

MIPC PRESS

Merritt Island Presbyterian Church
January 2026

HAPPY NEW YEAR



WISHING YOU JOY
THROUGHOUT THE YEAR!

Pastor Christina's Corner

Beloved Church Family,

Happy New Year! As we turn the calendar to January 2026, we stand at a unique threshold. The noise of the holiday season has faded, the decorations are being tucked away, and the world often feels a bit quieter and colder. Yet, in the life of the spirit, this is often when the most profound growth begins—in the quiet, beneath the surface.

The arrival of 2026 is not just the start of another twelve-month cycle; it is a fresh invitation from the Creator to "perceive" the new things God is doing in our midst.

A Season of Epiphany

In the liturgical calendar, January is dominated by the season of Epiphany—the celebration of the light of Christ being revealed to the world. Just as the Magi followed a star into unknown territory, we are called to move forward this year with a "holy curiosity." We may not know every bend in the road ahead for 2026, but we know the One who lights the path.

Cultivating Rhythms of Grace

Instead of the traditional "New Year's Resolutions" that often focus on what we lack, I invite you to adopt Holy Rhythms. This month, consider how you might deepen your connection to the vine through:

Presence: Commit to being physically present in worship and fellowship. Our community is strengthened by your unique voice and spirit.

Prayer: Set aside five minutes of "listening prayer" each morning, asking God to show you where He is already at work in your neighborhood. Ask how you can connect with that work and who God is putting in your path.

Service: Look for the "new thing" God is doing in our local missions. Whether it is through the food pantry, committees, or Justice Ministry programs, there is a place for your hands to serve.

Pastor Christina's Corner

Looking Ahead

This month, on January 25th, we will gather for our Annual Congregational Meeting, a time to look back at the blessings of 2025 and cast a vision for the year to come. I encourage you to attend, not just for the reports and budgets, but to witness the story of God's faithfulness written in the lives of this congregation.

Let us step into 2026 with hearts wide open, ready to be surprised by grace and moved by the Spirit. The wilderness may be vast, but the "streams in the wasteland" are already beginning to flow.

Grace and Peace,

Pastor Christina

~~ THANK YOU ~~

Dear beloved family of MIPC, I would like to thank you for all of the lovely and thoughtful cards and gifts that Dale and I received – from home baked goods, to ornaments that I will cherish a lifetime, to messages and hugs. I am grateful for every one of them and for each of you.

Love,

Pastor Christina

Worship

We hope you have found meaning and encouragement in this year's Advent theme, "What Do You Fear?", even during what is often one of the busiest seasons of the year. Throughout Advent, our worship has invited us to reflect honestly on fear and to listen for God's reassuring presence among us.

Advent Worship Recap

- November 30 – First Sunday of Advent

The Harris family lit the first Advent candle of Hope. Pastor Christina began our Advent journey with the message "What Do You Fear?". We were grateful to Joyce Walker for serving as guest pianist/organist while Jennavon was away.

- December 7 – Second Sunday of Advent / Communion Sunday

The Serfozo family lit the second Advent candle of Peace. Pastor Christina preached "When We're Running Out of Hope, God Is at Work."

- December 14 – Third Sunday of Advent

The McPhail family—including beloved canine companion Yoshi—lit the third Advent candle of Joy. Pastor Christina's sermon, "Even in Our Fear, We Are Called Forward," reminded us that God "does not call the equipped but equips the called."

- December 21 – Fourth Sunday of Advent

The Koodie/Mohan family lit the fourth Advent candle of Love. The MIPC Women's Choir offered "Like a Child, I Wait," under the leadership of Joyce Walker, again filling in for Jennavon. Pastor Christina's message was "When You're Afraid, Give Me Your Hand."

- December 24 – Christmas Eve (4:00 p.m.)

Our Christmas Eve Worship Extravaganza featured the MIPC Choir singing "When the Son of God Was Born" and "Christmastime." The service also included Kenny's cello solo of "Silent Night" with congregational candle lighting, John's clarinet solo of "The First Noel," and Jeana's rendition of "O Holy Night." Communion was served, and Pastor Christina led a Lessons & Carols service, offering the powerful reminder that "Good News is Louder than Fear."

- December 28 – Sunday after Christmas

We gathered in the Activities Room for an informal worship service with breakfast, music, a discussion-style message, and a service project. John Shuford and Leslie Mitchell provided some jazzy clarinet/piano music. This event was well-attended and well-received—look for more like this in the future!

Looking Ahead

- January 4 – Epiphany Sunday / Communion

Pastor Christina will lead worship and the Sanctuary Singers will sing “Wise Men Still Seek Him.” Joyce Walker will fill in for Jennavon Brown on piano/organ.

- January 11, 18, and 25

Regular worship services continue, with our Annual Meeting following worship on January 25.

Each week, worship comes together because so many people generously share their time and gifts—preachers, liturgists, musicians, our AV team, and countless behind-the-scenes helpers. I am deeply grateful for everyone who helps make our worship warm, welcoming, and meaningful.

If you are interested in helping with worship, or if you have ideas or feedback to share, I would love to hear from you. Please feel free to speak with me on a Sunday or email me at epigayle@gmail.com.

*With gratitude,
Gayle Allenback
Worship Elder*

Preschool



December is always a very busy month here at the preschool and this year was no exception! We would like to thank all our church members who helped supply our Christmas Dinners to 9 of our families and another big Thank You to all those who picked an angel off the angel tree. We supplied 20 children with Christmas. Thanks to you, they woke up Christmas morning with presents under the tree.

We had breakfast with Santa and the children got to sit on Santa's lap and tell him what they wanted for Christmas. Thank you to Brian Poland for being our Santa and thank you Pam Poland for being our elf.

Thank you to Pat Smith for supplying our Christmas staff lunch. All the teachers enjoyed it.

We would like to also thank everyone who came out and helped with our Thanksgiving feast, and those who helped serve the children breakfast, and special thanks, Pastor Christina and Dale, for helping with the cooking.

We are ready to dive into another New Year. 2026 will bring changes to our Preschool staff; our director Tammy Lewis is stepping down and Robyn Mills will be the Director of the Preschool, effective January 1. (See following page for a letter from Tammy.) We give our heartfelt thanks to Tammy for her years of service to MIPC and to the children of our community.

Merry Christmas and Happy New Year to all. May God continue to bless us here at MIPC.

Blessings to all,

Robyn Mills, Preschool Director

Pat Smith, Preschool Elder

Dear Church family,

I first would like to say Thank You from the bottom of my heart for allowing me to serve for the last 8 years as the Director of the MIPC Preschool. We have seen a lot of changes and growth in the Preschool over the years, and it has been my pleasure and great joy to serve the Preschool staff and families.

After serving in ministry for 26 1/2 years as a Preschool Director, I am ready to slow down, so after praying and careful thought, I have decided to step down as MIPC Preschool Director. The good news is I will be staying on as the Lead VPK teacher and consultant to MIPC Preschool; this will allow me to spend much more needed time with my family.

Robyn Mills will take on the sole role of Director; I have full confidence in her ability to serve the Preschool. I will still be here to support in my position as VPL lead, and I am looking forward to continuing my career in early childhood education, serving our families.

Thank you for all your support and God bless MIPC Church and Preschool.

Blessings,

Tammy Lewis

Mission/Outreach

Mission Trip to Peru—June 7-16, 2026

Join the group for a memorable trip deep in the Andes Mountains to a beautiful village called Kasi. Flying into Lima followed by a short flight to Hungay, Peru, you will be greeted by the beautiful children who are so excited when Americans come to visit. You will participate in a variety of projects including tree planting, painting, light construction, VBS with children, a visit to the market in Hungay, and view the beautiful lakes near Mt. Huascarón.

Contact Barbara Sayles (bsayles@cfpresbytery.org or 407-422-7125) or download the application form from the Presbytery's website, www.cfpresbytery.org.

Update on Palestinian Peacemaker

Many of you will remember Amira Barham who spoke at MIPC in October 2023. Barbara Sayles of Central Florida Presbytery has stayed in touch with Amira through What's App. Amira is managing to stay safe. Her home is on the West Bank, so not quite as dangerous as Gaza. However, movement is limited and checkpoints are everywhere. She is still helping with the Al-Harah Theatre for Performing Arts that helps children and young people cope with and process the trauma, and help heal and grow healthier, kinder generations for the future. She sends her thanks to all of you who continue to pray for her, her family, and the families in her community, and asks that those prayers continue.

For more information, contact Barbara at the Presbytery office with your specific questions and concerns. bsayles@cfpresbytery.org; 407-422-7125.

FAMILY PROMISE UPDATE

Are you ready to help us again? January 18-25 is when we will be hosting, so get ready.

Now that you know what the dates of our hosting will be, please think about contacting us (Cheryl Mahan and Frances Fernald, the co-coordinators) and we will fill in the names on our big Family Promise dry-erase board.

We are looking for folks to bring suppers during that week, or to overnight with the families on comfy cots, or to help with set-up on the first Sunday, January 18th, or with teardown and cleanup on January 25th. If you cannot physically help us, and financial help is a possibility for you, we always need to purchase breakfast and lunch supplies to stock the refrigerator.

As always, we will not know how many families we will be hosting (one to four!) until Thursday, January 15. Our motto (phrase coined by Grace Methodist Church) is Semper Gumby! Always flexible! Keeps us on our toes.

We have been so gratified by the amount of help we have gotten in the past and look forward to your help this month.

Thank you in advance! Call us if you want to pick your favorite date.

Cheryl 321-431-9623 or Frances 321-427-4477

Mission/Outreach

Madagascar Updates

One of the members of the Madagascar Mission Network (MMN, which Cheryl Mahan belongs to), Jacky Radifera, keeps us better informed of what is happening in Madagascar since the change of President in August. That change was done according to constitutional guidelines—it was not a coup.

It appears that the US is supporting the interim president, (who will be in place until elections are held two years from now) Colonel Michael Randrianirina, who was sworn in on October 17th with US Ambassador to Madagascar Claire Pierangelo present. Also the high-ranking American military official who manages much in the Southern African region, Major General Matthew Trollinger, Chief of Staff of the U.S. Africa Command (AFRICOM) has been supportive of Madagascar and their shared security priorities, focusing on piracy, illegal fishing, illicit trafficking and territorial waters surveillance.

But enough names and politics. What can MIPC do to help?

We can pray for the peaceful transition of Madagascar into a better situation for all their people after the ousting of President Andry Rajoelina.

And we can help Madagascar by funding the teacher education of one student.

In February we invite you to join our Valentines Day effort we have dubbed *The Gift of Education: Bring Hope to Madagascar One Student at a Time*

You will be hearing more about this effort later this month.

Finance

	YTD as of 11/30/25
General Fund Revenue:	191,343
General Fund Expenses:	192,946
General Fund Net Revenue:	(1,603)
Preschool Revenue:	540,077
Preschool Expenses:	580,613
Preschool Net Revenue:	(40,536)

Both Church and Preschool showed a loss for November. The church remains ahead of projections, however, and should end the year with a lower deficit than projected. The Preschool is adjusting its budget for 2026 to reflect the lower ELC income along with somewhat lower enrollment.

Our 2026 budget was reviewed and approved at the December session meeting, and will be presented to the congregation at our annual meeting on January 25, 2026.

You can still bring your pledge card to worship, or mail it in, or even complete your pledge online at this link: <https://forms.gle/J1qwtgp49GMFnW6B7>

Mike Smith
Finance Chair

Deacons/Thank You

Our next Deacon meeting will be on January 12, 2026 at 3:30 PM in the Session Room.



Christmas Poinsettias

A special thank you to Brian Poland for picking up and delivering the outdoor poinsettias to the church and to Milt Seapker and Mike Ramos for planting the poinsettias. They certainly brightened up the church grounds.

Likewise, many thanks to all who ordered poinsettias for the sanctuary in honor of loved ones. Thank you, Gayle Allenback and Karlene Mohan, for picking up, delivering and arranging them right before the 3rd Sunday of Advent. They made the sanctuary so beautiful for our last few services of the year.

Thank You

The staff of Merritt Island Presbyterian Church and Preschool gives our sincere thanks the congregation for the generous Christmas bonuses, and the cards, gifts, and goodies given in appreciation for the work we do. We wish everyone a blessed and happy New Year and look forward to serving MIPC in the coming year!

Faith Formation Ministries



One Purpose Productions



Our Christmas performance of Camel Lot,
Don't Miss the Manger was fabulous!
The kids did a wonderful job!



We will begin our Spring Semester on Wednesday, January 14th @ 3:30 p.m.

If you know anyone who might be interested in this amazing ministry please contact our Director,
Gabriella Plaza-Jeffery @ 321-747-5881, gplaza104@gmail.com or Pam Poland, Faith Formation
Ministries Associate @ 321-626-6224, 321-452-5689 ext.1003, mipcffm@gmail.com

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Faith Formation Ministries



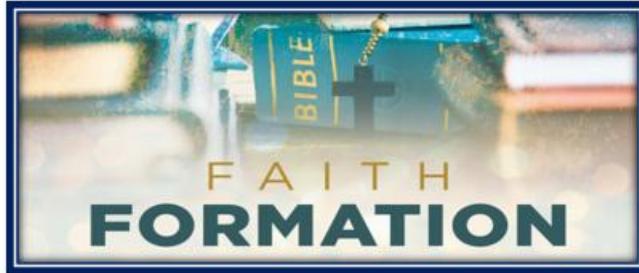
Activities Room—Sundays at 10:00 AM

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.



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.

Faith Formation Ministries



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

**Join us for a study on the Book of Judges with
Milt Seapker & Dave Hertzler!**



The Book of Judges describes Israel's chaotic period after Joshua, characterized by a recurring cycle: Israel disobeys God, faces oppression from foreign nations, cries out to God for help, and God raises a charismatic military leader (a "judge") to deliver them, leading to temporary peace before the cycle repeats, highlighting a downward spiral of idolatry, moral corruption, and lack of central leadership, concluding with the famous line, "everyone did what was right in their own eyes".

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

Faith Formation Ministries

Women's Ministry

*Renewing minds,
Transforming lives*

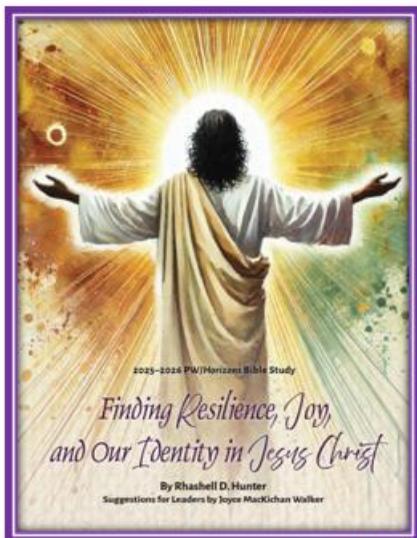
ROMANS 12:2



Women's Bible Study Group

Fabulous Fridays!

January 9th & 23rd @ 2:00 p.m.



Our study is led by Julie Hill and is titled "Finding Resilience, Joy, and Our Identity in Jesus Christ"

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.
cjhill@bellsouth.net or 321-431-5333*



Faith Formation Ministries



Men's Bible Study Group

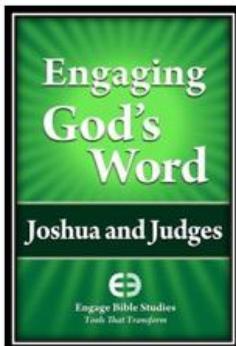
with Milt Seapker

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!

January 7th & 21st



The books of Joshua and Judges take you on a journey of contrasts - great courage and knee-shaking cowardice, enduring love and heartless infidelity, God's faithfulness and Israel's unfaithfulness. This in-depth study will give you hope as you watch God accomplish His work through the lives of mighty warriors and deeply flawed people.

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

Faith Formation Ministries

Plans for FFM Activities:

1. Our committee met on Monday, December 1st @ 1:00 p.m. in the Session room and on Zoom.
2. These are the current and upcoming activities for 2026.
 - a. Adult Faith Enrichment Class with Milt Seapker & Dave Hertzler-Sunday mornings @ 9:00 a.m. in the Session Room and on Zoom. Join us for our new study on the **"Book of Judges"**.
 - b. Women's Ministry: Fabulous Fridays Bible Study group: Every other Friday @ 2:00 p.m. in the Activities Room. Meeting dates are January 9th & 23rd. Our study is *"Finding Resilience, Joy, and Our Identity in Jesus Christ"* led by Julie Hill.
 - c. Men's Ministry: Bible Study Group: Twice a month on Wednesdays @ 2:00 p.m. Our study is **"Engaging God's Word-Joshua & Judges"**. Meeting dates are January 7th & 21st.
 - d. Our next committee meeting will be on Monday, January 12th @ 1:00 p.m.

Happy New Year to all!

Pamela Poland

Faith Formation Ministries Associate

Patricia Smith & Milt Seapker

Faith Formation Ministries Elders



Birthdays & Anniversaries

JANUARY BIRTHDAYS:

- 13 Diana Hammer
- 19 Elaine Larkin
- 23 Ralph Franklin
- 24 Forrest Mitchell
- 25 Rich Larkin
- 26 Randy Broekema
- 27 David Boote
- 28 Linda Serfozo
- 29 Cindy Willis



BUDGET UPDATE

YTD As of 11/30/25

Actual Revenue:	\$ 191,343
Budgeted:	\$ 193,780
Actual Expenses:	\$ 192,946
Budgeted:	\$ 205,498

JANUARY

ANNIVERSARIES:

- 12 Linda & Kamran Sarkarati
- 17 Charles & Barbara Giel
- 25 Cheryl & Fred Mahan



please note

The deadline for input in the
February newsletter is **Jan. 23**



*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
Robyn Mills
Jennavon Brown
Jeana Lutz
Gabriella Plaza
Giovanna Curry

Pastor
Faith Formation Ministries Associate
Financial Secretary
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 January tip:



Did You Know? The Brevard Soil and Water Conservation District was established in 1950 to provide the administration of programs to conserve soil and improve water quality and quantity on private lands in Brevard County. The Board meets on the second Wednesday of each month at the Cocoa Agriculture center. For more information visit <https://www.brevardswcd.org>

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

Please contact the church office if you have questions, if you would like to speak to the pastor, or if we can assist you in any way.



Office phone number: 321-452-5689

Preschool phone number: 321-453-1640

Office extensions:

- 1001: Reception**
- 1002: Leslie Mitchell**
- 1003: Pam Poland**
- 1004: Rev. Greenawalt**
- 1005: Robyn Mills**

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