



### NEXT Retreat at Camp Montgomery



This year, twenty-nine middle and high school students participated in NEXT, a new discipleship experience for our youth. Divided into three segments, students participated in worship, study and prayer activities as they learned about discipleship and the church. The last segment was a retreat held at Camp Montgomery.

On April 14<sup>th</sup>, all of the students who had completed the experience shared their faith journeys with the Session and their families and friends in a Confirmation of Faith ceremony. Eighteen of these students decided to become covenant partners at MPC – welcome!



In this newsletter, you will find: upcoming events, a financial update, an events recap and more. Keep Reading!

# Daily Bread Food Pantry Update



**Total Guests  
2025**  
through April 22, 2025

Food	Clothing
921	344
	

Visitations to our Daily Bread Food Pantry and Clothes Closet continue at a steady pace. Now, four months into 2025, our faithful DBFP volunteers continue to support the weekly distribution of three grocery bags full of canned and packaged dry goods along with breads & pastries, fresh fruits & vegetables, dairy products – and occasionally some meat, fish and poultry items! We at MPC are truly blessed to be a blessing to those in our community that need food and clothing assistance!

Congregation-wide donations have sustained the Daily Bread Food Pantry for nearly 12 years. Support also comes from the Rotary Club, Mandarin Presbyterian Preschool, BSA Troops, Stetson Kennedy Foundation and various church groups.

Special note: This season, Smith Family Farms in Hastings has provided over **700** pounds of FRESH broccoli weekly, harvested by a husband and wife team working with the Society of Saint Andrew. Also, see below for a recent community donation. Praises to all with blessings and gratitude!



## Generosity in Action

Girls on the Run of Julington Creek and the Fruit Cove Neighborhood Walmart Market joined forces to donate nearly 300 food items to our Daily Bread Food Pantry!

This generosity embodies Christ's teaching that "whatever you did for one of the least of these brothers and sisters of mine, you did for me." - Matthew 25:40



## April Blessings Overflowed at MPC!

What a vibrant month we've experienced together at Mandarin Presbyterian Church! Our office and church campuses were alive with worship, fellowship, and service as we celebrated both Holy Week and a season of meaningful gatherings.

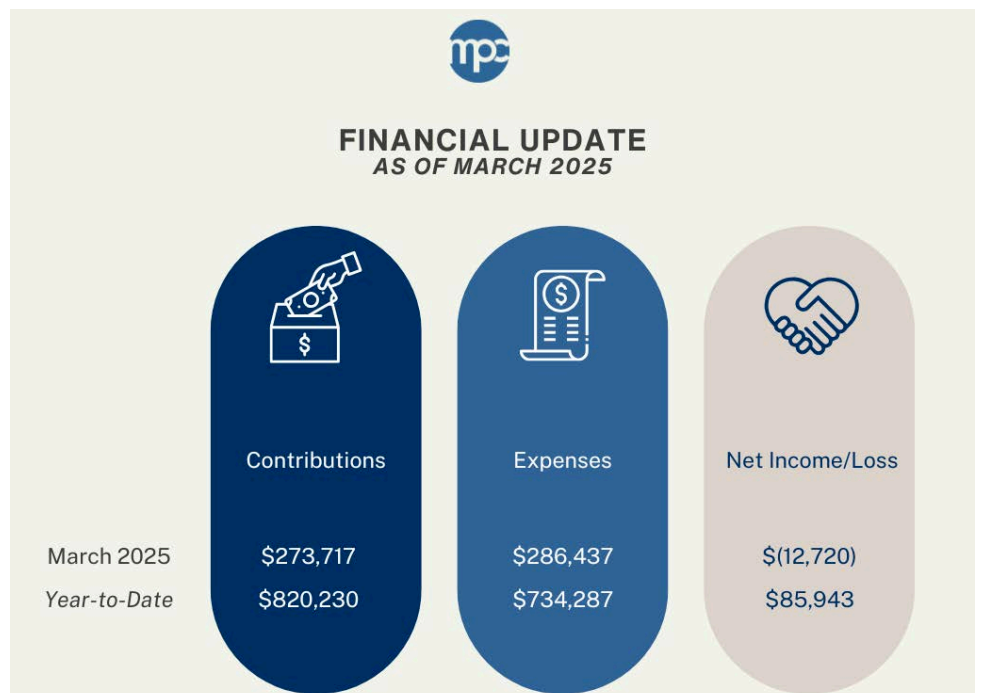
In April, we were blessed to host:

- Our family-friendly Eggstravaganza celebration
- The inspiring Get A Grip Bible Study culmination and celebration
- A moving Maundy Thursday service
- Three joyful Easter worship celebrations
- Women's and Men's Great Banquet weekends
- Our impactful Next Gen Confirmation Trip and Confirmation of Faith ceremony
- Our 18<sup>th</sup> successful year of Mulch for Missions - thanks to the many volunteers who helped with mulch delivery and spreading!

There's never a dull moment at MPC, and we wouldn't have it any other way! Our church family continues to grow and thrive through these opportunities to worship, connect and serve together. Looking to find your place at MPC? We're here to help! Stop by one of our welcome desks on Sunday mornings or email our connections coordinator, Renata, at [rkamp@mandarinpres.com](mailto:rkamp@mandarinpres.com).



Give online: [mandarinpres.com/give](https://mandarinpres.com/give).



Recurring donations provide the most reliable support for our ministries. They're easy to set up and help us plan effectively. Need assistance? Contact Anne Petrone: (904) 680-9944.

Thank you for your generous support!!



## Congratulations Grads!



Congrats to Devyn Nelson, MPC's Pastoral Intern, on his graduation from Dubuque Theological Seminary!

As mentioned previously, Devyn will continue wrapping up his pastoral ordination with ECO and step into the role of Assistant Pastor of Discipleship on June 1<sup>st</sup>. We are very excited about God's plans for Devyn and his family!



We also would like to congratulate all of our Class of 2025 graduates!! May God be with you on your future endeavours!



Mandarin Presbyterian Preschool is accepting registrations for "Summer Fun at MPP" - our dynamic preschool camp for ages 3-5 years old and open to all campers - it's not required to be an MPP student. Each week features unique theme-based activities that spark curiosity and joy in young learners. For more information, call or email Lee Samuels at the preschool office at 904-680-6406 or [lsamuels@mandarinpres.com](mailto:lsamuels@mandarinpres.com). Space is limited, so sign up quickly!

Session dates and themes:

1. May 27-29 – Hakuna Matata Mindfulness and Meditation
2. June 3-5 – Castles, Dragons, and Fairy Tales
3. June 10-12 – Galaxy Explorers
4. June 17-19 – Moana's Luau
5. July 29-31 – Rascally Robots

## J.O.Y. (Just Older Youth)



### KENTUCKY DERBY

**Please join us in the Fellowship Hall of  
the Office Campus on Thursday,  
May 8th, 11:30am**

Join us for our May JOY luncheon for a taste of the derby! Games, prizes and our very own run for the roses! Ladies, get out your fancy dress and your biggest hat and gentlemen, wear your craziest bowties! Special prizes will be awarded for each!

The cost is \$7.00 per person. Please RSVP by Tuesday, May 6th at 904-680-9944.

## MPC Men's Luncheon

The MPC Men's Fellowship Luncheon is held the second and fourth Wednesday of every month. We meet in the Fellowship Hall from noon until 1:15pm. We strive to have a guest speaker at one of the monthly meetings and have a discussion based on the previous Sunday's sermon at alternate meetings.

We have a lunch of sub sandwiches with the fixings on the side, along with potato salad, chips, drinks and dessert. The cost of lunch is \$8.00.

All men of our church and guests are invited to join us. Please consider joining us for fellowship, prayer, interesting guest speakers and discussion.

Please contact Randy Hester at 904-859-4996 or [hesterrandy632@gmail.com](mailto:hesterrandy632@gmail.com) or Wayne Gaff at 904-318-0002 or [w.gaff@comcast.net](mailto:w.gaff@comcast.net) with any questions.

## The Great Banquet

"Grace" has several meanings. In a spiritual context, God's Grace means receiving love and approval without having to earn it. Experience God's grace at the Great Banquet which is a 72-hour experience of being surrounded by His amazing and abundant Grace. To find out more, visit [nefgb.com](http://nefgb.com).

## Join our Team!

We are looking for adults (18 and older) with childcare experience to work on our Sunday morning nursery team. This position includes implementing curriculum, communicating with parents and caring for children 0-2 years old. For more information, please contact Wendy Greer at [wgreer@mandarinpres.com](mailto:wgreer@mandarinpres.com). Please share with anyone that may be interested!

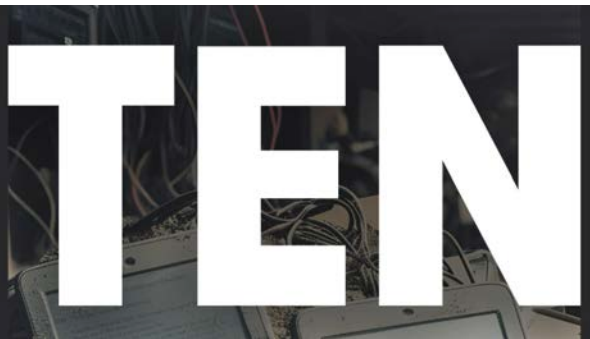
# Mark Your Calendars



Fellowship for moms with hot coffee, breakfast and childcare. Gatherings will be held every other Tuesday from 9:45 to 11:45am on the MPC Church Campus. Get all the details and save your spot at [mandarinpres.com/momco](http://mandarinpres.com/momco).



Join us May 10th at 3 Grains of Rice for our May SERVE Day! Volunteers needed for mulching and food sorting. We are also collecting gently used Bibles and Christian materials all month for 3 Grains of Rice recipients and homeless individuals. For more details, go to [mandarinpres.com/serveday](http://mandarinpres.com/serveday).



"Ten" Sermon Series Begins June 1st - Discover how the Ten Commandments reveal God's compassion, our need for grace, and wisdom for transformed relationships. Join us as we uncover why these timeless principles remain relevant and lead to a fulfilling life today.



Get ready for an unforgettable summer at one of our day or overnight camps! Get all the details at [mandarinpres.com/kidsevents](http://mandarinpres.com/kidsevents).

Summer camps:

- K-Kamp: June 8-12
- SCAMP: June 23-27
- WinShape: July 14-18
- Southwind: July 15-20



Save the date for a fun evening this summer. Come for dessert, fellowship and fun with the ladies, Wednesday, July 30th. We'll also have an opportunity to shop and hear from a representative from Rethreaded, an organization that works with survivors of human trafficking. More details and registration will be available soon.



## Event Recap: Easter at MPC

Easter Joy at MPC! Our celebration began with a vibrant Palm Sunday Family Worship Day featuring guest artist Robin Dutton's live worship art (beautiful paintings pictured below). Children delighted at our annual Eggstravaganza event while our Maundy Thursday service provided a meaningful opportunity to reflect on Christ's sacrifice. Easter Sunday unfolded through three beautiful services filled with inspiring music from our choir and worship team along with Pastor Andrew's inspiring Easter message. Joy and Blessings to all!





## Just a note from the Session



(Left to right)

Front Row: Curt Etheridge, Tami Shepler, Rev. Jenn Arnold, Danielle Caplin, Rev. Dr. Andrew Stepp

Middle Row: Frank Talbot, Carol Yelinek, Rosa Heard, Kim Harris, Penny Kievet, Chris Davis

Back Row: Rev. Jeff Arnold, Matt Balanky, Hawley Smith III, Bob Gillander

### April Session Update

What a great Easter at MPC! We had over 1,800 people in attendance between all three services. Once again, our Music Ministry blessed us not only with the Hallelujah Chorus during the 9am service, but through all the music in both services. A powerful, interpretive dance that depicted the crucifixion, burial and resurrection of Jesus was performed during the offering at the 10:30am service. He is risen indeed!

We were excited to welcome eighteen new Covenant Partners in April. These students all made their statement of faith through the Confirmation classes offered to our Middle and High School students.

There is another opportunity to Serve the City, 3 Grains of Rice specifically, on May 10<sup>th</sup>. Go to the MPC website for information and to register to serve.

Volunteers are needed in our Kids Ministry this summer for our camp opportunities at SCAMP, K-Kamp and WinShape. There is no better way to serve God, than through serving our youngest disciples. Imagine the difference you can make in a young life. Jesus said, "Let the little children come to me, and do not hinder them, for the kingdom of heaven belongs to such as these." Matthew 9:14 (NIV). You can sign up to volunteer on the Kids Min page of our MPC website or contact Pastor Wendy Greer at [wgreer@mandrinpres.com](mailto:wgreer@mandrinpres.com).

Our core values drive all that we do:

- Jesus First
- Every Generation
- Deep-Spirited Community
- Courageous Faith
- Whole-Life Generosity

Each member of the Session wrote a one-sentence prayer for our church and will be praying those prayers throughout the month of May. Join us by writing your prayer for the church and praying along with us. "Rejoice always, pray without ceasing, give thanks in all circumstances; for this is the will of God in Christ Jesus for you." 1 Thessalonians 5:16-18 ESV.



Download and use our Church Center app for secure giving, prayer requests, check-in & events.



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