



THE END OF A CALL

BY CATHY ADAMS, IPC MEMBER

As co-chair of the 2015 Pastor Nominating Committee, Lee Walthall prayed that the third time would be the charm in recruiting Dr. William J. Carl III to be IPC's seventh Senior Pastor.

"God had already tried twice to get me to Birmingham," Dr. Carl explained of offers of the Birmingham pastorate in the mid-1990s and again in 2005.

Dr. Carl looks back over fifty years of God "dropping seeds" leading to an eventual acceptance of IPC's call. Relationships, going back to the 1960s when high schooler Jane Alexander met Felix Yarbrough and Carl Murray through her home church in Maryville, Tennessee and later with IPC Interim Pastor Jerry Shetler, who played a role in leading Dr. Carl to First Presbyterian Dallas in 1983. "As a minister, you know when you have the call, and you know when you have the end of that call," Dr. Carl says of his time at IPC.

A man whose resume fills five single spaced pages, from authoring books and a play to teaching and preaching from Oxford University to churches in 45 states and nearly as many foreign countries to



THE CARLS ON THEIR WEDDING DAY (LEFT) AND ON THE HOLIDAY HOUSE TOUR.

speaking a dozen languages, cannot be condensed into a few paragraphs. Of all of the accolades and accomplishments over the years, the central story of Dr. Carl's life is his more than 50-year love story with his wife, Jane.

When IPC's former interim pastor Dr. Morgan Roberts learned that Dr. Carl was coming to Independent, he chuckled, "You're going to like Bill. You're going to

CONTINUED ON PG 3

FEATURING

Living our faith during separation **PG 4**

FEATURING

The history of an ancient Easter service **PG 8-9**

LEARN

Creating a 2020 vision for PCUSA **PG 11**

MISSION

How to worship, learn and give online **PG 5**

UPCOMING events

See complete calendar online
including details and updates:
ipc-usa.org > [connect](#) > [calendar](#)

APRIL

- 5 Sun Palm Sunday service, 11 am ❖
- 9 Thu Maundy Thursday service, 6:30 pm ❖
- 10 Fri Good Friday service, 12 pm ❖
- 12 Sun Easter service, 11 am ❖
- 26 Sun Dr. Carl's Final Sunday at IPC ❖

MAY

- 3 Sun Evensong, 4 pm ❖ ♦
- 10 Sun Children's Fresh Air Farm Appeal ❖
- 17 Sun IPC Alumni Choir sing, 11 am worship
- 25 Mon Memorial Day. Offices closed. ❖ ♦

JUNE

- 1-4 M-Th Vacation Bible School at IPC ❖ ♦
- 1-5 M-F Bibles Times Marketplace at CFAF ❖ ♦
- 8 Mon Summer Learning Program at CFAF begins ♦
- 16 Sun PMUAB Sunday ❖

NOTE: All services are livestream only. Events could change. Please make sure to check online calendar and eUpdates for the latest news and events.

- ❖ Major Events
- ❖ Children/Youth
- ❖ Adults/Seniors
- ♦ Learning/Education
- ♦ Service Opportunity
- ♦ Music Ministry



DR. CARL AT A CHURCH EASTER EGG HUNT

CONSIDER THIS

Best is Yet to Come for IPC



As I write my last Consider This, I'm reflecting on the past five years and how our time together is coming to an abrupt end in a very challenging and disorienting way. When we first worshiped together on that glorious Easter morning in 2015, who would ever have guessed that our five years as pastor and people would come to a close in what seems a little like a medieval plague?

As you well know, we are trying hard to make the best of a bad situation by taking care of ourselves, our church and the most vulnerable members of our beloved congregation as well as the ones who need help the most in our

larger Birmingham community. The church building has been closed, meetings, bible studies and classes have been canceled. Staff have been sent home to work remotely, and worship is now experienced digitally with livestream. Guess you could call it virtual liturgy via cyber worship! Our pastors can't even visit the sick in hospitals, homes, Kirkwood or other retirement communities because of the fear of spreading or catching the virus. On top of that, this may be first time in our church's history that IPC members will not gather to celebrate Palm Sunday, Holy Week or Easter in person! It's all part of the "new normal." We are all just hunkered down in a way we never have been before, even after the awful events of 9/11.

I mentioned at the beginning of my first livestream sermon on March 15 that I started preaching 53 years ago in a tiny, little church in Coweta, Oklahoma, which is just outside Tulsa. A big Sunday there was ten people, and that was when the farmer brought his family of five and doubled the size of the normal congregation. I had just finished my freshman year in college when I preached in that church every week for a year. One Sunday there were only three people in the pews. That was back when we gave 30 minute sermons, so I dumped the whole load on them, 10 minutes a piece! Anyway, I've preached in lots of churches in this country and around the world between then and now. It seems poetically appropriate that I bookend my preaching career by sharing the Gospel to a handful of people in the pews, all made up entirely by our amazing choir. I do love "preaching to the choir!"

My last Sunday to preach before heading off to real retirement outside of Maryville, Tennessee (Jane's hometown by the way) will be on April 26. Then we will slip away and be gone for good. It will be odd not to see any of you in person except the other ministers, Jeff McLelland and the choir. But please know that Jane and I will hold you in our prayers and in our hearts for the rest of our lives.

Also, in the Providence of God, I do believe the best is yet to be for IPC!

All the Best,

Bill

William J. Carl II
Senior Pastor

love Jane.”

The call to a pastorate is always an outreach to partners, an understanding that Jane brought to their marriage in 1971. The Carls met in a Baptist Student Union cafeteria sharing rhubarb pie as freshmen at the University of Tulsa. Jane was dating a football player at the time, and music major Bill “scared the boyfriend off” by inviting Jane and her date to hear him sing the role of the drunken gardener in Mozart’s opera “The Marriage of Figaro.”

“Bill Carl has brought scholarship along with down home preaching to which you can relate,” sums up Lee.

Pondering retirement in the mountains of Tennessee with a man of prodigious energy, Jane is confident that Dr. Carl will not lack things to do. “He has a riding lawn mower, and I will tell him what to prune and which weeds to pull. He will have a computer to create and a piano to play, and he knows where the tennis courts are.”

Dr. Carl doesn’t plan a lot of retirement napping. “I’m going to play more tennis, write, turn my play into a musical, speak around the country, travel for fun and have my Saturdays back for watching college football games since I won’t be spending every weekend memorizing sermons!”

Please join us via livestream at 11 am on Sunday, April 26 for the Carls' final service.

PASTOR SEARCH UPDATE

The Interim Pastor Nominating Committee is working with the Human Resource Ministry Team, the Session, and the Presbytery Committee on Ministry to find the best interim as quickly as possible. Please keep the team members in your prayers: Anne Knox Averitt, Barry Delozier, Bryson Edmonds, Betsy Faucette, Penney Hartline, J. Long, Judy Matthews, and Robert Pless.

The Pastor Nominating Committee (PNC) has gained approval of IPC Ministry Information Form, which is now posted on the PCUSA’s Church Leadership Connection portal for candidates. Potential candidates can now provide their resumes and Pastor Information Forms directly through our own PNC webpage.

The PNC plans to provide updates as often as once a month but no less than once a quarter. Consider letting them know what you are looking for in a new Pastor and keep the the PNC members in your prayers: Teresa T. Pulliam, Beth Adams, Wendell Allen, Sandy Bean Jr., Brandon Demyan, Susan Dulin, Betsy Holloway, Robert Posey, George Taylor III, Oliver Williams III, and Emily Wykle.

More info: ipc-usa.org > [pastorsearch](#)

welcome MEMBERS



Laura James
New Member

The Window is a quarterly publication of Independent Presbyterian Church 3100 Highland Avenue South. The Window is published for church members and friends.



William, Claudia, William and Xan Powell
New Members



John and Liz Shults
New Members



“Together, with God’s help, we will lead this church into a second century of service to this community and to the glory of God’s kingdom throughout the world.”
~ Dr. William J. Carl III



DR. CARL TUTORING A STAIR STUDENT (TOP LEFT). DR. CARL AFTER WORSHIP (TOP RIGHT). THE CARLS READING TO VBS CAMPERS (BOTTOM LEFT), AND DR. CARL ON IPC'S FIRST MISSION TRIP TO RWANDA.

LIVING OUR FAITH DURING SEPARATION

Our church is more than a gathering place. It's a home often filled with the sound of laughter, music and praise. It's also a sanctuary from our often uncertain world. While our doors are temporarily closed for in-person worship, classes and groups, we are finding a new home in the digital world to continue gathering, worshipping, connecting and living our faith during separation. Some of our staff explains how.

DR. WILLIAM J. CARL III

"Worship at IPC has entered the cyber-digital world in a whole new way! Fortunately, we were already doing livestream services long before we cancelled in-person worships. It's wonderful having so many of you worship online with us! Photos of families huddled around laptops and TVs or members at the beach or in the mountains watching on smart phones and tablets are proof of how far and wide our services are reaching. Folks in New York, Virginia, Texas, the Netherlands, and South Africa are joining us regularly as we worship God together. Thanks to Jeff and the IPC Choir for helping us make joyful noise!"

DR. JEFF MCLELLAND

"Our singers have worked to continue the tradition of beautiful music and leadership for our congregation. This role as leaders is most needed in their lives, as well as the balm to their souls that music and community provides to them during this time of stress and isolation. In addition to bringing the worship service to our congregation each week, I am working to provide recorded segments of music from our sanctuary on YouTube that can be used during meditation and prayer. I miss all of you and am looking forward to seeing you in worship again soon."

REV. BRIAN LAYS

"Many schools offer online learning these days. In Christian Education, we are using this opportunity to begin to hone our skills at offering meaningful ways to continue to grow in faith despite being



SCREENSHOT OF SUNDAY 11 AM WORSHIP LIVESTREAM.

apart. Weekly Sunday School offerings will appear on YouTube prior to our streaming of the 11:00 worship service, offering ways for children, youth, and adults to participate in faith formation from the comfort of their homes. While we miss being able to make discussion a centerpiece of our learning, we are trying to creatively discover new ways to grow in faith as families or as individuals. These skills will remain useful even when we return to our classrooms!"

REV. SUSAN CLAYTON

"In Community Ministries, we seek to be the Body of Christ in the world in very 'in person' ways. We are meeting via Zoom to see how we can continue to help even as our food pantry is shut down, STAIR/LIFT-OFF are cancelled, and First Light shelters in place without volunteers.

We continue to meet food and crisis intervention needs through our Social Service Fund, and we need your financial contributions to that fund. Gift cards for food and payments of utilities, rent and

prescription medications will continue through the fund. Please give generously. Second, we are gathering volunteers to make sack lunches for the women and children at First Light. Please help as you are able! Please continue to pray for the most vulnerable in our community!"

REV. LUCY TURNER

"The Congregational Care staff, Deacons and Shepherd Teams are reaching out to members by phone, email and letters. Our initial efforts focused on members in their 70s, 80s and 90s—in particular those with health concerns and those living alone. Our Intercessory Prayer Team continues its work even though they cannot gather in the chapel for weekly prayer. Your prayer requests can be emailed Connie Logan at clogan@ipc-usa.org. Our knitters are making prayer shawls, which will be delivered as soon as it is safe. Anyone can help during this time with your prayers and a call to someone you look forward to being with again in worship or a small group."



WEEKLY EMAILS PROVIDE MEMBERS AND THEIR FAMILY, LIKE THE REDIKERS, WITH ACTIVITIES AND OPPORTUNITIES TO EXPLORE THEIR FAITH.

HOW DO I....

Navigating Worship, Ministry Online

We are continuing to find new ways to continue to minister to our members and our neighbors. Here's a look at all of the ways you can continue to stay involved in the life of IPC from home:

- Join us for 11 am online worship every Sunday. Service is livestreamed on YouTube and Facebook. You can even go back and watch the service later.
- Take a moment to pause and reflect on life and your faith through our daily video devotionals produced by staff. They are posted to YouTube and Facebook Monday through Friday at 10 am.
- Participate in a Sunday School class online. By 7 am every Sunday, we'll post a new adult class, new youth lesson and new children's offering. Look for links in the Sunday morning email or on our YouTube page.
- Make sure you are subscribed to IPC emails. Every Tuesday at 5 pm, separate emails go out to our youth and our families. On Thursdays at 5 pm, look for the congregational eUpdate. Now on Sunday mornings, we send out an email at 7 am with all the information you need for Sunday morning worship and class. It includes a special Lenten message from Rev. Turner. Not receiving the emails? Check your junk/spam folders then contact hgathings@ipc-usa.org.
- Worship bags for children are also available for download via the Sunday email.
- Engage with us on social media by "liking" or following us on Facebook, Instagram, Twitter and LinkedIn. Our handle is "ipcbirmingham."
- Subscribe to our YouTube page. Go to youtube.com/ipcbirmingham. Log into your account or create a new one. Click the "subscribe" button then the bell icon. You will want "all" selected to ensure you receive email alerts whenever new videos, including classes and devotionals, are posted.

OFFERINGS

Make an Online Gift

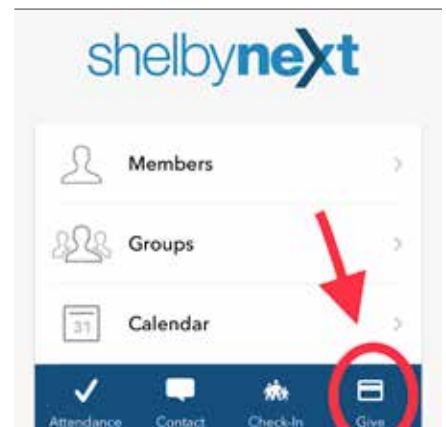
Please continue to remember to support the church. Even during this time when in person attendance is not possible, we do have basic necessary bills to cover. There are several ways to make a gift:

- Mail it to IPC, 3100 Highland Avenue South, Birmingham, AL 35213
- Online at ipc-usa.org. Simply click on the "give online" button on the homepage.
- Via the ShelbyNEXT membership app. The app can be downloaded through the App Store or Google Play. Login and select the "give" option at the bottom right of the screen.

As always, thank you for your gifts.
Denise W. Moore
Director of Finance



FIND ONLINE GIVING ON OUR WEBSITE
IPC-USA.ORG



GIVING ALSO AVAILABLE ON OUR
SHELBYNEXT MEMBERSHIP APP



A H.E.R.O. SCHOLARSHIP FUND RECIPIENT'S SELF-PORTRAIT

JOINING GOD IN THE WORLD

HERO PARTY

Ten years ago, the IPC Day School endeavored to further its mission by offering opportunities to children who otherwise may not be exposed to a quality preschool education. The Day School formed the H.E.R.O. Scholarship Fund to provide Hope, Excellence, Reliability, and Opportunity to children with limited financial resources. Through fundraising and donations, we have thankfully been able to provide 50 full year Day School scholarships through our IPC Day School HERO Fund. We are proud to help provide a firm, faith-based foundation for these children to start their learning careers and set them on a path for future success.

Due to COVID- 19 precautions, a new date for this bi-annual Day School H.E.R.O. Street Party with games in Rushton Park followed by a Roger Day concert in Highland Hall is to be announced. The Day School Fund relies on sponsorships and donations solicited during the street party campaign and other gifts throughout the year to continue to offer scholarships to deserving children. Look for the date in upcoming emails.

BRIEFS

Youth Sunday

Another school year is quickly coming to a close. The end always presents an opportunity to look back and celebrate the successes of our children and youth. Just as graduation is a time-honored tradition, so is Youth Sunday at IPC.

To uphold this tradition, Youth Sunday is going digital. Plans are underway to move a youth-led worship service online this April. We hope everyone will join us and prepare to be wowed! Look for more information in future eUpdates.

BTMP/VBS

Are your children and teens ready for a week of exploring their faith and making new friends? Register by May 1 for Bible Times Marketplace (BTMP) and Vacation Bible School.

BTMP campers (completed 1st- 6th grade) and tribal assistants (completed 7th-12th grade) will share in the "Stories of Jesus" at the Children's Fresh Air Farm June 1- 5.

VBS campers (completed 3K - 5K) will become "Knights of North Castle" on the quest for the King's armor on the ground floor of IPC June 1- 4.

Registration open to all online: ipc-usa.org > connect > sign up links

Staff Changes

On February 1, several staff changes were made. Rev. Lucy Turner is serving as the director of Congregational Ministries overseeing pastoral care. Rev. Brian Lays is now in Christian Education. He shares the duties of overseeing CE with Rev. David Seamon who will focus on our family ministries. IPC member and catechist Enid Athanas is now assisting with Catechesis part-time. Please welcome them to their new roles here at IPC.

**SAVE THE
dates**

- July 3** Independence Day. Church offices closed.
- July 12- 18** Montreat Youth Retreat, Montreat, NC
- July 17** Summer Learning Program ends
- July 27- 31** Catechesis Level I training

PCUSA PRAYER

A Word of Prayer for Uncertain Times

Eternal God, sustainer, provider, God of all wisdom and knowledge,
Our spirits are weary, our faith quivers, our minds get clouded by news of sickness and death.

You know our thoughts before we express them, even the fears we dismiss, you know them.

We cannot hide our feelings and worries from you.

So, as we are, we come to You, O God, asking for wisdom, for clear minds and open hearts, for calm and assurance that, through the crisis, You are present.

Knowing that "the Spirit helps us in our weakness; for we do not know how to pray as we ought, but that very Spirit intercedes with sighs too deep for words,"

We ask for wisdom and protection...

For medical personnel, scientists, doctors, nurses, and laboratory technicians.

For those around the world considering current and other health crises.

For health care personnel and caregivers.

We lift them up to You. Bendíceles con sabiduría; protégeles de todo mal.

We ask for clear minds and open hearts as people navigate daily lives...

As closures, cancellations, and quarantines are enacted.

As families gather in their homes, some caring for those who are sick.

As we encounter neighbors in our neighborhoods, stores, and pharmacies.

Bendícenos con paciencia y creatividad, amor y entendimiento.

We pray for the sick, those who have lost or are at risk of losing jobs in the midst of this crisis, for those whose health or social services will be or have been affected, for those suffering the direct effects of this virus, locally and around the world.

Illumine us, Holy Spirit. Show us in what ways we can be of help as we care for self and others.

Iluminanos para saber cómo ayudar.

We ask for calm, assurance, and strength.

May we all remember that, in the midst of any crisis,

Your grace reaches us,

Your hope enlightens us,

And Your love surrounds us all.

En medio de la crisis,

tu gracia nos alcanza,

tu esperanza nos ilumina,

y tu amor nos rodea.

Amén.

Vilmarie Cintrón-Olivieri

The Rev. Cindy Kohlmann

Co-Moderators, 223rd GA



PRESBYTERY

PMUAB Sunday

One gift can change the lives of many local families. Now, more than ever, your gift is needed, especially as more people experience hardships related to COVID-19 and reach out to IPC Social Services for assistance with food, rent, utilities, medicine and other necessities.

Help our STAIR families keep roofs over their heads and lights and other utilities turned on. Ensure no resident is asked to leave Kirkwood by the River because they have outlived their financial means. Give low-income students in Jefferson, Tuscaloosa, Bibb and Shelby Counties the chance to experience and learn about nature at Living River. Your gift to the Presbytery Ministries United Appeal of Birmingham (PMUAB) provides funding for those ministries through the Kirkwood by the River Life Care Fund, the Living River Power of the Outdoors Scholarship Fund and the IPC Social Services Fund.

Learn more about PMUAB and how you can help during worship on Sunday, June 16.



EASTER VIGIL LITURGY DEEPENS FAITH

BY DONNA FRISCHKNECHT JACKSON, EDITOR OF PRESBYTERIANS TODAY

The sun was setting as cars pulled into the church parking lot. I walked toward the glowing embers that were being coaxed into flames in a rusty fire pit outside the church doors. It was a welcome sight on a chilly spring night.

As much as I wanted to stay close to the fire's warmth, as more people gathered, I edged to the back of the circle that was forming. I felt awkward and shy. I was not a member of the church. I was a stranger to them as they were to me. But the biggest "stranger" of all was the worship service itself at this Episcopal church. I was a Presbyterian at a Paschal Vigil, and I had no idea what to expect.

The Paschal Vigil, also known as the Easter Vigil or the Great Vigil of Easter, is an ancient liturgy celebrated on the night before Easter Sunday. Initially, it started in the middle of the night, ending with the break of dawn on Sunday. It was also a service in the early church when new Christians were welcomed into the faith through the waters of baptism followed by the celebration of the Eucharist.

And for centuries to come, the vigil has been a time for Christians to celebrate the Resurrection with the rising of a new day, when the darkness of night fills with the light of hope.

I stood on the outer edge of the circle, watching the priest light the Christ candle from the flames that were dancing in the breeze. From that light, the candles we held were lit. The priest sang words of praise, and after their Lenten break, the "Alleluias" returned and were sung. They never sounded so beautiful as they did that night in the dark, cold air. I found myself being drawn into the mystery of the Saturday before Easter that I had never known, until I became an adult, was called "Holy Saturday."

When I was growing up, the Saturday before Easter was anything but holy. It was a day to dye Easter eggs and make last-minute trips to the store for the holiday meal we would have after Easter Sunday



WEST PLANO PRESBYTERIAN CHURCH'S EASTER VIGIL BEGINS OUTSIDE AT SUNDOWN WITH THE LIGHTING OF A BONFIRE AND THE PASCHAL CANDLE.



THOSE ATTENDING THE EASTER VIGIL GATHER IN THE CHURCH LIBRARY TO LISTEN, PRAY AND REFLECT ON GOD'S CREATION AND GOD'S LOVE FOR THE WORLD.

worship.

Yet even as a child I wondered what happened in between Good Friday's crucifixion and Easter morning's shouts of "He is risen!" What was this space Saturday was offering to the world? A space that was inviting us to ponder death and grieve losses — to be comfortable sitting with the uncomfortable — all with the knowledge that tomorrow joy would return, as promised.

The Easter Vigil was answering my

childhood questions. Saturday was a holy space where I needed to be reminded of the depths of God's love that was shown on the cross. I needed to be on the journey from dark to light with others. I needed to remember that the God of creation is always redeeming us, washing us anew in the waters of baptism, showering us with light, and inviting us to sit at the table and break bread together.

The vigil moved from outdoors to inside the church. As the front doors opened, I noticed that it was completely dark inside. I was also hit with the overwhelming smell of Easter lilies and hyacinths. I inhaled deeply. I thought about the dank tomb where Jesus' body lay and wondered if there was also the scent of hope rather than the stench of death. I wondered, too, about the times in my dank tomb, no matter what situation brought me there, when I had forgotten to smell the roses; that is, awaken my senses to the new life around me.

As the service progressed to another room and the lights slowly came on, becoming brighter with each song, prayer and reading, I discovered I was no longer a stranger in the crowd. And this strange service known as the Easter Vigil became my new best friend, one that has deepened for me what it means to live out the promise of the Resurrection.

As a minister in the PC(USA), I have always wanted to hold an Easter Vigil. admit, though, it has been a hard sale. It has been my experience that it is difficult to get people to return after Palm Sunday for Maundy Thursday and Good Friday. I have heard the comments from many a worship committee that attending church two nights in a row is asking a lot of people, and oftentimes I would have to condense the liturgy of the Last Supper and Jesus' last words from the cross into one service.

Would I, could I, dare ask for a third night of worship for an Easter Vigil?

THREE DAYS OF WORSHIP

The Rev. Dr. David B. Batchelder of West Plano Presbyterian Church in Plano, Texas, has dared and continues to do so during Holy Week, asking his congregation to make the commitment to not only experience an Easter Vigil, but to participate in an ancient liturgy known as the "Triduum."

Triduum, Latin for the Great Three Days, celebrates the mystery of Christ's dying and rising spread out over three days beginning at sundown on Maundy Thursday. The liturgy continues through Good Friday and Holy Saturday, concluding at sundown at the end of Easter day.

"It may seem that I've gotten my math wrong in adding up the days. Not so," Batchelder said, explaining that Triduum is calculated according to the Genesis creation story: "and there was evening and there was morning."

"Liturgical time follows the Jewish calculation of the 24-hour day moving from sunset to sunset rather than midnight to midnight," he said.

For Batchelder, Triduum has been an important spiritual practice for him, but he realizes it is not something Presbyterians are accustomed to and it takes easing into and perhaps adapting the liturgy to work with where a congregation is.

"To bring the liturgy of the Great Three Days to Presbyterian congregations not familiar with this tradition involves some adaptation," Batchelder said, noting that most congregations will have a Maundy Thursday service of some kind, focusing on Jesus' last meal with his disciples. Some congregations, too, will have their own version of a Good Friday service, perhaps an ecumenical gathering to hear the last

words of Jesus spoken from the cross or to experience a Tenebrae service, in which candles are extinguished as the service progresses.

"But rare is the Presbyterian congregation that has an after-sundown Saturday Easter (Paschal) Vigil," Batchelder said.

Over the years, Batchelder has incorporated more sensory and tactile elements to the Holy Week services, to bring the ancient liturgy to life and deepen the meaning of the Easter message.

Elements such as foot washing and stripping the chancel, as they are offered in the 2018 Book of Common Worship, have been introduced to his congregation with much success.

For many years, Deb Vermie, a member of West Plano Presbyterian Church, "resisted" participating in the foot washing. Last year, though, she was surprised by the reading she heard from John 13, instructing "me to do as Jesus did."

"I felt moved to action by the Spirit as I removed my shoes and took a towel in my hands," Vermie said.

Vermie's response is exactly what Batchelder hopes will happen to worshipers participating in Triduum.

"The three days of Triduum intend to engage worshipers as active participants in the meaning of Christ's self-giving. In Triduum, we do not watch something performed by others, like a Last Supper tableau or readings at a Tenebrae. We participate in the mystery," he said.

That participation has also opened the doors to West Plano Presbyterian's Holy Week worship being more intergenerational.

"The Easter Vigil service with the location changes inside and outside the church and moving from room to room keep your senses alert," said Eric Sughrue, a parent of three young girls. "The mixture of participation and silence allows space for everyone, especially the children, to learn and have reverence for this special service and time of year."

Sughrue's 8-year-old daughter, Lucy, especially likes participating in Maundy Thursday worship.

"Washing other people's feet makes me happy," she said.

Still, Triduum is not a "convenient" liturgy, Batchelder says.

"It requires commitment from a congregation — a commitment to attend worship on consecutive nights, with each night's service lasting more than an hour," he said.

And that can be difficult.

"Sometimes the Triduum coincides with spring break, when the kids are out of school. Other times it falls on the sacred weekend of NCAA basketball's Final Four. And always, there are many things for families to do getting ready for hosting family and friends on a weekend that also functions as a cultural holiday," Batchelder said.

In spite of obstacles, Batchelder has found in his more than 30 years of celebrating Triduum liturgy that "I, and the people I serve, need what Triduum offers."

"We need to be brought from death to life again and again. We need to be renewed in the meaning of our baptisms, so that we can wisely and courageously fulfill our calling in a broken and fearful world," he said, adding, "Triduum is central to our ongoing formation in faith. And we should observe it and be grateful that each year the Lenten wilderness journey leading to the Easter fire comes just in time in our lives."



THE EASTER VIGIL CULMINATES IN THE CELEBRATION OF THE EUCHARIST, WHERE THE STAR OF THE LORD'S SUPPER IS THE 7-POUND LOAF OF CHALLAH BREAD MADE ESPECIALLY FOR THE SERVICE, SAYS THE REV. DR. DAVID BATCHELDER, PICTURED HERE. PHOTOS: WEST PLANO PRESBYTERIAN CHURCH

ONE GREAT HOUR OF SHARING

BY PAT COLE, PRESBYTERIAN NEWS SERVICE

Who could forget the devastation after Hurricane Maria swept across Puerto Rico in 2017? Certainly not Mimita Nieves. Eighteen months later she was still living without electricity.

Mimita did the best she could. She got along on canned food and powdered milk, and fresh vegetables when she could get them. She cooked on a small propane stove and lit her home with solar lights that she charged during the day. A friend lent her a battery-powered radio that served as her main source of information.

The hurricane wrecked the electrical grid across Puerto Rico. Complicating things for Mimita, the storm also destroyed her home's electrical wiring. Mimita lives on Vieques, a small island eight miles east of the Puerto Rico mainland. No highway connects the mainland and Vieques, so most transportation for both people and cargo to the island is via ferry boat or airplane. Due to its lack of accessibility, Vieques lagged behind in the restoration of housing, infrastructure and basic services.

Her situation did not change until the day Presbyterian volunteers knocked on her door. The volunteers replaced her electrical system with one much safer and more durable, built her a new fence and hauled away storm debris that had been in her yard for months. One Great Hour of Sharing gifts provided the materials they used to make the repairs. As a senior citizen with limited income, Mimita never would have been able to afford a contractor to do the work and feels blessed for the help she received.

When her lights came on, Nieves was overcome with gratitude for Presbyterians. "I cried," she says. "I got down on my knees and I cried."

Mimita's house also got a much-needed roof installed by an organization called Hope Builders, an organization which will now be able to rebuild more roofs in Vieques using gifts to One Great Hour of Sharing.

One Great Hour of Sharing gifts are also



MIMITA NIEVES (ABOVE) SHOWING PRESBYTERIAN VOLUNTEER THE DAMAGE TO HER HOME. THE VOLUNTEERS HELPED HER CLEAN AND MAKE NECESSARY REPAIRS. PHOTOS: PRESBYTERIAN NEWS SERVICE

are at work in impoverished communities in San Juan, Puerto Rico's capital and largest city, helping organizations like the G-8, a community-based nonprofit group. The G-8, has rebuilt more than 100 roofs in eight communities near the Martín Peña Channel.

A sister organization to the G-8, the Martín Peña Channel Land Trust, has taken even more steps to protect the residents. The land trust acquired the property and residents are applying for surface-rights deeds to their houses.

The programs supported by One Great

Hour of Sharing—Presbyterian Disaster Assistance, Self-Development of People and the Presbyterian Hunger Program—unite us in caring for the hungry, the weak and the vulnerable. Together, we work to become as Isaiah said, "repairers of the breach, restorers of streets to live in"—for as we always say, if we all do a little, it adds up to a lot.

IPC will take a special offering for One Great Hour of Sharing on Sunday, April 5.

SPELLING OUT A VISION FOR PC(USA)

BY MIKE FERGUSON, PRESBYTERIAN NEWS SERVICE

The Vision 2020 Team has completed its Guiding Statement and has a handful of other recommendations in draft language for the 224th General Assembly to consider when it meets in Baltimore June 20-27.

Special committees and commissions had until Friday to send their reports to the General Assembly in order to meet the 120-day deadline.

Using the denomination's acronym to form its Guiding Statement, God calls the Presbyterian Church (U.S.A.), according to the Vision 2020 Team, to be:

- Presbyterians are called to confess their sins and ask the Holy Spirit to guide them. "By grace Christ binds us together," the statement reads, "cleanses us in the waters of baptism, nourishes us at the Lord's table and sends us out to share the Good News."
- "Reformed and always being reformed, we follow the Holy Spirit in new and imaginative ways to places we have not yet been," the statement says. "We work for God's justice and peace for all people in every land, walking with the vulnerable, the marginalized and the abused."
- "Against forces that seek to divide, Christ compels us to bear witness to a love that connects communities across great differences," according to the statement. "We approach others in a spirit of openness and trust as we follow Jesus Christ in respecting the freedom of other religions, worldviews and traditions."
- Gratefully following the One who washed the disciples' feet, we list to our neighbors, working to meet their practical needs," the document states. "The Holy Spirit pushes us beyond the familiar, meeting people where they are as we share Christ's transformative love."
- "We are people of the resurrection," the document states. "Though death surrounds us, we are not afraid because we follow the One who was raised



VISION 2020

from the tomb. In the sure and certain hope of resurrection, we joyfully testify that the church and its members are called to follow Christ's model by risking all, even life itself, for the sake of the Gospel."

The team also produced an invitation for Presbyterians to engage with the Guiding Statement. Included are questions the team posed during listening sessions it held, including "What does your church or organization or the PC(USA) need to let go of? Hold on to?" "What breaks God's heart in your community?" "Where do you encounter God's joy, love and grace in your community?"

Also included in the resources are words and music to "This is Who We Are," the winner of a contest to help illustrate the vision musically. Tracy Keenan wrote the lyrics and, together with Aisha Brooks-Lytle, composed the music.

The 2020 Vision Team has three additional recommendations for consideration by the upcoming assembly:

- Commend the Guiding Statement and resources to the six agencies of the PC(USA) as well as mid councils, seminaries, congregations

and individuals for study, reflection and conversation. It also asks commissioners to the 224th General Assembly to require the Presbyterian Publishing Corporation to develop curriculum with a focus on the Guiding Statement.

- That the moderator(s) of the upcoming assembly appoint an implementation team to introduce the Guiding Statement and "integrate it into the life of the denomination" and "proclaim and celebrate the transformative stories of those who engage intentionally with this Guiding Statement."
- That the 227th General Assembly (2026) consider forming a 2030 Vision Team to explore a new Guiding Statement "that will help us name and claim our denominational identity as we seek to follow the Spirit into the future decade."



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RETURN SERVICE REQUESTED

Holy Week

APRIL 5-12, 2020

JOURNEY CONTINUES WALK WITH JESUS

Sunday, April 5 • 11 a.m. • Livestream

**Palm Sunday
One Great Hour of Sharing**

Offering will be collected online to assist those affected by natural disaster, hunger or in need of medical care through Presbyterian Disaster Assistance, Self-Development of People and the Presbyterian Hunger Program.

Thursday, April 9 • 6:30 p.m. • Livestream

Maundy Thursday

Join us as we commemorate Jesus' Last Supper with his disciples and remember his mandate to love one another.

Friday, April 10 • 12 p.m. • Livestream

Good Friday

This somber service provides a space for us to remember Jesus' crucifixion and his sacrifice to save us.

Sunday, April 12 • 11 a.m. • Livestream

Easter

Christ the Lord is risen! Celebrate the good news with us.

All worship services will be livestreamed on IPC's YouTube Channel and on IPC's Facebook page. You can find IPC on YouTube and social media @ipcbirmingham.

Details: ipc-usa.org > worship > services