

Montreat Presbyterian Church USA

Home Worship Service

Second Sunday of Easter
April 19, 2020



VIVIAN HARE

*"The Christian [calling] is...the call
to invite all into a new community
where justice is done
and where freedom and love flourish,
a community that is grounded in Christ,
empowered by the Spirit,
and destined for participation
in the eternal communion of the triune God."*

- Daniel Migliore

Gathering Music

"This Easter Celebration"
**(Carolyn Winfrey Gillette, 2020/
Samuel Sebastian Wesley, 1864)**
Vivian Hare, pianist

This Easter celebration
is not like ones we've known.
We pray in isolation,
we sing the hymns alone.
We're distant from our neighbors--
from worship leaders, too.
No flowers grace the chancel
to set a festive mood.

No gathered choirs are singing;
no banners lead the way.
O God of love and promise,
where's joy this Easter Day?
With sanctuaries empty,
may homes become the place
we ponder resurrection
and celebrate your grace.

Our joy won't come from worship
that's in a crowded room
but from the news of women
who saw the empty tomb.
Our joy comes from disciples
who ran with haste to see--
who heard that Christ is risen,
and then, by grace, believed.

In all the grief and suffering,
may we remember well:
Christ suffered crucifixion
and faced the powers of hell.

Each Easter bears the promise:
Christ rose that glorious day!
Now nothing in creation
can keep your love away.

We thank you that on Easter,
your church is blessed to be
a scattered, faithful body
that's doing ministry.
In homes and in the places
of help and healing, too,
we live the Easter message
by gladly serving you.

Tune: Samuel Sebastian Wesley, 1864

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Email: carolynshymns@gmail.com New Hymns: www.carolynshymns.com

Churches are given permission for free use of this hymn, including in live streaming and posting it online. Drop me an email if you want this new hymn in MS Word and/or a PDF with music: carolynshymns@gmail.com

I am grateful to people for sharing this new hymn with others.

Introit

"Come, Christians, Join to Sing"
**(Christian Henry Bateman, 1843/
Spanish melody arr. Carr, 1824;
harmony David Evans, 1927)**
Montreat Presbyterian Church Choir

Come, Christians, join to sing:

Alleluia! Amen!

Loud praise to Christ our King:

Alleluia! Amen!

Let all, with heart and voice,
before God's throne rejoice;
praise is God's gracious choice:

Alleluia! Amen!

Call to Worship

I Peter 1:3-9

Blessed be the God of our Savior, Jesus Christ!

**God has given us a new birth
in the living hope of the resurrection.**

God has given us an inheritance
that is imperishable and unfading.

**In this we rejoice,
even when we suffer trials.**

For although we have not seen Jesus, we love him;
and although we have not seen him, we believe in him.

**For the outcome of our faith
is the salvation of our souls.**

Opening Hymn

{Click on the title for audio}

["Christ the Lord Is Risen Today"](#)

**(Charles Wesley, 1739/
Robert Williams, 1817)**

Vivian Hare, organist

"Christ the Lord is risen today!" Alleluia!
All creation, join to say: Alleluia!
Raise your joys and triumphs high, Alleluia!
Sing, O heavens, and earth reply, Alleluia!

Love's redeeming work is done, Alleluia!
Fought the fight, the battle won, Alleluia!
Death in vain forbids him rise, Alleluia!
Christ has opened paradise. Alleluia!

Lives again our glorious King, Alleluia!
Where, O death, is now your sting? Alleluia!
Jesus died, our souls to save, Alleluia!
Where your victory, O grave? Alleluia!

Hail the Lord of earth and heaven! Alleluia!
Praise to you by both be given, Alleluia!
Every knee to you shall bow, Alleluia!
Risen Christ, triumphant now. Alleluia!

Words and Music: Public Domain

Prayer of Confession

God, you have made known to us the ways of life.
Yet, too often, we put other things above you
and turn away from the ways of life
and toward the ways of death.

Forgive us, we pray,
and guide us back into your presence,
that we may know the fullness of joy.

Resurrecting God,
in a doubting world,
keep us in faith
that we may have life.

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Assurance of Pardon

The saying is sure, and worthy of full acceptance:
that Christ Jesus came into the world to save sinners.

In Jesus Christ, we are reconciled to God.
May our faith be strengthened
by the Holy Spirit,
that we may have life in Christ's name.
Amen.

Music Especially for Children

"Jesus Bids Us Shine"
(Warner/Excell)
Vivian Hare

Jesus bids us shine with a clear, pure light
like a little candle burning in the night.
In this world of darkness, we must shine,
you in your small corner,
and I in mine.

Text and Music: Public Domain

Gospel Reading

***To see and hear the reading
of the scripture passage,
please [click here](#).***

John 20:19-31

When it was evening on that day, the first day of the week, and the doors of the house where the disciples had met were locked for fear

of the Jews, Jesus came and stood among them and said, "Peace be with you."

After he said this, he showed them his hands and his side.

Then the disciples rejoiced when they saw the Lord.

Jesus said to them again, "Peace be with you. As the Father has sent me, so I send you." When he had said this, he breathed on them and said to them, "Receive the Holy Spirit. If you forgive the sins of any, they are forgiven them; if you retain the sins of any, they are retained."

But Thomas (who was called the Twin), one of the twelve, was not with them when Jesus came. So the other disciples told him, "We have seen the Lord." But he said to them, "Unless I see the mark of the nails in his hands, and put my finger in the mark of the nails and my hand in his side, I will not believe."

A week later his disciples were again in the house, and Thomas was with them.

Although the doors were shut, Jesus came and stood among them and said, "Peace be with you."

Then he said to Thomas, "Put your finger here and see my hands. Reach out your hand and put it in my side. Do not doubt but believe."

Thomas answered him, "My Lord and my God!"

Jesus said to him, "Have you believed because you have seen me? Blessed are those who have not seen and yet have come to believe."

Now Jesus did many other signs in the presence of his disciples, which are not written in this book. But these are written so that you may come to believe that Jesus is the Messiah, the Son of God, and that through believing you may have life in his name.

Anthem

**{Clicking on the title below
will take you to another page for the anthem.}**

["A Gaelic Blessing"](#)

(John Rutter, 1978)

Libera

Deep peace of the running wave to you.

Deep peace of the flowing air to you.

Deep peace of the quiet earth to you.

Deep peace of the shining stars to you.

Deep peace of the gentle night to you.

Moon and stars pour their healing light on you.

Deep peace of Christ the light of the world to you.

Deep peace of Christ to you.

A Gaelic Blessing

text: John Rutter © 1978, Hinshaw Music, Inc.

music John Rutter © 1978 GIA/Royal School of Church

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Sermon



"JESUS SHOWS HIMSELF TO THOMAS" BY ROWAN AND IRENE LECOMPTE
RESURRECTION CHAPEL, NATIONAL CATHEDRAL, WASHINGTON, D.C.

Jesus Comes In (John 20:19-31)

***To find an audio recording of this sermon
as delivered from the pastor's study at home,
[click here.](#)***

For some of us these days, there is the blessed privilege of the possibility of getting out of our home confinement, just for a little bit, for a walk or to take just a little bit of more or less private, more or less individual exercise.

At those times, for those who have that privilege, we may get a passing glimpse of friendly neighbors, might even stop for an elongated moment to greet our acquaintances. And it feels like taking a long drink of cool water in the middle of an arid desert.

We are making the sacrifice of keeping to our homes to do our part for the health and safety of our loved ones and our communities and

our country and the whole world.

One of the losses where we really feel that sacrifice is the absence of all of those daily encounters that those of us with the privilege of mobility once, not very long ago, took for granted:

planned or random encounters between friends, neighbors, co-workers, extended family, people with whom we share sports teams or music preferences or common interests, even strangers.

We humans miss the interactions with all kinds of different people.

Something about it feels crucial, even for the introverts-and I am one-who may really enjoy being around other people, may thrive on being gregarious or simply being part of a group, or even just on the fringes of a conversation, but can only recharge their batteries by spending time alone.

It's the deep value of relationships, whether lifelong bonds or a momentary glance in the post office.

These interactions not only tell us we are part of one kind of community or another; they actually make us communities: the community of friends; the community of family; the community of a neighborhood; the community of people who have been through things together; the community of people who live around here and need to go get groceries the way the Samaritan woman needed to go to the well to get water.

And if those opportunities to bask in or even just cling to community are not there, specifically in terms of being in the physical presence of others, we miss it.

Asheville's own Thomas Wolfe, the young author of *Look Homeward, Angel* in the early part of the 20th century, had had a devastating falling out with his editor and sometime best friend, Maxwell Perkins.

As Thomas Wolfe, only in his late 30s, lay on what turned out to be his deathbed, he wrote a letter to his old friend who had done so much to help him become not just a successful writer but a national

sensation, in which Thomas Wolfe said to Max,

"I shall always think of you and feel about you the way it was that Fourth of July day three years ago when you met me at the boat, and we went out on the cafe on the river and had a drink and later went on top of the tall building, and all the strangeness and the glory and the power of life and of the city was below."

No one knows exactly who the author was of the one-chapter, 15-verse book of the Bible called III John, written around the year 100, about 70 years after the crucifixion of Jesus. Unusually for a New Testament epistle, it's not written from an apostle to a church community, but from one individual in the Church to another.

After the first line that essentially says, "Dear beloved Gaius, whom I love in truth," the elder starts off by saying, "I pray that all may go well with you, and that you may be in good health, just as it is well with your soul."

Just a few verses later, the elder says, "I have much to write to you, but I would rather not write with pen and ink; instead I hope to see you soon, and we will talk together face to face" (III John 13-14).

I had always enjoyed that as a sign-off, but until the last several weeks, I had never really registered the power of that simple wish, that longing for a future time when instead of using some medium of communication, friend can see, and be near, and talk directly, with friend.

I can't help but think of Tennyson's longing poem, "Crossing the Bar," written near the end of his life:

"Twilight, and evening bell,
and after that, the dark,
but may there be no sadness of farewell when I embark;
For tho' from out our bourne of time and place,
the flood may bear me far,
I hope to see my Pilot face to face
when I have crossed the bar."

I hope to see my Pilot face to face.

Maybe part of our longing to be able to interact freely in person again, without protective masks, is an indication that whether we're conscious of it or not, our minds and hearts really do recognize, in each other's faces, the image of God.

A few months ago, I mentioned something about the Kingston Trio in a sermon, and two days later we learned that, coincidentally, that same Sunday, Bob Shane, the last original member of the Trio, had died.

They had sprung onto the national scene in 1957 and immediately became a cultural phenomenon; many of us who have an acoustic guitar in the house have it because the Trio's success helped to make it a household instrument.

Inevitably, after a few years of megastardom, the pressures of spending all day every day with each other exacerbated tensions between personalities, and a rift that never fully healed opened up between Dave Guard and the other two. They were lifelong friends who didn't want to have much to do with each other, but there was always a unique bond that never faded among those three people, and belonged *only* to those three people.

Thirty years later, Dave Guard was living quietly in New Hampshire and losing a battle to a disease from which he would not recover, and Bob Shane wrote him one last letter. At the very end, after all they had been through, and the much longer time of not seeing and a lot of time not even particularly liking each other very much, he signed off with two words over his signature:

"Brothers, OK?"

What does it take to keep us away from each other?

And how much more do we appreciate each other's presence when we cannot have it?

I had grandparents, my Mom's parents, who for most of my life lived in Louisville. Growing up, I spent a lot of time there with them during summers, and then I went to college not too far from there, so

during those four years I went to stay with them regularly, even just for weekends.

Sometime later, my grandfather died, and I tried to keep in touch with my grandmother, but we were hundreds of miles away and starting a family of our own, and she could barely hear you if you stood two feet in front of her and yelled at the top of your lungs, let alone trying to negotiate a phone call.

I got to the point that I felt so funny shouting at her that her hair looked nice or to please pass the potatoes that sometimes I'd finish barking out a sentence and shout, "Over!"

So, phone calls never worked, and our lives carried on, and I tried to see her as much as possible but it wasn't much, and at one point when she was in her late 90s, our family stopped by where she was living and we had about a half hour visit, looked at some pictures together; I think she was in bed the whole time.

Toward the end of our time together, looking at me as if she knew something that she knew I couldn't possibly have remembered, she said, "You and I used to be close."

I muttered something like, "I think we still are," but I thought to myself, you're going to take your medicine right now. I wanted to correct her, but mainly I just wished we'd had more time together during the times when she was not the one who could have made that happen.

"I have so much to write to you,
but I'd rather not write with pen and ink;
instead I hope to see you soon,
and we will talk together face to face."

What does it take to keep us away from each other?

And how much more do we appreciate each other's presence when we cannot have it?

It was evening on that day, the first day of the week, the same day Mary Magdalene had gone to the tomb and been the first person to

see that the stone had been rolled away, according to John's gospel.

"And the doors of the house where the disciples had met were locked for fear of the Jews."

I'm extremely uncomfortable with the way John throws out a sentence like that. For clarity: Jesus and his disciples were all Jews. Their families were Jews. Their friends, allies, neighbors; the people they had spent the past three years loving, serving, consoling and encouraging; the people they worshiped with at their synagogues, were Jews.

The disciples had every right, and were not without reason, to be afraid of the socio-religious establishment of which they were a part. They had just watched that establishment--with the full-throated encouragement of its supporters--orchestrate and carry out the state-sanctioned murder of the kindest, most generous, most loving human who would ever walk the face of the earth, their friend and their leader whom they called Lord and Teacher.

But that would be like saying that we are hunkered down in our houses, only venturing out quietly, keeping our careful distance and wearing masks and trying not to touch surfaces, for fear of the Americans.

But no matter how you say it, we know what it means to be locked inside for fear of what's out there which has proven itself to be lethal and unconcerned about what's just or what's fair.

What does it take to keep us from being near each other?

The fear that any one of us might be exposed to a microscopic and therefore unseeable but potentially mortal danger because someone has breathed too close to us. And the fear that we may unknowingly carry something back into our homes that could harm someone else by our breathing.

Jesus came and stood among them and said, "Peace be with you."

After he said this, he showed them his hands and his side. Then the disciples rejoiced when they saw that it was their Lord.

And he said to them again, "Peace be with you. As the Father has sent me, so I send you."

When he had said this, he breathed on them, and said to them:

"Receive the Holy Spirit.

If you forgive the sins of any, they are forgiven them;
if you retain the sins of any, they are retained."

Actually, the known surviving Greek manuscripts of John's gospel do not include the word "sins" in the second half of that statement-the part about retaining.

So it may be that it was intended to read:

"Receive the Holy Spirit. If you forgive the sins of any, they are forgiven them; if you retain any-as in, any person-if you choose to retain someone, anyone, as a member of your community, they are retained."

Maybe the definition of the evangelistic community-building program of the Church, given by the risen Christ to those frightened, first disciples from the first day of his resurrection,

is that when you are Christ's own, when the Spirit has broken the boundaries of your personal space and breathed on you, you have it in your power to forgive people and retain them in Christ's church.

This is a story of people locked inside their house for understandable fear for their safety and well-being, facing tough decisions about the hazards outside, and cabin fever or worse inside.

It's a story of strength and resilience and community in the Spirit, and the longing for connection and presence among human beings.

It's a story of disciples staying behind locked doors because they simply have to, and how even when that is the case, no locked door, no fear, and not even any one community member's disbelieving demand for proof, can prevent Jesus from getting in-from coming to

his beloved people wherever they are, even that one, unconvinced disciple-and breathing the Spirit of his peace on them.

What does it take to keep us from being together?

Maybe the even more insistent question is: what circumstances could ever keep Jesus from coming to us and breathing the Spirit of God into our lives?

It's answered by the Apostle Paul in the letter to the Romans (8:35, 37-39):

"Who will separate us from the love of Christ?

"Will hardship, or distress, or persecution, or famine, or nakedness, or peril, or sword?

"No, in all these things we are more than conquerors through him who loved us.

"For I am convinced that neither death, nor life,
nor angels, nor rulers,
nor things present, nor things to come,
nor powers, nor height, nor depth,
nor anything else in all creation,
will be able to separate us from the love of God
in Christ Jesus our Lord."

May Jesus come and stand in your house tonight, and breathe on you the peace of the Spirit.

Keith Grogg
Montreat Presbyterian Church
Montreat, NC
April 19, 2020

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Thomas Wolfe, letter to Maxwell Perkins, in "A Brief Biography of Thomas Wolfe" (North Carolina Office of Archives and History, archived September 17, 2007.

Hymn

"We Walk by Faith and Not by Sight"

(Henry Alford, 1844/
Samuel McFarland, c. 1814)
Vivian Hare, pianist

We walk by faith and not by sight,
with gracious words draw near,
O Christ, who spoke as none e'er spoke,
"My Peace be with you here."

We may not touch your hands and side,
nor follow where you trod;
but in your promise we rejoice
and cry, "My Lord and God!"

Help then, O Lord, our unbelief
and may our faith abound
to call on you when you are near
and seek where you are found.

And when our life of faith is done
in realms of clearer light
we may behold you as you are,
with full and endless sight.

Text and music: Public Domain

Prayers of Intercession

We invite you to make use of this prayer list in your own prayers, today and whenever you pray.

IN OUR PRAYERS:

Eade Anderson, home after brief hospitalization
Sally Baisley (Christina Tutterow's mom)
Evelyn Bannerman
Glenn Bannerman
Ken Boyer
Sylvia Boyer
Connie Bristow (friend of Genie Sullivan)
Sylvia Davis and her family (friends of the Hare-Groggs),
catastrophic stroke, now under Hospice care
Jey Deifell
David Duncan, continuing severe back pain
Andrew Flake (friend of Ann DuPre Rogers)
Jane Frist
Fred Hale
Bob Hare
David & Susan Holcomb and their extended family
Dick Keefer, recovering after heart operation
Margaret Linton
Scotty MacAliley
Susan Maffett, recovering from knee replacement
Bev MacSherry, cancer
Mary Grace Moore (Beverly Thompson's granddaughter),
repeatedly hospitalized with severe mono
Betsy Neville
Gordon Neville
Harry Philips, in Hospice care
Margaret Rada
Ellen Ramsey
George Ramsey
Jack Sadler, shingles
Bob Shaw
Belle Shipley (Susan Holcomb's mother)
Linda Shortridge
Arline Taylor
Maggie Tuggle
Lamar Williamson

A short message from [Tom Moore](#), 99-year-old British WWII veteran who set out to raise £1,250 for the National Health Service's fight against Covid-19 by walking 100 laps in his yard before his 100th birthday on April 30.

(His hip was broken in a fall when he was 98.) He has met his goal for laps taken, raised over £8,000,000 to date, and pledged to continue his daily walks as long as people keep giving.

We also lift up in prayer...

All throughout the world who are suffering from the coronavirus and other illnesses

Post office employees, first responders, nurses, doctors, hospital workers, police, truck drivers, grocers, clerks, farmers, medical technicians, factory workers, public health officials, government servants and other decision makers, and all on the front lines

Military men and women, stationed at home, far away, on ships, at air bases, or deployed in areas of conflict

Parents with children at home

Teachers and all other professionals displaced and scrambling to reconfigure what they do

Young people whose dreams and trajectories have been put on hold

All victims of war and destruction

Neighbors vulnerable to poverty, hunger and hard weather

Victims of domestic violence

Refugees fleeing war, famine and gangs

Parents and children separated from each other

All who are in grief for loved ones

Businesses and consumers affected by the coronavirus

Prison workers and inmates

Everyone trying to fill out unemployment and other financial relief forms

National and international YAVs whose terms have been cut short

Elmarie & Scott Parker, our Mission Co-workers in the Middle East

Victor and Sara Makari, our Mission Co-workers in Palestine

Ardrishaig Parish Church, our eco-partner church in Scotland

Black Mountain Counseling Center

Bounty & Soul

Children & Friends

Christ Community Church

Rev. Deanna Hollas, PC(USA) Gun Violence Minister

Kairos Prison Ministry

Montreat College

Montreat Conference Center

OFCB ministries and the people of Haiti

The Presbyterian Heritage Center

The Lord's Prayer

Our Father, who art in heaven,
hallowed be thy name.
Thy kingdom come, thy will be done,
on earth as it is in heaven.
Give us this day our daily bread,
and forgive us our debts, as we forgive our debtors.
And lead us not into temptation,
but deliver us from evil.
For thine is the kingdom,
and the power, and the glory forever,
Amen.

Minute for Mission

If you would like to contribute to One Great Hour of Sharing, please mail a check (made out to MPC and with "OGHS" on the memo line) to the church office at

Montreat Presbyterian Church
P.O. Box 577
Montreat, NC 28757

Thank you!

Offering Music

"Breathe on Me, Breath of God"
**(Edwin Hatch, 1878/
Robert Jackson, 1888)**

Eric Nichols, baritone horn
Rusty Frank, trombone

Breathe on me, Breath of God;
fill me with life anew,
that I may love what thou dost love
and do what thou wouldst do.
Breathe on me, Breath of God,
till I am wholly thine,
until this earthly part of me
glows with thy fire divine.

Text and Music: Public Domain

A Prayer for Dedication of Offerings

God, you have given us life
in the resurrection of our Lord Jesus Christ.
In gratitude, we offer our hearts
and the fruit of our labor to your service.
By your grace, accept, we pray,
the offering of our lives
in union with our risen Lord
who lives and reigns with you forever. Amen.

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Westminster John Knox Press

Hymn

["Thine Is the Glory"](#)
**(E.L. Budry, 1884, trans. R.B. Hoyle, 1923/
G.F. Handel, 1748)**
Vivian Hare, organist

Thine is the glory, risen, conquering Son;
Endless is the victory thou o'er death hast won.

Angels in bright raiment
rolled the stone away,
kept the folded grave-clothes
where Thy body lay.

Thine is the glory, risen, conquering Son;
Endless is the victory thou o'er death hast won.

Lo, Jesus meets us, risen from the tomb;
lovingly he greets us, scatters fear and gloom.

Let the church with gladness
hymns of triumph sing,
For the Lord now liveth;
death hath lost its sting.

Thine is the glory, risen, conquering Son;
Endless is the victory thou o'er death hast won.

No more we doubt thee, glorious Prince of life!
Life is naught without thee; aid us in our strife.

Make us more than conquerors,
through thy deathless love;
Bring us safe through Jordan
to thy home above.

Thine is the glory, risen, conquering Son;
endless is the victory thou o'er death hast won!

Words and Music: Public Domain

Benediction

*May you be blessed in the holy names of those
who, without you knowing it,
help to carry and lighten your pain.*

May a window of light always surprise you.

*May memory bless and protect you
with the hard-earned light of past travail;
to remind you that you have survived before
and though the darkness now is deep,
you will soon see approaching light.*

- John O'Donohue (2008)

May the grace of our Lord Jesus Christ,
the love of God,
and the communion of the Holy Spirit
be with us all, now and forever.
Amen.

Excerpted from John O'Donohue, "For Suffering," in O'Donohue, *To Bless the Space Between Us* (New York: Doubleday, 2008)

Postlude

"Hallelujah"
(G.F. Handel)
College Church, Wheaton, Illinois

Video created by Adam Billingham. Audio from April 2012 at College Church in Wheaton
Text and Music: Public Domain

Montreat Presbyterian Church

montreatchurch.org



OUR MISSION

*In the fellowship of Jesus Christ we
Listen for the word of God in our lives
Love with open hearts and open minds
Walk the path of faith together
Serve others and
Welcome all.*

OUR VISION

*Led by the Holy Spirit
We proclaim the word of God
Through our ministry and mission.*

The Session

Jane Alexander, Everett Culpepper (2020)
Mason Blake, Beth Fountain (2021)
Jim Henderson, Ann DuPre Rogers (2022)
Moderator Keith Grogg (pastor)

Officers & Committee Chairs, 2020

Jane Alexander, clerk
Jim Henderson, assistant clerk
Gill Campbell, treasurer
Bill McCaskill, assistant treasurer

Mason Blake, Christian Education
Beth Fountain, Congregational Care
Hal Demarest, Earth Care Subcommittee
Judy Shuford, Evangelism & Membership
Grace Nichols, Fellowship
Everett Culpepper, Finance & Property
Eric Nichols, Mission & Outreach
Ann DuPre Rogers, Personnel
Linda Hobson, Worship & Music

Want to talk? Need a pastor? Come on in!

Call the office at 664-9212,
or email Keith at pastor@montreatchurch.org,
and we'll find a time that works.

Rev. Margaret Peery also provides pastoral care:
parishvisitor@montreatchurch.org

Contact Information

Rev. Keith Grogg, Pastor	<u>Pastor@MontreatChurch.org</u>
Vivian Hare, Director of Music	<u>Music@MontreatChurch.org</u>
Jane Alexander, Clerk of Session	<u>Clerk@MontreatChurch.org</u>
Rev. Margaret Peery, Volunteer Pastoral Visitor	<u>ParishVisitor@MontreatChurch.org</u>
Patty Smith, Office Administrator	<u>Office@MontreatChurch.org</u>
Clara Hare-Grogg, Young Adult Volunteer	Clara's YAV Weblog page Link

(828) 664-9212
MontreatChurch.org

P.O. Box 577, Montreat, North Carolina, 28757

Church Office hours: Weekdays 9:00 A.M. - Noon
304 Lookout Road, Montreat

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