

# Connections—August 2019

## **“GLIDE, MRS. DUFFIELD, GLIDE!”**

Rev. Herlin introduces Rev. Jill Duffield, our Rally Day preacher and adult education facilitator as well as a dynamic writer and editor of *The Presbyterian Outlook*.

## **MUSIC MINISTRY ANNOUNCES 2019–2020 SEASON**

Messiah, Requiem, children’s music, Noonday Noëls ... Hunchback? What’s in store from the Music Ministry this year?

## **KENYA PROGRAMS CONTINUE TO INSPIRE “GRATITUDE FILLED WITH GRACE”**

For the last decade-plus, the Meeting House has helped make a difference in east Africa through two inspiring partnerships in Kenya.

## **A MOMENT WITH ...**

Facilities Ministry Moderator Kait Murphy discusses her experience as moderator and some of the challenges the Meeting House faces on the facilities front.

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## **“Glide, Mrs. Duffield, glide!”**

**Dear Meeting House Family,**

**“Glide, Mrs. Duffield, glide!”**

So began the first article I ever read by Jill Duffield. It was a guest column in an issue of *The Presbyterian Outlook*, and for years, the magazine sat in my seldom-used spare bathroom, open to that particular page.

Her words jumped out at me each time I’d come in to clean: they were the exhortations of a swim instructor as Jill powered through her strokes, forgetting to breathe, forgetting the glide needed to ride the momentum, and to let her body refresh and reset.

Jill's article would go on to make the connection between her frantic swimming strokes, and the way we too often live our frantic, frenetic lives.



Fast forward 10 years, and that same Mrs. Duffield is now the editor and publisher of that same magazine—and our upcoming Rally Day speaker!

Some of you may be familiar with her work at *The Presbyterian Outlook*, but even if you've never read it, you have probably heard from Jill. The insights she shares in her weekly lectionary reflections often make their way into sermons at the Meeting House. She has a gift for observing the human condition, for reflecting on how we wrestle with our Christian calling, and for capturing those insights in images and analogies that stick.

I've been privileged to get to know Jill over the past two years as I have served on the board of *The Presbyterian Outlook*, an independent, nonprofit publication celebrating its 200<sup>th</sup> anniversary this year!

With articles exploring how we live our faith, stories from local congregations, moving personal reflections, and a host of resources for doing the work of the church, *The Presbyterian Outlook* seeks to inform, equip, and inspire, all the while navigating the very challenging waters of surviving as a print and digital publication in today's world. I have been privileged to witness Jill's gifted and faithful leadership in this endeavor.

I am excited for y'all to get to know Jill this Rally Day, and to give her a taste of life here at the Old Presbyterian Meeting House.

To whet your appetite, I encourage you to stop by *The Presbyterian Outlook's* website, or even consider subscribing.

And don't forget to glide!

In Christ,  
Ann

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## Music Ministry Announces 2019–2020 Season

*Ours is a singing faith!  
Now hear the hymns we raise,  
Resounding, strong,  
the years along,  
and echoing our praise!*

So affirms Presbyterian hymn-writer Jane Parker Huber (1926–2008) in her hymn on the inseparable nature of music and faith.

At the Meeting House, we are blessed with Spirit-filled choirs for all ages, robust congregational singing, talented instrumentalists, high-quality instruments, and dedicated music supporters.

In the past few months since I arrived here, I have been overwhelmed by the welcome and hospitality, and have come to realize what a special place the Meeting House is. I am proud to carry the baton into this next chapter and am thrilled to announce our upcoming musical season.



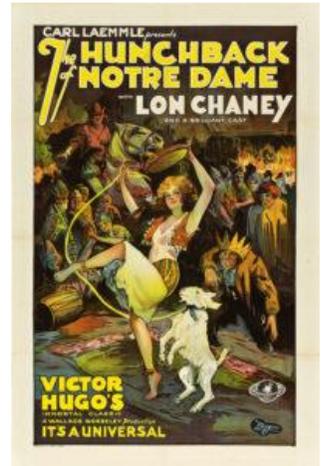
First, the Adult Choir season will begin with a retreat on Saturday, September 7, from 10 a.m.–2 p.m. at the Mount Vernon Presbyterian Church, and will begin to sing in worship on September 8.

All are welcome to join the choir—no prior experience or music-reading ability required!

Children’s Music, an essential and integral part of their Sunday morning education program also begins on September 8, and we’ll begin to learn some of the refrains and responses we will sing every week in worship.

Our popular Concerts with a Cause and Noonday Noëls series will continue this year with a number of notable free concerts, so mark your calendars now.

- ***The Hunchback of Notre Dame (1923)*** (Friday, October 18, 7, p.m.)  
A silent film screening of Universal Pictures' early adaptation of Victor Hugo's classic tale with a live organ soundtrack on the Lively-Fulcher organ.
- ***Messiah*** (Sunday, December 1, at 3 p.m.)  
The Meeting House Choir, soloists, and orchestra present G.F. Handel's immortal 1741 oratorio of G. F. Handel, featuring his famous "Hallelujah" chorus and some of the composer's greatest arias.
- **Noonday Noëls** (Wednesdays, December 4, 11, and 18, 12:05 p.m.)  
These short lunchtime programs will feature local musical groups like the Annandale Singers, the all-male chorus Brethren, and our own Meeting House Singers.
- ***Mozart Requiem*** (Sunday, March 22, 3 p.m.)  
The unfinished masterpiece of Mozart will be presented as a fitting Lenten reflection in the familiar form completed by Süssmayr, sung by the Meeting House Choir and soloists, with orchestra.



We hope to see you there at any or all of these concerts! For more information or to join any of the choirs on a regular basis or as part of a Festival Choir that will sing for the above concerts and for special liturgies like Christmas and Easter, please email or call me at 703-549-6670, ext. 121.

Everyone's welcome—no exceptions!

Peace,  
Steven

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## Kenya Programs Continue to Inspire “Gratitude Filled with Grace”



For the last decade-plus, the Meeting House has supported two partnerships in Kenya: Moi’s Bridge United Orphanage and Academy and the Njoro Presbyterian Church Orphans and Vulnerable Children Program.

Both seek to provide not only critical sustenance for orphaned

and other vulnerable students (e.g., food, clothing, shelter), but also prepare those children for life beyond their elementary schooling. The programs offer career counseling and financial support to cover the costs of secondary school and college tuition.

“The impact is the education and care of children who otherwise would not have had the opportunities that are now open to them,” says Meeting House member and longtime initiative steering committee member Rhonda O’Bannon, who has visited the east African nation several times to witness the programs in action.

Rhonda points out that such “opportunities” are not limited just to educational advancement.

In one instance during a visit to a center specializing in learning for traumatized children, a group lingered long in the showers and needed prodding to finish up. Why? Because they had never felt running water before.

“One of the things we cherish and appreciate is the safety of our drinkable water and a ‘refreshing’ shower. This was a reminder of what we have and take for granted.”

Of the first children to graduate from high school, five were girls and all five girls were accepted to college or university. Rhonda says, “This would’ve been

incredible had the first five included only boys; in the Kenyan society, the fact that these were girls is extraordinary.”

Now, all five are fully employed with professional jobs—and there are 15 more students who have followed in their footsteps to attend college/university or a technical school.

A poem written by student John Njoroge expresses what support from the Meeting House and others means to him as well as his peers:

***Giving me that push without which  
I would probably stall  
Your help has given me peace—  
not only peace but peace of mind.***

*To learn more and find out how you can help, please contact Rhonda O’Bannon.*



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## **A Moment With ... Facilities Ministry Moderator Kait Murphy**

**What did the Facilities, Membership and Evangelism, and Worship Ministries hope to accomplish during the August 24 work day?**

We wanted to create an all-ages, all-skill level opportunity for fellowship across these ministries as we cared for our historical property inside and outside in preparation for Rally Day and the start of the 2019–2020 education programming.

We focused on mulching, weeding, trimming, and overall gardening outside and sprucing up the sanctuary and other interior spaces used for education inside.



**What are the Meeting House’s biggest facilities-related challenges?**

Being the stewards of a beautiful historic property with four buildings and burial ground requires a lot of maintenance and attention to detail. Some repairs or replacements can be

costly or must adhere to Historical Old Town Alexandria city codes.

Timelines can range from immediate to needing official approval, so there are a lot of stops and starts. We're constantly reassessing and prioritizing, so even with staff and volunteers paying close attention, it's still a challenge to keep up with repairs, weather events, and the historical nature of the buildings.

**What are some specific projects you hope to complete this program year (which kicks off on Rally Day [Sunday, September 8])?**

We're installing a new boiler in the education building (just in time for the start of education programming and the opening of the preschool).

We'll be making exterior repairs to Elliot House.

A newly formed subcommittee will address audio and sound system planning (2021–2025), focusing on sound and video equipment that is used to record worship services, DVD and audio podcast production for people to experience our services.

We're in the process of making repairs to the buildings on campus affected by the

midsummer flooding and storms. Heritage Hall and Elliot House sustained damage requiring remediation, and we need to replace materials as well as identify future flood and leak prevention designs for prone areas.



**Thus far, what have you liked about being moderator?**

It has been a great experience to care for such a historically significant campus. My appreciation for the level of work and attention required to maintain the character of the church and other buildings has grown and has been humbling.



There are so many cosmetic things that we see day to day that we can appreciate, but looking deeper into the character of the architecture and design is truly inspiring and I feel honored to be a part of the Meeting House's living history.

***For more information about the Facilities Ministry and its work, please contact Kait.***