

# THE MILFORD messenger

## From the Pastor

ADVENT 2020

Apart from a sermon series I preached a couple of years ago, I rarely visit the book of Ecclesiastes. It's so desperately glum—"Meaningless! Everything is meaningless!" (1:2)—and finding the good news of God there can be like digging a hole in search of treasure on a sandy beach: every handful of sand removed is quickly replaced by a landslide from the rim.

The book's most famous passage comes from the third chapter, but despite our familiarity with these words—"For everything there is a season, and a time for every matter under heaven" (3:1)—it nevertheless reflects the same resignation, the same spiritual ennui that permeates the rest of the book. The basic point is that there is a fitting time for everything—the good and the bad—and we have little say in the matter.

It makes for a nice song—"Turn! Turn! Turn!"—but mostly it just comes off as sour grapes.

But lately, I've been hung up on one particular phrase of this passage (a phrase which, I confess, never really meant much to me before):

"[There is] a time to embrace, and a time to refrain from embracing" (3:5b).

These words have always suggested to me the natural ebb and flow of human relationships, but now, of course, they mean something very different, and

much more poignant. Namely, the whole human family is enduring an extended "time to refrain from embracing."

2020 is almost over, and fully three quarters of it have been defined by strictures of social distancing, mask wearing, and the avoidance of large gatherings. These limitations curtail so many of life's joys and complicate so many of life's necessities, and we feel the oppressive weight of them after nine months. When we hear the words of Ecclesiastes in this light, they are of little comfort to us—like canceling your child's outdoor birthday party because of rain and telling her, "Well, sometimes it rains."

The words don't address the pain of the long road of fear and isolation we are walking, nor do they grant sufficient weight to the very real costs borne by our relationships, our livelihoods, and our spirits.

But perhaps we can wring some hope out of these words, seeing through the cynicism of the Teacher and discovering a little bit of the good news of God even here.

Having lived through a very long "time to refrain from embracing," the words we need to hold onto today are the words of assurance that there is also "a time to embrace." This phrase has perhaps never worked as hard as we need it to

now. No longer a passing line of parallelism in a Hebrew poem, now it is the bedrock of our hope and our bulwark against despair. It is not yet a time to embrace, but that time will come.

As we continue to hear good news about the imminent arrival of highly effective vaccines, there is good reason to hope that the time to embrace is not too far off. I have begun imagining what life might be like for our family when shroud of the pandemic is finally lifted.

As eager as I feel for that time, imagining its arrival serves as yet another reminder that it is still—for now—"a time to refrain from embracing." But in the midst of trial, we can cling to hope and trust in the good promise of God. As the Psalmist proclaims: "Weeping may linger for the night, but joy comes with the morning." We eagerly await the coming of that joy.

It is not yet a time to embrace, but that time will surely come.

In Christ,



## MPC Virtual Choir

"Absence makes the heart grow fonder". Right? Absence of live choral music in my life has made my heart grow fonder of this art form... this worship form... this uplifting, soul-developing, human-nurturing form of communication. I am grateful to all who have participated in the MPCVC ("MPV Virtual Choir") over the Summer and Fall. It takes a lot of patience to not only learn your part of a choral song without other singers but also to navigate the many technological aspects of recording, uploading, emailing, and submitting your part of a virtual choir. I am looking forward to the day we can sing together again in person. I encourage all to consider participating in the MPCVC- a unique way to worship. Please contact Marcus or

anyone that you see and hear in the MPCVC to learn more about how this works and how you can participate.

The MPCVC has been meeting regularly via Zoom all Fall. And anyone can join at any time!

## Christmas Eve with the MPCVC

A special Christmas Eve MPCVC virtual re-creation of our traditional Silent Night will be presented by the MPCVC. We would like ALL MPC members and friends to consider submitting a video of themselves and/or their family singing with the MPCVC. Contact Marcus for instructions on how to participate.

# Youth

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## Youth Volunteers

Thanks to our team of dedicated adult volunteers, the MPC Youth have been able to continue some in-person (masked/distanced) gatherings. Youth have offered service projects of outdoor leaf cleanup for a couple of our senior MPC members.

## Advent Activity

A special "Reverse Advent Calendar" activity has been coordinated by Youth volunteer Jenny Ginther. Youth are encouraged to guide their families in helping to create a special Advent giving box that will be shared with a local community group to then be provided to a family in need.

## Zoom Calls

I have been excited to meet regularly with our Youth Group via Zoom all Fall. We have been following the recently-produced ALPHA series... a great interactive video series that allows our group to simultaneously watch various Youth topics relating to Prayer, the Bible,

Faith, and other topics. Insightful questions are posed throughout each video episode that allows us to listen to one another talk about our responses to the episode questions.

If you know a child in grade 6 through 12 who would like to join us, please be sure to have them contact Marcus for details on how to get involved with our Zoom meetings and upcoming Youth Group activities.

## Passage Partners

Passage Partners continue to challenge themselves with reading through the entire Bible over the course of four years. Lorraine Nagelkirk has walked with a small group of our Youth for nearly two-and-a-half years so far reading approximately six chapters each week. We are nearly two-thirds of the way through the Bible. It is a huge undertaking, and I am so proud of all who have accepted this challenge.

Please pray for our MPC Youth. This is a time in life that is already challenging- even when there is no pandemic and when things seem "certain". Pray that our Youth will be reminded of and sense God's steadfastness and unending love.

## Christmas Traditions from Around the World!

### **Nativity Scenes**

This one is for Bob Parrett.

St. Francis of Assisi is the main reason we have Nativity scenes today. In 1223 he created a real-life Nativity scene after approvals from Pope Honorius III.

In a cave in the town of Greccio, his live Nativity scene featured a manger, ox, and donkey. There he delivered his biblical message.

The Smithsonian claims the three wise men, shepherds, and farm animals were never featured together in the Bible.

Ok...Wait..... Who is going to be the first to ditch them from the manger? The animals are my favorite pieces. Sometimes history can be so cruel.

### **Snow Globes**

These cute little Christmas decorations can guarantee anyone anywhere a snowy white Christmas.

Erwin Perzy, while trying to improve the brightness of the electric light bulb, poured semolina in a glass globe filled with water creating the first artificial snow. He then added a festive miniature diorama. Today, they are popular with all ages.

### **Poinsettias**

In 1828 the U.S. Minister of Mexico Joel R. Poinsett noticed this colorful Christmas Eve flower in Mexico.

Christmas festivities were just beginning to see their way into the United States. He brought the red and green flowers here and the MPC poinsettia Christmas tree was born. Now there are more colorful colors to choose from.

### **Pomanders**

In the 14th century small sachets were filled with herbs to purify the air in Europe as this was the time of the Black Plaque.

Today they have been replaced with oranges, whole cloves, cinnamon and nutmeg.

They can be used as fragrant tree ornaments.

This is a great Christmas decoration to make with your family during the holidays.

### **Yule Logs**

Yule logs were named after "JOL" (yule) and is a yule winter solstice festival in Scandinavia.

The log is to have been lit to coax the sun to rise from the south and usher in the rebirth of the land.

Yule logs then were very old full blown tree trunks. Not chocolate ones as we know them. Families cut down these trees and fueled one end of the trunk in the fire and the rest of the log slowly burned for the full 12 days of Christmas.

Talk about a "Slow Burn"!

### **Mistletoe**

Mistletoe back in the day was not thought of as an excuse for puckering up.

Greeks used it for cramps and spleen problems, Romans for ulcers and poisons, and Celtic druids saw it as a sign of fertility due to the fact that it could grow in the winter months.

The English were thought to have started the whole mistletoe kissing thing.

Pucker Power to the Brits!!

This holiday will be remembered forever. Years down the road you will be telling families and friends about the Covid Christmas of 2020.

Stay safe, social distance 6 feet apart, wear that mask (there are some really cute Christmas ones out there) and see you sometime in 2021 .Merry Christmas to you all.

Stay safe.

Sandi Muirhead

# Get Involved

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## “Everyone Eats” Update

E1E members have been busy helping purchasing food, packing and loading vehicles at St. John's and Calvary Presbyterian churches in Detroit.

Fort Street started to serve meals and clothing in early November after all this time. A new Staff we are told. E1E is looking into volunteering there also.

Thank you Virginia Mantela for all the canned goods and pasta you shopped for.

## The Cereal Church gets Serious..

The October cereal count was one sweet number.

142 cereal boxes were collected by the MPC members. Yes....you read right. 142 cereal boxes... We started with about 45 per month. Roger Brooks took my load and

Suzanne Jarasz took 12 boxes to Community Sharing herself.

Every day cereal boxes just magically appear on my table outside. Sometimes I can catch who is delivering them and thank them. Many not. So again CS and I thank you for your time and purchasing the cereal.

Cereal can be a breakfast item, anything snack with or without milk and Cheerios can keep a baby busy for a few minutes. It's a all around people food.

December load will be put away for January. December they are overwhelmed with food and January gets slow again.

### WORSHIP INFORMATION

Worship is live online every Sunday at 10:00 am.  
Get connected to worship by visiting

**[live.milfordpc.org](https://live.milfordpc.org)**

*If you need assistance, please contact the church office and we will help you!*

# This 'n' That

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## Izzard Memorial Garden

Niches are available for members and their immediate family in the Izzard Memorial Garden. If you are interested in more information, contact Hanne Bishop (248-882-4415 | hanneloreetb@gmail.com).

## Retirement Giving Option

If you must take a “Required Minimum Distribution” (RMD) from your retirement plan, you might want to consider making a “Qualified Charitable Contribution” directly from the plan. With recent tax changes, it may be more advantageous than in the past. **Check with your tax preparer.**

# Thank You!

## **Thank You! Thank You!**

Many thanks to Sandi Muirhead, Bob Parrett, Jennifer Ginther and the Youth of our church for working on my yard. The clipping, raking, and blowing that you did made everything look really nice.

I really appreciate all of your hard work.

Thank you again.

**Jackson Baker**

Thank you to everyone who sent cards, flowers, made food, called and stopped to visit. Your thoughtfulness is greatly appreciated.

**Barb Muirhead**

A "Special Thank You" to Sandy Trombley, Kelly Holloway, and Lisa Nathan for helping set up the slides for All Saints' Sunday. Thank You to Kelly Carey for creating weekly videos for our children's message! I would also like to thank Marcus for organizing and setting up the virtual choir anthems during this Advent season. And of course, none of this would be possible without the dedication and hard work of our virtual team that puts together our Sunday Service each and every week. Thank You, Pastor Bryant, Bob Parrett, Rick Moore, Mandy York, Marcus LaPratt, Kyle Schang, and Nathan Schang.

Thanks!

**Beth Burgess**  
**Worship Committee**

## **Thank you!**

The Brotherly Love Truck Ministry for the Homeless would to thank the MPC Congregation for the generous donation to our cause.

During these stressful times we cannot interact with the homeless at the shelters, instead we have elected to provide three meals a month for 100 people. The meals are prepared and delivered hot to the shelter for the staff to serve the clients.

Hopefully next year we will be able to continue our normal activities. The shelter that we support has moved into a former nursing home providing private rooms with beds, multiple bathrooms, activity rooms and a safer environment, but not a working kitchen.

Blessings,

**Susan Linn and Dave Muirhead -  
Brotherly Love Truck Ministry**

## **Grateful**

The deacons are very grateful for the generous support of the \$10 turkey donations. The overwhelming response during this difficult time was a clear indication of the giving "church on the corner". You exceeded our last years total and helped Community Resource Sharing provide Thanksgiving turkeys for 150 families in our area. Thanks so much for being part of this program.

"We give thee but thine own"!

**MPC Deacons**

# Community Notes

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## In Our Thoughts & Prayers

Kim Seagraves, Larry Teal, Tammy Baker, Christopher Cooper, Alana Hoeft, Janette Gabel, Barb Burtch, Liam Klagges, Bill & Linda Baden, Joy Ballard, Steve Baker, Sean McMullen, Jim Burley, Chrissi & Jerry Emerick, Chris Beebee, Tom Reynolds, Barbara Good, George Wootton, Mary Lou Gharrity, Larry Cepuran, Dorothy Bonnell-Tracy, Eddie Bahan, Tom Neff, Adam LaPratt, Ted Rancont, Joanne Hansen, Dave Matejko, Ted Byrne, Sandy Cole, Jordon Loch, Jan Davis, Pat Gordon, Marie Jackson, Joe & Hanne Bishop, Marlene Neff, Tina Talbot, Bill Watkins, Jerry Breen, Avery Nagelkirk, Mary Fishell,

Butch Maxwell, Don Hart, Rich Johnston, Dick Sands, Lee Holman, Judy Nelson, Clayton Maxwell, Bob & Ann Kirsch, Peggy Anderson, Martin Stith, Randy Fields, Jim Osborne, Barb Muirhead, Harold Burton

and all military personnel of our congregation.

***Please call the church office if you wish to renew or add someone to our Prayer List.***

## Snow Birds

Please let the church office know if you are leaving town for the winter. We would love to stay in contact with you while you're away. Call 248-684-2805 or email [lnathan@milfordpc.org](mailto:lnathan@milfordpc.org) with your winter address and phone.

## Homeschool Help!

MPC member Byron Perrine has established a website for support of parents who will be "homeschooling" their children during the pandemic. The site may be viewed at either [christianclassical.education](http://christianclassical.education), or, [HeritageRestorationProject.org](http://HeritageRestorationProject.org). Contributions from parents are invited. Byron has also published two books during the pandemic: "The Public School Curriculum That Made America Great" (this is a reader for use at home); and, a modern language release of Flavel's treatise on keeping the heart, titled "The Corruptible and Redemptive Nature of Habits of the Heart." These books are available in both paperback and Kindle electronic formats on Amazon.com.

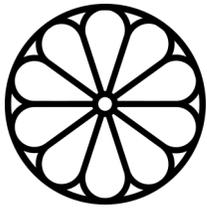
# The Nativity



W Z C B R Z J H M Y R R H  
I F H Q T E E O S N O E L  
S S R Z J R G H S M R B L  
E K I A O Y E N S E E X Z  
M C S D N P M A A T P Y M  
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T F R Y O B E N U S A Y S  
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S A N G E L A I L E F A M  
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ANGEL  
BABY  
BETHLEHEM  
CHRIST  
EMMANUEL  
FLOCKS  
FRANKINCENSE  
GABRIEL  
GIFTS  
GOLD  
HEROD

JOSEPH  
MANGER  
MARY  
MESSIAH  
MYRRH  
NOEL  
SAVIOR  
SHEPHERDS  
STABLE  
STAR  
WISEMEN



## Milford Presbyterian Church

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www.milfordpc.org

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Return Service Requested  
**Time Value**

*“How beautiful upon the mountains are the feet of the messenger who brings good news!”*

Isaiah 52:7

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## Staff & Contact

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