

MIPC PRESS

**Merritt Island Presbyterian Church
December 2023**



How does a
weary world
rejoice?

Pastor Christina's Corner



Deep abiding joy—the kind that helps us to rejoice even when weary—wouldn't that be the most amazing Christmas gift?

We are living in a weary world right now. Weary from years of isolation. Weary from being torn by conflicting information. Weary from war-torn conflict that threatens to destroy our world. Weary because it takes more energy to navigate a day than it used to.

As frustrating as this is, it is not unique in history. This Christmas you'll probably watch Charles Dickens' *A Christmas Carol*. It was written in a time when there was great poverty; when the poor barely made a living; when people were weary from the cost of living (literally!); when workhouses and orphanages were synonymous; and when large families, high mortality rates, and illness were the norm.

Christ was born into a weary world. King Herod ruled the land with a legacy of ruthlessness. The Romans treated the people of Israel with contempt, imposing harsh taxes and land seizures that forced many into subsistence farming. Poverty and destitution were pervasive. And yet, Christ was born, bringing good news of great joy for all people.

As Advent comes again to a weary world, we ask, "How does a weary world rejoice?" From the opening chapters of Luke's Gospel, we have found a few answers: we acknowledge our weariness, we find joy in connection, we allow ourselves to be amazed, we sing stories of hope, we make room, we root ourselves in ritual, and most importantly, we trust our belovedness.

In the parallel birth stories of Jesus and John, joy arrives—despite trepidation, fear, or grief. In these stories, we find rhythms for rejoicing. As we move through our series, we hope to create space for acknowledging the weariness of our world while celebrating God's closeness with great joy.

Pastor Chr st na's Corner

And so, this Advent, we will hold space for our weariness and our joy. We will seek a "thrill of hope" in our hurting world. We will welcome joy—even if, like the prophet Isaiah, we cry out for comfort (Isaiah 40:1). In this weary world, may we find many ways to rejoice.

I think of the song, "O Holy Night." The lyrics go, "A thrill of hope, the weary world rejoices, for yonder breaks a new and glorious morn." When Jesus left his throne in heaven and took on flesh (the incarnation), He brought the thrill of hope to a weary world. This hope remains today. It is the hope that we who know Him as Savior have an eternal home, and this is not it. It is a sure hope of victory over death and disease.

If you are struggling with weariness or sin this season, I'd like to suggest you ponder what God did on that holy night when our dear Savior was born. Just maybe, you will be caught up in the thrill of hope. Join us at MIPC in person or online as we make space for possibilities, and in them, we find rhythms for rejoicing, even in the midst of difficult circumstances.

This year we will add a special Advent opportunity: A Living Nativity will take place at MIPC on Monday, December 4th at 4pm. Bring your own chairs and watch the older elementary kids and the animals as they bring the nativity to life. Invite your neighbors and friends to join in as we find joy in this new opportunity to experience Jesus and the nativity here at MIPC.

May you have a blessed and meaningful Advent Season.

Love,

Pastor Chr st na



Session Highlights

Your Session met November 16, 2023 for a Stated Session Meeting with the following highlights:

- Approved Leslie Neihouse as Elder Commissioner for December Presbytery meeting.
- Approved request for Girl Scout Troop 278 to use the Fellowship Hall on Friday, Dec. 22 for an overnight stay.
- Approved request to move the \$500 budgeted for Brevard Justice Ministry to Mutual Aid Society.
- Approved request to have Change of Greenery guide our volunteers and hire 2 technicians for 2 hrs, twice a year at a cost of \$75/hr for 2 technicians. The cost of these technicians would be paid out of the Memorial Garden Designated Funds. The total cost would be \$300 per year.

Thank you to those who have signed up to support the various committee ministries of our church. We hope you will continue to find ways to share your gifts and talents through these ministries. We especially need volunteers to serve on committees to help with decision making, planning, organizing, and implementing these ministries of worship, faith formation, fellowship, mission/outreach, preschool, property, and finance & stewardship,

If you have questions about any of the Session actions, committees, etc., please ask! Talk to me at church, or email me (karriwf@gmail.com).

Our next Stated Session Meeting is scheduled for December 18, 2023.

*Clerk of Session
Karri Fjeldheim*

Looking Back:

November brought special worship services throughout the month. We began with Holy Communion on November 5 with serving of the elements to congregants in the pews - our first service to the pews since pre-COVID! November 5 also brought Kids Klub and families; November 12 brought One Purpose and their families; November 19 offered a blessed opportunity to worship with our friends from Christ the King church; November 26 celebrated Christ the King Sunday. We truly were blessed with a variety of music during the month - glorious sounds from children's and youth voices from Kids Klub and One Purpose, the wonderful music from Christ the King Praise Team, and, of course, the beautiful music from our MIPC musicians, Maryrose Beerman, Jeana Lutz, and Joyce Walker. Welcome back, Joyce! We are thankful that Joyce (with husband Dave) joins us every year for the holiday season through spring.

Looking Ahead:

On December 3, we will again serve Holy Communion with traditional elements to the congregation in the pews. The packaged cups will be available as an option. We look forward to the special service as we begin the season of Advent. Advent brings meaningful traditions and songs as we anticipate the celebration of Jesus' birth. Because Christmas Eve falls on Sunday, we are planning one in-person service at 4:00pm. Instead of a regular Sunday morning service, we will have an online service that shows a video of the Live Nativity from December 4. Our music team is working on a plan for informal choir music during December; please watch Sunday bulletins and email for information.

On December 31, Pastor Christina will enjoy a very well-deserved day off, while Rev. Rick Oppelt joins us for an informal, hymn-sing type service.

Worship

A Note of Thanks

As we prepare this newsletter article, we are in the middle of Thanksgiving week. We offer **thanks** for: those who attend our worship services - whether in person or online; for Pastor Christina; our musicians - Maryrose, Jeana, Joyce - and guest musicians - Leslie Mitchell, Ted Beerman, Rev. Rick Oppelt, Jewel Poirier, Kids Klub, One Purpose, Christ the King Praise Team; our tech team - James Neihouse, Dale Greenawalt - guest techies Leslie Neihouse, Joe Neihouse, Brian Poland; those who prepare and serve communion; those who decorate our sanctuary (Hanging of the Greens, special flowers) and those who clean the pews and floors. We are grateful for the many people who make our worship services possible, beautiful, and meaningful.

We send a special thank you to Rita Rhinehart for making the beautiful Christmon necklaces again this year, and even delivering them to the office, despite her health challenges! Rita performs this act of love every year and we appreciate it so much.

We continue to worship wherever we are / wherever you are. If you are away or unable to come to our MIPC sanctuary, please join us through livestream online; if you are in town, come join us and stay for fellowship time afterward. We love to see you!

Leslie Neihouse (leslien@1570films.com)

Karri Fjeldheim (karriwf@gmail.com)

Worship Co-Chairs

Preschool



In October, we had a great time at our fall festival. We had a great turnout and the food was really good. (Tammy beat Brian Poland out to win the best, most spicy chili—ha ha!) The children and families had a fantastic time, they especially loved the petting zoo. Pastor Christina made friends with a bearded dragon. It was pure love.

This month we started to prepare for Thanksgiving and Christmas. We are supporting 14 families from our preschool with food for holiday meals, and gifts for the children. We appreciate all your support.

On November 16 we had our Thanksgiving Family feast for our Preschool and VPK classes. Everyone had a wonderful time!

We have an angel tree up in the Narthex for anyone who would like to sponsor a child for Christmas. Each angel is marked with a child's age, sizes, and toy requests (we suggest an outfit and 2 toys for each child). Bring wrapped gifts back (with angel tag attached) by Dec. 16.

We're so excited about our Living Nativity scheduled for Dec. 4 at 4 PM. This will be in the Memorial Garden and the children and Pastor Christina will act out the Christmas Story, along with live animals!

Our Breakfast with Santa will be Dec. 20 at 9:30 AM. This is always a wonderful time for the children to have breakfast with their families and meet with Santa!

We wish everyone a blessed Christmas.



*Tammy Lewis & Robyn Mills,
Preschool Co-Directors
Pat Smith, Preschool Elder*

Mission/Outreach

Interfaith United—United in Thanksgiving

On November 20th some of us were blessed to attend the amazing annual Interfaith United concert at Suntree United Methodist Church. It is a time for people of all faiths to come together and "build bridges of understanding by connecting diverse people and beliefs through learning and service" as written in the group's mission statement. The evening was led by 20 faith and community leaders from Brevard County. Our former MIPC member, Stephen Downen, organized the volunteer choir and conducted the music—four wonderful ecumenical songs. If you're interested in participating, watch for next year's announcement in October. There is also a delicious buffet of international food afterwards! Their website is www.interfaithunited.com

Family Promise

Thanks to Leslie Mitchell and Cheryl Mahan for doing chaperoning duties at Grace Methodist in November. It involves arriving at 8PM and overnighting there until 7AM the next morning to make sure our Family Promise families are safe and provided for. Call Cheryl (321-431-9623) if you would like to participate in this or in any of the meal providing opportunities. Family Promise of Brevard just had its tenth anniversary in November. Their website is excellent and well worth looking at—familypromiseofbrevard.org

Christmas Joy Offering

This annual PC(USA) offering provides assistance to current and retired church workers in their time of need, and helps develop our future leaders at Presbyterian-related schools and colleges equipping communities of color. Watch for special envelopes and flyers in the Narthex.

Christmas Eve Loose Offering

This year, our Christmas Eve offering will go to support Mutual Aid Brevard, the Facebook group sponsored by MIPC whose focus is very timely and completely Brevard-based. (see article on the next page.)

Mutual Aid Brevard



Mutual Aid Brevard:

Our November Partner Luncheon was a big success! We had over 30 attendees from agencies all over Brevard come together to share about the programs each of them have to make life better for Brevard folks. We had donations of food for lunch, candles and soaps for each attendee, and gift cards

and other cool donations for door prizes. We will continue to make these luncheons happen on a quarterly basis. It's so valuable to spend time getting to know the people who work in these agencies, and learn how each one is unique.

October spending was mostly hotel and rent assistance, with transportation coming in 2nd (mostly car insurance assistance, which is extremely difficult to find anywhere else.)

As the holidays approach, Mutual Aid is keeping a featured post updated with resources for people to apply for toys for their children or food for their holiday meals; we're also posting ways that folks can help volunteer for some of these agencies that work so hard to meet needs at this time of year.

Here's a summary of October activity in the Mutual Aid Facebook group:

Amount collected: \$1741 Amount spent: \$2351

Spending:

Housing (hotel rooms/rent assistance/storage):	\$1,073	45.6%
Transportation:	\$790	33.6%
Utilities:	\$488	20.8%

Leslie Mitchell, Admin, Mutual Aid Brevard

<https://www.facebook.com/groups/mutualaidbrevard>

Stephen Ministry / Deacons



"We can't fix things, but we can walk along with people who are hurting."

Bob Beers, Stephen Minister

"Each time we met, I could feel the burden lighten."

Stephen Minister care receiver

"My Stephen Minister is more than a trusted friend. In her presence I experience God's grace. I feel cared for, strengthened, and supported. She is truly a gift."

Stephen Minister care receiver

The above are actual quotes, from Stephen Ministers and their care receivers, confirming the value of a Stephen Minister relationship. Stephen Ministers have received 50 hours of training to include listening skills, specific ministry situations, Christian caregiving, and more. Much of what a Stephen Minister does is listening without judgement. Confidentiality is key to Stephen Ministry and the care receiver remains anonymous.

MIPC, in partnership with Grace Methodist church, has a strong Stephen Minister program. If you, or anyone you know, believes that you have a need for a Stephen Minister, or if you would like to learn more, please contact either Pastor Christina or Craig Smoot (321-223-4841).

Dec. 3
Advent

WHAT?

Feb. 18
Lent

ANOINTING ?



Why?

*Merritt Island Presbyterian Church has had the reputation of being a welcoming, giving church. We have programs and events that encourage the community to join us for worship and fellowship, but the number of Sunday attendees is not reflecting our efforts to bring others here to meet Jesus Christ.

*In conversations with Pastor Christina and some of our church officers it has been suggested that we make a **visible, hands-on commitment** to listen for God's plan for MIPC. Over the next year please consider joining others from MIPC in anointing our property. Dates are included.

*To begin our listening, let's walk our campus together, and **ANOINT** the places where our ministries take place.....

The church offices, the Session room, Sunday school areas, Fellowship Hall's adult and children's space, property, Pre-school areas Activity room, Bible Study rooms, Heavenly Handmade, and of course our Sanctuary and all that serve His Church.

*What do we do to anoint a place?

The Pastor or an Elder may touch a place with anointing oil as we pray for God's direction of how to fulfill His plan for this place and for us.

*In Luke 4:18-19 we are told that, "Anointing is the burden removing and yoke breaking power of God". This frees us to listen for God's plan for MIPC and us.

*Isaiah 10:27, "...the anointing breaks the hold of anything that interferes with our reaching our full potential as God's people...."

Together we will come together to welcome the Holy Spirit.

May 19
Pentecost

Aug. 11
School begins.

Fellowship

Join us Saturday, Dec. 16 at 1 PM for a Cookie Exchange! Details below—please RSVP on the Narthex signup sheet, or email the church office at mipresbyterian@gmail.com.



MERRITT ISLAND PRESBYTERIAN *Christmas Cookie Exchange*

COME FILL UP YOUR COOKIE JAR!



December 16th, 1pm - 3pm



MIPC Activities Room



Signup in the Narthex or by calling/emailing the church office

**Bring 2-3 dozen of your favorite Christmas Cookies
and**

a copy of the recipe.

**Each person will receive a box of assorted Christmas cookies
and**

a special gift.

Finger Snacks are also welcomed



*Bring your
best cookies!*



Stewardship

This year's stewardship campaign, *Together For Joy*, is built around Psalm 98: "Sing to God a new song, for God has done marvelous things. Let the floods clap their hands; let the hills sing together for joy." This imagery conveys the power and beauty of our community; that together, we can do marvelous things.

Throughout this campaign, we heard each week from elders and committee chairs about the different ways we can all serve our church. We are grateful to those who were inspired to volunteer to share their gifts with our committees.

We're also very grateful to those who heard the call to pledge for 2024. We've already had nearly as many respond as did last year. If you have not yet submitted your 2024 Giving form, you can still do so! Pledge forms are available in the Narthex, or, you can go to our [website](#) and just click on Pledge Now to fill out a form completely online—it's easy!



Nominating Committee

Our Nominating Committee did an outstanding job recruiting new Elders and Deacons for MIPC! At our Dec. 3 Congregational Meeting immediately after worship, the following slate of officers will be nominated:

DEACONS:

Betsy Heenan

June Hutchinson

Lorrie Peek

Elaine Larkin (extending term)

Lynn Pemberton (extending term)

Linda Whitten (extending term)

ELDERS:

Libbi Moore

Nancy Shuford

Our grateful thanks to those who have volunteered to serve. We also thank our Nominating Committee, chaired by Pat Smith, and consisting of Craig Smoot, Marilyn Smoot, Pastor Christina, and Leslie Mitchell.



Faith Formation Ministries



World's Largest Protestant Church
Kids Klub

Kids Klub will perform **"ANGELS AWARE!"** which is a very memorable and special production to our program. Why did God come to earth at Christmas as a baby? Join Micheal, the archangel, Sara, Cherry, and Harold as they explain to the heavenly host what will happen that first Christmas and why. **Performance dates are Saturday, December 2nd @ 4:00 p.m. and Sunday, December 3rd @ 4:00 p.m.**

If you know anyone who might be interested in this amazing ministry please contact our Performing Arts Director, Mary Lou Tipton at 321-544-7234 or iccone1@yahoo.com, or Pam Poland, Faith Formation Ministries Associate at 321-452-5689 ext. 1003 or mipcffm@gmail.com.



Faith Formation Ministries

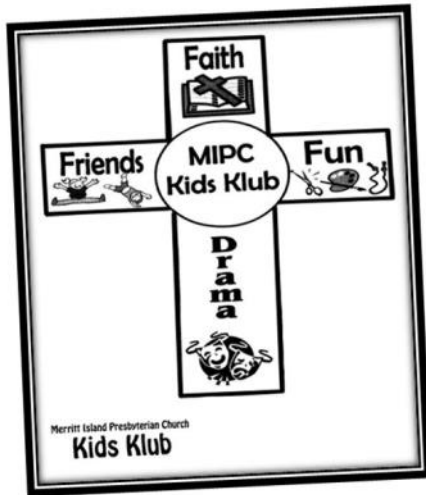


Kids Klub Performing Arts Anniversary Party



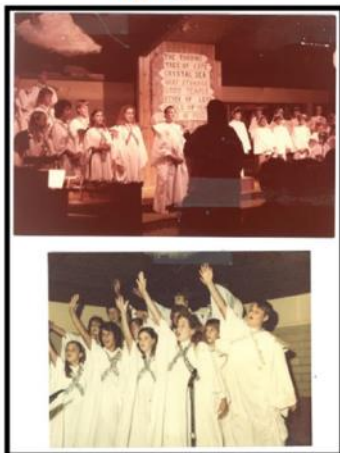
Sunday, December 3rd @ 4:00 p.m.

MIPC Fellowship Hall, 600 S. Tropical Trail



Come join us as we celebrate our 40th year together!

1983



2023



Faith Formation Ministries



One Purpose Productions will perform
“An Unexpected Christmas” Just imagine...
you’re traveling home on Christmas Eve, excited to visit family and friends, enjoy holiday meals, and warm by the giant fireplace when your flight is grounded overnight due to inclement weather. No one expected this to happen. How can this possibly be a Christmas miracle? This musical is heartfelt and brings people of all different paths of life together in the most unexpected way. The characters find joy and comfort in each other when all of their Christmas plans seem to fall through. Before the final realization of what is truly important at Christmas, God’s one, true Christmas miracle comes into plain view.

Performance dates are Friday, December 8th @ 7:00 p.m. and Saturday, December 9th @ 4:00 p.m.



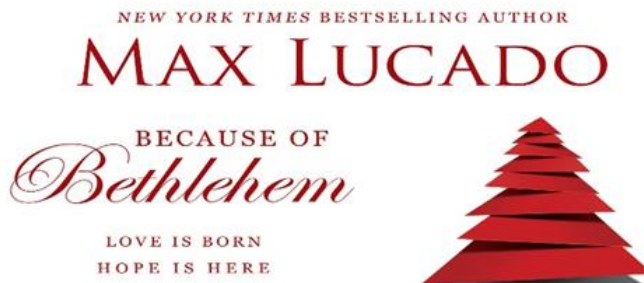
Faith Formation Ministries



Faith Formation Class: Sunday Mornings, 9:00 a.m. Session Room and Zoom



With Dave Hertzler
Come join us in person or on Zoom!
The link to join will be sent out with your weekly bulletin.



***Please note there will be no class on Christmas Eve, December 24th**

Faith Formation Ministries



Activities Room—Sundays at 10:00 AM

Merritt Island Presbyterian Church offers Children's Church for Preschool-6th grade. Class starts after the Children's Message in our Worship service beginning at 10:00 a.m. Come join us for Bible stories, Crafts and Games! If you are interested, know someone who might be, or would like more information please contact Pam Poland at 321-452-5689 ext. 1003 or mipcffm@gmail.com.

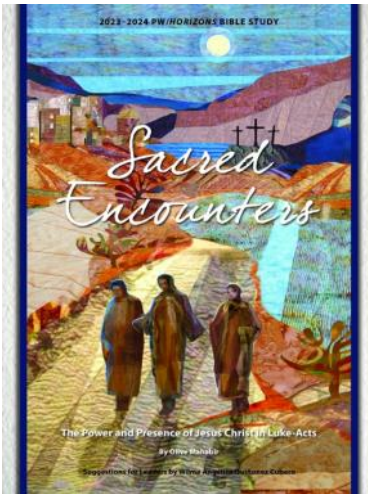


A Heart To Give



Please note there will be no class on Christmas Eve

Faith Formation Ministries



*Faith Formation Ministries Bible
Study Group
Fabulous Fridays!!
December 1st & 15th @ 2:00 p.m.*

*Our study is led by Julie Hill and is
titled "Sacred Encounters: The Power
and Presence of Jesus Christ in Luke-
Acts"*

*Come join us for a time of Faith & Fellowship in the
Activities Room every other Friday @ 2:00 p.m.*

*Books are available for purchase-\$10.00 each
Please contact Julie Hill for more information and questions.
cj2hill@bellsouth.net or 321-431-5333*

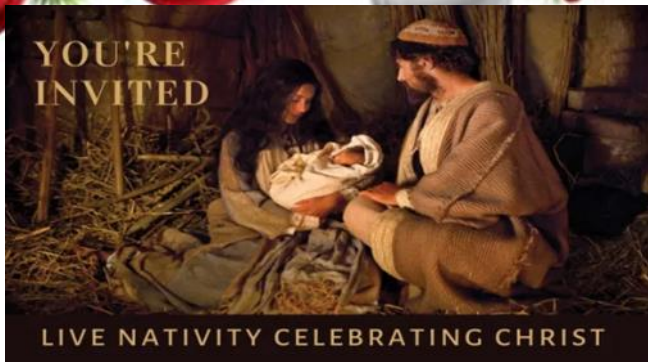


Committed to
nurturing faith,
supporting mission,
working for justice,
and building community.



Merritt Island Presbyterian Church
"A Heart to Give"

Faith Formation Ministries



Monday, December 4th – 4:00-5:00 p.m.

Preschool Christmas Pageant

Live Nativity

Merritt Island Presbyterian Church

600 S. Tropical Trail-Memorial Garden

**Come and join us as our Preschool children
present the Christmas story.**

Hosted by MIPC Preschool & Faith Formation Ministries

Faith Formation Ministries

Plans for FFM Activities:

1. Our committee met on Monday, November 13th @ 1:00 p.m. in the Session room and on Zoom. These are the current and upcoming activities for 2023.
 - a) Children's Church-Sunday mornings at 10:00 a.m. in the Activities Room.
 - b) Adult Faith Enrichment Class-Sunday mornings at 9:00 a.m. in the Session Room and on Zoom. Our 4-week Advent study led by Dave Hertzler is *Max Lucado's Because of Bethlehem: Love is Born, Hope is Here*
 - c) Kids Klub Fall semester: Tuesdays @ 3:00 p.m. in the Fellowship Hall
 - d) One Purpose Productions Fall semester: Wednesdays @ 3:30 p.m.
 - e) Women's Ministry: Fabulous Fridays Bible Study group: Every other Friday @ 2:00 p.m. in the Activities Room. The study is *Sacred Encounters: The Power and Presence of Jesus Christ in Luke-Acts* led by Julie Hill.
 - f) Kids Klub Show: Saturday, December 2nd @ 4:00 p.m.
 - g) Kids Klub Show & 40th Anniversary Party: Sunday, December 3rd @ 4:00 p.m.
 - h) Preschool Christmas Pageant: Monday, December 4th @ 4:00 p.m. with a Live Nativity. Everyone is welcome!
 - i) One Purpose Productions Shows: Friday, December 8th @ 7:00 p.m. & Saturday, December 9th @ 4:00 p.m.
2. Our next committee meeting will be on Monday, December 11th @ 1:00 p.m.

Pamela Poland
Faith Formation Ministries
Associate
Dave Hertzler
Faith Formation Ministries
Elder



BIRTHDAYS & ANNIVERSARIES

DECEMBER BIRTHDAYS:



9 Suzanne Larsen
11 Heidi Dutter
12 Cheryl Mahan
14 Bob Erb
19 Gregg Kraver
21 Dale Greenawalt
22 Sue Sakala
27 Tyler Johnson
29 Leslie Neihouse
31 Julie Hill
31 Craig Hill

DECEMBER ANNIVERSARIES:



4 Elaine & Rich Larkin
22 Wally & Barbara Finney
29 Brian & Sarah Finney

BUDGET UPDATE

YTD As of 10/31/23

Actual Revenue:	\$158,568
Budgeted:	\$182,331
Actual Expenses:	\$162,663
Budgeted:	\$176,274

please note

**The deadline for input in the
January newsletter is
December 18**



*The MIPC Press is printed by the Merritt Island Presbyterian Church,
600 S. Tropical Trail, Merritt Island, Florida 32952.*

Rev. Christina Greenawalt
Pam Poland
Leslie Mitchell
Maryrose Beerman
Tammy Lewis
Robyn Mills
MaryLou Tipton

Pastor
Faith Formation Ministries Associate
Financial Secretary
Acting Music Director
Preschool Director
Preschool Director
Performing Arts Director

Each month, we feature an “Eco-Friendly Tip!” It’s our way of helping conserve resources and preserve our beautiful Brevard beaches and waterways. This month’s tip:



Our beautiful Brevard Zoo has some excellent advice for making your Christmas greener. You might be surprised to know they recommend fresh trees over artificial! Shopping, wrapping, entertaining, and decorating tips can be found on this website: <https://brevardzoo.org/10-tips-greener-holiday-season/>

Do you have a tip to share? Contact mipresbyterian@gmail.com.

Please contact the church office if we can assist you in any way.



Office phone number: 321-452-5689

Preschool phone number: 321-453-1640

Office extensions (NEW):

1001: Reception

1002: Leslie Mitchell

1003: Pam Poland

1004: Rev. Greenawalt

Email: mipresbyterian@gmail.com

Preschool email: MIPCPreschool@gmail.com

Website: www.merrittislandpc.org

Facebook: [Facebook.com/Merritt.Island.Presbyterian.Church](https://www.facebook.com/Merritt.Island.Presbyterian.Church)

Twitter: [@MIPresby](https://twitter.com/MIPresby)