debbie Ridgeway

Here's a good one:

"When I was a kid, I'd pray every night for a new bike.

Then, I realized God didn't work that way, so I stole a bike

and asked for forgiveness.

--Charlie T



--Maurla White

Word Search Puzzle

Submitted by Terry Ridgeway

T	R	E	C	N	O	C	S	I	D
S	D	O	G	J	S	C	E	E	S
R	E	E	O	E	E	R	E	C	E
I	G	V	C	J	E	S	C	U	E
F	N	O	I	T	S	E	U	Q	S
O	N	L	S	G	M	G	D	S	I
D	I	A	O	O	I	N	D	O	R
G	M	W	D	R	N	A	A	U	A
T	R	A	E	H	D	H	S	L	H
R	U	O	B	H	G	I	E	N	P

Love one another!



PHARISEES
 JESUS
 SADDUCEES
 DISCONCERT
 QUESTION
 LAW
 MASTER
 LORD
 HEART
 SOUL
 SECOND
 NEIGHBOUR

Letter from Joshua Curl

Merry (early) Christmas from Osaka where the temperature has finally fallen into the 60's just in time for the holiday season.

The autumn is beautiful in Japan. Summer weather is brutal and the fall foliage is a fitting reward. One Japanese writer, probably a little too partial to Japanese autumn, wrote, "fall foliage in America is fine, but it doesn't make you feel the passage of time or give you a sense of wistfulness. I really became aware in Japan of the profound effect that nature has on the human psyche." I am always grateful just to be sweat free, but the foliage is a definite plus.

Autumn is also my favorite season because it contains my favorite day: Thanksgiving. I had a wonderful Thanksgiving in Osaka with church friends. It was one of the warmest (thankfully not temperature-wise) Thanksgivings in recent memory and yet a delayed train (which pretty much only happens for one reason here) on my way home was a harsh reminder of the isolation and hopelessness that can be so prevalent here.

My goal in Japan has been to make new friends through karaoke every day and to help them take their first step towards loving Christian community, so it was particularly gratifying to celebrate the 5th anniversary of Cafeoke (the monthly karaoke outreach event at the Heart and Soul Cafe that I started in 2014) last month. I cannot thank you enough for making this crazy event and community possible.

New Genesis College President(!): I am currently serving on the Genesis College team, which hopes to establish an accredited two-year Christian college in Osaka in the near future. I have been asked to serve here until June 1 in order to hold things down while the college is looking for a new president. At long last, it appears we have found our couple. The MacDonald's of Williamsburg, VA have been approved to be our new team leaders which is a huge answered prayer. They are currently in the midst of mission agency training and fundraising, and hope to move to Osaka as soon as possible. Thanks again for all your prayers.

Giving need: My current term runs until June 1. My total budget is \$2,500/month, but I currently only have enough funds to last until April. I will need an additional \$5,000 to complete my term. Thanks again for all your support. I'm so thankful to be in my fifth year of uninterrupted service in Japan. Your partnership has made all this possible.

Prayer requests: 1) praise for the new Genesis College president and his wife; 2) please pray for all our English students and karaoke lovers. I hope that our

Genesis College offices can become a hub for not only English study but, as with the Heart and Soul Cafe in Nagoya, a loving community where people can perhaps first experience God's love for them; 3) please pray for clear direction for me beyond June; 4) please pray for me as I prepare for Japanese Language Proficiency Exams. My Japanese tutor is a karaoke lover who became a Christian through teaching Japanese to missionaries. She is miraculously able to make even endless kanji (Chinese characters) study enjoyable.

Merry Christmas & thanks so much for all your love and support,

Joshua

My MTW account: <https://www.mtw.org/missionaries/index/curl-joshua>

MTW Donations mailing address: **Mission to the World Donations**

P.O. Box 744165

Atlanta, GA 30374-4165

Letter from Sergeant Jesus

I received the letter below from 1st Sergeant Jesus _____, a recipient of our care packages. His last name and months deployed were blacked out with Sharpie, I imagine for security purposes.

I appreciate everyone's support for this ongoing project!!! Collection box for troops is in the narthex.

Thanks again,

Brenda Collins

On behalf of all the Marines from 3rd Battalion 4th Marines, thank you for the care package that I received today. We want to thank you for the support that you show towards the Marines who are forward deployed. It is these small gestures that really motivate the Marines to keep fighting.

We are from 29 Palms California. We have been here for ___ months and have ___ more to go. All of the Marines are focused, but we are eager to return to our loved ones.

Thanks again and Semper Fidelis.

Jesus _____



STEREOTYPES

COLLABORATION

**SAFE
NET**

CIVIL RIGHTS

LABOR LAWS

ETHNOCENTRISM

OPPRESSION

PRIVACY

SOCIAL JUSTICE

ACTION

ACCESS TO EDUCATION

RESPONSIBILITY

ENVIRONMENTAL RIGHTS

SEXISM

DISTRIBUTION OF WEALTH

HUMAN RIGHTS

SLAVERY

FAIRNESS

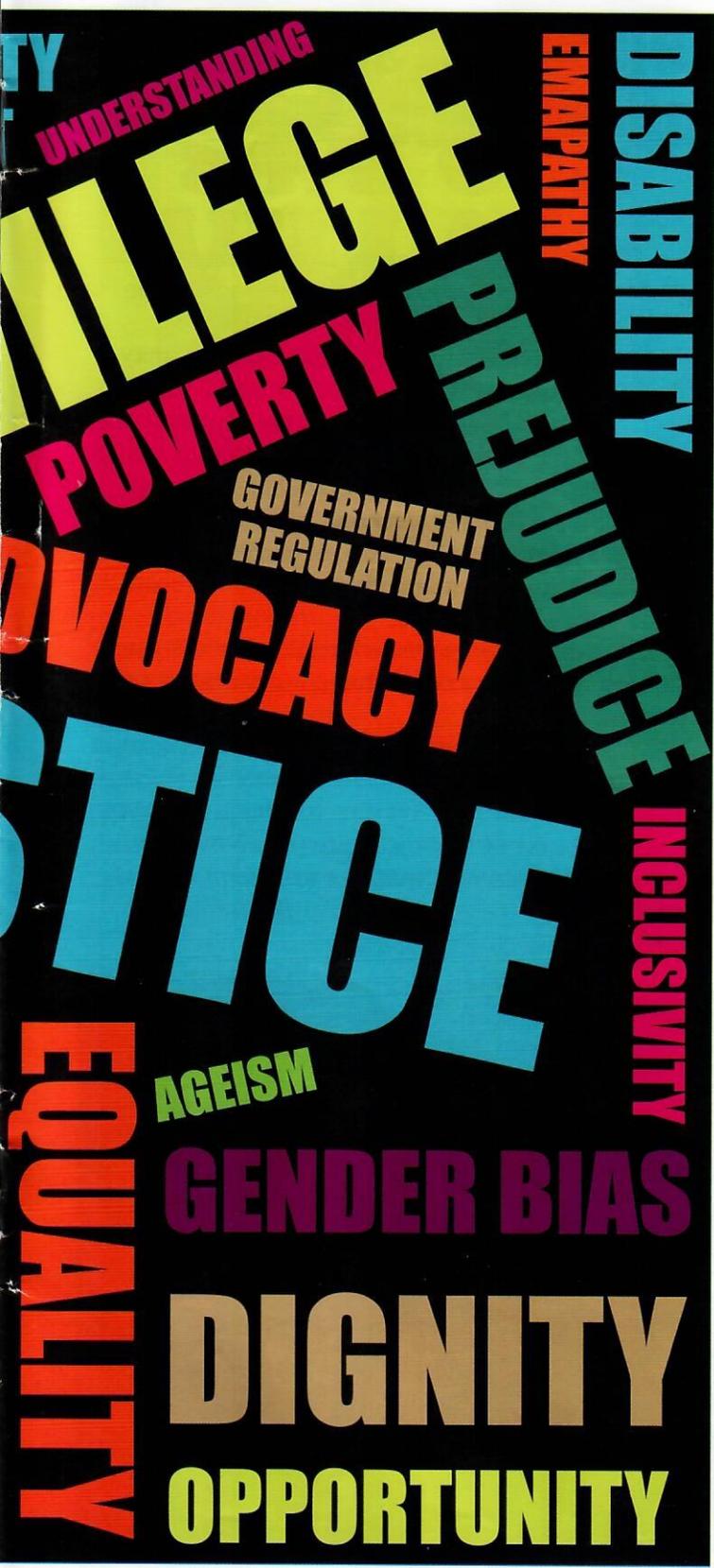
STEWARDSHIP

EQUITABLE SOCIAL MOBILITY

**INTEGRITY
DISCRIMINATION**



Advocating for social justice



The United Methodist Church has long concerned itself with social justice. John Wesley and the early Methodists shared their opposition to slavery and inhumane prison conditions.

The denomination's Social Principles are the way the church attempts to prayerfully speak to contemporary issues through a biblical and theological lens and "to apply the Christian vision of righteousness to social, economic, and political issues." (*Book of Discipline*)

The work of advocacy is tasked specifically to the United Methodist Board of Church and Society to provide "witness and action on issues of human well-being, justice, peace" through research, education and training.

According to the *Book of Discipline*, through spiritual disciplines "works of piety" such as prayer, Bible study, participation in corporate worship and communion – we grow and mature in our love for God. By engaging in acts of compassion and justice – "works of mercy" such as visiting the sick and those in prison, feeding the hungry, advocating for the poor and marginalized – we live out our love for God through service to our neighbor. "Our love of God is always linked with love of our neighbor, a passion for justice and renewal in the life of the world." (§102, *Book of Discipline*)

United Methodists believe that salvation entails renewal of both individuals and the world. The faithful response to God's saving grace has both a personal and social dimension as we grow in "holiness of heart and life."

The work of United Methodists is more than just helping individuals but it is about transforming conditions that create injustice and inequality. "It is our conviction that the good news of the Kingdom must judge, redeem and reform the sinful social structures of our time." (*Book of Discipline*)



Advocates, witnesses remain in spite of Mountain Valley Pipeline project

By Madeline Pillow

The Rev. Morris Fleischer can look out of his office window at Newport-Mt. Olivet UMC (NMO-UMC) in Newport, Va., and see the path of the Mountain Valley Pipeline (MVP).

Once in place, the pipeline will cross Rt. 42 about 60 yards to the north of the church. Currently, the initial clearing for the pipeline has begun with a group of hardwoods already toppled to the ground.

The MVP, according to the website, will be a “natural gas pipeline system that spans approximately 303 miles from northwestern West Virginia to southern Virginia — and as an interstate pipeline will be regulated by the Federal Energy Regulatory Commission (FERC).” The pipeline will be constructed and owned by Mountain Valley Pipeline, LLC, which is a joint venture with other partners.

This project will affect the Virginia counties of Giles, Craig, Montgomery, Roanoke, Franklin and Pittsylvania.

The sight of these broken trees has affected Fleischer deeply as the fight against this pipeline has been going on for three years now.

“I found myself having to leave my office the day that

the crews were cutting as I felt my blood pressure rising from the visible destruction of the trees against the cacophony of the roaring chainsaws,” said Fleischer.

The church is in a central location in the community and while the pipeline will not directly cross the church property, Fleischer shared concern that the blasting part of construction could cause damage to the building’s foundation.

The pipeline’s path has already affected a nearby elderly couple, as they had to relocate from their home, visible from the church, where they have lived for more than 50 years.

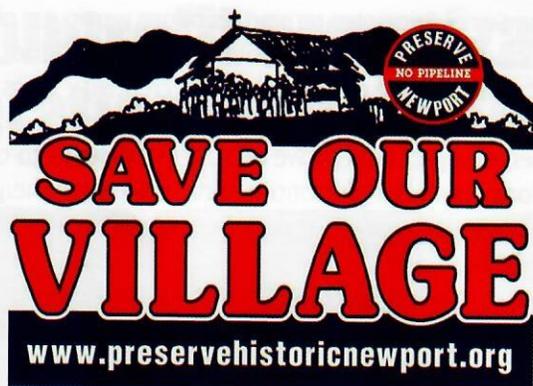
Due to the pipeline’s intended location, the 168-year-old church will be situated in what industry officials call the “incineration zone.”

Fleischer shares his optimism for the church building in spite of this.

“My guess is that since this church survived a Civil War skirmish and a fire in 1902 that destroyed nearly every structure in the Village of Newport except for the church, NMO-UMC will, by the grace of God, survive this too.”



The “Giving Witness” event was held in March 2018. Photos courtesy of Morris Fleischer.



What the pipeline means for the area

Because of its location in the community, the church has served as a meeting place for groups such as Preserve Giles County as well as for several community forums for local and state officials to hear concerns from local citizens and to share information about the project. Two primary groups have been actively working to prevent its intrusion through Newport: Preserve Giles County and Preserve Newport Historic Properties.

Fleischer said that Preserve Giles County has approached this issue primarily from an environmental standpoint. Sharing about the dangers that the pipeline presents to water and the local wildlife, the organization has also been working with Dr. Ernst Kastning, a preeminent expert on the karst geology* of the region.

Kastning issued a study about the dangers of positioning the pipeline in the region due to factors such as the steep mountain, the fragility of the karst and the county's status as an active seismic zone.

Kastning's study also highlights the potential threat to drinking water and the process of blasting on underground streams.

Fleischer noted that the lease on the pipeline easement will run out in 20 years following the pipeline's construction.

"If the profitability of natural gas declines and the pipeline is abandoned, what happens to the chemicals that are used to hasten the natural gas through the line as the pipe itself begins to rust and decay?" Fleischer asked. "Will future generations have to deal with poisoned soil and the dangers inherent from contaminated water due to short-

sighted, economic gain?"

Fleischer also shared concerns about the origins of the natural gas that will flow through the pipeline.

Preserve Historic Newport Properties (PHNP) has approached this issue from a standpoint of immanent domain.

"How does EQT (a partner in the project), a limited liability corporation, have the right to use existing immanent domain laws for profit that were originally designed for public utilities?" Fleischer asked.

PHNP has also looked at the village of Newport and its current recognition by the State of Virginia as an historic community and what protections might be offered by such a designation. Just this past year, Newport was named as one of the three most endangered historic communities in the Commonwealth.

Giving Witness event

The "Giving Witness" event was held on March 18, 2018 as an ecumenical service to bear witness to God's creation, uplift the importance of stewardship as people of faith and a recommitment to working for the care of creation. More than 180 people attended from the immediate community, across the commonwealth and West Virginia.

"Newport is in a season of lament. The Giving Witness event was designed to give voice to the concerns that have seemingly gone unheard by both federal and state regulatory agencies and officials who have given carte blanche to the Mountain Valley project," said Fleischer who organized the event with another local church.

Throughout these years of protest, and this event in particular, Fleischer has found himself in pastoral care mode. As the MVP project moves ahead, Fleischer has shared that local landowners are angry and feel dejected.

The Giving Witness event seemed to bring attendees a sense of relief however.

"Residents were finally able to verbalize and share their frustrations within a community of those similarly concerned," said Fleischer.

The event has opened up dialogue about holding another event soon as well as one in West Virginia.

Fleischer has found Roanoke District Superintendent, the Rev. Kathleen Overby-Webster, to be a great source of encouragement and wisdom along the way.

The Rev. Glenn Rowley, conference director of Justice and Missional Excellence, attended the prayer vigil in Newport. He was moved because he sees the people's witness

*Karst is a topography formed from the dissolution of soluble rocks such as limestone, dolomite, and gypsum. It is characterized by underground drainage systems with sinkholes and caves. (wikipedia.com)



in spite of the pipeline moving ahead.

“Even in this small town battling corporate greed people are still holding onto hope in spite of a lot of reason to despair as the pipeline company is already clearing trees and some are being taken down that aren’t in the original plan,” said Rowley. “It was a great opportunity to see faith in action as the Body of Christ!”

United Methodists and social justice

So why are Fleischer and his church community so passionate about this topic? It might have something to do with the Social Principles of The United Methodist Church.

“All creation is the Lord’s, and we are responsible for the ways in which we use and abuse it. Water, air, soil, minerals, energy resources, plants, animal life and space are to be valued and conserved because they are God’s creation and not solely because they are useful to human beings. God has granted us stewardship of creation.” – UM Social Principles ¶ 160 I. The Natural World

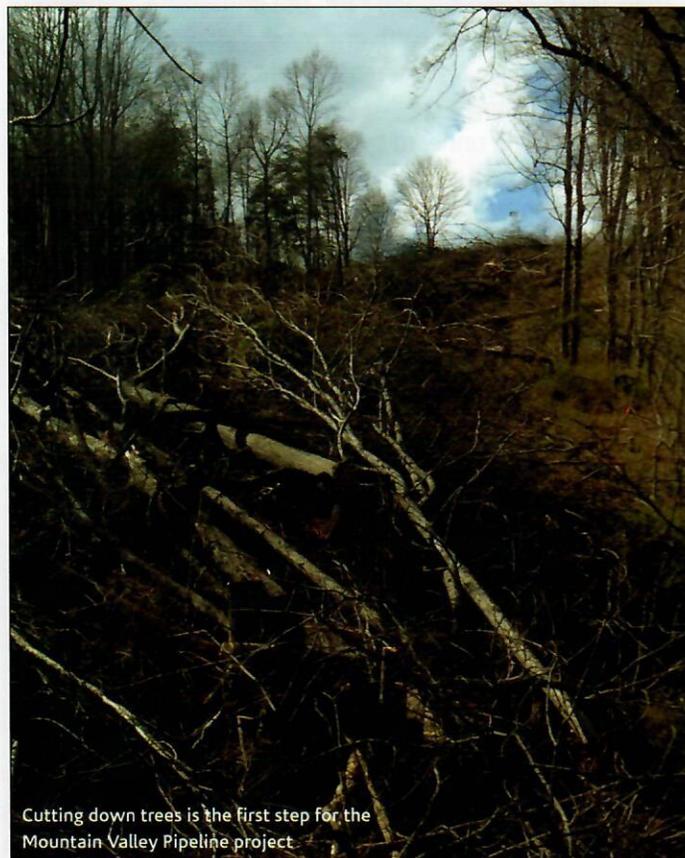
For Fleischer this is all about loving what God loves.

“The Social Principles remind us of our particular place in the created order as responsible stewards and the importance of using our freedom and creativity to its benefit. We are all interconnected in the greater web of life — when one part suffers, we all suffer. This leads to other questions about our gluttonous consumption of energy and our incessant need for convenience and acquisition,” said Fleischer.

Moving forward, Fleischer and the church community will continue being a witness. Fleischer has a summer sermon series planned called “Overcoming Disappointment.” He will also be participating in the EarthKeepers training at the General Board of Global Missions in Atlanta this May. He hopes to share about what they have learned through their experiences and learn about more ways in which they can become better stewards of God’s good creation.

“This violation of our community will not define who we are and the good that we are about,” Fleischer said. 🍀

-Madeline Pillow is editor of the Advocate.



Cutting down trees is the first step for the Mountain Valley Pipeline project.



The Giving Witness event.

FROM THE BISHOP



Reflection on the Bishop's Convocation on Race and Reconciliation

Dear Virginia Annual Conference,

On April 14, 2018, more than 225 people from the north, south, east and west areas of Virginia and beyond came to dialogue about the most crucial conversation of our lives — the conversation on race and reconciliation.

As we gathered at Annandale United Methodist Church, I noticed the excitement in the area as we exchanged polite greetings. However,

as I moved around the church and experienced brief exchanges, I could feel a sense of uncertainty in the air. The topic of race and reconciliation is a hot topic but can scare the average individual.

When I hosted the first Bishop's Chat and Chew, several individuals shared unapologetically that the Virginia Conference needed to work on the racial division in our conference. I was pleasantly surprised by the honesty from the clergy and laity who wanted to work on this issue. However, as I prayed and discerned, the Holy Spirit revealed the Virginia Conference resources and the resources of our apportioned dollars in the General Commission on Religion and Race (GCORR). I shared with our Commission on Ethnic Minority Concerns and Advocacy (CEMCA) that I wanted to tackle this monumental issue, and the rest is history.

Our keynote speaker, Romal Tune began the event by telling a story that was so appropriate for the conversation. Interestingly, he experienced a delay in the arrival to the church because his iPhone was "frozen," and he had to depend on several individuals that did not "look" like him for directions to the church. The story was quite relevant as he articulated the assumptions we make about individuals we encounter.

Romal pushed us to examine our own stories of race (both experiential and inherited.) He articulated, "Just about everything begins and ends with the story you have accepted as truth about yourself and others. These stories will shape our thinking, actions and assumptions about

different races." The "a-ha" moment was the realization that until we are able to examine our own stories we can never have an authentic conversation about race and reconciliation. He emphasized, "When we surrender our stories to God then we are able to embrace a new Kingdom narrative about race."

The video "Deconstructing White Privilege" by Dr. Robin DiAngelo was viewed in the afternoon session. The Rev. Giovanni Arroyo and the Rev. Michelle Ledder, Programs Ministry for GCORR, led the convocation in several small group conversations on race and reconciliation based on the video and workbook. As I listened intently to the conversations, individuals were highly engaged, owning their truths, learning new language and listening to each other. I walked away from this session with a sense of assurance that our conversations on race and reconciliation have just started. 

Peace and Blessings,

Bishop Sharma D. Lewis

The United Methodist connection in VIRGINIA



Conference event shares information on upcoming General Conference

By Forrest White

As head of the Virginia Conference delegation to the Special Session of the General Conference, Martha Stokes has invested countless hours in study and prayer and conversation, preparing herself as best as she can for the three-day gathering in St. Louis, now less than five months away.

This journey has taken her into local churches around the conference, where she has heard divergent opinions on issues related to human

sexuality, on ordination of self-avowing gay and lesbian clergy and on same-sex marriages.

"I've been wonderfully surprised at times, when people come up afterwards and say, 'We recognize, even in our congregation that we have lots of differences of opinions, but we didn't realize until today how much we love each other,'" Stokes said on Sept. 26, at the Commission on a Way Forward Q&A event held at Reveille UMC in Richmond and livestreamed throughout the conference at 10 other sites and online.

"When we have the opportunity to really be open and authentic and honest with each other in a very respectful, loving way, we can work through those differences and realize what is most important is the care and concern we have for each other across those differences."

At the 90-minute Q&A event, Stokes joined Bishop Sharma D. Lewis and the Rev. Tom Berlin — lead pastor at Floris UMC in Herndon and clergy head of the Virginia Conference delegation to General Conference — to provide an overview of the work done by the Commission on a Way Forward and to answer about 15 questions, some submitted in advance, some on the night of the gathering.

The questions ranged from procedural — What will happen at the Special Session and what if no plan receives the required two-thirds majority vote? — to practical — How might the plans presented by the Commission impact clergy appointments and what if churches within a charge don't embrace the same option within a plan?

One person asked if the 22 delegates from the Virginia Conference — 11 clergy, 11 lay — would be voting based on what their home churches want for the future.

"Delegates vote their own conscious," Berlin said, simply.

"It really comes down to what we are each hearing God say in terms of the way forward, the future for our church,"

The 2019 special session of the General Conference will be held in The Dome, part of the America's Center Convention Complex in St. Louis.



The United Methodist connection in VIRGINIA

Stokes said. "It is really a spiritual time for delegates to not only do what you might think of as the book work, having to look at all the legislation, and then to really be vessels, to have made that time of our own preparation one in which we listen to what God is calling us to be as the church."

On multiple occasions, Berlin encouraged those attending and those watching via livestream to take time and read the 90-plus page final report of the Commission. Many of the more than 30 submitted questions are answered in the report, he said.

Bishop Lewis urged all those listening to continue in prayer, to continue to trust that God is in the miracle business.

"It is not a time for us to be afraid," she said. "It is a time for us to continue in our churches to have conversations. The worst thing we can do is to isolate ourselves and not have conversations."

Lewis reiterated her six 2019 Guiding Principles:

- ❖ Clergy and laity lead with a non-anxious presence.
- ❖ Pray for our church's mission and way forward daily for

four minutes (2:23-2:36 a.m. or p.m. or at another time that fits your schedule). Pray for the General Conference, the 864 delegates, the 22 delegates from the Virginia Conference and for the "power of the Holy Spirit to lead and guide our delegates."

- ❖ Pursuit of the UMC mission "To make disciples of Jesus Christ for the transformation of the world." We must continue in our churches to focus on four ministry areas — engaging in ministry with the poor, improving global health, developing Christian leaders, creating new and renewed congregations.
- ❖ Pursuit of the Virginia Conference vision "To be disciples of Jesus Christ who are lifelong learners who influence others to serve."
- ❖ Strive for unity in the Virginia conference. "Be careful what you say, be gentle," Lewis said. "We have persons' lives and souls in our hands."
- ❖ Keep our promises (retiree pensions and healthcare; global commitments such as in Mozambique and

Cambodia)

The panelists saved the most poignant question until the end — Someone wanted to know their greatest hope and greatest fear for the gathering in St. Louis.

Berlin's great hope, he said, is passage of the One Church Plan because it provides a "generous unity."

That plan, Berlin said, honors the fact that The United Methodist Church has progressive and traditional people, as well as "a whole bunch of us in the middle," with some leaning left and some leaning right, and it tries to "create a space for everyone."

"My greatest fear ... I think if some or many of us have to part, it's very important that we part with a blessing," Berlin said. "It's very important not to do this work in ways the world looks in on us and says, 'You're just like us. The rule of Christ really isn't in your hearts.' It's important for us not to hold each other in contempt or anger or judgment, but to understand that principled people can come to different decisions." 🇺🇸

— Forrest White is news associate with the conference Communications office.

View the livestream event as well as total resources: www.vaumc.org/GC2019

View the final report of the Commission on a Way Forward in the four official denomination languages: www.umc.org/who-we-are/way-forward-report-released-in-all-four-official-languages-of-general-confe.

Prayers

OF THE CHURCH

Nursing Homes	Pray for our Missionaries	Family & Friends	Pray for safety for Friends and Family in the Military
<i>Westminster Canterbury</i>	Germany	<i>Brian Biggs</i>	<i>Jake Barr</i>
<i>Joan Rollins</i>	<i>Ben & Jasmin Seidl</i>	<i>Elizabeth Williams</i>	<i>Grant Collins</i>
<i>Greenfield of Berryville</i>	Japan	<i>Phyllis Spinks</i>	<i>Sam Collins</i>
<i>Ann Bramhall</i>	<i>Joshua Curl</i>	<i>Syd Fearing</i>	<i>Nick Falconer</i>
INOVA	Zimbabwe	<i>Chuck Bretzin</i>	<i>Jeremy Grenell</i>
<i>Johnny Wilt</i>	<i>Dr. Manyeza</i>	<i>Mary Ann Williams</i>	<i>Devon Potts</i>
	Compassion Inter. Children Mission	<i>Steve Frick</i>	<i>Montana Potts</i>
	Kenya	<i>Ron Rough</i>	<i>Carl Sowdon</i>
	<i>Kakii Mwangangi</i>	<i>The McDarby family</i>	
	<i>Staphane Carol Akiny</i>	<i>Bishop Rev. Sharma Lewis</i>	
	Peru	<i>Mary Ann Hess</i>	
	<i>Emmanuel David</i>	<i>Baby William</i>	
	<i>Abregu Corsino</i>		
February Birthdays	March Birthdays	April Birthdays	Anniversaries
3 Teresa Gunnell	1 Hannah Coates	2 Chip Talbott	Feb.
5 Amanda Everhart	3 Guy Pitcock	3 Carolyn Coates-Marcus	4 Elden & Shirley Eichelberger
John Yanekian	Sawyer Shipley	7 Matthew Gunnell	15 Jim & Donna VanWagoner
7 Alisa Hart	7 Troy Mayner	8 Eldon Eichelberger	
8 Linda Rehling	9 Karen Potts	10 Chris Capilongo	
8 Susan Wheeler	12 Brody Ridgeway	11 Crystal Eagle	March
13 Shelly Eagle	Robert Rogowsky	13 Sylvia Merchant	4 Harvey & Shelly Eagle
13 Shirley Eichelberger	Mason Chamblin	19 Brenda Collins	14 Brian & Susan Biggs
15 Matthew Grezch	14 Allen Baker	25 Liam Mayner	31 Luke & April Coates
16 Garrett Osterhoudt	23 Thomas Gunnell	27 Ron Mayner	
18 Becki Hile	24 Billy Coates	28 Luke Coates	April
24 Devon Potts	25 Joan Rollins	Joan Simpson	2 Ron & Peggy Wenner
26 Ryan Eagle	27 Chad Osterhoudt	29 Lynn Curl	30 Matthew & Teresa Grzech
29 Ann Bramhall	30 Grant Collins		
	31 Bruce Loy		

The Mission of Mt. Pleasant
United Methodist:

- R REACH out with the Good News of Jesus
- E EXPERIENCE God's Word
- A ADORE God through Worship
- C CREATE Fellowship
- H HONOR God through Service

- ❖ Worship Service - Sundays 10:30 am
- ❖ Adult Sunday School - Sundays 9:15 am
- ❖ Children's Church and Young People's Time during Worship Service
- ❖ Requests for Prayer (Prayer Telephone Chain) – call: Gail Mayner 703-431-2931

Pastor: Larry Thompson
Cell: 703-283-0689

Church Lay Leader:

Julie Yanekian 703-606-9706

Church Administrative Council:

Council Chair: Brad Bretzin 540-822-9048

Vice-Chair: Terry Ridgeway 540-822-5005

Council Secretary:

Bonnie Ridgeway 540-822-5847

Church Treasurer:

Tim Bowers 540-822-3077

Pastor-Parrish Relations Contact:

Donald Fletcher 540-822-5117

Trustees Chair: Billy Coates 540-822-5046

Sunday School Coordinator:

Jane Bretzin 540-822-9048

*Visit our website @
www.mtpleasant-umc.com*

History of Mt. Pleasant United Methodist Church

Prior to 1878 members met in the Mountain School House in the village of Taylorstown. In 1878 the original church building was built on land purchased from William Beatty for a sum of \$50. In 1958 Henry and May Davis King donated two acres on the other side of Taylorstown Road / Rt. 663 and the congregation built the present church building. The old church was torn down after completion of the new church; however, the stone entrance of the old church still remains in the current church cemetery. Mt. Pleasant was originally part of the Doubs Circuit in Maryland until the flood of 1936 when the Point of Rocks bridge, between Virginia and Maryland, was washed away. At that time, Mt. Pleasant was placed on the Hillsboro Charge. From 1982-2017, Mt. Pleasant became members of the Lovettsville Charge along with Bethel United Methodist. The Lovettsville charge dissolved on July 1, 2017 and Mt. Pleasant joined Mt. Olivet UMC in a cooperative parish named the Mt. Olivet – Mt. Pleasant Cooperative Parish of the United Methodist Church.

2019 Mt. Pleasant United Methodist Church

*(located in the village of
Taylorstown, Virginia)*

13266 Taylorstown Rd.
Leesburg, VA 20176



Mt. Pleasant

Pastor Larry Thompson

Pastor's Cell Phone: 703-283-0689
Mt. Pleasant Church phone: 540- 822-5513

*Mt. Pleasant UMC invites you to make
this your church home as we celebrate
and worship Our Blessed Lord and
Savior Jesus Christ.*

*Sunday Worship Service
10:30 am*

Mt. Pleasant United Methodist Church (UMC) Calendar of Events 2019

Date	Event	Date	Event	Date	Event
On-going in 2019	Small Group Studies - Topics: TBA; Mondays 7:30 pm; Check weekly bulletin or church web site	May 2	National Day of Prayer	Oct. 6	World Communion Sunday
On-going in 2019	3rd Sunday Events: Food Closet Collections, Rise Against Hunger offering, Assembling event for Back Pack Buddies & monthly coffee hour after Sunday service	May 9	Trustees Meeting, 6:30 pm; Administrative Council Meeting, 7:30 pm	Oct. 10	Administrative Council Meeting, 7:30 pm
On-going in 2019	Weekly Wednesday Night Prayer Gathering, 7:00 pm - 8:00 pm	May 12	Mother's Day Sunday	Oct. 20	Senior Citizen Sunday; Pot luck luncheon after Sunday service
On-going in 2019	Adult Sunday School, 9:15-10:15 am, weekly	May 27	Memorial Day Service 11:00 am and Cemetery Fundraising Lunch, 11:00 am - 1:00 pm	Oct. 27 (tentative)	Laity Sunday Service
Jan. 10	Trustees Meeting, 6:30 pm; Administrative Council Meeting, 7:30 pm	June 2	Recognition Sunday for Graduating High School Seniors	Nov. 2	Fall Community Ham & Turkey Dinner (Freewill Offering), 5:00 pm
Feb. 21	Administrative Council Meeting, 7:30 pm	June 9	Pentecost Sunday	Nov. 3	All Saints Sunday
March	Chicken BBQ, Rise Against Hunger Fundraiser, Date/Time: TBD	June 13	Administrative Council Meeting, 7:30 pm	Nov. 10	Veterans Recognition Sunday
Mar. 5	Shrove Tuesday Pancake Supper, 6:00 pm	June 16	Father's Day Sunday	Nov. 14	Trustees Meeting, 6:30 pm; Administrative Council Meeting, 7:30 pm
Mar. 6	Ash Wednesday Service, 7:30 pm (at Mt. Olivet - joint service with Mt. Pleasant)	June 20-22	Virginia UMC Annual Conference, Roanoke VA	Nov.	Lovettsville Faith Community Ecumenical Thanksgiving Service - Location/Date/Time:TBD
Mar. 14	Trustees Meeting, 6:30 pm; Administrative Council Meeting, 7:30 pm	June 24-28	Vacation Bible School/Family Fun Summer Event, 9:00 am - noon	Dec. 1	First Sunday of Advent
Mar. 31	Worldwide UMCOR Sunday; UMCOR offering and 5th Sunday Worship and Fellowship at Mt. Olivet, 10:00 am	June 29	Swim Party, Lovettsville Community Center, Time: TBD	Dec. 6-7	Taylorstown Association Craft Fair at Mt. Pleasant
Apr. 6	Spring Community Ham & Turkey Dinner (Freewill Offering), 5:00 pm	June 30	5th Sunday Worship and Fellowship at Mt. Pleasant 10:00 am, and Farewell for Pastor Larry	Dec. 7	"Rise Against Hunger" Meal Packaging Event, Location/Time: TBD
Apr. 11	Administrative Council Meeting, 7:30 pm	July	Spaghetti Dinner fundraiser (Christmas in July), Date/Time: TBD	Dec. 8 (tentative)	Sponsoring Local Families in Need at Christmas - deadline for donations
Apr. 14	Palm Sunday	July 11	Trustees Meeting, 6:30 pm; Administrative Council Meeting, 7:30 pm	Dec. 12	Administrative Council Meeting, 7:30 pm
Apr. 18	Maundy Thursday Service at Mt. Pleasant), 7:00 pm; (joint service with Mt. Olivet)	Aug. 3	Mt. Pleasant Annual Community Picnic, 11:00 am - 4:00 pm	Dec. 14	Ladies Christmas Luncheon at Julie Yanekian's home, Date/Time: TBD
Apr. 19	Good Friday Service - Time/Location: TBD	Aug. 8	CANCELLED - Administrative Council Meeting, 7:30 pm	Dec. 15	Christmas Celebration Event Sunday - Visit from Santa after Sunday Service
Apr. 21	Easter - Sunrise Service at Mt. Pleasant, 7:00 am; Traditional Service at Mt. Pleasant, 10:30 am	Sept. 8	Sunday School Recognition Day at Mt. Pleasant	Dec. 24	Christmas Eve Candlelight Service, 8:00 pm
April or May	Spring Church Clean-Up/Fix-It Day, Date/Time: TBD (Sponsored by the MP Trustees)	Sept. 12	Trustees Meeting, 6:30 pm; Administrative Council Meeting, 7:30 pm	Dec. 29	5th Sunday Worship and Fellowship at Mt. Pleasant 10:00 am
Apr 27 - May 2	Loudoun Faith Community Bible Reading Marathon in Leesburg - Times: TBA	Sept. 29	5th Sunday Worship and Fellowship at Mt. Olivet, 10:00 am		