



Memorial Park Church

ANNUAL REPORT

2018-2019

TABLE OF CONTENTS

Pastor Message	2
WORSHIP	
Music & Arts	3
BELONG	
High School IMPACT.....	4
Women.....	5
Men	6
Seniors	7
LIFE Groups	8
Pastoral Care	9
SERVE	
Children’s Ministries.....	10
Middle School IMPACT	12
Outreach	13
Missions.....	14
GROW	
Preschool.....	16
Adult Classes	17
Financial Ministries	18
STEWARDSHIP	
Personnel Report	19
Fiscal Year Summary	20
Fiscal Report.....	21

From the Desk of Pastor Dean

As the 2018-2019 ministry year comes to a close, and now aligns so well with our fiscal year, this annual report offers me a great opportunity to reflect on perhaps the most significant change to the life of the Memorial Park Church family in a long time.

After much prayer, study, discussion, planning, and hard work, we stepped into our new Sunday morning format this year, going from three worship services with concurrent education programs to having two worship services and one unified Discipleship Hour for all ages. The transition was not easy, especially for our beloved church family that gathered at the 8:00 a.m. service for years, but now, one year later, we can truly see the fruit of these changes.

Driven principally by a desire to see greater intergenerational worship and an increase in discipleship classes for all ages, we are growing as a church family in so many healthy ways. We know that more than doubling our Adult Class attendance at Discipleship Hour has been a terrific blessing and a good indicator that our congregation is growing deeper in God's Word as whole-life followers of our Savior. But my favorite part of the new Sunday morning schedule is, without a doubt, watching families worshipping God together more than ever before. The simple spiritual practice of worshipping together as a family—and intergenerationally—is a HUGE part of a "sticky faith" that will equip our next generation to remain, abide, grow, and thrive in the church for the rest of their lives.

If there was one intergenerational worship experience that stands out in my mind from this past year, it would have to be the renewed practice of "children's sermons" that we experienced during the Advent Season. There is nothing quite like the spontaneous, quick witted, and biblically informed responses from our kids during those worship times that made us laugh, think, and realize: it is so good to worship as a family! The funny thing is that from the responses of the adults—based on comments I received—have gotten as much, if not more, out of the children's messages as the kids. At the end of the day, all of us come to the Kingdom of God as His children. That is a good reminder for each of us as we gather weekly for worship.

I am so grateful for the vision and leadership of our elders to help make these challenging but essential changes happen. I am equally thankful for the many, many volunteers who came along side our Children's Ministry and Worship staff, and Deacons to make this work; but I am even more humbled by you, my MPC family for making this change—for the good of the whole family and finding ways to make it work. We are growing and healthier as a church family because of it.

Every Sunday morning, as I walk through the Welcome Center, Café, and Connections Corner to go to and from the Sanctuary for worship, I am encouraged to see the dedicated service, fellowship, energy, faith, and love of our growing, unified and beloved church family. Thank you!

Pastor Dean



WORSHIP

WORSHIP & ARTS >

Making Spirits Bright

By Jim Lueers, Minister of Worship & Arts

On a bright Sunday morning last July, the stained-glass window radiated into the Sanctuary with joyful colors. The pastor focused us with a scripture and we stood to look at the screens and sing. But the words were hard to read. The missionaries shared about their ministry with pictures of family, new buildings, and happy new believers barely visible to us. The pastor projected a sermon illustration that looked like a watercolor left out in the rain. HELP!

Screens and projectors became a fun way for us to sing together starting in the 1970's. Many of us can remember youth group meetings with an overhead projector singing songs we sang almost every week. Soon churches began using screens more regularly and complicated projectors were added to the budget. Projecting Bible passages and sermon illustrations soon turned to finding movie clips and flashy backgrounds that create an atmosphere of movement. Lifesize videos of the pastor replace a preaching pastor on Sunday morning in some churches. Expensive digital walls and LED lights can create a plethora of background and colors for the worship spaces, even project different images on each of the screens.

At MPC, our Sanctuary has only had screens installed for ten years, and while we do not plan on jumping into LED lights and video walls, our services have come to rely on visual images to convey lyrics, announcements, pictures, and sermon illustrations. So, our tech team started working to find a better way.

Our first step was to replace the projector bulbs, but new light bulbs are expensive and with age, projectors can lose their potency. When that didn't solve the problem, we decided to replace our projectors and screens with new monitor TVs.

Planning the system included help from Jay Blum and Norm Snyder, A/V Directors at LaRoche College. The Tech A/V team came together last fall to install the new digital video system in the sanctuary. Tom Mueller, Michael Wagner, Edie Houghton, Nick Gasbarro, Jay Blum, Bradley Butorac, and Patrick Ward, guided by James Dames, Facilities Director, ran cables through the whole room to connect the monitor TVs to the Sound Booth. "We had some cables over 250 feet to string under the chancel. They were lying on the floor and you had to keep them labeled and organized!" says James Dames. In one afternoon, the cables were connected, but as most of you know, technical systems are not always cooperative. The tech team continued to work with the hardware and software over the next week to make it work well.

The next week, pictures came alive in full color, lyrics and Bible passages were easily read, and announcements were much more inviting. Our Wednesday evening speakers appreciated the great system to portray their presentation. But much more than the physical changes, the new system has helped the many generations we invite to worship together each week come together and focus as one body in Christ. The screens are just one part of a tech

ministry that includes Live Streaming on Facebook each week, broadcast on CTV, monitors in the Nursery and Café and podcasts through iTunes. The tech team is reaching the world with the Good News of Jesus Christ each week and you can be a part of it. All it takes is a phone call to get started.





BELONG

HIGH SCHOOL >

Sharing Faith Stories Encourages Growth

By Ryan Pietryga, Director of Student IMPACT

In Psalm 145:4-5, the psalmist writes “Great is the Lord and greatly to be praised, and his greatness is unsearchable. One generation shall commend your works to another and shall declare your mighty acts.” MPC’s Confirmation Class program is aimed at teaching our rising generation all about the greatness of our God, so that they will continue to declare His mighty acts. This past spring, we had 22 students declare their faith in Jesus Christ and join our MPC family of faith!

Confirmation Class is an introductory course to the Christian faith that is offered to upcoming ninth graders each fall. The primary purpose of the class is to help students grow in their relationship with Christ and their understanding of who He is and what He has done for them. Students are invited to examine their life-changing and ever-growing relationship with the Lord. The class also covers important topics such as the reliability of the Bible, Redemptive History, and salvation. Confirmation Class serves to connect our students to High School IMPACT, as well as the MPC body by allowing them to serve and offering the confirmands the option to join the church at the end of the class. Students typically leave the class with a better understanding of their faith and who God is. One student wrote in her statement of faith: “I learned that even during the years where I was not faithful, God was still standing by me and wishing for me to come back to my faith...Jesus has changed my life.”

One of the highlights this year for the Confirmation Class was the “Faith Share” class—an opportunity for

confirmands and their parents to connect and share faith stories. On this dedicated Sunday morning, parents are invited to the Confirmation Class for an intentional opportunity to help their kids learn from their experiences—in both hard and growing times—as well as reinforce the bond between the kids and their parents as spiritual influencers. We had over 30 parents sharing about their faith struggles and triumphs with

“Even during the years where I was not faithful, God was still standing by me and wishing for me to come back to my faith... Jesus has changed my life.”

their kids, which resulted in a very meaningful morning. Students also really enjoyed the Confirmation retreat this year at Whitehall Camp and Conference Center in Emlenton, PA, where students were given an opportunity to “retreat” from all distractions in their lives as they learned about how the Biblical narrative collides with their own life story. Students enjoyed the weekend so much that they requested next year we do a specific tenth grade retreat!

Now that this year’s Confirmation class is over, our hope and prayer is that our students, with their MPC church family beside them, will continue to experience an “ever-growing relationship with Jesus Christ.” We believe this happens when our

students are connected to not just our student ministry but are active members of the local church family. Ultimately, our hope is that as our students grow, maturing in their faith, living out their ever-growing relationship with the Savior, that one day they will commend the awesome works of our God to a future generation of believers.



Delighting in the Lord

By Michele Holmes, Director of Women's Ministries

"So we fix our eyes not on what is seen, but on what is unseen, since what is seen is temporary, but what is unseen is eternal."

—2 Corinthians 4:18

What happens when we fix our eyes on what is unseen? Have you ever paused to wonder what that even means? How can we fix our eyes on something we can't even see? I think the answer to these questions starts with our hearts.

When we choose to set our hearts on the eternal—on the things that really matter in our lives because they are all wrapped up in God the Father, God the Son, and God the Holy Spirit—then our eyes get fixed on things we cannot see. We start valuing time away with the Lord even more than our morning coffee, and that can only be a thing worked out by the power of the Holy Spirit!

When we settle into that rhythm of being still with God, we realize—read this next part slowly—that He takes great delight in us. As we enjoy Him, He shows us that He enjoys us as well, and provides us with more than we could have hoped for.

The Women's Ministries Spring Retreat centered in on this theme of "getting away with the Lord." A group of a little over 50 women packed their bags this past May and headed over to the Laurelville Retreat Center to spend a weekend delighting in the Lord. It was a first for us, holding a retreat in the middle of the woods in the deep of spring. We spent time digging into things that matter: naming things we make too important in our lives that crowd out God; naming a word that we

wanted God to work into our lives; creating a piece of stamped jewelry with that word; exploring what it means to delight, with reckless abandon, our God in all His splendor.

This was the first retreat I've been a part of that where we scheduled in "delighting time"—dedicated time where our ladies were free to craft, nap, hike, or chat with friends. That was far and away one of everyone's favorite parts. Don't we all need a little get away time from schedules? This retreat allowed that for all of us, and the Lord renewed in our hearts a sense of our worth in Him as a result.

Keeping our eyes fixed on the unseen is our goal. God is our ever-present guide. And our commitment is to seek Him first in all things. If you're reading this and looking for more of the "unseen" in your own life, I hope you would consider giving Women's Ministries a call or sending us an e-mail. We'd love to connect with you and find a place for you in a class or a girls' night, or who knows, maybe even a retreat some time!



"We steer where we stare."

*—Lysa Terkheurst
(The Best Yes)*



Food. Faith. Fellowship

By Dave Daniel & Corky Semler, Men's Ministries

Men's Ministries at Memorial Park—known as the Joshua League—began hosting its Saturday Morning Men's Breakfasts during the 2017-2018 ministry year. The 2018-2019 year brought with it a significant focus on these breakfasts as they began to grow alongside our efforts to bring men together. These breakfasts serve as an opportunity for fellowship among men of MPC, while also inviting new visitors and less active men of the church to deepen their participation in the ministry.

The third Saturday of every month, we are welcomed by the aromas of coffee and bacon. A hearty meal is shared alongside conversation with our brothers in Christ. Generally a group of 35 or more men each month, we enjoy time singing together led by Jim Lueers (Minister of Worship & Arts) or Paul Housman (Pastor of Missions & Outreach). The time of fellowship and enjoying company together is a refreshing opportunity to reconnect with friends and meet new faces.

"I come away inspired, moved, and motivated."

The core of the morning is a presentation by a rotating group of men from the community on subjects laid on their hearts by the Lord. The talks range from the theoretical to the nitty gritty of Christian life. To say that the speakers were outstanding would be a vast understatement. We had several of the best "in house" speakers (including Pastor Dean Weaver, Elder Roger Rumer, and Elder Jay Roy), along with some seriously notable guests: including Paul McNulty (President of Grove City College); Dan Dupee (Chairman of the CCO); Michael McHenry (Pittsburgh Pirates); and evangelist Stephen Abbott from

Australia. "I come away from [the breakfasts] inspired, moved, and motivated," reflects John O'Master, one of the active men in the ministry. "The speakers, especially Pastor Weaver, are excellent! He and the others have touched on topics that are particularly meaningful to men, in all our roles. We have been encouraged to be the best we can be to the Glory of God. Their stories have been inspirational and moving. And being new to MPC, getting to know more men, especially the men at the breakfasts is really a highlight. (And I have taken over cooking the bacon!)."

We are putting together another lineup of speakers for the coming year that will undoubtedly be encouraging, challenging, and engaging. How do we choose our topics each month? We don't choose! The press used to ask Dan Rooney, "who do you pick on draft day?" His reply? "We pick the best athletes that we can find." We have the same approach. We select men who we believe are godly men or who are in positions that are interesting. Like Dan Dupee, Chairman of the CCO: he's in a strategic position in that organization. We pick people who can inspire and encourage, then let them choose the message—whatever is on their hearts.

The goal of these breakfasts is for men to have a time of fellowship and really allow them to get deeper into their relationship with Christ and get more deeply involved in the church. These breakfasts are a starting point—not an end in themselves—to get more involved in the various opportunities in Men's Ministries.

John O'Master, who has made connections with other aspects of Men's Ministries through the breakfasts—Men in Action, Men in Prayer, and a Monday Bible study—finds the support system one of the

best parts of getting involved: "Like everyone, I have weaknesses that I often need help with. Not necessarily overtly, but the subtle encouragement of being with other men, knowing they too, have difficulties they are experiencing or have overcome makes me more resolute to be open to the Spirit of God to work deeper in my life."

We invite all men of MPC to set aside the third Saturday of each month from September through May (December excluded) to join us. You will certainly be blessed and will be a blessing to the others.

Growth & Change

By Rev. Dr. Karen Anderson, Pastor of Visitation & Senior Life

When some think of Senior Ministries, they think of older adults gathering for rather bland events, but here at Memorial Park, our Senior Ministry team continues to reach across generations as it seeks to fulfill its mission to offer senior adults a life changing, ever growing relationship with Jesus Christ. The ministry involves adults of all age groups who participate in the ministry through serving on our Senior Ministry Team; volunteering in the community through our Primetimers and Second Thursday Luncheons outreach opportunities; and attend our engaging Senior adult Bible studies on Thursday mornings.

Our Bible Studies have been enriched with increased attendance (over 25 attendees per session) in our fall, winter, and summer sessions where we have seen younger seniors and married couples attending the classes, as well as folks from outside the church. This has brought depth to our discussions and fellowship.

Our Senior Ministry Team is made up of folks of all ages: from seniors like Mary Lou Curry who is in her eighties (pictured top left being serenaded by one of our entertainers at our September Second Thursday Luncheon) to younger members like Laura Hartline (pictured top right serving as a helper at our Primetimers' service at The Haven).

New to the Senior Ministry Team leadership (though a veteran of Senior Ministries) is Margie Fritz. Margie is newly retired and strongly committed to this ministry. She and her husband, Dan, have taken over booking entertainment for our Second Thursday Senior Community Luncheons from Cathy Boyd, who had faithfully and excellently worked as entertainment coordinator for the past three years. Other Second Thursday

responsibilities have also been passed on to committee members: Mary Bullen has taken over the duty of decorating the tables; Sally Campbell is coordinating the meal planning with the caterer; and many other volunteers serve the ministry by setting up and cleaning up before and after the meal. We have plenty of opportunities to get involved!

Another part of our Senior Ministries outreach efforts is Primetimers—a weekly visitation and worship service at local senior care facilities. This year Primetimers added a fourth facility to its ministry: The Haven, located at the corner of Babcock and Cemetery Lane.

This presented a new challenge in that we were providing a worship service in the memory care unit. The experience has required us to really think about the kind of songs we sing as many of our guests can no longer read, and how our speakers bring the message. We have learned to keep the songs and the message simple. Those who have been there have found that ministering to these sweet people blesses us as we seek to bless them.

We continue to look for ways to expand this ministry, and we invite you—no matter what your age—if you have a heart for senior adults, join us as we endeavor to fulfill our mission.



Life: Together

By Jason Scott, Connections Coordinator

“Once you have it, you don’t want to let it go.” I sat and listened as one of our LIFE Group Leaders shared with me what life was like in his group. Once you get a taste of truly doing life together in Christian community, you don’t want to let it go. You fight for it. You want to fight for that time together in a schedule that gets busier and busier because it never gets any less busy. You make it a priority, and deliberately make hard choices to make it happen.

Authentic community is taking a risk of loving and being loved for who we are. It might mean tough love seasoned with grace at times. A love that celebrates what God is doing in our lives, and how we fulfill His mission in this world. A love that makes our joys even more joyful, companions to carry us when we are plunged into the depths of grief, and friendships as we live life in the ordinary.

LIFE Groups provide people the opportunity to care, grow, and connect with one another as we become more like Jesus in a small group community. We pray together, study God’s Word together, and simply do life together.

Finding this community begins with an invitation. One of the ways we invited people into this life-giving ministry was through the LIFE Group Luncheon last March. The luncheon was an invitation into a life-changing and ever-growing relationship with Jesus Christ through LIFE Groups.

What were our goals for the luncheon?

- Appreciate existing LIFE Group leaders.
- Cast vision to care, grow, connect in LIFE Groups.
- Provide an environment for people to connect relationally through fun activities.
- Give people a path forward into groups.
- Form new groups or plug people into existing groups

A Real-Life Vision of a LIFE Group

Our guest speakers for the luncheon were the Women’s Ministries Director Michele Holmes and her husband and elder Geoff Holmes. They illustrated the vision for LIFE Groups by sharing from their own life experiences within a group. We learned several things from their journey that was also echoed by other LIFE Group leaders.

Relationships Formed Through a New Members Class can set the Stage for a LIFE Group

Geoff and Michele shared how their first LIFE Group was formed through acquaintances they made during their New Members Class. They gave a simple invitation at their last class to people who were once strangers. This is not uncommon. Another couple of our leaders, John and Rhea Christopher, echoed the same sentiment with their first group that came out of a new members class. The pastor suggested that they stay

together as a group. How did the experience turn out? Rhea Christopher sums it up: “one of the best groups we were ever in.” Groups can form among friends, strangers and acquaintances alike. There is no one way to forming groups. We entrust the process to God.

LIFE Groups Provide Support Through, well, Life!

Michele and Geoff faced a crisis. Between selling one home to move into another, an unexpected issue surfaced that prevented them from moving into their new home. Essentially, the family was homeless. Yet, it was their LIFE Group that stepped up in their time of need, with another family opening their own home until matters got sorted out. And it was their group that helped them get moved in, including the piano! Michele remembers the whole experience fondly: “I just think that He made us to be with each other. We long for community, and MPC is a family, and it’s an awesome experience to get to know your family members in your own home in a relaxed place, where

you can be real. Laughing, praying. We were made for this.”

LIFE Groups Experience Constant Change Through Life Cycles

Some groups dissolve because of life changes. Some groups have dissolved for years then reformed in a different stage of life. Other groups evolve with different members. Then there are groups that are resolved to continue for years. An older gentleman at the luncheon by the name of Mark has been a part of his group for 25 years! Why do I bring this up? Because if your group doesn’t make it to 25 years, it does not mean it has failed. Although we hope that groups would commit for at least 18 months, we also understand life is change. And the reality is, groups change and go through their own life cycles, and you never know if God will bring you back together again.

—continued on page 9—

God is on the move at Memorial Park

By Rev. Dr. Kevin Gourley, Pastor of Congregational Care

2018-2019 has been a rewarding year of equipping and ministry. Ministering with the support and encouragement of a Biblical, Missional, Prayerful, and Loving Church—Memorial Park Evangelical Presbyterian Church—is such a gratifying experience. There are 5 areas of ministry I would like to briefly expound upon where God has been very present over this past year and on the move in these five areas of ministry inviting people into a life-changing and ever-growing relationship with Jesus Christ.

Wednesday Morning Men's Bible Study

This year a group of 10-12 men met at 6:30 a.m. in the Clayton Center to study a book *Sacred Rhythms* by Ruth Haley Barton. In this book, we studied as well as practiced some spiritual disciplines such as meditation, Bible study, prayer, and Sabbath Keeping. The study had a great influence on our lives. Personally, I have begun the practice of Sabbath Keeping, resulting in more energy and joy into my life—a practice not taken seriously for 35 years of ministry! We will continue this study in the fall where each of us will be keeping each other accountable in growing closer to Christ.

Women to Women Listening Prayer

Late spring and early summer, Pastoral Assistant Tom Anderson led a study and practice on Listening Prayer/Centering Prayer, an ancient Christian practice centering in on meditation of Scriptural phrases and verses to grow closer to God. We discussed the practice of this prayer and then practiced sitting in silence before God for 20 minutes to listen to His voice. Many of us had some profound and healing experiences of the presence of the Holy Spirit. We continue to practice this type of prayer in our quiet times with the Lord in a hectic and overstimulated world.

Visitation

One of the most important and rewarding forms of ministry for me is visitation in the hospital, the homebound, and just people in general. The last few years volunteer Pastoral Assistant Tom Anderson has joined me. I have seen the importance of Jesus sending the disciples out in twos. We visit together and then are able to debrief our visit and hold up each other up in prayer. The people we minister to in visitation actually minister to us in ways that are too deep for words! Tom has become a confidant, a counselor, and a friend.

LIFE Groups are a Process

LIFE Groups are a step by step journey. People I used to call a year and a half ago who had no interest are starting to attend more LIFE Group events and are even open to taking next steps into a group this Fall. Some seasons of life are busier than others, and constantly changing. That is why we have events like the LIFE Group Luncheon or Launch events. They are an invitation to help people to connect relationally, then they can determine if they want to form a group. Attending an event isn't a commitment, but just one more step in the process of becoming a LIFE Group member. It is an invitation to a life changing and ever-growing relationship with Jesus Christ doing life together in small group community.

What is your next step in this process?

We'd love to help you get connected to a group where you can find that authentic community to walk through life with. The LIFE Group Ministry is excited to offer sermon-based LIFE Groups this Fall for our series on the book of Daniel. This will give you the opportunity to discuss the sermon and how it applies to your every day. Whether you are interested in joining a LIFE group or want to attend with your current group, we would be happy to have you! Give us a call.

Stephen Ministry

Carol Kjellman, Dee Cuffman, and I continue to lead this ministry where volunteers receive 50 hours of training to walk with people in our church and outside our church who are experiencing the challenges of life. Walking through these various challenges with another person is essential to "persevering in the faith." This year we trained an additional eight new Stephen Ministers to befriend and assist others. We now have 31 active Stephen Ministers who minister faithfully to others. Half of these have been active Stephen Ministers for over five years!

Intercessory Prayer Group

This group has been meeting together to pray for the needs of the MPC for over 15 years! We meet twice per month in the Prayer Room on the second and fourth Wednesdays from 1:00 -2:30 p.m. to study a book on prayer for the first half hour and then to pray for an hour. We always are open for more to be a part of this important ministry! We have added a few new people this year who have time in the midweek to pray. The Connection Cards have contributed mightily to our prayer time as we are receiving more and more requests and needs to pray for. We as intercessors are 'blown away' by the sheer number of requests to pray for and we know that we are only 'scratching the surface' of all the many needs of this church. There is such a freedom in carrying these many burdens to the Lord together in prayer Who alone can handle them and carry us! Oswald Chambers said, "Prayer does not equip us for the greater work; Prayer is the greater work!"



KIDS>

Setting Hearts on Fire: New and Veteran Leaders in TRU Kids

By Jessica Wendlandt, Early Childhood Coordinator

We often talk about what has been accomplished in the Kingdom because of your giving. While we gratefully experience the benefit of your generosity, we would also like to describe the work of God because they gave. Who are they? They are our fantastic team of men, women and teens who faithfully serve the families of our church each week, year after year.

The mission of Memorial Park Church is to invite people into a life-changing and ever-growing relationship with Jesus Christ. In order to grow those relationships, MPC made a big structural change last fall which provided the opportunity for more adults to receive deeper biblical knowledge through classes at the Discipleship Hour.

With those major changes for the church at large, Children's Ministries adapted our Sunday morning program to complement the structure for adults. We had to double our volunteer base this year in order to provide coverage in each classroom and accommodate new changes. We prayed for God to make this possible, and after making a BIG ask, the church body responded! Children's Ministries had 25 people join the TRU Kids team as first-year leaders, bumping our total number of volunteers to approximately 70 people! We are grateful for God's provision in bringing us all these new leaders to run our programs. New to the TRU Kids team this year is Madeline Stitt. "I believe children need as many Christian adults in their lives as possible," she says about her time spent in Children's Ministries, "to

model Christian values and behavior, and aid in teaching the fundamentals of God's message. As a retiree, I have the time to help at TRU Kids and believe the Lord calls me to do this. Serving enriches my life. I am totally impressed by the TRU Kids curriculum and its leaders. It is a pleasure to be involved and see the children blossom."

"I feel like I'm playing a part in the Great Commission."

We are also grateful for our "veteran" leaders. Change can cause people to fear or flee, but several of our TRU Kids Leaders have faithfully been serving in our ministry for decades. They've been unmoved by changes, and instead remained spiritual anchors for the children of MPC. Doug Klocko has been on our team for close to 10 years; Amy Joll has served in our nursery for about 15 years; and Linda Hinds, Curt Powell, Bill Schmitt and Mark Weber have all been serving in Children's Ministries for nearly 30 years! Curt Powell remembers, "when I first became a Christian, I wanted to serve. I asked folks, 'what's the job that nobody wants?' The answer came back—teach Sunday school. At first, I wasn't very good. But God brought me along and now I feel like I've found my place. I feel like I'm playing a part in the Great Commission. As each Sunday unfolds, I can't really tell if it's having any effect at all. With kids this young, I'm only planting seeds. But when I see the kids 5, 10, sometimes 15 years later

and see the kind of people they've become, I'd like to think I played a part, behind parents, teachers, and mentors."

Various TRU Kids Leaders faithfully teach each year even when their own children age out of the program. Some teenagers are now coming back to volunteer, sometimes serving alongside their parents or among those who taught them as young children!

The faithfulness and dedication of our leaders make the TRU Kids program possible. Every Sunday morning, these volunteers continue to invite the children of this church into life-changing and ever-growing relationships with Jesus Christ. What about you? Do you want to live into this mission; to reach kids' hearts and set them on fire for God? We are always looking for more volunteers who have a passion to serve children. YOU can make an eternal difference in the lives of the kids of Memorial Park. Will you join our team? If God keeps moving like He has in our ministry, you may also find a ministry for the next 30 plus years, with us!



Giving is Receiving

By Jacob Soto, Middle School Coordinator

“Do nothing out of selfish ambition or vain conceit. Rather, in humility value others above yourselves, not looking to your own interests but each of you to the interests of the others.”

—Philippians 2:3-4

Middle School is a complicated time for a lot of kids; it’s a time when they begin to ask a lot of questions about their faith. Here at Memorial Park, our Middle School IMPACT program invites kids into a space where they can ask those questions, discuss topics that they are curious about or are working through—things like friendship, identity, putting others first—and create a space where they can be open about their questions and begin to own their faith, as we walk alongside them as they begin to navigate their relationship with Jesus more deeply.

As part of this exploration, Middle School IMPACT spent time last holiday season discussing what it means to live an “after you” kind of life. Contemporary culture can often cause a self-focused attitude, which becomes all the more noticeable around the holiday season when kids may begin to look forward to the items they may receive as gifts. Many people spend the Christmas season focused on what they want, missing the whole heart of Jesus. We wanted to provide an opportunity for students that would teach them that not only are they truly blessed, but also gain an understanding of how others may struggle and what sacrifice really looks like.

We challenged our students to spend time thinking about others and their needs. The goal was to begin with noticing the needs of other people.

Looking around in their every day lives to see outside of themselves. The next step we challenged them with was considering what giving to that person or serving for that person would look like. How might they be able to help, and how might they be able to serve by sacrificing of themselves?

Giving our students a concrete way to



put these thoughts into practice, Middle School IMPACT partnered with Women’s Ministries to hold a gift drive to serve families at Uncommon Grounds Café in Aliquippa—a non-profit organization that aims to reach the least, the last, and the lost with the gospel of Christ through listening and offering dignity in a variety of different ways, from offering art programs to community development.

The goal for our students? Fill the collection tub with gifts for the less fortunate teenagers from families ministered to at Uncommon Grounds

Café. With just one week left in our collection, we had the entire tub filled and were able to deliver gifts for 26 underprivileged kids.

Our other goal? Find ways to continue giving throughout the year. Even after we accomplished our goal of filling our collection bin, we made intentional efforts to discuss giving throughout the month of January, celebrating when we were able to find ways to give and serve. We looked for other opportunities to serve so we could explore different ways to give back—with time, with a listening ear, even just sharing your talents. And our summer trip in 2019 is focused in giving—Serve City: a week of service at various local Pittsburgh organizations. This is what Christians are called to do every day. Paul reminds us of this in Philippians 2 as he challenges people to imitate Christ’s humility. We are not supposed to live for ourselves, but always to look out for others. We are not supposed to do this for selfish reasons, but out of love for our neighbors. Eighth grader Owen Russell reflects on his involvement in the Uncommon Grounds

gift drive: “Events like this are so important because you are really helping people out. Participating in the gift drive impacted my faith and understanding of people; it helped me to figure out what it meant to give, what it meant to help others feel joy, and know that God is there.”

Do you have time or talents to share with Middle School IMPACT? We’d love to have you on the team! Find out more about our projects, leadership opportunities, or ways to connect with our students. You’ll be glad you did!

Sometimes a little help is all it takes

By Sam Taylor, Campus & Community Outreach Coordinator

"You know, I haven't been to church in years. Maybe it's time for me to start going again." Sitting in his truck, facing the front doors of Memorial Park Church, a local man casually mentioned this while several middle- and high-schoolers washed his truck free of charge. Over 45 cars were washed for free this past May 4, and their drivers even received Cuffman-sister cookies. The Free Car Wash, hosted by Student IMPACT, was just one of 18 projects that were accomplished on Compassion Day 2019.

Compassion Day began nine years ago when MPC was invited to join several other local churches in a new ministry effort called "Compassion Day." The first major project that the group took on was replacing the roof at the Family Guidance facility. The following year, MPC's Missions and Outreach team decided to switch the focus from big projects to helping church members and neighbors with smaller projects. The desired outcome was to tangibly help people during an annual event and to begin to change the church culture from being served to being servants. Nine years later, and over 1,800 people have served on Compassion Days, showing the love of Christ to our neighbors.

Nearly 200 people took part in Compassion Day 2019, whether they were working on a project in the community, on our church property, grilling, or serving food. May 4 was a day when

members of our MPC family of all ages and stages of life looked outward simultaneously, making themselves available to bless people in our surrounding community in the name of Jesus. These service projects included doing yard work for several families in need of assistance, building retaining walls, making frozen meals for Living in Liberty, packing lunches for Light of Life, spreading mulch on the church grounds, sorting clothes at Repurposed, painting and yardwork at North Hills Community Outreach, working at Garfield Farm, singing at Kane and Cumberland Nursing Homes, and serving at Allegheny Youth Development on the North Side.

Compassion Day is just one day out of the year, but, our hope and prayer is that its fruit extend far beyond that in at least two ways: one is in the lives of those who serve. Perhaps as they see the impact they have in the lives of those they serve, they will catch a vision for how they might extend God's compassion to their neighbors throughout the year. Second, our hope is that those who are served find themselves invited deeper into a life-changing and ever-growing relationship with Jesus Christ. Perhaps that invitation takes the form of something as simple as getting your car washed and thinking about coming back to church.



This Is The Great Adventure

By Paul Housman, Pastor of Missions & Outreach

“But you will receive power when the Holy Spirit comes on you; and you will be my witnesses in Jerusalem, and in all Judea and Samaria, and to the ends of the earth.” Acts 1:8

The mission of Memorial Park Church is to invite people into a life-changing and ever-growing relationship with Jesus Christ. I am so grateful that international missions are central to our goals and not a sideline project.

Thank you for that and praise the Lord that together we are joining in the good work God is already doing in our world to call every ethnos; every tribe, nation and tongue, to glorify the Lord together.

Communicating across cultural divides can be difficult, but God always provides a way. Most recently, my experience with our mission partners at Camp Kikomar taught me that music can be a universal language in bringing people together, but even better, it allows us to do so much more.

In early June 2019, we received a prayer request from Diana Garrett and Mirna Sotomayor, our Mission Partners at Camp Kikomar in Mexico. In the mountains of Mexico, a group of Christians is being persecuted for their faith and as a result, their children have been kicked out of school. The kids have spent the past year being taught by a handful of faithful young girls ages 16-21 who have a ninth-grade education. Diana invited some of the children for a few days of respite at the camp. To her surprise, the pastor of their church inquired if the entire church could come along! What an opportunity to love on these beautiful, faithful servants of the Lord! But there was no full team in place and no supplies to run a camp for that many people. They asked that we pray for God’s guidance and blessing as they worked to make this trip possible. After sending that prayer request to our Mission Prayer Group, we prayed.

Others were praying and responded by

asking what more we could do.

So, we prayed again. We invited others to Give and Go. They prayed, and they responded. All those who prayed and gave financially went with us in a very real sense. There is more to God’s mission work than physical presence in country. In fact, much of what God is doing is Spiritual.

We all went on a great adventure to partner with what God was already doing in Kikomar.

God called, we responded, we went, we supported, we continued in prayer and saw God work in all of us, in many ways. A team of four from Memorial Park—myself, along with Charlene Cave, Lauren (Skurcenski) Sullivan, and Michele Holmes—answered that call to go to Mexico on extremely short notice. We heard God calling and we went in His time, to join Him in whatever He had for us.

This group of believers went from fearing the dangerous and forbidden waters of the ocean to laughing and jumping in the waves with us. Legalism and seriousness were replaced by smiles, laughter and joy. Resolve to persevere in the great trials of persecution was strengthened. Walls were broken down in trusting Americans who they discovered are not all violent sexual predators.

We played games indoors like Jenga and Uno that connected us regardless of language spoken. We got to teach each other words and phrases while having fun playing. We played games outside like relay races and games with a large, colorful parachute. We played catch games in the beautiful Gulf of Mexico in the front of Camp Kikomar.

Beautiful family pictures were captured, printed, and put into frames for keepsakes. Once the families warmed to us and the camera, they couldn’t stop getting their picture taken! We printed the pictures—thank you for the printer,

Laurie Brown—and set them along the benches in the dining hall. Family after family walked by commenting and smiling over the portraits. What fun it was to send each of them home with a stack of their grinning faces as a memento of their time in the freedom and beauty of Camp Kikomar.

One of the young men of this persecuted group of believers played guitar. Jeremiah is his name. I borrowed the camp’s guitar and Mirna blessed me with playing her’s. We didn’t waste time finding an opportunity to sit down for a couple hours, playing songs of praise and worship together. Music helped us transcend words. We taught each other songs and found songs that were familiar to both of us. Some Spanish songs and some American songs. Later that night I had the opportunity to lead the group in a couple of songs of worship before we had a time of testimonies and a diploma ceremony for the students to receive certificates of completing their year of schooling in their homeschool. I invited Jeremiah to lead worship with me. By this time, we were like best buds.

We sang and worshiped together in Nahuatl, Spanish, and English. We discovered “How Great Thou Art” truly is a universal theme in any language. We prayed for each other. We testified of God’s goodness to us. What a beautiful thing it was to see and hear our different languages and different expressions all to our one true God. Gathering to glorify God together in Spirit and in Truth.

Funds were gathered to complete the walls and build a roof for their small school.

God orchestrated so many amazing things and so much more could be told but here is the bottom line:

We all went together through prayer, support, and physical presence to partner in what God was already doing to draw every ethnos to glorify Him together. Different cultures, different expressions,



to the same God. This was a little foretaste of heaven: "After this I looked, and there before me was a great multitude that no one could count, from every nation, tribe, people and language, standing before the throne and before the Lamb. They were wearing white robes and were holding palm branches in their hands. And they cried out in a loud voice: "Salvation belongs to our God, who sits on the throne, and to the Lamb." Revelation 7:9-10

"I have no words to describe the peace and the joy that were present," Diana confessed to me once we had returned home. "We basked in it, as we watched Rogelio, the leader of this suffering flock, let his guard down and play soccer with all his might for the first time in fifteen years. To see all, from the smallest to the biggest out in the waves, under the watchful eye of trained lifeguards, enjoying joy at the sea, which is the meaning of Kikomar."

We weren't just waiting for the kingdom; we were experiencing it together. It really is all about Jesus. This is the great adventure! God calls us, we respond, He acts.

Don't you want to step into His call on your life to join in the great adventure?

Even if you can't physically go beyond our local community to serve in God's mission to reach the world, you can share the great love of Jesus right where He has planted you. Plus, I believe that you go with the called in very practical ways by your prayers (James 5:16) and by your financial support (Philippians 4:10-20, 1 Corinthians 9:14). Thank you for inviting others into a life-changing and ever-growing relationship with Jesus through Outreach and Mission Ministries at Memorial Park Church!





PRESCHOOL >

A Bountiful Year

By Jan Moreth, Preschool Director

As our 26th year came to a close, our hearts were full of gratitude for a God who created and sustains this ministry on a daily basis. Each morning the preschool staff gathers for a devotional and prayer time—that coming before the Lord at the beginning of the day is life-changing and life-giving for all of us. This gathering provides us with time to reflect on the busy and plentiful year at Memorial Park Christian Preschool!

Our enrollment this year exceeded our expectations and the addition of another session of Discovery Days—a program that meets from 11:30-2:30 on Monday, Tuesday, and Wednesday (choice of days is up to parents) under the direction of Mrs. Sauer—proved to be favorable to our MPCP families. In addition to Mrs. Sauer's detailed and creative plans for each week, we have welcomed a naturalist from Latodami Nature Center each month for extra STEM learning. With each visit, students experience live animals, when possible, and specimens from the Carnegie Museum. Hands down, the favorite visitor is Penny the hen!

Parent involvement during the past academic year was again high and much appreciated. When our vision screenings, school pictures, or speech/language/hearing screenings are done, we rely on parent support. Volunteers for morning carpool greeters included three MPC staff members (the early birds on-site in the mornings!) who warmly welcomed children to school. Though it may seem like a small role, greeters have the ability and opportunity to completely turn a child's morning around—who knows what the home environment was like

in the past hour or even the night before, and a sincere welcome that is personalized can make a child feel secure and at home. In addition, a large parent contingent enables us to host a Christmas Store for our students, with the positive variance set aside to care for families in need.

At the completion of our academic year, we plunged almost immediately into the dizzying days of Summer Art Camps. All six camps filled up, with 90% of those registrations happening in the first 4 hours of open registration. The Summer Art Camp staff consists of preschool staff members and a few others who create and carry out some of the most engaging experiences you can imagine. From my office I could hear children repeating: "When we are afraid, God is with us! When we are happy, God celebrates with us! When we are thankful, God is happy! When we make mistakes, God forgives us! And When we pray, God hears us!" What a joy it is to be used by God in the spiritual formation of these little ones!



ADULT CLASSES >

Tackling Difficult Questions

By Laura Gonzalez, Administrative Assistant to Executive Pastor of Ministry

Take a stand or sweep things under the rug? Oftentimes those two options seem to be the only way to move forward in today's society, fraught with topics like depression, racism, creationism, homosexuality, and so many others that are difficult to address. Rather than choose one or the other, Pastor Betsy Rumer decided to take the road in between and start a conversation. Beginning in September 2018, as part of the Adult Classes ministries, we started the First Wednesdays Speaker Series—a monthly series that would address these hard, cultural topics within our church and community. MPC Member Dave Moran was excited to hear of the scheduled list of speakers, saying, "this is the kind of dialogue our nation should be having on important topics like this and I'm glad the church is taking these steps to engage in thought provoking ways with the community."

"Clearly, this topic's relevance permeates many spheres of our lives, and speaking openly about it seemed to "set the stage" for the subsequent topics in future lectures relating to disenfranchised Others."

When the doors opened for our first speaker in September—Dr. Tara Gunther,

—continued on page 17—

who gave a faith-based talk on depression and anxiety, we were unsure of how the evening would be received by the church members and the community; however, we were pleasantly surprised to welcome a healthy number of attendees to the Sanctuary that evening. MPC member Janey Mather reflects on her experience during Dr. Gunther's talk:

"In hindsight, the very first one on anxiety and depression had an unexpected outcome that is, perhaps, worth sharing. I had invited a friend whose adult (millennial) son is struggling with depression. As she was taking copious notes on Dr. Gunther's presentation, I noticed others who were doing the same. This friend does not frequent a church sanctuary, so the setting was unfamiliar, though inviting. What struck me was the shared and expressed communal concern of this audience of acquaintances, friends, and strangers. Clearly, this topic's relevance permeates many spheres of our lives, and speaking openly about it seemed to "set the stage" for the subsequent topics in future lectures relating to disenfranchised Others. My friend and I have been able to talk often about her son's continuing challenge and progress; we are grateful for this event that opened a doorway."

In each of the following months, we were able to draw between 50-150 people for each speaker, including guests like Michael Thornhill, Associate Director of Cross-Cultural Ministry and Recruiting for the Coalition for Christian Outreach (CCO) for his talk on Racial Reconciliation alongside MPC's own Dean Weaver; Elder Dr. Steven Little (University of Pittsburgh) for his talk on Biblical Creation in the Eyes of a Scientist; Elder Roger Rumer with Lisa Slayton of the Pittsburgh Leadership Foundation (PLF) and their presentation on "Beyond #MeToo"; Dr. Duffy Robbins (Grove City College) and his discussion of teenagers and social media; missionary Mark V. and his discussion about his work with Muslims; and finally, Dr. Wesley Hill who shared his personal story in "Christian

Faithfulness & Homosexuality."

The topics were somewhat controversial, which brought people out even on cold winter evenings, and folks stayed after to discuss further and engage in questions in the Sanctuary as a group. "I loved this series," says MPC member Dena Masterino. "Loved. Not an understatement. Both the Racial Reconciliation and Beyond #MeToo really changed my perspective and I have felt so much shift that I have shared it multiple times with others. God had been pushing me to do some digging and research on Racial Reconciliation over the last 2 years and this was really a great capstone to my self-study. Both of these also showed me how much Memorial Park was concerned about the issues as a church and it made me proud to be connected with them. Coming to the speaker series in both of those topics in particular helped give me another opportunity to sit quietly and listen to other perspectives delivered in a kind, compassionate but deeply truthful way. That isn't always something you can get on either topic in the surrounding culture. Thank you so much for providing such a wonderful resource."

We are so grateful for this opportunity and the positive impact it has had on the people in our community, we can't wait to see what the Lord has in store for us in the future.

Pictured top to bottom: Dr. Wesley Hill (Trinity), Lisa Slayton (PLF), Michael Thornhill (CCO)



Financial Ministries at Memorial Park

By Catherine Pavlock, Executive Director of Operations

In the midst of the day-to-day paying bills, tracking budgets, and processing contributions, a new ministry has been gaining ground at Memorial Park. For several years we have offered Dave Ramsey courses such as *Financial Peace University* and *Legacy Journey*, and we have had many people participate in those programs. Tapping into the creativeness and passion of John Gourley, he and I have begun to expand our financial ministries offerings over the past year.

The intent of these programs is to help people use the funds that God has entrusted them with in a way that honors Him.

That means learning to tithe, living on a budget, getting out of debt, and enjoying a life of abundant generosity! Doesn't that sound like an epic life? That's why we named our first series the EPIC Workshop, based on the sermon series delivered by our pastors in Spring 2018. EPIC stands for:

Everything Belongs to God—everything we have is a gift from God, we are merely his stewards

Pinciples to Live By—tithing is still a Biblical principle to live by

Incredible Journey—learning to live a life of generosity

Called to the Mountaintop—the big picture of what God has for his people

Since last June, EPIC has been meeting on the second Saturday of the month and offering programs in fundamental skills like budgeting, getting out of debt, and building an emergency fund. We also offer special topics like

retirement planning, insurance, college planning, creating a will, and social security. More than 60 people have participated in at least one workshop and we have had nine different presenters, bringing in expertise from our congregation and community. After taking a break for July and August, the EPIC Workshop will continue in September with a slightly modified format. EPIC Core will focus on developing the foundational financial skills that will bring long-term success, and EPIC Focus will offer special topics of interest. These will be offered on an alternating basis, so watch the bulletin, mid-week email, and *The Bridge* for more information throughout the year.



Another new offering this year was the *ForeTalk* class for our Thursday morning seniors. This class is designed to help people engage in seven critical conversations they need to have to plan for end-of-life issues. The class was well received by a lively group, so we hope to offer it again.

We also continue to offer the *Financial Peace* class in a new format, which allowed it to fit in our Sunday morning Discipleship Hour. We will plan to do this again next spring and are exploring other materials which might fit Memorial Park better.

Hopefully you will plug into one of these Financial Ministries offerings in the next year. We know that it's hard for people to talk about finances and maybe a little uncomfortable, but we offer a "No Judgment Zone" for you to ask questions and get answers to help you. Getting your financial house in order may change not only your life, but have profound impacts on your family, your church, and your community well into the future.



STEWARDSHIP

PERSONNEL >

Adding Talent at Memorial Park

By Janey Mather, Elder, Personnel Committee

Every dynamic organization becomes adept at navigating changes both inside and outside its boundaries. Some of these changes are anticipated, while others are not. One fact remains: People are its prime resources and each employee contributes skills, talents and gifts that enrich and strengthen the entire body. Nothing could be truer when considering the cumulative professionalism of those who have joined the MPC staff in 2018-2019. These individuals include **Virginia Chartrand** and **Dan Yagesh** (Facilities), as well as **Barbara Kennedy** and **Amanda Rihn** (Preschool).

**

Most worshippers do not notice clean floors, organized classroom seating, or shiny faucets until these features are *not* clean or organized or shiny. Yet on any given Saturday night or Sunday morning, it is the work of two new employees who offer a welcoming and safe environment. **Virginia "Jenny" Chartrand** and **Dan Yagesh** serve as custodians of the facilities operations.

Jenny Chartrand takes much pride in everything she does, adopting the philosophy of 'cleanliness is next to godliness' at an early age from her mother. A mother of five herself and grandmother of nine, Jenny enjoys the quiet of the church building during many evening shifts. While cleaning the preschool wing on Thursdays, she particularly loves listening to the choir rehearse, though Josh Turner's "Long Black Train" is her favorite Christian country song.

Growing up in Rainelle, West Virginia

fostered Jenny's love of nature and "all things green." The peaceful beauty of this small town instilled values of faith and family that are very much a part of who she is today. Because many relatives are scattered across the nation, she particularly loves being able to plan a reunion to gather everyone in one place. Jenny admitted being happiest when her hands are painting, gardening, or making dinner for her family on a Sunday afternoon.



Dan Yagesh is beginning his seventh month of employment at MPC, having previously worked for an employer who sold the company to a new buyer.

Pleased with a much shorter drive, Dan embraces his responsibilities of keeping the church building in optimal condition. Sunday morning is a particularly busy time due to classroom set-ups and more foot traffic, but he states that his "daily duties are a way to express that I care about others," which indeed he does.

When Dan is not performing his tasks, he enjoys valued time with family and friends. Cooking a leg of lamb or heading outdoors is his way of relaxing, staying healthy, and maintaining balance between work and play.

**

While the facilities staff maintains MPC's

buildings and grounds efficiently and hospitably, MPC's Preschool also keeps an eye toward welcoming new children and their families to its doorstep. Both **Barbara Kennedy** and **Amanda Rihn** have deep educational backgrounds that they are now sharing with the minds and hearts of these young ones.

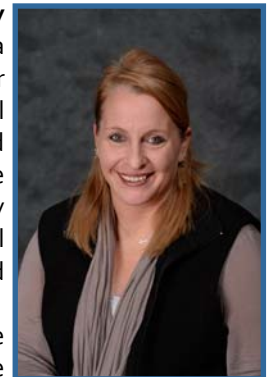
Barbara Kennedy

serves as a substitute teacher for all preschool age groups and considers her role as an opportunity to "model kindness and compassion."

Sharing the love of Jesus with the preschoolers not

only spills over to their families, but also the world at large. It's a principle, she believes, that continues to grow and develop exponentially as the child grows and develops. Barbara's favorite Bible verse is Matthew 6:19-21 because it reminds her to view life's brevity on earth from a kingdom perspective.

The Kennedy family is in the process of adopting one or two more children from Haiti to join their already healthy family of four. "Our daughter is biological, and our son was adopted from China, so we like to say that we're starting our own United Nations family," Barbara affectionately confides. Travel has always been an interest; next on her 'bucket list' is an RV trip out west with her family. Whether in or outside the educational realm, Barbara considers it



to be a privilege to serve the Lord in every way.



Amanda Rihn is no stranger to MPC, for she currently serves as a ruling elder on Session and has embraced a position of classroom teacher of four-year-olds who attend MPCP (Memorial Park Church Preschool) three days a week. Through the ministry of MOPS (Mothers of

Preschoolers), Women to Women, and Bookends, Amanda has appreciated the genuine friendships and connections that these outreaches have afforded. Her family has been members of MPC for fifteen years and her own three children attended the preschool. Now on the other side of the equation as teacher, Amanda hopes to “provide the Christian foundation as well as an academic start to my students’ learning” that was a blessing to her own family.

Moving to a town in Virginia for her first teaching job, Amanda recalls singing “Here I am, Lord” in church the day before leaving home en route to a place where she knew no one. To this day, that particular song brings tears to her eyes because she had to lean fully into where God was leading her. Eventually, a welcoming church family at Fairview Church in Fredericksburg, VA became a connecting point that—to this day—remains fond and cherished.

**

These four newly hired employees enhance and enlarge the territory of God’s plan for MPC. Each one brings an energy and willingness to serve. Each one contributes to the mission of “inviting people into a life-changing and ever-growing relationship with Jesus Christ” by sharing gifts of caring, hospitality, safety, and instruction. Memorial Park Church’s impact to its members and community is enriched by such wealth of human resources.

CHURCH LEADERSHIP>

2018-2019 Leadership at Memorial Park

2018 Deacons

Alisha Belack	Mary Lou Leibold
Rob Burton	Amy MacNeil
Erin Butler	Heather McAninch
Janell Butorac	Olivia McCreary
Charlene Cave	Jeff McManus
Carol Craig	Lisa Meinert
Shirley Crawford	Tim Molnar
Chris Fenton	Kathy Patton
Kathy Fenton	Kathi Peters
Deb Gallo	Jason Pierce
Kelly Gronbeck	Curt Powell
Patty Hildenbrand	Lynn Sekeres-Sosovicka
Wayne Hildrenbrand	Jim Stooft
Joshua Holmes	Jocy Waibel
Bob Kildea	Patrick Ward
Steve Kimmel	Tracy Weller
Karen Kurtz	Ted Weller
Scot Kurtz	

2018 Session

Rick Corliss (clerk)	Chris O'Rourke
Paula Allan	Amanda Rihn
Joe Cafaro	Laura Roy
Bob Gillen	Rev. Betsy Rumer
Rev. Dr. Kevin A. Gourley	Karl Sauereisen
Carol Kjellman	Corky Semler
Steve Little	Kevin Steele
Mac McCrum (elder emeritus)	Rev. Dr. D. Dean Weaver
Tom Meinert	Greg Wilson
David Moran	

FISCAL REPORT

June 1, 2018 – May 31, 2019

End of Year Report

By Catherine Pavlock, Executive Director of Operations

This past year was another roller coaster in the financial world, but as always, God abundantly provided for the needs of his church! Coming off the EPIC sermon series last spring, giving was exceptionally strong through the summer and into the fall of 2018. We started falling a bit behind our monthly budget in November, and December was unusually low. However, as we approached year-end, you stepped up and we ended the year just \$12,000 under budget for Total Income. On the expense side, we were \$71,000 under budget for the year, primarily due to a milder than anticipated winter and frugal management by our staff. We ended the fiscal year with income exceeding expenses by almost \$39,000 – a win by any standards!

As you have read elsewhere in this report, even while staying under budget, our ministry areas have accomplished great things! Personnel costs continue to hover right around 60% in spite of rising healthcare expenses and a 2% cost-of-living raise. Our admin staff continues to hunt down the best bargains to reduce overhead and keep the budget in line. On the facilities side, the addition of the Long-Term Maintenance line in our budget has allowed us to start catching up on some long-deferred projects. Projects included some parking lot paving, parking lot lighting upgrades, new windows and doors in the Edinburgh Room, new windows in the Nursery, a crosswalk to increase parking lot safety, and several smaller projects.

The Next Steps campaign officially concluded last October, but we continue to receive donations which help to cover our loan payment each month. As of May 31, the loan balance was \$385,773. We hope to be able to pay off this loan in the next year.

The maintenance of our facilities, the programs here at MPC, the outreach to our local community, and the support of missionaries around the world is only possible because of your generosity. Thank you for your ongoing support of the work that God has called us to do together in His name.

CONTENTS>

Balance Sheet	23
Ministry Fund Summary	24
Preschool Fund Summaries	25
Building Fund Summaries	26
Fund Balances	27
Analysis of Debt	27
Commitment to Missions	28
Membership, Attendance, and Giving Statistics	29
Financial Notes	29

CONSOLIDATED BALANCE SHEET

	31-May-19	31-May-18
ASSETS		
Cash & Cash Equivalents:		
Ministry	\$ 594,776	\$ 585,975
Capital Campaign	\$ 28,310	\$ 28,132
Library Endowment	\$ 8,617	\$ 8,107
Preschool	\$ 223,643	\$ 166,540
Scouts	\$ 18,880	\$ 27,169
Subtotal	\$ 874,226	\$ 815,923
Receivables	\$ 479	\$ -
Fixed Assets	\$ 8,718,542	\$ 8,797,070
TOTAL ASSETS	\$ 9,593,247	\$ 9,612,993
LIABILITIES		
Local Payroll Taxes Payable	\$ 2,443	\$ 2,445
Designated Giving	\$ 4,224	\$ 32
Construction Loan	\$ 368,009	\$ 499,504
Other Payables	\$ 25	\$ -
TOTAL LIABILITIES	\$ 374,701	\$ 501,981
FUND BALANCES		
Ministry Fund	\$ 179,327	\$ 137,636
Building Fund	\$ 52,629	\$ 44,312
Capital Campaign	\$ (339,698)	\$ (429,069)
Emergency Reserves	\$ 88,350	\$ 47,850
Preschool	\$ 223,897	\$ 166,540
Fixed Assets	\$ 8,718,542	\$ 8,797,070
Other Designated Ministry Funds	\$ 295,499	\$ 346,673
TOTAL FUND BALANCES	\$ 9,218,546	\$ 9,111,012

MINISTRY FUND SUMMARY

2018-2019
Budget

2018-2019
Actual

2017-2018
Actual

REVENUES



Tithes & Offerings	\$ 2,435,000	\$ 2,403,352	\$ 2,364,038
Facility Rental	\$ 5,000	\$ 5,815	\$ 6,105
Initial Offering	\$ 5,000	\$ 15,236	—
Investment Income	\$ 100	\$ 3,488	\$ 88
Other Income	\$ 50,000	\$ 59,288	\$ 57,211
TOTAL REVENUES	\$ 2,495,100	\$ 2,487,179	\$ 2,427,442

EXPENSES

BELONG



Belong Staffing	\$ 266,409	\$ 261,352	\$ 245,232
Deacons	\$ 4,150	\$ 3,691	\$ 3,658
Congregational Ministries	\$ 6,200	\$ 5,888	\$ 2,264
TOTAL BELONG	\$ 276,759	\$ 270,931	\$ 251,154

GROW



Grow Staffing	\$ 346,005	\$ 329,483	\$ 336,456
Family Ministries	\$ 35,290	\$ 36,179	\$ 33,379
Adult Ministries	\$ 12,800	\$ 9,129	\$ 9,153
Learning Support	\$ 8,800	\$ 7,869	\$ 7,320
TOTAL GROW	\$ 402,895	\$ 382,660	\$ 386,308

SERVE



Serve Staffing	\$ 221,893	\$ 214,505	\$ 239,951
Mission Partners	\$ 382,200	\$ 396,020	\$ 380,033
Outreach	\$ 7,500	\$ 6,400	\$ 5,894
Denominational Ministries	\$ 50,574	\$ 46,489	\$ 40,962
Program Ministries	\$ 13,000	\$ 8,370	\$ 10,607
TOTAL SERVE	\$ 675,167	\$ 671,784	\$ 677,447

WORSHIP



Worship Staffing	\$ 254,015	\$ 244,881	\$ 270,151
Worship & Arts	\$ 29,450	\$ 27,075	\$ 28,388
TOTAL WORSHIP	\$ 283,465	\$ 271,956	\$ 298,539

STEWARDSHIP



Stewardship Staffing	\$ 396,080	\$ 419,650	\$ 390,841
Leadership	\$ 2,200	\$ 3,396	\$ 1,413
Administration	\$ 187,634	\$ 174,096	\$ 171,117
Property	\$ 256,400	\$ 237,710	\$ 224,335
Generosity	\$ 14,500	\$ 13,307	\$ 45,249
TOTAL STEWARDSHIP	\$ 856,814	\$ 848,159	\$ 832,955

SUMMARY

TOTAL REVENUES	\$ 2,495,100	\$ 2,487,179	\$ 2,427,442
TOTAL EXPENSES	\$ 2,495,100	\$ 2,445,490	\$ 2,446,403
NET TOTAL	\$ -	\$ 41,689	\$ (18,961)

PERSONNEL SUMMARY

TOTAL PERSONNEL	1,484,402	1,469,871	\$ 1,482,631
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PRESCHOOL OPERATING FUND SUMMARY

	2018-2019 Budget	2018-2019 Actual	2017-2018 Actual
REVENUES			
Fees	\$ 233,364	\$ 272,117	\$ 226,544
Other Income	\$ 1,330	\$ 2,780	\$ 1,451
Art Camp	\$ 9,600	\$ 9,824	\$ 9,130
Total Revenues	\$ 244,294	\$ 284,721	\$ 237,125

EXPENSES			
Personnel	\$ 167,100	\$ 173,484	\$ 179,527
Personnel Benefits	\$ 40,233	\$ 31,388	\$ 37,310
Administration	\$ 12,062	\$ 10,262	\$ 9,680
Student Activities	\$ 1,154	\$ 905	\$ 783
Student Resources	\$ 10,885	\$ 8,833	\$ 6,544
Teacher Resources	\$ 700	\$ 360	\$ 1,060
Art Camp	\$ 7,372	\$ 6,399	\$ 6,469
Total Expenses	\$ 239,506	\$ 231,631	\$ 241,373
Revenue Less Expenses	\$ 4,788	\$ 53,090	\$ (4,248)

PERSONNEL SUMMARY			
Total Salaries & Benefits <i>including Art Camp</i>	\$ 213,092	\$ 209,845	\$ 222,775
Percentage of Total Expenses	89.0%	90.6%	92.3%
Year-end Enrollment	154	173	171

ALL PRESCHOOL FUNDS

	31-May-19	31-May-18
PS Operating Fund	\$ 155,764	\$ 102,675
PS Scholarship Fund	\$ 19,402	\$ 23,486
PS Families in Need Fund	\$ 6,497	\$ 4,806
PS Special Gifts Fund	\$ 38,273	\$ 31,260
PS Equipment Fund	\$ 3,961	\$ 4,314
Total Preschool Fund Balance	\$ 223,897	\$ 166,540

BUILDING FUNDS SUMMARIES

GENERAL BUILDING FUND

Fund Balance 05/31/2018	\$	44,312
Contributions & Transfers	\$	42,738
Expenses	\$	34,421
Fund Balance 05/31/2019	\$	52,629

CAPITAL CAMPAIGN - Next Steps

Fund Balance 05/31/2018	\$	28,282
Contributions	\$	133,921
Interest	\$	370
Transfer from Seventh Trumpet	\$	42,153
Gain on Sale of Stock	\$	-
Total Income	\$	176,444
Tithe	\$	22,500
Financing & Credit Card Fees	\$	22,420
Debt Repayment	\$	131,496
Total Expenses	\$	176,416
Fund Balance 05/31/2019	\$	28,310

CAPITAL CAMPAIGN - Seventh Trumpet

Fund Balance 05/31/2018	\$	(457,351)
Loan Payments	\$	131,495
Transfer to Next Steps	\$	42,153
Fund Balance 05/31/2019	\$	(368,009)

Note: negative balance includes mortgage liability

FIXED ASSETS

Fund Balance 05/31/2018	\$	8,797,070
Less Depreciation	\$	(78,528)
Fund Balance 05/31/2019	\$	8,718,542

FUND BALANCES

As a church, we use a fund-based system of accounting, where the Total Fund Balance = Assets - Liabilities. All income and expenses are attributed to a specific fund at the time of receipt/disbursement. The Ministry Fund covers the budgeted operating expenses of the church. Other funds are used to designate or restrict moneys that have been received for specific purposes. Disbursements from the specific designated/restricted accounts are generally controlled by the ministry directors responsible for the particular ministry area under Session's direction.

	Balance 05/31/2019	Balance 05/31/2018
Ministry Fund	\$179,327	\$137,636
Building Fund	\$52,629	\$44,312
Fixed Asset Fund	\$8,718,542	\$8,797,070
Capital Campaign Fund	(\$339,698)	(\$429,069) *
Emergency Reserve Fund	\$88,350	\$47,850
Preschool	\$223,897	\$166,540
Administration & Personnel	\$69,292	\$61,491
Memorials	\$18,974	\$84,839
Library	\$9,088	\$12,977
Deacons	\$29,314	\$36,305
Missions	\$41,437	\$12,583
Family Ministries	\$68,213	\$67,912
Men's Ministries	\$3,764	\$3,371
New Life	\$4,960	\$4,928
Women's Ministries	\$18,852	\$20,757
Worship & Arts	\$7,118	\$6,741
Scouts	\$19,035	\$27,225
Other Ministries	\$5,452	\$7,544
Total Fund Balances	\$9,218,546	\$9,111,012

* Note: negative balance includes mortgage liability

ANALYSIS OF DEBT

A construction loan was taken in 2014 to pay for construction costs associated with the Seventh Trumpet Campaign. The loan was interest only during the construction period and was converted at the conclusion of the campaign to a mortgage payable over 10 years. Monthly payments are currently approximately \$7500 which includes principal and interest (floating rate). Funds received under the Next Steps campaign are being used to pay off this debt. The church also has a \$500,000 line of credit available for operating expenses, but we did not borrow against this during 2018-2019; however, there is now an annual fee to keep the line open.

	Principal
Debt at 05/31/18	\$ 499,505
Additions & Reductions to Principal:	
Mortgage	\$ (131,496)
Line of Credit	\$ -
Debt at 05/31/19	\$ 368,009

Schedule of Interest Paid for the Year

	Interest
Construction Loan/Mortgage	\$ 20,804
Line of Credit Interest/Fees	\$ 500
Total Interest Paid	\$ 21,304

COMMITMENT TO MISSIONS

Memorial Park is a missional church and places high value on its commitment to missions. This takes the form of staffing, budgeted contributions to outreach and mission partners, support for the Presbytery of the Alleghenies and General Assembly, designated gifts, mission trips, and maintaining a Mission House for use by visiting missionaries.

	2018-2019	2017-2018
Budgeted Missions		
Serve Staffing	\$214,505	\$239,951
Mission Partners	\$396,020	\$380,033
Outreach	6,400	5,894
Denominational Ministries	46,489	40,962
Program Ministries	8,370	10,607
Total Budgeted Missions	671,784	677,447
Designated Mission Payments	130,253 ⁽¹⁾	177,608 ⁽¹⁾
Next Steps Tithes	22,500	31,250
Total Mission Support	\$824,537	\$886,305

(1) Plus \$24,163 for Lenten Offering and \$4224 in other giving not yet distributed

MEMBERSHIP, ATTENDANCE, AND GIVING STATISTICS

	05/31/2019	05/31/2018
Total Church Membership	1257	1510
Average Weekly Worship Attendance ⁽¹⁾	697	706
Discipleship Hour: ⁽²⁾		
Children (birth-5 th grade)	65	---
Youth (grades 6-12)	43	---
Adults	94	---
Annual Tithes & Offerings	\$2,403,352	\$2,364,038
Average Giving/Person/Week ⁽³⁾	\$66.31	\$64.39

(1) Calculated based on total regular Saturday/Sunday worship attendance.

(2) The Discipleship Hour started in September 2018, so there are no numbers from the previous year.

(3) Calculated based on worship attendance only

NOTES TO FINANCIAL STATEMENTS

Note 1: Summary of Significant Accounting Policies

Memorial Park Church (the Church) is a designated 501(c)(3) non-profit religious organization established to provide spiritual and benevolent services to its membership, the local community, and other needy communities throughout the world. The Church is supported primarily through member contributions. The financial statements of the Church were prepared on a modified-cash basis of accounting in accordance with generally accepted accounting principles. More specific details of our accounting policies are documented in the accompanying notes.

Note 2: Ministry Fund

The Ministry Fund is for the general operations of the Church. The operating needs are approved by the Session in accordance with the Church's annual operating budget. The Ministry Fund expenses are allocated in the four areas of the MPC Strategic Plan: Belong, Grow, Serve, and Worship, plus an additional area called Stewardship that covers the overhead expenses of the church. Salaries and benefits are prorated to each area as a percentage based on the work each employee does.

Marketable securities received by the Church from contributors are sold at the market price as soon as title passes to the Church. The proceeds are applied in accordance with the desire of the donor. The difference between the amount credited to the donor and the cash realized is included in the fund(s) to which the donation was applied.

Note 3: Pastoral Staff

The EPC has several classifications for ordained clergy, namely Pastors, Associate Pastors, and Assistant Pastors. Pastors and Associate Pastors have Terms of Call (financial terms) that are initially approved by the congregation and presbytery. At Memorial Park, our Pastor and Associate Pastors are Dean Weaver (Pastor), Kevin Gourley (Associate), and Betsy Rumer (Associate). In accordance with EPC governance, once a Pastor or Associate Pastor is hired, the Terms of Call are overseen and approved by the Session as part of the annual budget formation process. Therefore, the individual salary and benefits packages for each pastor are no longer included in this report. Our church participates in the medical, dental, life, and long-term disability insurance programs of the EPC for called pastors. Payments to the retirement accounts of pastors is set by the EPC at a rate of 10% of salary (including housing).

In the EPC, Assistant Pastors may be hired by the Session for a period of time to perform particular tasks. Paul Housman is Assistant Pastor for Mission & Outreach and Karen Anderson is Assistant Pastor for Visitation & Senior Life at Memorial Park.

Note 4: Property, Plant, & Equipment

Due to the unavailability of sufficient historical cost relating to property and equipment purchased prior to January 1, 1982, the Church has adopted the policy of recording the property and equipment at the insurance appraisal value provided by the current insurance carrier as of January 1, 1982, in accordance with the guidelines recommended by the Accounting Standards Subcommittee on Non-Profit Organizations. Subsequent additions are recorded at cost for purchased assets and fair market value at the date of donation for donated assets. Depreciation on equipment is provided for on a straight-line basis over the estimated useful lives of the equipment.

The guidelines recommended by the Accounting Standards Subcommittee on Non-Profit Organizations also state that structures used primarily as houses of worship need not be depreciated. Accordingly, the Church has elected not to depreciate the Church building, which includes Westminster Hall and the Education Wing addition. The Clayton Youth Center and the five Peebles Road properties are being depreciated over 25 years, facility improvements over 15 years, furniture and fixtures over 10 years, worship equipment over 7 years and major computer equipment over 5 years. When a property is demolished, it remains on the books as original cost less depreciation to reflect the value of the land to MPC. Three properties have been demolished thus far: 8824 Peebles (Hope House), 8832 Peebles (Hospitality House), and 8856 Peebles (Lynch 1). Desktop computers are expensed in the year purchased.



Annual Report 2018-2019

**Memorial Park Church
8800 Peebles Road, Allison Park, PA 15101**

www.mpcepc.org