

MIPC PRESS

Merritt Island Presbyterian Church
March 2026



Pastor Christina's Corner

Dear Church Family,

As we move deeper into this new year of 2026, I find myself reflecting on the word “radical.” It comes from the Latin *radicalis*, meaning “root” or “ground.” This is the basis of our Lenten Theme. Therefore, the good news should bring us back to our roots.

Emulating Jesus and embodying his teachings should ground us in who God created us to be. Can we be “good news” people in a world too often burdened by bad news?

In a world that often feels shifting and uncertain, the Gospel calls us back to our roots: to be a people grounded in Christ’s love, mercy, and unending grace.

Over the last 60+ years, Merritt Island Presbyterian Church (MIPC) has served as a beacon of hope for our community. Whether we are gathering in the sanctuary or joining together through our online livestream, offering our facilities as a safe place for people recovering from addiction, or being fertile soil for children to learn, grow, and bloom, we remain a family united by one Spirit.

This Lent, let us remember that the good news really is good news. It is joyful—like fine wine saved for celebration. It grows like a mustard seed and smells like perfume poured from an alabaster jar. It tastes like bread passed endlessly through a hungry crowd. It sounds like laughter and feels like mercy. The good news is alive in the world.

This season, I invite you to "dig deep and drink freely" from the well of Christ’s love. Let us look forward with resilience, trusting that God is already at work in our future, just as He has been throughout our legacy.

I look forward to seeing how God continues to use each of you to make our community a brighter place.

Peace and blessings,

Pastor Christina

A View from the Pews (by Elsa)

Hello, my favorite humans! It's Elsa here. Since I spend most of my time observing the comings and goings at Merritt Island Presbyterian Church (MIPC), I thought it was high time I gave you a status report from my perspective—which, as you know, is usually from about six inches off the ground or high up on my cat tree.



The Sunday Morning Huddle

I love Sunday mornings. The energy changes the second the first cars pull into the lot at 600 S. Tropical Trail. I've noticed a few things lately:

- The Music: The choir was sounding excellent in December and January. They looked sharp in the choir loft, though I personally think my fur coat is a more stylish robe.
- The special guests from Special Gathering really made my heart purr.
- It's sad to see Jeana go and we pray the Lord keep her and that she feels his face shine upon her until we meet again. May she always know that she is loved.
- The Narthex box: There is a box in the Narthex that stays very busy. You humans are always dropping canned goods in there for the Central Brevard Sharing Center which is very kind of you.
- I love to check out what goodies are in the radio wagon for the preschool pantry. If only Pastor Christina didn't have me on such a special diet. Did you know I've done a great job losing weight? Last year I was 21 pounds and now I am just 15 pounds. I miss all the treats but I do get around better - one day I will catch one of those curly tail lizards that intrigue me out the office front door.
- The "5 Cents Per Meal" Jars: On the second Sunday of every month, I hear the clink-clink of coins hitting cans for hunger programs. It's a rhythmic sound I've grown to enjoy.

A View from the Pews (by Elsa)

What's Purring Lately

There is always something happening in the Activities Room. I've seen the Heavenly Handmade group meeting on alternating Wednesdays at 10:00 AM. They make these soft shawls and hats that look like the perfect place for a nap—though they tell me those are for local hospitals and outreach.

I also saw some excitement recently with our Family Promise hosting. It was wonderful to see our church become a "home" for families in transition; it reminded me that we're all just looking for a warm place to belong.

On Ash Wednesday the Activities Room was smelling scrumptious as we shared a soup dinner before our Taize Ash Wednesday service. I felt like I belonged with ashes on my head as well. Each day I feel the love of Christ while living here.

Elsa's Reminders

Starting in March — We will have game days (Joyful Thursdays) at noon every other Thursday in the activities room. Bring something to share if you are able to. Come hang out, eat some good things and laugh over some good games.

Stay Connected: If you missed a service, you can watch the Live Stream on Facebook.

I'll be here, likely tucked away in a quiet corner of Pastor Christina's or Leslie's office listening in or keeping an eye on things. If you see me, a gentle scratch behind the ears is always appreciated, but please—no flash photography during my nap time!

Stay paws-itive,

Elsa 
Chief Feline Officer

On the First Sunday of February, we celebrated the Sacrament of Communion.

The Second Sunday was Scout Sunday, a proud tradition here at MIPC honoring Troop/Pack 343 and our over 60-year relationship. (see photo below)

On Feb. 15 we were blessed to receive new members Craig & Julie Hill and Bobby Pflaumer to MIPC.

Lent began on Ash Wednesday, Feb. 18. Unfortunately our dear Pastor Christina came down with COVID that week, so we are grateful to John Shuford and Karlene Mohan for leading our beautiful Ash Wednesday service which included imposition of ashes. We're also grateful to Rev. Olivia Haney for leading worship the following Sunday.

That Sunday, Feb. 22, was a busy day here at MIPC! We welcomed the Island Gathering, a wonderful group of singers under the direction of Richard & Nancy Stimson. We installed our new Elders and honored our beloved vocalist Jeana Lutz on her final Sunday with us. We also had a special visit from our former organist Maryrose Beerman, who played a beautiful duet with Joyce Walker.

Lent continues throughout March, culminating in Palm Sunday on March 29. Look for special singers and instrumentalists throughout the month! Our Lenten series is called *Tell Me Something Good: Grounding Ourselves in the Good News This Lent*. This Sanctified Art series comes with daily thought-provoking Facebook posts that help us remember to let the good news ground us, and let that good news inspire us to take action in a world desperate to hear, see, and taste what is good. Be sure you are following our Facebook page!

Our grateful thanks to all who make our services flow, both musically and audio/visually! In addition to those mentioned above: Dale Greenawalt, James Neihouse, Leslie Neihouse, Brian Poland, Sarah Lawrence, and Jennavon Brown.



High Tea

Our High Tea on Feb. 8 was a rousing success! We are so grateful to Anne Cole and her sister Grace, along with Linda Whitten, Betsy Heenan, and the Deacons, for providing such a lovely event. The food, décor, fellowship, and of course the tea, were all wonderful.





As we move into March and look forward to the arrival of spring, I am pleased to share our latest updates and news with you in this month's newsletter.

We are excited about a busy March! We have St. Patrick's Day activities, Spring Break field trips, and many Easter activities including the MIPC Easter Egg Hunt!

I would like to thank everyone who donated to our "Sand for Smiles" campaign! Your contribution has helped us (mostly) fill the sandbox. The children are so excited to play in it every day.

This month we are excited to start our "Mulch Madness" campaign! We were visited by the Department of Children and Families for a routine inspection, and it was pointed out that our school age playground needs mulch in certain fall areas (among other corrections). These are requirements that we must meet but with limited funds right now, every donation helps.

Thank you in advance for any support you may provide. It truly does make a difference to all our little ones.

Respectfully,

Robyn Mills, Preschool Director

Mission/Outreach

Joyful Thursdays: Food, Fun & Games

A Weekday Lunch & Game Fellowship for All Ages

Come for the food. Stay for the fun. Leave with community.

Join us beginning on Thursday, March 4th for a relaxed, joy-filled time of lunch, board games, card games, puzzles, and fellowship. Bring a friend, bring a dish if you'd like — or simply bring yourself. Everyone is welcome.

 When: Thursdays (Bi-Monthly)

 Time: 12:00 PM – 2:00 PM

 Where: Activities Room

 Food: Potluck encouraged, but not required

 Activities: Board games, card games, puzzles, trivia, and more

 All Ages Welcome

Why Join Us?

- *Build friendships*
- *Enjoy intergenerational fun*
- *Relax and unwind midweek*
- *Invite neighbors and friends*
- *Strengthen our church community*

Come as you are. Stay as long as you like.

Let's grow in fellowship, joy, and connection.

Thanks

Dearest Church Family,

You are absolutely amazing. You have loved our family for many years, and have made a difference in our lives.

The Celebration of Life for Bob is just one example of how you have given of yourselves to us. Your desserts, ushering, hard work, and love have touched our hearts.

Please accept our thanks and love, and our gift as a memorial in Bob's name. God Bless you all "real good!"

Love, Sandy, Bob & Patti Hill



Dear MIPC:

I want to thank you for your support of Special Gathering (now Island Gathering) in 2025. I am thankful for our relationship with Merritt Island Presbyterian Church.

Blessings, Richard Stimson



Dear Friends at MIPC,

This past year, you have truly been the hands and feet of compassion in Central Brevard. Through your prayers, food drives, generous giving, and volunteer hours, our faith-based partners have shown up in powerful ways for neighbors you may never meet, but whose lives have been changed because you cared. Because of you, thousands of families who walked through the doors of the Sharing Center found not only groceries, but dignity, encouragement, and hope.

With gratitude,

David M. Brubaker, President/CEO, The Sharing Center of Central Brevard

Finance

STATEMENT OF ACCOUNTS January 2026 - Summary

	<u>January</u>	<u>YTD Budget</u>	<u>Annual Budget</u>
TOTAL Operating Revenue	52,235.44	56,239.00	665,566.00
TOTAL Expenses	71,514.65	74,057.00	730,774.77
TOTAL Net Operating Revenue	(19,279.21)	(17,818.00)	(65,208.77)
MIPC Operating Revenue	11,111.72	15,250.00	184,000.00
MIPC Expenses	18,223.29	19,839.47	231,243.77
MIPC Net Operating Revenue	(7,111.57)	(4,589.47)	(47,243.77)
Preschool Revenue	41,123.72	40,989.00	481,566.00
Preschool Expenses	53,291.36	54,217.53	499,531.00
Preschool Net Revenue	(12,167.64)	(13,228.53)	(17,965.00)

Both the church and the preschool reflected a loss for the first month of 2026. This was anticipated, as January is a “three-paycheck” month, meaning expenses are higher due to an additional payroll cycle. Historically, these early-year losses are offset in subsequent months that have only two pay periods. For planning purposes, the other three-paycheck month in 2026 will be July.

As you may know, the Session approved a deficit budget for this year. This primarily reflects the Finance Committee’s effort to project income more realistically based on recent giving trends. Because of this, you can expect periodic outreach regarding special offerings and designated collections throughout the year. These opportunities will allow members to direct their giving toward specific ministries, missions, and causes that are especially meaningful to them.

I am grateful for the opportunity to serve as your new Finance Committee Chair. If you have any questions, concerns, or interest in joining the Finance Committee (we meet once a month via Zoom), please feel free to reach out.

Gayle Allenback, Finance Elder

Deacons/Stephen Ministry

Our next Deacon meeting will be on March 9 in the Session Room.



WHAT IS STEPHEN MINISTRY?

Stephen Ministry is a way for congregations to provide high-quality care and outreach to hurting people in the congregation and community.

Stephen Ministers are congregation members who go through 50 hours of Christian care-giving training. Each Stephen Minister is then matched with a hurting person and meets with that person weekly to listen, care, pray, and encourage. Caring relationships last for as long as the need persists.

Stephen Ministers care for those dealing with grief, divorce, job loss, hospitalization, financial struggles, loneliness, convalescence, terminal illness, and other life difficulties.

Mother Teresa used to say, "Loneliness is the leprosy of the modern world." For a lot of people today, levels of care they might have once received through tight-knit communities are not available anymore. Stephen Ministers are attuned to those needs, stand in that gap, and provide quality Christian care.

MIPC has an active Stephen Ministry program. If you, or anyone you know, may be in need of a Stephen Minister, please call either our pastor or Craig Smoot, 321-223-4841 (MIPC referral coordinator).



Presbytery Events

C.O.L.E. LEADERSHIP 2026

SAVE THE DATE!

MARCH 21 | 9AM - 1PM

For all church officers, ministry staff & volunteers!

- ✓ **Inspiring Worship**
- ✓ **Engaging Workshops**
- ✓ **Delicious Lunch**

Grace Covenant Presbyterian Church

1655 Peel Ave. • Orlando, FL 32806

Cost: \$15 • Registration Opens Feb. 27

PROTECT THE FLOCK



Identifying & Responding to Domestic Abuse

Training event from Called to Peace Ministries
Hosted by Covenant Presbyterian Church

Domestic abuse is more common than we may think. This four-hour training aims to equip churches to respond with clarity, compassion, and wisdom.

Training to include:

- Definitions, dynamics, and impacts of abuse
- Supporting and advocating for victims
- Recognizing tactics used by abusers
- Discerning genuine repentance
- Avoiding common pitfalls
- Taking practical next steps



[Registration for
Protect the Flock](#)

WHAT TO EXPECT	
NO-COST 4 HOUR TRAINING	2.28.2026
Q&A SESSION	
COFFEE AND REFRESHMENTS	COVENANT PRESBYTERIAN CHURCH 1925 COUNTY RD 419, OVIEDO, FL 32766
	FROM 9:00 A.M. TO 2:00 P.M. 

More information about Called to Peace can be found at www.calledtopeace.org

Presbytery Events

1st Wednesday

SACK Lunch Conversation

(South Atlantic Community Knowledge)

A monthly zoom for sharing across the Synod!



Join, learn and share experience, resources, and best practices on a new topic each month.

We meet 12-1:30 pm Eastern Time.

March 4 - Racial Justice

April 1 - No Meeting (Holy Week)

To register: scan the QR Code or visit synodofsouthatlantic.org



Faith Formation Ministries



One Purpose Productions



We're seven weeks into our Spring semester and we have 16 fabulous youth joining us! We are excited to announce that we will be performing an all original stage play written by our wonderful and talented Performing Arts Director, Gabriella Plaza-Jeffery!



If you know anyone who might be interested in joining this amazing ministry for our Fall semester 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.

Like us on Facebook!

www.facebook.com/MIPPCPerformingArts

Faith Formation Ministries

COMING SOON



One Purpose Productions

Day of Worship & Pancake Breakfast

Sunday, April 19th @ 10:00 a.m.



**Come and join us for Family Worship
filled with the music and beautiful
voices of our youth followed by a
Pancake Breakfast!
All are welcome!**



Performing Arts Ministry Staff

Director: Gabriella Plaza-Jeffery

Faith Formation Ministries Associate: Pamela Poland

Assistant Director: Mike Smith

Music Director: Giovanna Curry

Technical Director: Brian Poland

mipconepurpose@gmail.com

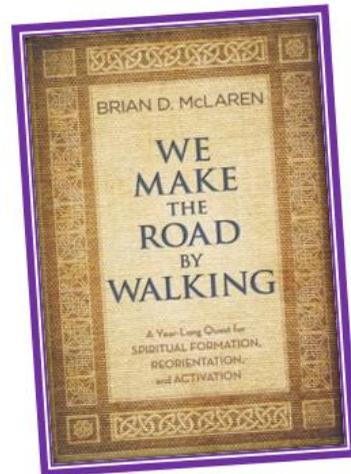
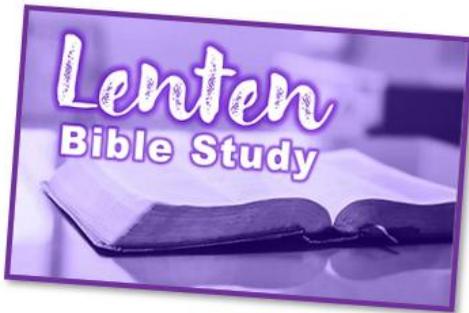
Like us on Facebook! www.facebook.com/MIPCPerformingArts

Faith Formation Ministries



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

Join us for a Lenten study with Milt Seapker & Dave Hertzler!



Join us for this study where the goal is spiritual formation, reorientation, and activation. The author's readings are multidimensional gems that shed light on the Bible, Jesus, faith, community, spirit, desire, unity and diversity, stewardship, God in the end, and much more. These readings will enlighten and inspire us to forge a fresh path of faith and social engagement, to toss out old lethargic ways and bad habits, and to walk the talk of the kingdom of God.

**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*

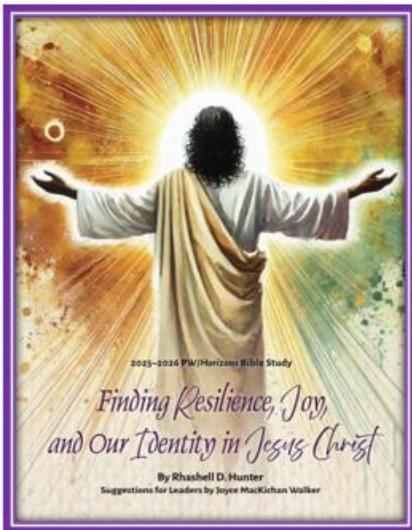
ROMANS 12:2



Women's Bible Study Group

Fabulous Fridays!

March 6th & 20th @ 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*



Please come and join us!

Easter Egg Stuffing Party



Tuesday, March 24th
@ 11:00 a.m.
Activities Room
Lunch Provided



We would appreciate any individually wrapped candy or small toy donations to stuff the eggs with. (No chocolate please)
Please R.S.V.P. Pam Poland at mipcffm@gmail.com or text 321-626-6224 so we know how much food to prepare.
There is a sign-up sheet available in the Narthex.

Faith Formation Ministries

Faith Formation Ministries & MIPC Preschool

Saturday, March 28th @ 10:00 a.m.



- * Wonderful Free Church Event! All are welcome!
- *Easter Egg Hunt *Games *The Easter Bunny

Can you help with? *Event set-up *Games
*Hiding eggs *Clean-up

If you would like to volunteer to help with our celebration, please contact Pam Poland at 321-626-6224

or mipcffm@gmail.com or Robyn Mills at
mipcpreschool@gmail.com.

There is a sign-up sheet available in the Narthex.

Faith Formation Ministries



Men's Bible Study Group

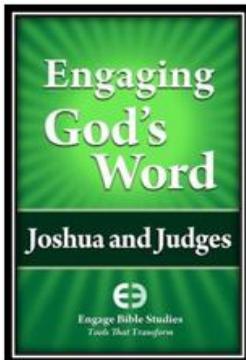
with Milt Seapker

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!

March 4th & 18th



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, February 9th @ 2:00 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 Lenten study "*We Make the Road by Walking*".
 - b. Women's Ministry: Fabulous Fridays Bible Study group: Every other Friday @ 2:00 p.m. in the Activities Room. Meeting dates are March 6th & 20th. 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 March 4th & 18th.
 - d. Special Event Dates:
 1. Egg Stuffing Party: Tuesday, March 24th @ 11:00 a.m.
 2. Easter Egg Hunt: Saturday, March 28th @ 10:00 a.m.
 3. Performing Arts Ministry-One Purpose Productions Day of Worship & Pancake Breakfast: Sunday, April 19th @ 10:00 a.m.
 4. Vacation Bible School: June 8th- June 12th, 9:00 a.m. - 12:00 p.m.
 5. Fall Festival: Saturday, October 24th @ 4:00 p.m.
 6. Live Nativity & Preschool Pageant: Friday, December 11th @ 4:30 p.m.
 - e. Our next committee meeting will be on Monday, March 9th @ 2:00 p.m.

Happy Saint Patrick's Day to all!

Pamela Poland

Faith Formation Ministries Associate

Milt Seapker

Faith Formation Ministries Elder

Blessed are all who fear the Lord, who walk
in his ways. You will eat the fruit of your labor,
blessings and prosperity will be yours.

Psalms 128:1-2



Happy Saint Patrick's Day

Birthdays & Anniversaries

MARCH BIRTHDAYS:

- 2 Chuck Downen
- 4 T.J. Mitchell
- 4 Maryrose Beerman
- 5 Kristin Fjeldheim
- 5 Stephanie Serfozo
- 17 Sandy Hill
- 17 Betsy Heenan
- 19 Richard Ficker
- 19 Carl Crockett, Jr.
- 22 Karlene Mohan
- 23 Jim McConnaha
- 27 Milt Seapker



BUDGET UPDATE

YTD As of 1/31/26

Actual Revenue:	\$11,112
Budgeted:	\$15,250
Actual Expenses:	\$18,223
Budgeted:	\$19,839



please note

MARCH ANNIVERSARIES:

- 1 John & Nancy Shuford
- 12 David & Stacy Boote
- 18 Janet & Robert Post
- 24 Tina & Gregg Kraver

The deadline for input in the April newsletter is March 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
Gabriella Plaza
Giovanna Curry

Pastor
Faith Formation Ministries Associate
Financial Secretary
Preschool Director
Substitute Organist/Pianist
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.



After a hard freeze, water may not be readily available to plants because the roots can be too cold to function properly. So the first priority is to water the plants well. Then, wait until the risk of future freezes has passed before pruning or removing dead material. Freeze-damaged leaves and stems often act as a natural protective layer. By the end of March, our risk of freezing temperatures will be greatly reduced and it will be safe to prune dead leaves then.

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