# MIPC PRESS

Merritt Island Presbyterian Church August 2025



## Pastor Christina's Corner

Over the past several years, our Buildings and Grounds Committee has been hard at work overseeing a beautiful transformation of our church campus.

We are grateful for the Legacy Gifts from Mary Helen and T.C. Anderson and Pat and Gary Hobbs. These gifts, along with the financial contributions of others, including insurance, have funded this transformation.

Every brick, beam, shingle, stained-glass window, and pew of our buildings came into being through the generous, often sacrificial giving of faithful members. Many of them were pioneers in our communities. They participated in the campaigns for these structures with a vision of prosperous ministry for the future. They have faithfully paid the bills for utilities, repairs, and insurance. In short, the brick and mortar have survived due to their and our dedication.

Thanks to them—and the efforts of many others—we now have refreshed buildings. We are also thankful for the work of our roofers, Gorilla Roofing, and for the general contracting work of Joe Macik and his crew from Macik Builders.

We're grateful to everyone who helped bring this renovation to life. As a side note, due to the repairs and replacement of our plumbing, from January through June of 2025, MIPC has saved over \$7,000 in water bills over the same time period in 2024. Those are real ministry dollars no longer being washed down the drain.

Over the past three years of renovations, all told we have spent over \$784,000 in the expectation that our church and preschool will be around for many more generations of people looking to find acceptance, hope, and a place to learn and grow.

There are still more projects we would like to accomplish, such as new windows and doors for the preschool buildings, and we know that over the next few years the Lord will provide.

## Pastor Christina's Corner

Merritt Island Presbyterian Church was chartered as a church in the spring of 1964 and the preschool began in 1965. MIPC has a long history of sharing the Good News of Jesus Christ, planting the seeds of God's grace, love, joy, and faith in children and adults alike.

Currently, Merritt Island Presbyterian Church Preschool has 128 children who learn and grow in the love of Christ in a nurturing environment as part of the mission and ministry of MIPC.

What has become evident to me is that MIPC as church and congregation has a resilient ministry. MIPC has gone through many variations of itself, has survived being closed for a pandemic, has seen ministries flourish and grow and then dwindle to create new opportunities for renewed ministry. There have been times of celebration along the way: weddings, baptisms, confirmations, connections to the community, and faithfulness to follow the Holy Spirit's guiding – even when it was unpopular. Because of this I am confident that whatever the future holds, the people of MIPC will know what to do – seeking to be the Heart of Merritt Island.

At this time, we celebrate the re-dedication of buildings, originally built and dedicated over 60 years ago, but more than that we celebrate a resilient congregation, a people who have been a beacon of hope and light to our community—often thanks to the faithfulness of our saints who left lasting legacies to continue the work and mission of Jesus Christ.

Ultimately, the church building belongs to God. Not to the entity whose name is on the deed. Not to a mortgage company. Not to the judicatory body – a.k.a. the Presbytery. Not to the members themselves, no matter how hard they have worked to maintain it. MIPC stands for and belongs to God. Each of us was called to this time and place to be good stewards of all that belongs to God.

We have been a good community partner for generations. Scouts, Recovery Programs, Square Dancers, Christ the King Life Church, our Preschool, our Performing Arts programs, and more. As we continue to transform

## Pastor Christina's Corner

and renew MIPC, what are the meaningful connection points that we have with these groups or other groups in our community? How can we continue to reach our community in new ways to plant the seeds of faith?

Christ not only calls us to gather. Jesus was sent to us so we would know the grace of God. And we are sent to go out into the world to do as he commanded. Jesus was clear when he said: "I give you a new commandment, that you love one another. Just as I have loved you, you also should love one another" (John 13:34). We are committed to showing God's love to our neighbors and seek to fulfill that mission by sharing the story of the community of Merritt Island Presbyterian Church and the MIPC Preschool. When we do that, we become a community of belonging, where there is a place at the table for all who want to be there. We become a community of joy, where a deep gladness rests upon, and emanates from, the congregation. We become a community of transformation.

Because we are broken people, we will never do this perfectly. We will stumble and fall along the way. But by the grace of God, we will be led towards this kind of vision, which can be an expression of the Beloved Community where all people find a place of acceptance, love, and affirmation.

May God continue to bless the church and the congregation and use us in our time to bless others.

Join us on Sunday, August 10, as we celebrate with a special Blessing and re-Dedication of the renovated buildings and the Preschool Pantry. Please consider bringing an item for the pantry (a list follows this article). We will begin at 10:00 a.m. with a worship service, followed by a time of celebration and food in Fellowship Hall. The Preschool Pantry will be open for tours as will a few of the Preschool classrooms.

All are welcome! Feel free to invite a friend or reach out to a former member of MIPC for this special time. If you would like to bring something to share for the meal please contact the church office (mipresbyterian@gmail.com).

### Preschool

#### **Food Pantry Needs:**

Laundry detergent

Cleaning supplies

Disinfecting wipes

Feminine hygiene products

Toothpaste/toothbrushes

Apple sauce (cups, pouches or jars)

Flavored oatmeal packs

Kid-friendly cereal

Goldfish snacks

Ritz crackers

Cheez -it snacks

Mac and Cheese

Rice-a roni mixes

Past-a-roni mixes

Spaghetti sauce

Pasta

Canned ravioli/spaghettios

Fruit cups

Cookies (any type)

Any individually wrapped snacks or chips

### Preschool



July was a very busy month for us here at the Preschool. We had a wonderful experience at VBS. The children really enjoyed it. They got story time with "Scout," and they did an art project, and they got to do Science which was new this year,

thanks to Mr. Mike. The snacks this year were not too much sugar - with the exception of Monday where they got 3 marshmallow treats and then smeared marshmallow filling on them. That was the day they got extra time outside. They enjoyed the opening and closing with the music and dancing. We had a really fun time.

Our school age kids went on field trips, including the Florida Zoo which they really enjoyed. It is hard to believe summer camp is almost over. Our new classes will start August 18.

As a reminder, the Preschool will be closed on August 1 and August 4 so that the classrooms can be prepped for the coming school year.

Please don't forget our open house and dedication of buildings and opening of pantry August 10, we hope to see everyone there.

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

# Preschool—Robyn Mills

It has been an honor to be a teacher at the MIPC Preschool for over 15 years now. I have grown over those years and continued to learn with these children. Starting as a teacher for 3-year-olds, I am now one of the Preschool's Co-Directors. Over the years, I have noticed that the children around me have changed, their behaviors, their needs. My eyes have been opened to see that our community needs help to support our children in different ways. One aspect in education that has emerged is the need for "trauma-informed care." I wanted to know more, and I wanted to learn how this might be a way to help the children in our care.

Due to budget cuts from state and national funding, our income at the Preschool has been reduced and we are trying to keep expenses down in any way possible. But I realized the Preschool needed to do something about the issues I could see happening around me. So in researching possibilities, I was fortunate enough to receive two scholarships from the Presbytery and the Synod of S. Atlantic to cover the \$400 cost of a continuing education course entitled: Trauma Informed Care.

This course has taught me how to look at children's behavioral challenges with more compassion and understanding. I have learned that the trauma in a child's life (even before birth) alters the brain and affects different aspects of their life including learning, behavior, and self-regulation. I also realize that, like most of us, many of our teachers have a history of trauma.

My goal now is to teach our teachers to look at the challenging behaviors of some of our children in a different light, so that our children can have the tools they need to live beyond and learn to thrive despite life's traumas. One of my assignments during the 2-month course was to create a training presentation on trauma informed care for the staff here at the Preschool. I will be presenting that to the teachers on one of our upcoming workdays.

My hope is that each one of us here at MIPC Preschool will make a difference to all the children in our care, but especially to the ones that may have suffered or are suffering from trauma. I am thankful that MIPC Preschool is here for these children and provides a safe and caring environment for the children in our community.

I pray that God will use the Preschool as a beacon of hope and light for our children and our teachers. I hope you will too!

# Worship

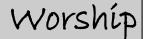
The past few weeks have been full of meaningful and joy-filled worship at MIPC!

On June 29, we welcomed Roberta Stocksdale as our wonderfully capable substitute pianist/organist (thanks to a referral from Jennavon) and heard a rousing sermon from our in-house guest preacher, and elder, Milt Seapker, about both literal and figurative signs. His message brought to mind a funny memory from my own childhood: as a little girl, my mom would routinely drive us past a sign that said, "Watch out for pedestrians." Only, I thought it read, "Watch out for Presbyterians!" (Proof that I've been a Presbyterian longer than I could read!) That sign puzzled me until I finally worked up the courage to ask my mom why anyone needed to watch out for Presbyterians. She had the best laugh over that and kindly explained what the sign really meant. For years after, whenever someone did something quirky at church, my mom and I would exchange a look and say, "That's why you have to watch out for Presbyterians!"

On July 6, we gathered at the Lord's table for communion, enjoyed the talented Leslie Mitchell as our substitute pianist, and welcomed Pastor Christina back from her travels. She introduced our summer sermon series, centered around connection, where the congregation was encouraged to create Lego scenes inspired by each week's readings.

July 13 saw the return of Jennavon to the organ/piano, as we witnessed the baptism of Brooklyn Hope, were introduced to the beautiful voices of the singing group Soliloquy (thanks again to Jennavon), and saw the first of our Lego creations displayed "on the big screen".

On July 20, as it was now Jeana 's turn to be away, Sarah Lawrence stepped in as hymn leader and soloist, lifting our spirits with a heartfelt rendition of "On Eagles' Wings." We also celebrated the creative energy of our Vacation Bible School participants by displaying their crafts (the crafting was led by Julie Hill, who isn't afraid of being around children who have access to glue and scissors) and noting the contributions of our other VBS helpers (if anyone needs a scientist, call Mike Smith), along with viewing more wonderful Lego creations.



On July 27: Will Merklinger, a familiar friend to MIPC (specifically our performing arts ministry) led us in song as hymn leader and soloist.

#### Coming up:

- August 3: Communion Sunday.
- August 10: A special service focused on our building dedications, followed by lunch and tours of our newly dedicated spaces.

As always, I am so grateful for the many hands and hearts who make worship possible each week—our preachers, liturgists, musicians, AV team, and coordinators. Your gifts and dedication create a space where all are welcome to encounter the presence of God.

If you feel called to join the Worship Committee, or have ideas, talents, or feedback to share, I'd love to hear from you. You can reach me at epigayle@gmail.com.



With gratitude,

Gayle Allenback

Worship Elder

## Mission/Outreach

# Family Promise Stakeholders Gathering July 1st in the Cocoa Village Playhouse

First, to all of you reading this, please take maybe 10 minutes of your precious time and go to the Family Promise of Brevard website (familypromiseofbrevard.org) if you have not done so before now. Their mission is simple and direct and so critical to the health and long-term success of our county.

We keep families housed so children can thrive

A very interesting short meeting of Family Promise Stakeholders (which is ALL of us) at Cocoa Village Playhouse brought together many folks who are leading the charge to diminish the family homelessness that plagues Cocoa.

Chris Beavens, the Executive Director of Cocoa Village Playhouse, offered this venue for our meeting. Denise Steward, the Principal of Cocoa High School, talked about the improvements in graduation rates and her students' greater interest in higher education post graduation. Shayla Murray Smith who heads Elevate Brevard (actually housed in the Family Promise building) which encourages and assists high schoolers in continuing their education to get better jobs. Linda Weatherman of Space Coast Economic Development Coalition. And Haylie Allegra of Florida Blue. Now that I think of it, it was a cheerleading session to build up more support for this organization so vital to the zip code 32922—Cocoa, Florida.

We need to enlist more hosting churches and synagogues (FP of Brevard now includes a synagogue!) because the cost of housing when there are not enough hosting congregations is gobbling up FP resources.

As you know (I hope!) we will have our second FP hosting September 28- October 5th and when we do there will be sparkling new flooring in the Activities Room. See the following page for information about volunteering for this worthy cause!

Questions? Call Cheryl Mahan, 321-431-9623

## Mission/Outreach

#### **Family Promise is Coming!**

Sunday, Sep. 28 (arrival at 5pm) - Sunday Oct. 5, 2025 (departing around 8am)

Because Frances and Cheryl are going to be doing some serious traveling before our next Family Promise hosting, we'd love to start lining up our volunteers now!

#### We need volunteers:

- 1) to do the meals each night (except Friday is pizza night usually)
- 2) to overnight at church (two people) which is 8PM to 7AM except Saturday which has different longer hours.
- 3) to help set up and tear down and clean up afterwards.

At the last hosting we did in January, we had almost everyone in the church participating in one way or another and we are looking forward to the same level of participation.

And have you seen the new flooring in the Activities Room—no more gross carpet! We are so grateful to all those who contributed physically or financially to the transformation—thank you so much!

Cheryl Mahan 321-431-9623

Frances Fernald 321-427-4477

## Finance

	YTD as of 6/30/25
General Fund Revenue:	120,961
General Fund Expenses:	107,283
General Fund Net Revenue:	13,678
Preschool Revenue:	306,987
Preschool Expenses:	331,230
Preschool Net Revenue:	24,243

June saw some expenses for both church and preschool that were budgeted but because of the timing, impacted the profit for the month. The church was blessed with a generous \$20,000 gift which increased our Unpledged Income category.

In July we will complete the flooring project in the Activities Room, and anticipate some AC replacement/repairs in August.

Mike Smith Finance Chair

Our next Deacon meeting will be on August 11, 2025 at 3:30 PM in the Session Room.



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#### GOD IS THE CUREGIVER:

"Cast your cares upon the Lord and He will sustain you." Psalm 55: 2 "Come to Me, all you who are weary and burdened, and I will give you rest." Matthew 11:28

"Cast all your anxiety on Him because He cares for you." 1 Peter 5:7

#### THE STEPHEN MINISTER IS THE CAREGIVER:

A Stephen Minister will walk with you and Jesus through a crisis. He/she cannot cure you of your ills...that job belongs to God. A Stephen Minister can, however, give you strong Christian love, compassion, and understanding as they really listen to you as a friend throughout your crisis.

If you or your friend or family member would like the support of a Stephen Minister, please contact Craig Smoot 321-223-4841 or Pastor Christina. MIPC has a strong Stephen Minister team along with Grace United Methodist church to serve you.

## Clothing Bin

In July, our Session approved the placement of a clothing collection shed on our property. The company collecting the clothing is St. Pauly Textile, which is a for-profit organization that collects clothing all over the country and then sells in bulk to organizations who will redistribute the clothing, such as the US government (FEMA), foreign governments, and relief agencies.

The shed will be monitored and emptied every week. There are two advantages to MIPC for this setup:

- 1. We are paid 4 cents for every pound of clothing collected
- 2. We get first dibs on any clothing dropped off, so we can use it for any of our ministries here at MIPC.

Once the shed is installed, we encourage you to bring in used clothing (it must be bagged in plastic bags). They will also accept shoes, belts, purses, blankets, sheets, curtains, pillowcases and stuffed animals.



# Good Samarítan/Hymnals

#### **Good Samaritan Account**

The church recently got a call from a young woman in the community who was in serious need of help paying her \$120 utility bill. She asked MIPC to help her. As it happened, we still had enough to cover this bill in our Good Samaritan Fund so, after the lady sent us a copy of her bill it was paid swiftly. As "The Heart of Merritt Island" it is wonderful we can help in this way.

MIPC has operated this Good Samaritan account for many years. We have used it to help members of the community pay rent, utilities, gas, car payment, hotel room—whatever need is urgent at the time. It's one of our (quiet) ways of serving the community we call home.

The Preschool, inspired by this program, began their own Good Samaritan account in 2021, also funded by donations, for preschool teachers and families to help with their needs as well.

With this most recent assistance, we have very little left in that fund. If you would like to contribute so that we can readily help those in need around us, please just note on your check or online payment that it is for the Good Samaritan fund. Many thanks!

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#### **HYMNALS**

Many of use have tried to find new homes or uses for our blue superceded (previous) hymnals. They were replaced in 2015 by the purple book *Glory to God: The Presbyterian Hymnal*. We would be happy for you to take one of the blue hymnals to keep at home. And if you know of a church or crafting group that could use them, please let us know!

## Share the Love of Jesus Christ!

Come join us for this very special celebration!

Sunday, August 10th @ 10,00 a.m.

Merritt Island Presbyterian Church





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**Food Pantry Grand Opening** 

**Building Dedications** 



Worship @ 10:00 a.m. followed by celebration activities!
600 S. Tropical Trail
135 Cone Road, Merritt Island, FL. 32952

Website: www.merrittislandpc.org

Like us on Facebook! www.facebook.com/Merritt.Island.Presbyterian.Church





Our Performing Arts Ministry for ages K-6<sup>th</sup> grade will begin their Fall semester on Tuesday, August 19<sup>th</sup> @ 3:00 p.m.

If you know anyone who might be interested in this amazing ministry please contact Pam Poland, Faith Formation Ministries Associate @ 321-626-6224, 321-452-5689 ext.1003 or <a href="mipcffm@gmail.com">mipcffm@gmail.com</a>. Like us on Facebook! <a href="https://www.facebook.com/MIPCPerformingArts">www.facebook.com/MIPCPerformingArts</a>







# One Purpose Productions

Our Performing Arts Ministry for ages 7th grade & up will begin their Fall semester on Wednesday, August 20th @ 3:30 p.m.

If you know anyone who might be interested in this amazing ministry please contact Pam Poland, Faith Formation Ministries Associate @ 321-626-6224, 321-452-5689 ext.1003 or mipcffm@gmail.com.

Like us on Facebook! www.facebook.com/MIPCPerformingArts

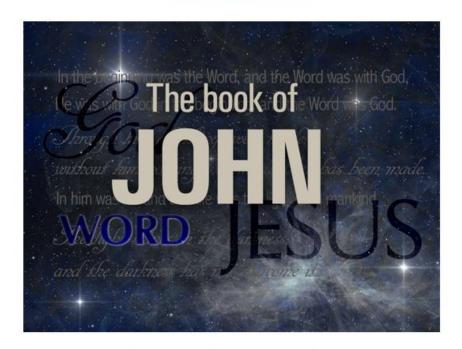






Faith Enrichment Class Sunday Mornings 9:00 a.m. Session Room & Zoom

Join us on August 3<sup>rd</sup> as we begin a new study on the Book of John with Dave Hertzler.



Come join us in person or on Zoom!

The link to join will be sent out with your weekly bulletin.



#### Activities Room—Sundays at 10:00 AM

Merritt Island Presbyterian Church offers Children's Church for Preschool-6<sup>th</sup> 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 <a href="mailto:mighthem:mig

\*Please note that we are on hiatus for the summer.
Classes will be available in September.





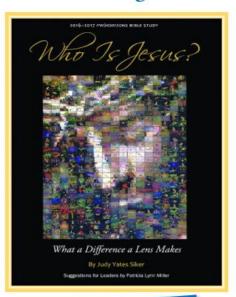
When we have infants or toddlers who need care during our worship service, Faith Formation Ministries can help. We have a rotation schedule set up for a wonderful group of volunteers. Our Ushers have a copy of the schedule, and can direct our guests to someone. For those who may not know, our new Nursery room location is in the church office next to Faith Formation Ministries.



Women's Bible Study Group

# Fabulous Fridays!

August 8th & 22nd @ 2:00 p.m.



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Our study is led by Julie Hill and is titled "Who Is Jesus? What a Difference a Lens Makes"

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

Please contact Julie Hill for more information and questions. ciphill@bellsouth.net or 321-431-5333







# Men's Bible Study Group with Milt Seapker

Twice a month on Wednesdays @ 2:00 p.m.

Location: 200 South Banana River Drive E11
Merritt Island 32952

Come join us for a time of Bible study and fun activities!

Please note that we are on hiatus for the month of August and will resume on September 10<sup>th</sup>.

Please contact Milt at 910-580-9344 or <u>milton.s43@aol.com</u> if you are interested in attending.

#### Synod of South Atlantic ~ and ~ Synod of Living Waters Presbyterian Women's Triennial Gathering

October 17th -19th, 2025

Epworth by the Sea, St. Simons Island, Georgia



The Lord is my strength and my shield; my heart trusts in him, and he helps me. My heart leaps for joy, and with my song I praise him. Psalm 28:7

Worship Leader
Rev. CeCe Armstrong
Co-Moderator, 226<sup>th</sup> General Assembly
Associate Pastor, St. James Presbyterian
James Island, Charleston, S.C.

Keynote Speaker Rev. Dr. Rhashell Hunter Author, 2025-2026 Horizons Bible Study "Finding Resilience, Joy and Our Identity in Jesus Christ"

You are invited to attend an exciting Presbyterian Women Synod Gathering October 17-19, 2025 at Epworth by the Sea Conference Center.

Our PW Synod Gathering, held once every three years, is an opportunity for women to nurture faith, exchange ideas, discover mission opportunities, strengthen relationships, and relax. Participants will enjoy workshops, tours, plenary sessions with inspiring speakers, worship, music, Bible study, and more.



More information and registration forms are available in the Narthex.

Contact Julie Hill: julie2025pw@gmail.com

# Vacation Bible School

We had an awesome week with our Preschool children!









Saturday, October 11th 4:00-6:00 p.m.

#### Plans for FFM Activities:

- Our committee met on Monday, June 21<sup>st</sup> @ 1:00 p.m. in the Session room and on Zoom.
- 2. These are the current and upcoming activities for 2025.
  - a. Children's Church: We are on summer hiatus until September.
  - b. Adult Faith Enrichment Class- Sundays @ 9:00 a.m. in the Session Room and on Zoom. Classes will resume on August 3<sup>rd</sup> with a new study on the Book of John led by Dave Hertzler.
  - c. Women's Ministry: Fabulous Fridays Bible Study group: Every other Friday @ 2:00 p.m. in the Activities Room. Meeting dates are August 8<sup>th</sup> & 22<sup>nd</sup>. Our study is "Who Is Jesus? What a Difference a Lens Makes" led by Julie Hill.
  - d. Men's Ministry: Bible Study Group: \*We are on hiatus for the month of August. The study will resume on September 10<sup>th</sup>.
  - e. Preschool 60<sup>th</sup> Anniversary Celebration, Food Pantry Grand Opening & Building Dedications: Sunday, August 10<sup>th</sup> @ 10:00 a.m.
  - f. Fall Festival: Saturday, October 11th, 4:00-6:00 p.m.
  - g. 3<sup>rd</sup> Annual Preschool Christmas Pageant & Live Nativity: Monday, December 8<sup>th</sup> @ 4:00 p.m.
  - h. Our next committee meeting will be on Monday, August 11th @ 1:00 p.m.

Blessings to all!

#### Pamela Poland

Faith Formation Ministries Associate

#### Patricia Smith & Milt Seapker

Faith Formation Ministries Elders



# Birthdays & Anniversaries

#### **AUGUST BIRTHDAYS:**

#### 17 Kim Scroggs

21 Jeana Lutz

25 Richard Fjeldheim

26 William Erb

26 Linda Sarkarati

26 Lloyd Lewis

26 Heather McPhail

28 Kendall Koodie

28 Scott Osikowicz

30 Erik Smoot

#### **BUDGET UPDATE**

#### YTD As of 6/3/25

Actual Revenue: \$120,961

Budgeted: \$ 107,000

Actual Expenses: \$ 107,283

Budgeted: \$ 113,791



#### AUGUST ANNIVERSARIES

13 Don & Mary Lynne Webster

19 Karri & Richard Fjeldheim

19 Shirley & Bill Kidd



The deadline for input in the September newsletter is August 22

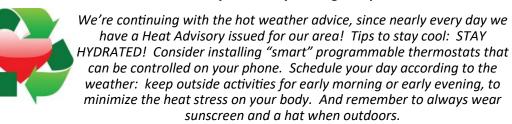


## The MIPC Press is printed by the Merritt Island Presbyterian Church, 600 S. Tropical Trail, Merritt Island, Florida 32952.

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Gabriella Plaza
Giovanna Curry

Pastor
Faith Formation Ministries Associate
Financial Secretary
Preschool Director
Preschool Director
Substitute Organist/Pianist
Church Vocalist
One Purpose Director
One Purpose Music 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. Here's your August tip:



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

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



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