



**MORROW
PRESBYTERIAN
CHURCH**

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"Reflecting Christ Together"

We're on the Web! Visit us at
www.morrowpresbyterian.org

In Touch with the Living Branch Life Group



The Living Branch Life Group is growing. We are pleased to report the addition of two new members, Chuck Depoy and Ilona Dorsey. The group meets once per month, twelve months per year, in the homes of the several members. In the spirit of doing God's work by sharing our time, talents and other resources with "the least of these", the group's recent and upcoming activities include the following:

November: Celebrating the life of the late Edith Walston

Edith was one of the charter members of the group. She was responsible for the Feed-the-Poor ministry that The Living Branch Life Group sponsored for a time. In her honor, her family, with our help, provides lunch for several people on November 6, the anniversary of Edith's death. This year marked the third anniversary. Living Branch members:

Purchased bread and water to serve 150 (300 sandwiches). Participated in preparation of the sandwiches and filling the bags.

December: Sharing our Bounty with others

Filling bags with items that can be used by the residents of the Calvary Refuge Center (toiletries, Bibles, other books, articles of clothing, toys, nonperishable snacks)

Providing wrapped toys for girls and boys (infants to 12years) for children at the Refuge Center

Visiting the center at a time that is deemed appropriate by center staff

Providing gift cards for food and gasoline to be used as incentives for parents who are not showing enough interest in school activities (attendance at scheduled meetings and conferences, supervising homework, insisting on student attendance, for example). This was tried last year, with positive responses. The gift cards were for two middle schools in CCPS.

November – February: Updating the Resource Directory the group developed for Clayton County Residents, which is distributed by the MPC Helping Hands Food Pantry to help those in need to locate other resources.

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**Morrow Presbyterian
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The Pastor's Pen



2015, three days before Christmas, I am at LA Fitness. I overhear someone ask another person, "Are you ready for Christmas?" And then I was at Publix the week before Christmas, and the cashier asked me, "Are you ready for Christmas?" And after church on almost every Advent Sunday, I am sure I asked one or two people, "Are you ready for Christmas?"

We know what is really being asked. "Have you purchased presents for everyone? Do you have all your decorations hanging? Did you get your Christmas tree yet?" People who ask this question toward the beginning of December might be inquiring about decorations hanging and trees resting in corners, while closer to Christmas they might be concerned with the person's ability to purchase and wrap presents.

It wasn't until I heard those disembodied voices at LA Fitness that I realized that this question might be a bit inappropriate. It sounds like we are only wondering about the commercial side of Christmas. Are people ready solely when decorations are up and gifts are under the tree? Are they ready solely when they have heard all the Christmas songs and store jingles? If a person is not ready, this means they haven't gone to the store and gotten all these things. They haven't satisfied the commercial side of Christmas. Once they do, though, they are ready and the season may finally be merry? Some people aren't "ready" until December 24, so this should mean that they have been unready all of Advent and have completely missed celebrating it.

We probably shouldn't get rid of the question entirely but should rephrase it. Let us not ask, "Are you ready for Christmas?" but "Are you ready for Jesus' birth?" This will make people stop in their tracks. They will have to consider it. Such a question may never have been asked of them, so they may not know what to say. What would we say, if asked?

Christmas was never meant to have a commercial side to it. The original Christmas meant to be a time in which God came to earth in human form to dwell with us, to teach us, to suffer with us, and then to die and rise for us. Christmas is a significant spiritual event that has nothing to do with dollar signs. Even though one of the wise men brought gold, the focus was not on that gift but is on the Baby King born in Bethlehem to raise God's children from sin and death.

The beauty about asking the question "Are you ready for Jesus' birth?" or even "Are you ready for the birth of Jesus?" is that nobody has to go to the store to get something and then be ready. Nobody has to get dusty decorations and artificial trees from the attic and set them up. Once the question is asked, the person can start right away. Right then and there, they have the opportunity to prepare themselves for the coming of our Savior. Think about it: those sweaty and stinky people at LA Fitness, while they lift weights and run treadmills, can be thinking about Jesus and preparing their hearts for his arrival. Those cash-strapped and stressed people in Publix or Kroger or Walmart can take a deep breath and realize that Christ is a free Gift to all who would receive him. We who leave worship on Sunday may carry the Advent message into the world with all its busyness and strife. We may remember that Christ is on his way, and we may prepare ourselves time and time again to welcome him in.

Are we ready not for Christmas but for Jesus' birth? Will we be joyful and thankful, when his birthday finally is here? It doesn't take much effort. It takes no money or possessions at all. It just requires us to be open to Jesus right here and right now, and open every single day of Advent and of our lives.

Peace in Christ,

Rev. Dr. John

Prayer Requests

PRAYING FOR OUR MEMBERS, FAMILIES, & FRIENDS Jeff Ragan (Sharon Goza's brother), Laura Dempsey (friend of Sharon Goza), Kaidlyn Broussard (requested by Angela Turner), Shirley Barnett, Ruth Batchelor, Carol Bevil, Jo Bevil, David Bradley, Allie Brandon, Mary Bridges, Terry Broom, Allene Brown, Susan Brown, Mary Butler, Nora Byrd, Rey Cabayan, Grace Cabrera, Cathy Chambers, Thomas Chukwura, Inez Coke, Betty Colwell, Tanya Costa, David Dawson, Ilona Dorsey, Lei Eason, Sherrie Esquivel, Jessica Giddens, Lila Haney, Robb Haney, John Henrickson, Charles Hoequist, Jeanine Jenkins & her sister Wanda, Lavell & Kiara Jones, Leah Lipps, Noli Luna, Patrice Marsh, Rev. Elizabeth "Libby" McAilley, Grandma & Grandpa Moriles, Nan Norton, Ray Norton, Michelle Oswalt, Breckin Parton, Rick Peel, John Popovich, Beverly Pruett, Jean Rathbun, Wendy Ray, Robin Rist, Gary Robinson, Shanna Robinson, Rose Satkowiak, Linda Souza, Keith Stanley, Margaret Strelsky, Ann Thornton, David Turner, Stuart Updike, Eddy Wheeler, Gene & Willis Williams, Terry & Margie Williams, Susan Wolpin. **OUR MISSIONARIES:** Rev. Al Tinio & family in the Philippines; Dan & Elizabeth Turk – Mission Haven. **OUR MILITARY:** Scott Bland - Navy, Virginia; SPC Kevin Brown, Army—Afghanistan; CPL Jaime Brown, Army, Afghanistan; Jeremy Butler – Marines; Joseph Eason – Iraq, PFC Najee Hall, Army, CA; Kevin Krebs, AK; SSG Richard Venizelos – Air Force, CO. **Our Many College Students.**

Santa Claus Express



Santa Claus Express 2016. The Santa Claus Express is about to head out to the Presbyterian Homes of Georgia. Donations for December are stamps and calendars.

The drop-off deadline is December 11, 2016.

Christmas Trees

Narthex Tree. If you would like to send a Christmas card to everyone in the congregation to share your Christmas message, a good way to do that is to send one to the church to be placed on the narthex Christmas tree. The money you may wish to include in your card this year will go toward one of our church expenses.

Family Tree—Fellowship Hall. Several years ago we started a Family Tree which is placed in our fellowship hall. YOU are invited and encouraged to bring an ornament that has your name on it to represent your family. If you already have an ornament from previous years, please feel free to bring another. Hooks will be available in the fellowship hall to use to hang your ornament.

Family Night Supper—Dec 11

Please come support our kids & staff! The Kids Club will present their Christmas program, "Sing a Song of Christmas" on Sunday, December 11. Covered Dish at 6 p.m. (please bring extra food)—Program at 7 p.m. The MPC Staff will be recognized as part of our Joy Gift Program.

Christmas Eve Service—7 p.m.



Our Christmas Eve Candle-light/Communion service will be on December 24, 2016 at 7 p.m. Please bring your family and join with your friends as we celebrate the birth of our Lord, Jesus Christ.

Youth Christmas Party



Youth—December 4, 5—7 p.m. The Youth will have their annual Christmas party at the Hooten home during the regular youth fellowship time of 5 - 7 p.m. on Sunday, December 4. Dinner provided. Youth with last names beginning with A-L, please bring a dessert. Youth with last names beginning with M-Z, please bring a 2-liter soda. **Please bring a wrapped ornament for the exchange.**

Children's Christmas Party

Children's Christmas Party, December 10, 11 a.m.—12:30 p.m. Lunch Provided. Bring your children (ages Toddler to 5th grade) and enjoy spending time with them while they do crafts, hear Christmas stories, sing songs, eat lunch, and have their picture made with Santa!

Special Music Programs

Canterbury Choir's Christmas Cantata
December 11, 11 a.m.

Kids' Club Christmas Program
December 11, 6 p.m. FNS and 7 p.m. Program

Contemporary Worship Christmas Service
December 18, 6:16 p.m.

Young at Heart Activities

Young at Heart will be going to Clayton State University on **Tuesday, December 6** for Cedar Hill Blue Grass (Christmas Program). Cost is \$2.00. Leaving church at 10:45 a.m.

YAH Christmas Luncheon on **December 14** at Frank's in Fayetteville. Meet at the restaurant at 12:00 p.m. or carpool 11:00 a.m. at the church.

The Senior Group from the First Baptist Church of Morrow are going to New Orleans on **March 6-10, 2017**. If you are interested in joining them, see Ken or Libby.

The YAH will be going to see The Ark Encounter and Creation Museum on **April 19-22, 2017**. See Ken Campbell.



Church Office Closed

December 22-26, 2016

*The MPC Church Staff wishes everyone
a Merry Christmas!*



Service Dog Etiquette



George & Marsha Ann Kempson are currently in Alabama training with a service dog. When they return, George will be seen around MPC with his new partner. Since MPC has not had a service dog amongst its congregants before, we thought it might be a good idea to give our members and friends a little information.

What should I do when I see a Service Dog? What is proper Service Dog etiquette?

Smile and be polite to the Service Dog's handler, but most of all:

- Do not pet the Service Dog
- Do not distract the Service Dog in any way
- Please ignore the Service Dog entirely. You're not being rude if you don't acknowledge the Service Dog's presence.

Service Dog etiquette says when a Service Dog has a vest on or is in public with its disabled handler (or trainer), it is working, even if it appears as though it is not.

If you would like to pet the Service Dog, ALWAYS ask the handler first, but don't be offended if they refuse. Some disabled Service Dog handlers don't like to chat about their Service Dogs. Most like to go about their day, just like you! Also, never ask personal questions about the handler's disability or intrude on their privacy. Keep these simple Service Dog etiquette tips in mind, and you'll have a far smoother experience when you see a Service Dog in public.

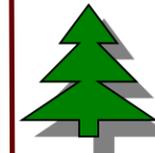
Oper Christmas Blessing - Dec 18

Operation Christmas Blessing was started in 2007 as a ministry of the Uptown Congregation Church in the Philippines. As an Uptown Church representative, Grandma Moriles is asking your help once again in supporting this ministry through your prayers and financial help. Checks to MPC, earmarked *Operation Christmas Blessing* may be placed in the offering plate along with your regular contributions on December 18.

2017 Youth Summer Conferences

Register Now for FITS & TGE. It's time to register for the Early Bird Discount for the 2017 Great Escape (Middle School) and Fun in the Son (High School) conferences. **Please give a \$100 non-refundable deposit to Andra Gammage by January 31 to receive a discounted rate.** The Great Escape: June 11 – June 16 at Lee College (Early Bird: \$389; After Feb 1: \$419). Fun in the Son: July 9 – 14 at Hilton Head (Early Bird: \$409; After Feb 1: \$439.)

Presbyterian Women



PWCT—December 10, 11:30 a.m.

The PWCT December Meeting / Luncheon will be held on Saturday, December 10 at 11:30 a.m. in at the home of Tamara Callahan, 867 Clifton Ridge, McDonough, GA 30253. All 2016 and 2017 members are invited to attend. Please bring a gift to exchange.



The Virginia Dews Circle—

December 12, 6:30 p.m.

"The Virginia Dews Circle will meet for our Christmas get-together with dinner on December 12, 2016 at 6:30 p.m. at the home of Anne Fordham. Meat (baked ham) is being provided so please bring the side dish you indicated at our November meeting. There will be a short program after the meal. We will have a gift to exchange (limit of \$10.00)." If you need a ride, please let Libby McNair know."



The Dorcas Circle— December 13,

10 a.m.

The Dorcas Circle invites all ladies to join them for their annual Christmas meeting at 10:00 a.m., December 13, in the Fellowship Hall. Soup's on! Bring a can of vegetables that begin with your name to add to the pot for our annual soup

The Morning Glory Circle—NO December meeting

The Morning Glory Circle will not have a regular meeting in December. Tentative plans for dinner week of 12/26. Stay tuned!



The Annual Ladies Retreat will

be on **Saturday, January 21, 2017**, at Calvin Center from **8:30 a.m. to 3:00 pm.**

Gail Hardy will be leading the retreat.

Cost is \$35. **Be sure to save the date!**

Downing of the Browns, Dec 31

Downing of the Browns – December 31, 9 a.m.—12 noon.

Many volunteers are needed to help take down the church decorations. Your help would be greatly appreciated!