



MIDDLE STREET BAPTIST CHURCH

Middle Street Baptist Church – September 2017 Newsletter

FROM PASTOR CHRIS

After two weeks of travel through China, I finally made it home this week. It was a remarkable trip—no surprise—and I'm still trying to make sense of everything we experienced. But rest assured, China is an amazing country, and God is doing incredible work there.



The return trip from Shanghai to Boston lasted 25 hours. I arrived home, immediately fell asleep, and woke up the next morning with a notable head cold, most likely thanks to the wonderful recirculated air on the plane. If you've traveled on a large jet, you know what I'm talking about – that cold, dry air that makes your throat a little sore, your nose a little runny, and your mind a little nervous as you wonder just how many other people's germs you're inhaling.

Fortunately it's just a cold, and I'm very much on the rebound. But this is a pretty common occurrence, isn't it? We undergo some spiritual experience—one that, at the moment, seems like it might alter our lives—but as we come "down from the mountain," opposing forces, whether they be spiritual, emotional, or a simple head cold, try to stop us dead in our tracks. They steal our attention from the spiritual high and redirect our focus to the more immediate valley.

When Moses came down from Mt. Sinai (Exodus 32), he was confronted by the Israelites worshipping and dancing to a golden calf. Even Jesus, shortly after coming down from the Mount of Transfiguration (Mark 9), predicted his own death.

God, in his grace, gives us certain mountaintop experiences, but we always have to come down from the mountain and back to real life. And those real-life, everyday struggles outnumber the mountaintop highs. In those moments, God calls us to two things:

1. Remember the mountaintop, when you met God. "I lift my eyes toward the mountains. Where will my help come from? My help comes from the Lord, the maker of heaven and earth." (Psalm 121:1–2)

2. Stay faithful in the valley. "In any and all circumstances I have learned the secret of being content – whether well fed or hungry, whether in abundance or in need." (Philippians 4:12)

The mountaintops on earth are temporary. But they provide encouragement along the way, and they point us to our final deliverance on a great mountain – Mount Zion (Obadiah 17). So this fall, as schedules ramp up and we get busy again, and as we may become more likely to experience a valley than a mountaintop, look to both the mountaintops of your past and the never-ending mountaintop that God has promised us in the next life, and let those thoughts lead you to the ordinary, everyday faithfulness that marks the bulk of our lives. Even when you've got a wicked head cold.

P. S. The photo above is with F (name redacted for security), a 26-year-old local church leader in China. Would you take a moment right now to pray for his ministry and for his church as they continue to faithfully follow Jesus?

WEEKLY PRAYER

The bible tells us that we should pray without ceasing, and we strive for that attitude of being in touch with the Lord, but it also teaches us much about setting aside time to spend in prayer.

The Deacons are beginning two prayer meetings. They will meet weekly. One meeting is at 5:00 pm on Wednesdays. The other is at 1:30 pm on Thursdays. You can contact Doran Morford or Marge Pomper with any questions.

These are not bible studies. They are not prayer courses of study. They are a time for folks to come together and pray about what's on their minds and hearts. We realize that you may have a very active prayer life in your own walk with the Lord, but there is also value in coming together to share and pray and corporately seek God's leading and empowerment. We will praise, give thanks, and open ourselves to God in prayer.

Come and join in at either of the times listed. All are welcome. We seek God's leading in making prayer an ever more dynamic force in our church life.

BIBLE STUDY FELLOWSHIP

Bible Study Fellowship (BSF) invites you to a Women's Bible study as we begin our study of Romans. The theme this year is Grounded in the Gospel, Transformed by Truth.

Our first class will be on Thursday, September 14, from 6:45–8:15 pm. God has something waiting for each of us in this study. We hope you'll join us!

HURRICANE HARVEY RELIEF



Some of you have asked how you can help with the Hurricane Harvey relief efforts. There are many worthwhile organizations doing tremendous work in Texas and Louisiana to help those affected by the disaster. If you are interested in joining the American Baptist Church (our denomination) in our response, you can check out [One Great Hour of Sharing](#). OGHS is committed to helping with disaster relief efforts both nationally and internationally. If you choose to donate to OGHS, make sure "OGHS - Hurricane Harvey" is selected.



THE BIG RED BOX

During the school year, many children receive at least 2 full meals while at school. On Friday afternoons and for the next 68 hours, many have little to eat. The impact of food insecurity is enormous. It affects not only a child's physical health but also their behavior. 25% of children in the United States live in food insecure households!

The End 68 Hours of Hunger program puts nourishing food in the hands of many school children to carry them through the weekend. Each bag of food costs \$10 a week and provides 2 breakfasts, 2 lunches and 3 dinners for a child with some left over to share.

Volunteers from Middle Street Baptist Church take the donated food to the drop off location, they help prepare the bags and deliver the bags each week to the Portsmouth schools.

HOW WE CAN HELP:

We will collect a designated food item for the bags every week.

SEPTEMBER 3RD AND 10TH REQUESTED FOOD ITEM:

Boxes of macaroni and cheese. Regular or deluxe. Boxes only, not cups.

SEPTEMBER 17th AND 24TH REQUESTED FOOD ITEM:

Individual cereal bars or granola bars

Please put all items in the Big Red Box located in the hallway near the nursery. Thank you for all the generous donations. It does make a difference in the lives of kids and their families, having food to eat every weekend!



Encounter with an Eagle and an Answer to Prayer

HEAL Africa has been anxiously awaiting the arrival of a 40-foot container from Australia with donated equipment to provide oxygen for patients in Goma, Democratic Republic of Congo. The equipment will undoubtedly save many lives at Heal Africa Hospital.

The container arrived this week, but was immediately impounded by government authorities who assessed customs duties on the shipment. The invoice was just over \$100,000, almost the price of the entire container full of equipment.



Bill Clemmer, Jo Lusi, and team

Dr. Jo Lusi, Director of HEAL Africa Hospital, decided to travel to Kinshasa to appeal the heavy duties on lifesaving material to be used at the non-profit hospital. Much prayer covered the situation.

Wednesday, as many were praying, a different scenario unfolded several hundred miles away. The Deputy Minister of Taxation had arrived in Goma during the day by vehicle, heading to the airport to meet a plane that would take him back to the capital city of Kinshasa, on the other side of the country. En route to Goma, an eagle flew into the plane's engine and the pilot had to make an emergency landing. Another plane would have to be dispatched to pick up the Minister in Goma on the following day. Dr. Jo, upon learning that a high level tax minister was 'stranded at the airport', hurriedly left the hospital. He met and greeted the Minister in the airport VIP lounge, escorted him to the best hotel in town, and took him out to dinner. Over the meal, Dr. Jo explained the dilemma of

the exorbitant customs fees for the life-saving equipment.

The Deputy Minister agreed that he must look into the situation when he returned to his office in Kinshasa. The next day, as the Minister departed on the new plane, Dr. Jo was told the “tax would be departing, too”.

God says to commit our concerns to Him, which is exactly what Jo did. Who would imagine that an eagle and an emergency landing would be the way God chose to answer his prayers?!

“For my thoughts are not your thoughts, neither are your ways my ways, declares the Lord. As the heavens are higher than the earth, so are my ways higher than your ways and my thoughts than your thoughts.” Isaiah 55:8-9

Love,

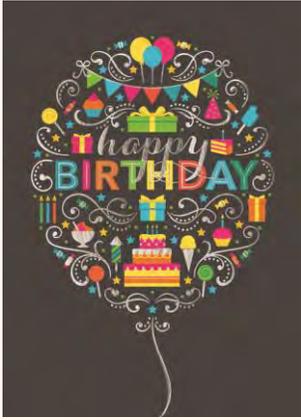
Ann and Bill
Goma, Democratic Republic of Congo
Bill and Jo Lusi

Bill and Ann Clemmer are our special interest missionaries that MSBC helps to support. You can read more about their work here: <https://internationalministries.org>



Many of you remember Corey and Amy Havlicek, a missionary family who visited us last year on their journey to Oaxaca, Mexico, where they will oversee the translation of the Bible into several native languages. You can read their [latest support update here](#).

SEPTEMBER BIRTHDAYS



September 1 – Cathy Davis
September 5 – Peter Gustafson
September 9 – Evan Churchill
September 9 – Charlotte Daboul
September 13 – Jessica Clark
September 15 – Marjorie Little
September 20 – Thomas Hand, Jr.
September 21 – Timothy Chapman
September 21 – Amelia Clark
September 23 – Vivan Martindale
September 23 – Tamara Rozek
September 24 – Chris Dunaway
September 26 – Taylor Moynihan

SEPTEMBER ANNIVERSARIES

September 14th – Gary and Stephanie Hurd (26 years)
September 25th – Richard and Pamela Moulton (30 years)
September 27th – Thomas and Janet Hand (48 years)



Thank You to the talented musicians who sang and played for our summer worship services!

Melodie

Chapman, John Martin, Diana de Alvare, Charles Leinbach

Fall Music

Sacred music has the power to profoundly touch our lives and bring us into closer communion with God. We invite you to be part of our music ministry!

Sanctuary Choir (Adults and Youth age 12+)

If you feel called to be part of this joyful ministry, please come to a rehearsal and see what we're all about! We welcome all levels of experience, whether or not you read music. Rehearsals are Sundays 9:00-9:40 AM, and we sing in worship monthly.

Contact Tamara Rozek, Director of Music Ministry & Organist - music@middlestreetbaptist.org

Gospel Group

Our instrumental/vocal ensemble which sings Gospel hymns, contemporary Christian songs, and spirituals monthly in worship. Instrumentalists: acoustic guitars, electric bass, accordion, drums, tambourine, and piano, and we welcome

more, along with singers. Rehearsals are Sundays 12:15-1:00 PM in the Chapel.

Contact Tamara Rozek, Director of Music Ministry & Organist - music@middlestreetbaptist.org



The Flower Committee would like to take this opportunity to thank all of those who have donated flowers in the past months. If you haven't but would like to, there are openings for the upcoming fall months.

We especially appreciate donations from you own flower gardens. If you order the flowers instead of bringing them from your garden, the price is \$25.00.

Be sure to fill out the chart (in full) located on the main bulletin board on the lower level. Please call any member of the Flower Committee if you need help or have any questions.

Ellie Hayes: (603) 964-6587

Dottie Steere-Doyle: (207) 384-5065

Janice Witham: (603) 436-7252

DAUGHTERS OF EVE

Women's Bible Study

All women are invited to come and find out how a group of women connect with their daily walk with Christ, learn more about one another, and have a great time together. We have been reading the book, "[Twelve Women of the Bible](#)". The study guide and DVD are based on the teaching from Lysa Terkeurst and several other women. The sessions focused on one biblical woman, to help women discover new insights and provide a powerful witness to God's gracious love. We will study the final session in October.

In November, we will begin a new book, "[Having a Mary Heart in a Martha World](#)", by Joanna Weaver. This will be a similar Bible Study series with a DVD and study guide. More information will be in next month's Newsletter.

Upcoming Meetings

Tuesday, September 19th - NO MEETING

Tuesday, October 17th 6:00 to 7:30 pm - We will be meeting at the church.

The Bible Study will be about The Syrophenician Woman, the final session in the book. Her passion to see her daughter restored and healed drove her to relentlessly pursue the only one who could set the child free....Jesus. The key Scriptures are Matthew 15:21-28 and Mark 7:26.

If you have any questions or would like additional information, please contact Janet Hand at 603.436.3051 or janetmhand@gmail.com

ANN JUDSON FELLOWSHIP

Ann Judson meets for lunch on Monday, September 11th, at the Portsmouth Country Club in Greenland, at 1:00 pm.

All ladies of the church are welcome. Please sign up if you plan to attend. There is a sign up sheet on the podium downstairs, outside of the Dorcan Room.

Questions? Call Jan Witham, (603)436-7252.

TRUSTEES' REPORT

The Trustees met on August 7, 2017 and the projects, work plans and schedules have been updated. Below is the list of projects with the most recent updates:

1. Demolition work is nearly completed in the kitchen and Fellowship Hall. We have encountered some support issues with the columns near the kitchen/hall doors which will need to be

addressed. Lisa DeStefano, Budel Construction, and a structural engineer will be meeting to discuss this.

2. Zoe Daboul and Tom Hand have located some used kitchen equipment that will help us save money on this bid.
3. We are working with the City to re-pave the parking lot.
4. We are still in the process of applying for more grants.
5. The Capital Campaign Committee met in July and we are off to a great start, more coming on this in September.
6. The sanctuary painting will begin as soon as possible along with the restoration of the exterior window sashes in the sanctuary.
7. Fellowship Hall furniture will be replaced with new light weight chairs and tables. We will donate the old furniture to local churches or non-profits.
8. Gus Gustafson has researched new battery operated candles for the Christmas Eve service. The sample he showed the Trustees looked great and we will proceed to purchase these candles. Thank you Gus! This definitely will be a departure from the traditional flame lit candles but first and foremost is fire safety. With a very well attended Christmas Eve service by families with young children, these battery operated candles will provide safety and protection for individuals and our building.
9. The Trustees would like to thank everyone for their patience during the renovations. Tom Hand will be on vacation from 8/15 to 8/30 and Gus has agreed to answer any questions during Tom's absence.

Please pray for God's direction as we move the church in a direction of service and outreach.

Trustees: Tom Hand, Chair, Lisa DeStefano, Peter Gustafson, Roland Ripley, Gary Sama

TO ALL COMMITTEES AND BOARDS

Please submit your 2018 budget information to the Trustees by October 1st.
any questions please contact Tom Hand, Chair of Trustees.

If you have

NOTES

MSBC Outreach Lunch Program

We will be having a meeting for everyone interested in helping with the organization of starting an outreach lunch program at MSBC similar to the lunch program that St. John's Episcopal Church provides that is known as Common Table. The meeting will be held on Thursday, September 7th at

1:30. Please let Vicki Walters know if you will be able to attend at vickiwa@comcast.net or 603-778-3009. If you are interested in helping but unable to attend that day please also let Vicki know.

Dear Middle Street family:

I feel as though a simple thanks is not enough. I have received an incredible amount of help from the Alice Marden Fund, Chris, and the Deacons, but mostly from you, all my brothers and sisters in Christ. It has been an incredibly difficult time for me, and knowing that I have all of you, has made all the difference in the world. Please do not ever doubt that you all make a difference in peoples lives. God bless.

In His Love,
Allison Leahy

Dear Middle Street Church Family,

I think of you every day. Thank you for the cards and phone calls - they mean so much, and the visits have been so special; I couldn't begin to thank you all individually. I'm still experiencing a lot of joint pain so I haven't been to church since the last time I worshipped with you at MSBC. I know this is where I need to be at the present time and I'm so glad for your constant remembrances - be it card, phone call, or visit.

Blessings, and love to all of you,
Joan L. Keech

Dear MSBC Family,

My heart felt thanks for the gift of the new computer. I hope to get it figured out soon. What a blessing it is to be apart of God's family. I feel loved and supported by all of you.

Love,
Tara Wise.

Thank you Deacons,

I received your gas card and it blew my mind. The things you do are wonderful. It gives us hope, showing that there are people in the world with heart. Thank you to our church family, who we love as we do our own family.

Love Always,
Lyle and Liva Webb

PRAYER CONCERNS

Updated August 30, 2017

Continuing Concerns

Lisa Beard
Amy DeStefano

Joan Keech
Lyle Webb

Friends and Family

Norma Estrada, friend of Rosalie Churchil
Karen Metrolis, wife of Frank Metrolis
Rita Rozek, mother of Tamara Rozek
Bob Snow, husband of Kay Snow
Amir Taghizad, friend of Russ Johnson
The family of Liva Webb
Dana and Mark Wise, brothers of Tara Wise

Our Soldiers in Service

Damon Doyle, Marines
Joe Freda, Jr., Navy

Becky Resendes, Army

Eli Sewell, Navy

Homebound Friends and Family

Al Coyle
Carolyn Harvey
Joan Keech

Norma Lang
Marjorie Little

Phil and Patricia Rowe
Victor and Helen Tine

THE MONTH AHEAD

Monday, September 11
1:00 pm
Ann Judson

Monday, September 18
5:30 pm
Trustees

Wednesday, September 20

5:30 pm

Trustees

Thursday, September 21

Newsletter Deadline

Meeting Weekly

Monday - Work Crew at 9 am

Wednesday - IMEC at 7:15 am

Prayer Meeting at 5:00 pm

Thursday - Prayer Meeting at 1:30 pm

Women's Bible Study at 6:45 am