

MONTHLY NEWSLETTER

November 2024



ISSUE HIGHLIGHTS

- Middle School Ministry Weekend
- MPP Registration 2025-2026
- Stewardship 2025
- Advent/Christmas 2024
- Session Update




Congregational Meeting
Sunday, November 17th
10:00 am
Between Services

Join us as we will be electing Elders, Deacons, Trustees for the Class of 2027 and the Nominating Committee for 2025.

Join us for a special Vision Night as we enter Stewardship season. Hear from Senior Pastor Andrew Stepp about what God is doing in our church and what's in store for 2025.

Childcare is available upon request. Contact Wendy Greer at wgreer@mandarinpres.com.

Bell Ringing



MPC will be ringing the Salvation Army bells at the Mandarin Oaks Publix from Dec. 11th to Dec. 21st. You may sign up in the Church Lobby beginning November 17th or by scanning the QR code.

T H A N K F U L

Upcoming Event Highlights

- November 3rd: Fall Fest on the River
- November 7th: Plan it Forward
- November 12th: Vision Night
- December 1st: Pancake & Pajamas

For more information and details, visit mandarinpres.com or the Church Center app.



Middle School Ministry



Middle School Ministry after the annual "Messy Games" competition at the Hang10 October Weekend.

From October 4th to 6th, 60 middle school students and 48 adult leaders and high school volunteers attended our annual fall retreat, Hang10 Weekend, at North Florida Christian Camp. The theme this year was the Hang10 500. Students heard from our speaker, Pastor Andrew; they participated in small groups and competed in games to take home winning trophies. Students were challenged to take a next step closer to Jesus and left ready to see what God was going to do not just in their life but what He will do at Hang10 throughout the rest of this year!

Middle School Meeting Times

If you know someone that may be interested in joining our Middle School Ministry, please share the below meet up times:

- Sundays: 9-10am in the Quads at the Loretto Road Campus for breakfast and a deeper dive into the Bible, known as "Dive-In."
- Wednesdays: 6-8pm at the Mandarin Road Campus for "Hang10" to learn about Jesus, have fun and connect. Weekly dinner for \$5 and events throughout the year. Visit mandarinpres.com/msevents.



STEWARDSHIP

2025



As we enter stewardship season, we are reminded of the powerful example set by the early church in Acts 2:42-47, where their commitment to generosity led to joy and growth. Today at MPC, our core value of "Courageous Faith" calls us to trust Jesus in similar ways, stepping out boldly in faith to fulfill His purposes even when the path seems uncertain. Combining this courageous faith with generosity creates opportunities for God to work faithfully through our church, helping more people take meaningful steps toward Jesus. Your faithful stewardship lends to your active participation in God's Story.

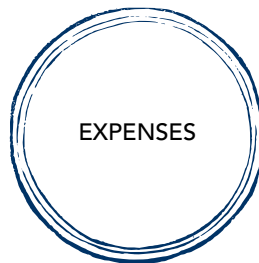
Part of our commitment to faith is through our financial giving. We hope you'll be moved to pledge your commitment to our church for the coming year.

Your generosity enables MPC to:

- Worship together as a community
- Teach children how to follow Jesus and create an enduring faith
- Care for people in our local community and around the world

We cannot express how much your commitment to MPC means as we journey forward together into the coming year. Throughout November, you can offer your pledge on our website or complete a pledge card, which is available at the Welcome Desks in the Church Lobby or our Mandarin Road Office. Pledge cards will also be mailed to all members and regular guests. Thank you for your generosity!

2024 Financial Update



Sept. 2024
Year-to-Date

\$167,931
\$1,892,770

\$278,253
\$2,029,175

(\$110,322)
(\$136,405)

Thank you for your faithful giving to MPC!



Daily Bread Food Pantry Update

Our **Daily Bread Food Pantry** and **Clothes Closet** have seen consistently high guest visitation rates. Our dedicated volunteers continue their weekly distribution of **three** grocery bags filled with a variety of items. These include canned goods, packaged dry goods, bread & pastries, fresh fruits & vegetables, as well as dairy products. Occasionally, meat, fish, and poultry items are also available.

So far this year, our weekly distribution averages have been impressive, serving over 59 households and impacting more than 160 individuals with 20+ guests taking advantage of the Clothes Closet! We are truly grateful for the opportunity to support those in our community who need assistance with food and clothing. Thanks for all of prayers and support!

**Total 2024
Distributions
to Guests**
(as of 9/17/24)

Food	Clothing
2552	771
	

Rotary Club of Mandarin, BSA Troop 321, Stetson Kennedy Foundation, and numerous other Groups (Bible Study, Quilters and others) along with countless individual MPC members and community neighbors have combined to contribute mightily with food, clothing and monetary gifts to power Daily Bread Food Pantry operations now stepping towards our 13th year!

*Praises to all with blessings & gratitude,
Daily Bread Food &
Clothes Closet Volunteers*

J.O.Y. (Just Older Youth)



November Luncheon

We hope you will join us for a Friendsgiving Luncheon on Thursday, November 14th at 11:30am in the **Lobby of the Loretto Road Campus**. The cost is \$7.00 per person. Please RSVP by November 12th at 904-680-9944.

MPP



Did you know that our church has an amazing preschool that serves children two to five years old? Mandarin Presbyterian Preschool has been a longstanding part of the community since 1964! On November 1st, we will open up registration for the 2025-2026 school year to church members, current students, and siblings of current/former students. Would you like more information on how your child can participate in our program? If so, please contact Lee Samuels at lsamuels@mandarinpres.com or call the preschool office at 904-680-6406.

Spots fill quickly, so don't wait!

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 or Wayne Gaff at 904-318-0002 or w.gaff@comcast.net with any questions.

Great Banquet



Ever wish you could change the weather just with a snap? While we can't control the skies, we can embrace God's grace and love for 72 hours. Enjoy being nourished and refreshed at the GREAT BANQUET! Interested? Check out nefgb.com for more info. The Men's Great Banquet weekend is Nov. 14-17.

Mission Spotlight: East-West

*MPC supports various missions around the world and here at home.
This month's Mission Spotlight is East-West*

In 1993, East-West was formed to take the gospel to the spiritually darkest places in the world. Over the past 30 years, they have taken the gospel to millions of unreached people.

Currently, East-West is working in 44 nations around the world. Over the last 10 years, East-West's focus has been primarily on multiplying disciples and equipping local leaders so that they might spread the gospel and plant churches among their own people. Utilizing indigenous people to spread the gospel in unreached communities has proven to be a very sustainable basis for sharing the love of Christ.

East-West works with local churches and individuals who want to serve among the nations. Whether for a week or a lifetime, East-West sends short-term missions teams and long-term field workers overseas to share the gospel, make disciples, and plant churches where none currently exist.

Of particular concern at this time are the deteriorating conditions in Cuba. The people have lost faith in their ineffective government. The government cannot provide even the basic services of clean water and electricity consistently. Hygiene and health care have suffered, and food insecurity is increasing. Many Cubans have lost hope and fled to other countries. Among those that remain, there is a great hunger for the gospel and the hope it provides.

God is at work in Cuba through the efforts of East-West. East-West team members have been working with local churches and leaders to share the gospel and distribute desperately needed food, medicine and other supplies.

MPC has supported the mission of East-West for many years. This year we were blessed to be able to provide an additional donation to purchase much needed supplies for the citizens of Cuba.

We are grateful for the work of East-West and look forward to supporting their efforts in the years to come.

For more information, please visit www.east-west.org.

Mark Your Calendars



Join our MPC Fall Celebration on November 3rd from 4-7pm at the River House Property! We will have live music, delicious BBQ, yummy desserts, games and fun for ALL ages! Register at mandarinpres.com/fallfest.



Come November 7th for a unique event aimed at helping you invest in your future and leave a meaningful legacy. You are invited to join us for an evening sharing best practices on various financial and future planning topics. Register at mandarinpres.com/planitforward.

THURSDAY
November, 7th

6-7:30
PM



Join us on November 12th at 6pm at our Loretto Road Campus Sanctuary to hear from Senior Pastor Andrew Stepp on what God is doing in our church and what's in store for MPC looking ahead. Childcare is available upon request. Please contact Wendy Greer: wgreer@mandarinpres.com.



A family event with pancakes, Christmas crafts, photo booth and Advent Activities...all while wearing your pajamas! The event is Sunday, December 1st on the Mandarin Road Campus and you can register for your time slot at mandarinpres.com/pancakes.



Saturday, December 7th
10am - 1pm

Join the Women's Ministry on December 7th for food, fellowship, worship music, a silent auction and entertainment. The cost to attend is \$10, and childcare will be provided for those who pre-register by December 2nd. Register at mandarinpres.com/jingle.



Save your spot for the Women's Ministry January 25th Getaway with God & the Gals retreat in Amelia Island to laugh, enjoy fellowship and spend time with God. There is a discounted hotel option (1/24-1/26) available only until December 13th. Go to mandarinpres.com/womensministry for more details and registration.



Advent/Christmas 2024



This season we will reflect on the promises surrounding Christmas & the greatest gift of all!

Operation Christmas Child - The last day to drop off gift-filled shoeboxes is November 17th.

Pancakes & Pajamas - Unpack your Christmas jammies and select one of the two seating times (4:30 or 5:30 pm). It will be a night full of syrup, sprinkles, pancakes and fun on December 1st in the Fellowship Hall on the Mandarin Campus! Kick off the season of Advent with your family in a fun and meaningful way! This event is free but requires pre-registration at mandarinpres.com/pancakes or the Church Center app.

Poinsettias - We are offering an opportunity to give poinsettias in memory or honor of loved ones. They will be displayed in the church Christmas Eve. Place your order online at mandarinpres.com/poinsettia or with the church bulletin insert. Plants are \$10 each. The deadline to order is Sunday, December 15th.

Salvation Army Bell Ringing - MPC will be ringing the Salvation Army bells at the Publix at Mandarin Oaks (corner of San Jose Blvd. & Mandarin Road). Dates begin Wednesday, December 11th through Saturday, December 21st. You can sign up in the church lobby on Sundays or scan the bar code on the first page.

Alternative Gift Market - You have the opportunity to join our congregation in supporting a number of missions both local and abroad. Purchase meals for a day for a local family, or chickens & goats through World Vision, or even send a child to a Young Life Camp; the possibilities are endless. AGM will be available on Sundays, December 1st, 8th and 15th.

Annual Christmas Music Celebration - Come enjoy an evening of music and scripture at 7:00pm in the Sanctuary on Sunday, December 15th. Hear the Christmas story with special music by the Sanctuary Choir, Concert Band and Handbells!

Blue Christmas Service - Blue Christmas is a gentle, contemplative service for those who are carrying pain or loss during this season of celebration. The Blue Christmas service is Thursday, December 19th at 6:30pm in the Fellowship Hall on the Mandarin Road Campus. Childcare is available with RSVP to wgreer@mandarinpres.com.

Tuesday, December 24th - Christmas Eve Services

4:30pm - Family and Children's Celebration with live Nativity

7:00pm - Candlelight Christmas Message, music by Worship Team

9:00pm - Candlelight & Communion Christmas Message, music by Sanctuary Choir & Concert Band

Please note activity bags will be provided for kids during the 7:00pm and 9:00pm services.

Childcare will be provided for kindergarten and younger children.

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

There may only be 2 months left in 2024, but MPC is not slowing down. There are many opportunities to be part of the life of our church through events and activities.

An encore meeting of Plan it Forward will be held on November 7th. This informative evening is designed to help you invest wisely in your future and create a lasting legacy.

We will have a Congregational meeting between services on November 17th. We will be electing Elders, Deacons and Trustees for the Class of 2027 and the Nominating Committee for 2025.

Sunday, November 24th, will be a time of celebration as we witness the Ordination of our Kids Ministry Director, Wendy Greer.

Pancakes & Pajamas is right around the corner on December 1st, followed by a Christmas concert on December 15th. All these events, plus more, may be found at mandarinpres.com. A special time to celebrate the birth of our Lord Jesus Christ.

We hope that you have enjoyed the church-wide Galatians study and the current sermon series on the Fruit of the Spirit. Can you imagine how different our world would be if we all tried to live by the Spirit's fruit of love, joy, peace, forbearance (patience), kindness, goodness, faithfulness, gentleness and self-control?

We are looking forward to our Advent Season, when we celebrate the birth of The Messiah, Jesus Christ.

We want to hear from you! At any time when you may have a question or just want to say hello, you can reach out to us individually or you can email the Session at elders@mandarinpres.com.

"If my people who are called by My Name, will humble themselves and pray and seek My face and turn from their wicked ways, then I will hear from heaven, and I will forgive their sin and will heal their land." - 2 Chronicles 7:14 (NIV)

Please join the Session as we continue to pray for our church, our community, our world.

Happy
THANKSGIVING

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