



# MOUNT VERNON PRESBYTERIAN CHURCH

*Growing Followers Of Christ Since 1902*

## *The Grapevine*

*I am the vine; You are the branches.*

John 15:5

Year 119, Issue 8

November-January, 2021

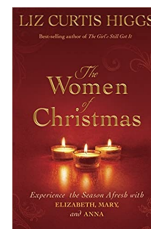
### **Christmas Changes Everything**

Each Advent season, as followers of Jesus, it's not just the birth of a baby that we celebrate, but rather the incarnation of God in the person of Jesus Christ; and it changed everything! Advent is a time to prepare our hearts as we consider again how the events of his life, death and resurrection re-form our faith, our lives, our values and our priorities. Like the shepherds who first received word of the Savior's arrival and went "with haste" to see him, we are invited during this season into practices that help us to look with fresh eyes of faith for how history and mystery are woven together in the Christ child. We are invited to hear with fresh ears the choirs of angels calling the world and calling us to peace as they sing "Glory to God in the highest heavens."

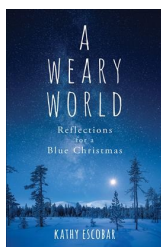


This year at MVPC the advent devotional **Advent in Plain Sight** will guide our journey in worship. The book by Jill Duffield is a series of daily devotions, questions and prayers using everyday objects to reflect on the coming of Christ and enable us to see the kingdom of heaven in a new way. For those who want to dive deeper into the devotional through prayer and discussion, the Thursday 9 am Pause Prayer group will be focusing on the devotional in Zoom Room One and everyone is welcome!

In addition, there will be a Women of Christmas Small Group gathering on Thursdays from 3 to 5 pm masked and distanced at Loretta Vander Pol's home. The **Women of Christmas** Small Group will be guided by the book of the same name to dive into the stories of Mary, Elizabeth, and Anna while also connecting with each other in faith and fun. Please sign up through the church office or by contacting Loretta Vander Pol.



And in every congregation, there are people for whom the Christmas season is a struggle. The magnitude of the weary world weighs on our hearts and minds and our grief and sorrow feel especially acute when compared to the festivities and joy everyone else seems to be feeling. In acknowledgement of that reality and to support one another on our journey through the dark winter, MVPC will host "The Longest Night: A Service of Worship, Hope, and Comfort" on Monday December 13th at 7pm. People who anticipate a weary Christmas are also invited to journey through the optional advent devotional, **A Weary World** by Kathy Escobar and to be a part of the Weary World Small Group gathering focused on connection, prayer, and discussion of the devotional. Please sign up for the Weary World Small Group through the church office or by contacting Rebecca Holland. We will decide on our meeting times and whether we will be in person or online as a group.



Copies of all the books will be available for you to pick up in the church office the week of Thanksgiving. If you would like one and can't get to the church, please let us know and we'll deliver. The books cost \$10 each if you would like to make a donation to offset the cost of the one(s) you use or provide for someone else.

Whether through Sunday Worship, the Pause Prayer Group, one of the Small Group Studies, taking on an Advent Devotional Practice, attending a special service like the Longest Night or Christmas Eve or Lessons and Carols, or through one of the ongoing MVPC bible studies or small groups, the hope is that we all just might see how Christmas changes everything!

**Sunday Worship** 10:30 am Zoom Meeting Room 1

Go to [zoom.us/j](https://zoom.us/j) enter Meeting ID: 360 424 7675 Passcode: MVPC

1511 East Broadway Street . Mt Vernon, WA 98274. 360 424-7675 . [www.MountVernonPres.org](http://www.MountVernonPres.org) [mvpc@MountVernonPres.org](mailto:mvpc@MountVernonPres.org)

## Greetings from your Worship Coordinator!

How things have changed since I first became part of this team. We have a great group of tech-savvy people who, due to Covid, first adapted to Zoom worship, and now to hybrid worship. Largely because of them and the Hollands, worship has continued to be meaningful in a time of social distancing. So a special thanks to Josh, Brian, Brad, Cameron, Rob, and Aaron. (We would still like to have another person or two to be part of the rotation.) And it has been wonderful to continue with our music programs during this time, thanks to Josh, David, Lou, Margo, Liz, and Natalie. And now our bell choir is up and running again with thanks to Barbara and the rest of us ding-a-lings. We look forward to when choir can safely sing together too!

With the Sanctuary renovation coming, we are now preparing Good Shepherd Hall to have worship services there from January through March. Until then we will continue to have in-person worship in the sanctuary (yes, with the pews in place). Of course, on line will continue to be available, and preferred when Covid is rampant. It will be so exciting to watch the sanctuary get revamped during this time, and it will be great to be back there for Easter!

We still could use more communion servers and/or liturgists (contact Pastor Dan or Gail LaFleur), bell ringers (contact Barbara Koozer), and singers and musicians (contact Josh). Thank-you all for allowing me to be so involved in our worship services. Any helpful suggestions are always welcome. May God continue to bless us. -Gail LaFleur



### A WORD FROM OUR ENDOWMENT COMMITTEE

Before we know it we'll be singing "Auld Lang Syne" again. The end of 2021 is just around the corner. As Caesar used to say, "tempus fugit". It's that time of year when we think of all the things that are coming up associated with the holidays and end of year financial planning.

Along with everything else on your schedule and mind, could you find a moment to think about what your legacy is going to look like? Here are a couple of ideas to get you thinking about why remembering MVPC in your will is worth strongly considering.

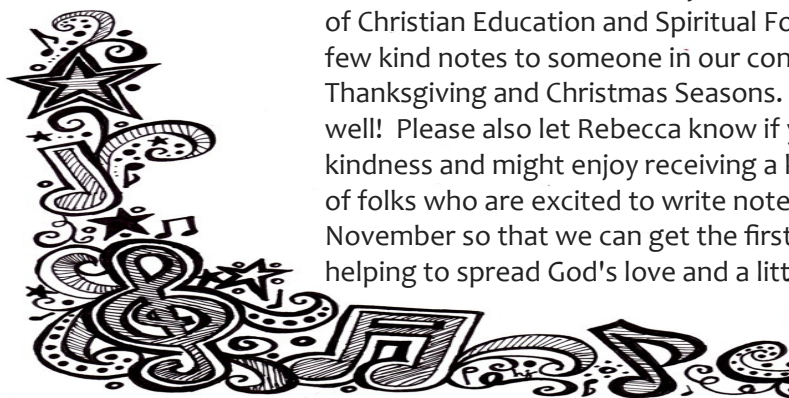
A gift to the church is a "thank you" gift. First of all to God, but also to the church family. This church has meant so much to us in so many ways. It has supported us in the down times. It gives us many opportunities to share God's love and grace in our community through the mission partners we work with. To see those continue and prosper is a wonderful way to say "thank you".

It is also a "lasting" gift and a "growing" gift. The fund is prayerfully and carefully managed under guidelines approved by Session. The fund will go on through the years providing resources for the mission of the church. It can be used to fund existing partners and other special needs that are presented to us that we feel we want to be a part of. This is all above and beyond our regular mission budget.

Finally it is a "meaningful" gift in the sense that we are giving of ourselves to something bigger than ourselves. God bless your considerations. And HAPPY NEW YEAR!

### MVPC Kind Notes Ministry

The MVPC Kind Notes Ministry is starting up again! Please let Rebecca Holland, Director of Christian Education and Spiritual Formation, know if you are interested in sending a few kind notes to someone in our congregation in need of a bit of kindness during the Thanksgiving and Christmas Seasons. Youth and kids are welcome to participate as well! Please also let Rebecca know if you know of someone who could use a bit of kindness and might enjoy receiving a kind note during this time. We hope to get our lists of folks who are excited to write notes and folks who could use a note matched by mid-November so that we can get the first notes out in time for Thanksgiving. Thanks for helping to spread God's love and a little bit of kindness in all you do!



## MVPC Ministry Enrichment: Deepening Life of Prayer and Discernment

Thank you to all the MVPC leaders who attended the first of four MVPC Ministry Enrichments for the 2021-2022 program year. Over the course of the year, we will explore the four priorities set out by session: Deepening Life of Prayer and Discernment, Biblical Literacy, Caring for One Another, the Church, and the Community, and Unified Mission with the Marginalized. During this first Ministry Enrichment, we spent time sharing about our ministry areas, exploring what it means to have a deepening life of prayer and discernment both as individuals and in our ministry areas, as well as looking toward the upcoming Stewardship Campaign, Advent Season, and Sanctuary remodel. While the Ministry Enrichments are designed to offer support, encouragement, and collaboration for leaders at MVPC, everyone is welcome to attend. Please let Rebecca Holland, Director of Christian Education and Spiritual Formation know if you would like to be on the email reminder list for future Ministry Enrichments at MVPC:

1/20 from 7 to 8:30 pm - Focus on Biblical Literacy

3/17 from 7 to 8:30 pm - Focus on Caring for One Another, the Church, and the Community

5/19 from 7 to 8:30 pm - Focus on Unified Mission with the Marginalized



### Nominating Committee and Leadership Roles at MVPC

The Nominating Committee of MVPC has been hard at work helping to define and articulate the new roles of Session and the Board of Deacons. For the congregation at large, this process has already begun to pay dividends as our Session and Ministry Coordinators have started learning their work.

Session has embraced the call to develop themselves as well as to develop the policies and practices that will guide the congregation forward into the *Bright Future* we believe God has for us. They have added a meeting each month that is dedicated to prayer, study and personal development, as well as maintaining the former meeting with a renewed focus on addressing business and the vision of the church. They have turned over the management of the day to day ministry to the staff and ministry coordinators. It's happening at different rates in different subsets of the congregation, but people are catching the vision!

Our new leadership model is intended to free the members and friends of the church to do ministry! To be the hands and feet of Jesus! To grow and to serve! It's exciting how many ways there are for the people of MVPC to serve the church and/or serve God's people in the larger community through the church. And it's equally exciting that we don't have to be limited to the possibilities which already exist, if you see something that would be helpful, hopeful and good for us to do, and you want to be part of making it happen, it can. And there are a number of people, including Pastor Dan, the staff and ministry coordinators who would be happy to resource and guide you so that MVPC lives out our vision of both knowing and sharing God's love.

As the nominating committee we realized that our schedule didn't give enough time for people to be equipped and trained for the work of leadership on Session and the Board of Deacons, so with the blessing of Session we're adjusting. Instead of calling people during the late spring, electing them in the early summer and having a one month period of training and study before ordination and installation in July, starting with 2022 we'll target winter months to call people into service, a Sunday close to Easter for elections and an approximately three month period of training and study before ordination and installation in July. So start thinking and praying now about who you see that might be called into service for the work of leadership on the Session and Board of Deacons of MVPC. We'll be getting in touch in early January for nominations!



## Congregational Meeting November 14th

The Session of MVPC has called a Congregational meeting for November 14th 2021.

The two orders of business will be:

1. To Discuss/Decide upon the following changes to the bylaws of the congregation which have been recommended by Session to allow for electronic and hybrid meetings.
  - a. Article VIII Section 1: Strike “in the church edifice” from the first line
  - b. Add Article VIII Section 8 to read:

“Meetings of the congregation may be held by telephonic or electronic means so long as conditions provide, at a minimum, for simultaneous aural communication among all participating members equivalent to those of meetings held in one room or area. Participation by the method constitutes presence in person at a meeting. Electronic meetings shall be subject to all rules adopted by the Session to govern them which may include any reasonable limitations on and requirements for participation.”
2. Elect an Elder to fill the current vacancy on the Session.

The Nominating Committee has Nominated Rob Hall to serve as Elder in the class of 2022.

The meeting will be held in accordance with the current MVPC Bylaws which means that it will require *in-person attendance of at least 10% of the enrolled membership (19 voting members) to obtain a quorum*. You may [click here](#) if you are online, or contact the church office to receive a copy of the current bylaws.

A further bylaw revision to align with MVPC's new leadership model is also recommended to the congregation by Session. That revision will be provided in writing and taken up at a later date when people who are not able or comfortable to come to the building for a meeting can be included in the discussion. Session has intentionally taken the bylaw revision as a two step process to allow for congregational participation. Your voice matters! Please ask any questions you may have.

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## Building for Today, Investing for Tomorrow

At MVPC, we're not just building for today, we're also investing for tomorrow! Part of our story as Christians is that we are always looking forward expectantly. Walter Brueggemann, who is one of the most influential Old Testament scholars in recent history says, “biblical faith is always geared to the future. It moves toward God's coming miracle, it pushes past the old treasured miracles and beyond the old ways of judgment.”

Our “*Forward to a Bright Future*” capital campaign was all about looking forward and being drawn into the bright future God has for us. The money for the capital campaign is being poured into the building. It's been a much needed infusion to update and secure the space for our ministry of welcoming care and gracious safety as we follow Jesus, listen for the Holy Spirit and discern God's will together.

And we continue to look forward to the next step. On November 14th, in the context of worship, there will be an opportunity to pledge financial resources for MVPC's 2022 Operating Fund. This is the primary fund that supports the ministry of the church. It is the bulk of our mission funding. It is staff time to care for the members and friends of the church. It is programming to provide worship, education and fellowship opportunities. It is infrastructure to create places and systems in which and by which ministry happens. The Operating Fund is how we invest in sharing faith and transforming lives through our church community. Its largest source of support is people like you, who trust what God is doing through MVPC.

In preparation to make your pledge, please, take a moment to consider how you have seen God at work in our church. Reflect on what pledge amount would be a meaningful step of faith for you and encourage you to trust in God's provision. Recognize that God is already in the midst of doing a new thing at MVPC and inviting you to be part of it, by offering your financial resources as well as using your gifts and talents. Then, prayerfully, fill out your pledge card.

If you're not able, or not ready yet to participate in worship in person, you are welcome to mail the card to the church and it will be placed in the basket with the other offerings. Please plan to join in worship online that day to celebrate God's faithfulness, and if you're feeling moved to use other gifts and talents as well, I and the other staff and ministry coordinators would love to help you discern where!

Gratefully yours, Pastor Dan (on behalf of the stewardship committee)

## “Forward to a Bright Future” Update

This is a quick update of our Capital Campaign since our August Newsletter. Here are some highlights:

- September 24<sup>th</sup>: Signed our Lump Sum Construction and General Conditions Agreement with *Trico* for the interior remodeling.
- A separate contract is near completion for our Audio/Visual equipment & installation. *Blue Stream Integrations* is collaborating their design and installation into the project schedule under *Trico*’s leadership.
- The Sanctuary chairs have been ordered and are in manufacturing.
- November 8-10<sup>th</sup>: The South entrance and GSH area will complete a drainage system to control runoff from the new roof.
- Now through December 26<sup>th</sup>: Services will continue in our current Sanctuary for the holidays.
- December 27<sup>th</sup> – January 3<sup>rd</sup>: Move all furniture and equipment from the Sanctuary, Fireside Room and Narthex into storage areas.

January 4<sup>th</sup> (Tentative): Start construction work and move Worship into GSH.

If you are interested in capturing a piece of history of our church, our pews and some large stained glass-windows, removed during the new roof construction, are being made available to members and friends of our congregation. Please contact Bruce Lavers for details.

**Financial Status:** All figures are to date.

**Original, 3-Year Summary:**

**New, 4<sup>th</sup> Year Summary:**

Total Commitments:	\$ 964,621	\$ 490,240
Total Cash Received:	\$ 663,554	\$ 246,927
Total Expenditures:	\$ 946,554 (incl. Loan Interest)	\$ 43,739



**On-Hand Cash and Mortgage:**

Total Available Cash:	\$ 504,952 (combined 3-year and 4 <sup>th</sup> year)
Mortgage Balance:	\$ 575,799

All of your patience, commitments and generous contributions are very important to the success of this campaign. We sincerely appreciate your support.

Your campaign Co-Chairs: Mary Ellen Byerly and Bruce Lavers

## MVPC Church Leadership 2021—2022



Session		Class Year	Board of Deacons		Class Year
	Vacant	2022	Tom	Howard	2022
Bill	DeHon	2022	David	Reamer	2022
Joe	Seabott	2023	Arlene	Andersen	2023
Becky	Goodell	2023	Rose-mary	Gale	2023
Bruce	Lavers	2024	Ward	Ernst	2024
Sarah	Maas	2024	Kitty	Willis	2024

## Thank you to:

- ♥ To all who participated in October Family Promise week by making and serving a meal, sleeping overnight or praying for those who serve and the families we support.
- ♥ Sarah Maas and Rebecca Holland for making MOPS meetings a reality.
- ♥ Mary Ellen Byerly and crew for creating a Covid safe time for fellowship after Sunday Services.
- ♥ Dan Long, Leslie Braun, Doug Catton, Ted Langrehr, Bruce Lavers and others for improving and keeping the landscaping beautiful.
- ♥ Thanks to everyone who has helped to safely bring back the after church fellowship. The kids have even figured out how to drink hot chocolate with their masks still on!
- ♥ Thank you to Rosemary Gale and Patti Allen for the pew pals bears.



## Opportunities to Serve, Grow and Fellowship Together

### Women's fellowship

Gather for Bible Study and Fellowship at **9:00 am**. In person in the **library or on Zoom, Room 2**. Bring a friend and make more new friends. Note date changes for the holidays:

**Saturday Nov 20 and Saturday December 18th.**

### MVPC Directory Update

The goal is to have a new church directory ready for print next February. If you are new to MVPC it would help to have a recent family picture so faces and names can be correlated, especially if you have children. They grow and change so fast and it has been 2 long years since we have seen them in person!

### CRAFTING...

continues on first and third Tuesday in the Fireside room from noon to 1:15 pm or join online in room one. All are welcome with or without projects for fellowship and conversation. We share our current work in progress (wip), patterns, finished and wish projects. We have found a quilting community project and need fabric and batting if you have some to share contact Rosemary Gale through the church office.



### Everyone is Welcome at MVPC's Weekly Prayer Group

You are invited to join MVPC's weekly prayer group that meets online every Thursday from 9 to 10 am in MVPC Zoom Room One. We spend time checking in on how we are doing and if we have any prayer requests for the group before we dive into a contemplative prayer practice together. The contemplative prayer practice is guided



and everyone is welcome, even if you have never experienced contemplative prayer before. It's a great opportunity to learn more ways to deepen your life of prayer and discernment as we explore prayers like lectio divina, the awareness examen, the welcoming prayer, centering prayer, and more. Please let Rebecca Holland, Director of Christian Education and Spiritual Formation know if you have any questions or want to find out more.

### Skagit Valley Mops/Momsnext kicked off at MVPC

Thank you to everyone at MVPC for your support of the Skagit Valley Mops/Momsnext group that kicked off in October and will be meeting from 9:30 to 11:30 am on the 3rd Saturdays every month through May at MVPC. Lou Cheney, Ruth Neal, Pat Papadopolus, and Margo Wortham have stepped forward as Mentor Moms from MVPC, volunteering to build relationships with the moms in the group over the course of the coming year. All of the moms who attended were entered to win raffle items, provided by folks from MVPC. Ruth Dunn provided two wonderful gift baskets for the raffle, full of goodies that will be helpful to moms like a nice pair of scissors, games for kids, antibacterial soap, gift cards, and more. David Lorente provided a delicious dinner for the raffle of chicken sandwiches, salad, and homemade zucchini bread. Thank you everyone for your support! Please talk with Sarah Maas or Rebecca Holland if you are interested in providing a raffle basket or items for a raffle basket or a dinner to be raffled at the upcoming Mops/Momsnext meetings in November and December. If you are a mom of young kids or if you know a mom of young kids, encourage them to come to the next Mops/Momsnext meeting on Saturday, November 20th from 9:30 to 11:30 am in Good Shepherd Hall.





## Wondering about Godly Play?

If you find yourself missing the Godly Play stories in worship and would like to continue to experience the stories and wonder with the kids, know that you are welcome to attend our hybrid Godly Play program from 9:30 to 10:15 am on Sunday mornings in person in room one (the first room in the Christian Education Hallway) or online in MVPC Zoom Room Three. Please talk with Rebecca Holland to get on the email reminder list and to receive zoom information. During the 2021-2022 program year, we are exploring Stories of the Church. We've explored stories about the Calendar of the Church Year, the Circle of Worship, World Communion, Communion, Baptism, and the Bible. In November, we will be exploring the Crosses, Symbols of Faith, and ThanksGiving, before we head into the stories of Advent in December. A huge thank you to Molly Howard for creating the Angels for our upcoming Advent Stories and to Mim Ambrose for helping to write the Advent stories. Thank you to our Godly Play team for continuing to provide the Godly Play stories and program at MVPC: Margo Wortham, Becky Goodell, Laurie Parker, and Mim Ambrose. Please let Rebecca Holland, Director of Christian Education and Spiritual Formation know if you are interested in joining the Godly Play Team.



## Exploring the Old Testament in a New Way

The MVPC Youth are exploring the Old Testament in a new way during the 2021-2022 program year, utilizing an online curriculum that summarizes the books of the Bible through entertaining videos. Every Sunday, in addition to enjoying pizza and games, the MVPC Youth watch a Bible Project video summarizing a book of the Old Testament, discuss what they noticed, and then take time to reflect as they choose (in journals or with crafts or whatever method helps them), before coming together in prayer. Feel free to check out the videos they are using at [bibleproject.com/explore/book-overviews](https://bibleproject.com/explore/book-overviews). It might be a new way for you to approach the Old Testament too! Thank you for your ongoing support of the MVPC Youth and especially to those who stepped up to be a part of the new Youth Group Mentor



Team: Dan Long, David Reamer, Mary Pugsley, Connie Bowser, and Becky Goodell. Please let Rebecca Holland, Director of Christian Education and Spiritual Formation, know if you are interested in joining the Youth Group Mentor Team.

## Godly Play Angels

A huge thank you to Molly Howard for creating the Angels for our upcoming Advent Stories and to Mim Ambrose for helping to write the Advent stories.



## MVPC Youth Fundraising

We will be raising funds for the MVPC youth to go to camp this summer with an online "Yumraiser" through See's Candy for Christmas, Valentine's Day, and Easter. Please consider purchasing See's chocolate and treats for the holidays through the [MVPC Youth Group Storefront](#) and encourage your friends and family to do the same. Orders need to be in by Dec. 3rd. If you would prefer, you can place and pick up your order through the church office and not have to pay for shipping. Please earmark all payments to the church with Youth Camp Fund. You can also simply donate to MVPC and earmark the donation for the Youth Camp Fund. Thank you for supporting the MVPC Youth!

# OPPORTUNITIES

## *to be God's hands and feet*

*"Never walk away from someone who deserves help; your hand is God's hand for that person."*

*Proverbs 3:27 -- the Message*

## OUR PARTNERS

### Family Promise

[familypromiseskagit.weebly.com](http://familypromiseskagit.weebly.com)

Meal providers and servers

Overnight hosts

### Love INC

[skagitloveinc.org](http://skagitloveinc.org)

Gap program providers

Mentors

Oil change and gas vouchers

Clothing and furniture

### Friendship House

[skagitfriendshiphouse.org](http://skagitfriendshiphouse.org)

cooks and servers

clothing & toiletries

### Underground Ministries/OPOP

[undergroundministries.org](http://undergroundministries.org)

more team members

story tellers

write/email

support families at home

visit in prison

be a friend

### New Earth Recovery

[nerecovery.com](http://nerecovery.com)

Counselors & mentors

### Care Pals

Helpers

Storytellers



## Sweater/Blanket Drive In November



- BLANKETS
- SWEATERS
- SOCKS
- GLOVES



- MITTENS
- HANDWARMERS
- MIMI TOILETRIES



### Drop off Dates

SUNDAYS IN NOVEMBER (7th, 14th, 21st) until 3 PM

TUESDAY AFTERNOONS IN NOVEMBER (9th and 16th) 3 pm until 6 pm

THURSDAY MORNINGS IN NOVEMBER (11th and 18th) 9:30 am

MOUNT VERNON PRESBYTERIAN CHURCH  
1511 EAST BROADWAY 360-424-7675  
[Mountvernonpres.org](http://Mountvernonpres.org)





## The Longest Night Service

Are you anticipating a blue Christmas? MVPC will host "The Longest Night: A Service of Worship, Hope, and Comfort" on Monday, December 13th at 7 pm. There will also be an additional Advent Devotional "A Weary World" that can be picked up in the church office (with an optional \$10 donation to help cover the cost of the book). MVPC will also be hosting a weekly Blue Christmas small group that will meet to support each other, pray together, and share our reflections on the Weary World devotional. Please let Rebecca Holland, Director of Christian Education and Spiritual Formation know if you or someone you know might be interested in participating in the Blue Christmas small group. Once we know who is interested, we will figure out when works best for us to meet and if we will be online or in person or hybrid to best meet the needs of the group.

## Mission Partners

### UNDERGROUND MINISTRIES—OPOP Adventures in Relationships

By Alvin Shim



Last week, I drove south to host a Kickoff Orientation for a One Parish One Prisoner team. Like so many before, it involved a congregation of excited individuals and an incarcerated applicant that had trouble imagining entry into a loving, stable, healthy community—but they applied to the journey, and I was ready to make introductions.

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Here's the message I received from the incarcerated friend:

Hi Alvin,

I received the starter kit on Friday, thank you. It helped to learn of the origin and to get a broader view of the program. I am grateful for all the work you've done and feel honored to be chosen. I am, however, having a hard time managing my feelings right now. I have spent the last 15 years trying to accept the fact that I could ever hope to be loved and accepted by the people of my hometown. I can identify with "despised and rejected", I don't know how to handle acceptance and community after being exiled and shunned for so long. My fear is so great tonight that I want to quit. I still think the One Parish One Prisoner team will break my heart and I am just not up for that. I am trying to calm myself enough to go to sleep. I had to let you know that I really need some prayer if I am to go any further. This may be harder than living under a bridge. I have disappointed so many people already. The shame is too much for me. Thanks for hearing me out.

Big hugs,

Hannah

\*\*\*\*\*

Hannah couldn't gather with us at the church building for the Kickoff Orientation, masked and distanced with windows all the way open. She wasn't there to hear the stories—that her team members knew her before, from pre-pandemic inter-church visits to the women's facility. That some team members remember the news of her crime, and that they always wondered about her personhood—what had her family life been like before and what happened to her after that horrifying incident? She wasn't there to hear one team member's confession: that his son had been incarcerated and he didn't have the capacity or outlet to share that burden or process those messy feelings. Five members at their local church, on day one of their One Parish One Prisoner journey, before having sent or received a single letter from their incarcerated friend, were weeping around the table—together. Secrets were out, lived experiences shared and honored, and the journey begins.

We've been busy this season, with the support and partnership of Mount Vernon Presbyterian. We're able to make plans, host Zoom meetings, and mail Starter Kits off. Hannah's team is our 23rd One Parish One Prisoner pairing. We have another set to launch in late October, and more and more after that. Thank you for joining us in this resurrection work.

Art by in incarcerated OPOP applicant



## New Earth Recovery: Loving, Strengthening, and Discipling Men and Women in Recovery

New Earth Recovery operates five homes in Skagit County for adults in recovery from drug and alcohol addiction. New Earth Recovery seeks to love, strengthen, and accompany people in recovery through faith based healing community.

We're walking with people who are in a struggle for their lives. Since we began our organization ten years ago, we've lost twelve former residents, six of whom have died in the last eighteen months, largely due to the stress and isolation caused by the pandemic. At the same time, we continue to see amazing transformation, growth, and long term success in others.

This week we read a Facebook post from a current resident who just celebrated 8 months of sobriety from heroin—a milestone he hasn't seen since he was 12 years old. He wrote:

I used to think 'I can't wait for bedtime.' Now I think 'I can't wait until morning.' Recently, life has become enjoyable for me for the first time ever. I once enjoyed sleeping more than living because life sucked, but now I'm actually happy to be alive! GOD IS GOOD! Yes, I love Jesus.

A Faith House graduate just held an online fundraiser that raised over \$900 for New Earth Recovery—with six former graduates joining in the fundraising effort. They are giving back so others can have the support, healing, and care they experienced.



Recently we received a voicemail from another graduate who called to thank us on the second anniversary of his sobriety. He is happily married, working, and living in Texas. He reported that New Earth Recovery is the best program he's experienced since he started living in treatment centers and recovery houses in 1975. He is encouraged that most of the guys he lived with at our entry-level men's house, The Foundation, are currently in recovery. We can't tell you how good it feels to hear that today.

Almost half of the New Earth Recovery budget relies on individuals and churches—an army of people who are part of the circle of care. The residents don't know each giver personally, but they are aware that the community supports them, believes in them, and desires good for them. They are deeply moved by the kindness of these givers.

In this pandemic season, personal contact with residents through volunteering is difficult. But New Earth Recovery relies upon prayer, financial gifts, donations of single bed sheets, blankets, and pillows, "giving tree" items for Christmas such as gift cards in \$10 increments, and encouraging notes to the residents— Faith House or Willow House (for women), and The Foundation, Cedar House, or The Trust (for men). Gifts, donations, and notes can be mailed to: New Earth Recovery, PO Box 1473, Mount Vernon, WA 98273.







## Pumpkin Party Events



## Birthdays and Anniversaries

### November

2-Howard Koozer  
 4-Sandy Seabott  
 6-Martin Boer  
     Donald Ross  
 7-Don Wolf  
 9-Warren Weeks  
 11-Mary Ellen Byerly  
 13-Natalia Weeks  
 14-Bev Overby  
 17-Donovan Maas  
 19-Bob Mitchell  
     Karen Beckner  
 21-Dale Irvine  
 23-Jadelle Moyer

### December

3-Warren Gilbert  
 4-Ward Ernst  
     Carol Sanders  
     Al Berger  
 6-Pat Schlecht  
 10-Bob Wygal  
     *Bill & Linda Ream*  
 14-Kimora Hansen  
 15-John Braun  
 16-Pat Papadopoulos  
     Linda Rabenstein  
 19-Laurie Parker  
     Joe Seabott  
 20-Carolyn Gilbert  
 21-Keith Tacker  
     Aurelia O'Donnell  
 22-Troy Olsen  
 27-Aaron Fox  
 28-Barb Clure  
 29-*Dave & Bev Wilson*  
 31-Jodie Kercheval  
     Carol Peterson

### January

1-Connie Shultz  
     Dave Wilson  
 3-Alberta Peters  
 7-Beth Tacker  
     Lucy McLaughlin  
 8-Loretta Vander Pol  
 9-Rosemary Gale  
 10-David Lorente  
 15-Kurtis Scoby  
 16-Bud Gilbert  
 19-Arlene Andersen  
 22-Betty Anne Friedericks  
     Graham Kerr  
 24-Allison Scoby  
     Sarah Catton  
 28-Elisa Gehringer  
     Janine Risenhoover  
     Darcy Olsen  
 29- Molly Howard  
 30-Linda Ream  
     Kevin Maas  
 31- Kitty Willis  
     *Martin & Tonnie Boer*



# *The Grapevine*

Mount Vernon Presbyterian Church

**Rev. Dan Holland, Pastor**

1511 East Broadway

Mount Vernon, WA 98274

(360) 424-7675

<http://www.MountVernonPres.org>

MVPC is...and is becoming...a caring, welcoming and graciously safe community

## **Know God's Love**

Deepening Life of Prayer and discernment  
Biblical Literacy

## **Share it with Others**

Caring for one Another, the church and the Community  
Unified Mission with the marginalized

## **All Worship Services are offered In Person and Masked OR Online in Zoom Room One**

**Nov. 21st** 10:30 am Giving Thanks Worship Service

**Nov. 28th—Dec. 19th** 10:30 am Advent Worship Services

**Dec. 13th** at 7pm The Longest Night: A Service of Worship, Hope, and Comfort

**Dec. 24th** at 7pm Christmas Eve Candlelight Service

**Dec. 26th** at 10:30am A Service of Lesson and Carols (followed with a Boxing Day Celebration of moving items from the Sanctuary to Good Shepherd Hall in preparation for the Sanctuary Renovations)

**Jan. 9th** 10:30 am Epiphany Worship Service

