



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 5
May, 2021

Forward to a Bright Future Continues Church Building Improvements

After overwhelmingly positive feedback from the congregation at our Congregational Meeting held after worship April 18th on Zoom, the Session of MVPC unanimously approved moving forward toward making much needed interior renovations. The timing of the work will take advantage of continued uncertainty regarding the safety of meeting indoors. The end goal of the project is to make the sanctuary more welcoming and inviting; enabling people who enter the building to experience worship more easily and more fully. The priority upgrades and repairs will include sound and visual equipment, new carpet and lighting as well as wallboard repair and painting. (Other upgrades are being considered and will be examined as the budget for the project becomes clearer.)



We believe this is another step toward the *Bright Future* into which God is calling us as Mount Vernon Presbyterian Church. So we are extending the *Forward to a Bright Future Capital Campaign* for an additional year. Hopefully, by now, you've received a letter with an invitation to consider your part in funding these renovations. If you haven't, please contact the church office. The time-frame for fulfillment of new pledges will be extended through 12/31/2023 but if you are able to fulfill your pledge earlier, you are certainly welcome to do so! New pledges will be most helpful if they are received by May 7. We will be planning the budget and determining the scope of work shortly thereafter.

We all look forward to gathering again for worship in the church building and it will be even better to do so with upgraded sound and visuals, new carpet and lighting. It's an exciting time to be part of the life and ministry of MVPC as we continue to look forward with hope and expectation to what God is doing through the church here in Mount Vernon, Skagit Valley, and beyond.

In Preparation for Pentecost

A new sermon series is starting May 2nd. The Holy Spirit is the least well understood member of the Trinity. Over the course of the series we'll look at how She unites believers with Christ across time and space, is a force for liberation, a builder of community and an inspiration toward God's hoped-for-future!

Pentecost is May 23rd

Wear red for the worship service.
The once yearly opportunity for funding the Deacons Ministry through the **White Gift Offering** is also May 23. This funds Christmas Baskets, Memorials and Scholarships and direct support to parishioners.
Please write "White Offering" on a check memo line.

Sunday Worship 10:30 am ~ Zoom Meeting Room 1

Go to zoom.us/j enter Meeting ID: 360 424 7675 Passcode MVPC

LEADERSHIP ROLES ARE CHANGING AT MVPC!

How We Got Here

A couple years ago, MVPC walked through an extended discernment process together, asking: *What is our unique gift (our charism) that God has given us as a church? Many people from the congregation participated and after weeks together in prayer our charism was articulated as follows: (it would be good for each of us to write this down, think about it, pray about it, let it become part of who we are) **MVPC is—and is becoming—a caring, welcoming and graciously safe community because we are deeply committed to seeking Jesus, listening for the Holy Spirit and discerning God’s will.***



In addition to articulating our charism, that extended discernment also led to 7 invitations for MVPC:

- One was about the *building*: *With exterior renovations completed and interior renovations getting underway soon we are well on the way to addressing our building and setting the future of the congregation on solid footing for ministry.*
- Four had to do with what we emphasize in the *programs and ministries of the congregation*: *We have and will continue to: develop ways for people to grow in their faith and serve the community, foster consistent and healthy communications, seek community partnerships and build intergenerational relationships.*
- The other two invitations had to do with **our leadership model—and that’s where this article focuses.**

Problems With Our Leadership Model

Coming out of the discernment process we articulated **the problems with our leadership model** like this:

“Currently the workload on our elders and deacons is often overwhelming. We need to organize our work in a manner that fosters health, promotes accountability and reduces burn-out.”

“As we seek to empower people to grow and serve by following the Holy Spirit’s lead in their own lives, it’s important for us to be in ongoing communal discernment in order to be good stewards of the resources of the church (both the people and the finances). We need better methods to evaluate and focus the ministry of MVPC.”

The invitation which emerged was to examine our leadership model and make necessary changes so that our ministry can flourish and grow in a united manner as we move forward... this need for a re-envisioned way of doing leadership has only intensified with the changes brought about by the pandemic!

A Better Way

The Session of MVPC and the Board of Deacons, aided by the Nominating Committee have developed a plan that we believe will address the invitations with the **primary goal of enhancing the faithfulness and the fruitfulness of the congregation’s ministry.** Some of the other goals of the new leadership model are to:

1. *Empower and equip people who serve in leadership roles in the congregation to do the ministry that they enjoy and free them from doing the stuff that isn’t their gift or passion.*
2. *Make the ministry roles smaller and better defined so that people are able to say “YES” emphatically and wholeheartedly when they are asked to serve.*
3. *Enable the congregation at large to participate in the ministry of the church in ways that are meaningful and life-giving for them.*

Not only do we believe the plan moving forward will lead to more faithful and fruitful ministry, but we also believe it will lead to *less burn-out and more enjoyment among the people who volunteer their time and energy to make MVPC the incredible church that it is!*

The Refreshing New Alignment of Leadership Roles

SESSION IS CLARIFIED

Historically the Session of MVPC has had two main roles which don't often require the same set of gifts or skills and together represent a formidable task. The roles are: Governance and Ministry Coordinating.

- **Governance** involves things like: Discerning and communicating mission, vision, purpose, values; Setting policy; Strategic planning; Monitoring and evaluating ministries; Resourcing and supporting ministries.
- **Ministry Coordinating** involves things like: Working with the pastor and the staff to develop teams to be the heart, the hands and the feet which carry out the ministries of the church.

The plan for Session is to separate the two roles. Governance will be the responsibility of the Session. Ministry Coordinating will be the responsibility of people who take on the new role of *Ministry Coordinator*. *Here's an overview of the two different roles:*

I. Session:

- **6 members** of the congregation
- Called by the Nominating Committee
- Elected by the congregation to a 3 year term renewable once for a total of 6 years
- Ordained as a Ruling Elder and installed to the Session
- Primary ministry will be **Governance**. Session will be less involved in the day-to-day/week-to-week running of the church.



II. Ministry Coordinators:

- **As many members and friends of the church as are necessary to do the ministry we're called to do**
- Nominated by stakeholders in the particular ministries of the church to lead/coordinate those ministries
- Appointed by Pastor and Nominating Committee to a 1 year term renewable as long as it's life-giving for the coordinator and fruitful for the ministry
- Commissioned to service as a Ministry Coordinator for a **particular ministry**

DEACON ROLES ARE MORE ROOTED IN RELATIONSHIPS

Historically the Board of Deacons has been charged with *providing that congregational care to everyone on our roster, as well as organizing the network of care for the congregation of MVPC--along with myriad other tasks!*

The plan for the ministry of Deacons is to separate two roles: The **Board of Deacons** and **Commissioned Deacons**, The *Board will oversee and organize the ministry, making sure any "holes" in the care network are as small as possible and arranging training and support opportunities for the Commissioned Deacons. A new culture of "Commissioned Deacons" will primarily be providing congregational care to their existing group, where they have regular contact and relationships of trust. Other Commissioned Deacons will be charged with a particular task, which may range from organizing meal trains as needed or writing birthday cards or being the primary point of contact to welcome visitors to MVPC.*

I. Board of Deacons:

- **6 members** of the congregation
- Called by the Nominating Committee
- Elected by the congregation to a 3 year term renewable once for a total of 6 years
- Ordained as a Deacon and installed to the Board
- Primary ministry will be **Coordination, Training and Support** of the Commissioned Deacons

II. Commissioned Deacons:

- **As many members of the church as are required to provide a caring network for the congregation**
- Nominated by various groups of the church and/or by the Board of Deacons
- Called by the Nominating Committee
- Elected and Ordained by the congregation
- Commissioned to a 1 year term of service in a **particular task**; renewable as long as it's life-giving for the Deacon and offers effective care for "their" charge/group

Nominations are happening for These Exciting New Roles

If you know someone (or are someone) who would be good for one of these roles--*Session, Ministry Coordinator, Commissioned Deacon, Board of Deacons--please let the nominating committee know at your earliest convenience. And if you have questions please reach out to Pastor Dan or any member of the Nominating Committee or Session.*

Spring 2021 at Mount Vernon Presbyterian Church



Reopening Update

It's wonderful to be part of a congregation that cares deeply about each other and wants to be together as much as we can! The question of when the church building will reopen for business has been on the hearts and minds of the congregation since Covid-19 vaccines were first made available right around the new year.

With Skagit County (and the rest of Washington State) moving to Phase 3 of the [Washington State Roadmap to Recovery](#) in March, some more possibilities emerged for social gatherings and church events. At their April meeting the Session of MVPC approved reopening the building for groups of up to 10 people effective June 1. If your group(s) would like to meet in the building, the Great Room, Fireside Room, Conference room and Library will be available to you beginning June 1. You may get in touch with the church office to begin reserving space!

In addition to plans for the building reopening, the Session has affirmed:

MVPC groups meeting in person outdoors - Take advantage of beautiful spring and summer weather!

Volunteer service with our mission partners (Family Promise, Friendship House, Care Pals, New Earth Recovery, Underground Ministries, Love Inc., etc.) while adhering to all of their Covid protocols.

We recommend that everyone be vaccinated as soon as you are able.

All MVPC gatherings will require masks to be worn, attestation of self-screening, and signing-in on a contact tracing log.

The Sanctuary and Good Shepherd Hall will remain closed until the interior renovation work (see front page of this Grapevine) is completed. If requirements remain what they are today, approximately 60 people would be allowed in the Sanctuary at one time. So we will be ready to go at that point with hybrid (online and in person) worship options.

Thanks for your patience and your diligence as we do our part to keep the congregation and broader community healthy during this season of pandemic.

CHILDREN, YOUTH, AND FAMILY MINISTRIES MAY 2021

Dear MVPC Families,

May 2021

Happy Spring! This month, we are wrapping up what has been an unusual and wonderful program year. I want to say a huge thank you to everyone who has helped to keep the ministries to the MVPC Children, Youth, and Families going during this crazy time. Thank you especially to the volunteers, parents, youth, and kids for their amazing flexibility and desire to continue to grow in faith and share the love of God. I am looking forward to summer and more time gathering in person outdoors!

During the 2020-2021 Program Year, the whole congregation has benefited from the Godly Play stories exploring the New Testament. The MVPC Youth Group, for teens in Middle School and High School, has met weekly on Zoom to discuss topics of faith using Bible Project videos and to connect through prayer and games. The Kid's Group, for kid's in Elementary School, has met weekly on Zoom to watch a Jesus Storybook Bible story and wonderful together before praying and playing games. Plus, we've connect through worship scripture readings and more. Despite the challenges, it has been a year of growth in our relationship with God and with each other!

Blessings,

Rebecca Holland, Director of Christian Education and Spiritual Formation

Family Small Group

Sunday, May 2nd at 4 pm Outdoor Masked at MVPC!!!

Families of all ages and stages are invited to be a part of the Family Small Group on the 1st Sunday of every month for a time of family fellowship, prayer, and games. Everyone is welcome! It's a great way to connect with others families!



MVPC Kid's Group (K-5th)

Wednesdays from 4 to 5 pm

Zoom Room One or Masked Outdoors!

May 5th	How to Pray?
May 12th	Sermon on the Mount
May 19th	Treasure Hunt!
May 26th	Lost Son

MVPC Youth Group (teens)

Sundays at 12:30 - 1:30 pm

Zoom Room One or Masked Outdoors!

May 2nd	Ahavah / Love
May 9th	No Meeting (Mother's Day)
May 16th	Lev / Heart
May 23rd	Nephesh / Soul
May 30th	No Meeting (Mem. Weekend)

Godly Play Stories in Sunday Worship on Zoom

May 2nd	Knowing Jesus in a New Way: Known in the Morning
May 9th	Knowing Jesus in a New Way: Known in Making Him Known
May 16th	Knowing Jesus in a New Way: Known in Waiting
May 23rd	Knowing Jesus in a New Way: Known by the Holy Spirit
May 30th	Paul's Travel's and Letters



Mission Partners

Friendship House

Mission Focus: Friendship House by Natalie and Michaela Holland

Before Covid, we volunteered with the first Thursday Friendship House Team. We have been volunteering once a month with our mom for the last few years. We arrive to the delicious smell of spaghetti and warm cookies. Each person on the team seems to have their task, whether it's cooking the sauce and noodles, preparing the salad and veggies, or baking the cookies and it all comes together in a wonderful meal to help feed those in need. Usually the meal is all ready to go when we arrive to help serve. We both like to be at the end of the serving line, handing out the warm cookies. The people who come through the line are kind and usually excited for the simple treat of a chocolate chip cookie fresh out of the oven. It is sometimes hard to see so many people in need, but we are glad that we are able to help in some way.



Please contact the church office or Laurel Coalwell if you are interested in being a part of the Friendship House team as we return to preparing a meal or two each month for those in need. While it is not yet safe for us to serve the meal, we will be able to prepare the meal at the Friendship House following their protocols of social distance and wearing masks.

Underground Ministries

By Alvin Shim

One Parish, One Prisoner Coordinator

Every applicant we receive for One Parish One Prisoner is as different as every congregation that we tap to join. We get the right person on the phone or Zoom and ask, "Do you want to know and love a prisoner?"

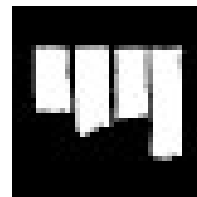
A typical self-assessment of an incarcerated brother: I was married for 20 years and I lost everything I ever worked for due to bad choices. I need a fresh start with new people around me that actually care about what I do. If I can meet new people that I can trust and be myself around, I could possibly get to know God better. What scares me is maybe I won't fit in. Maybe people won't trust me due to my past.

We will get an application like that and scream. This is exactly what we hope to provide when matching prisoners with parishes. If they can identify their needs and hesitations, and share them with us, they can share them with their new friends.

A typical self-assessment of a church team member: I need to think about how to engage without scolding or shaming. Part of my transformation is through getting acquainted with the other members of my team and sharing this journey together. I am very happy to enter this with a team and coach because I felt the huge poverty of trying to do this kind of relationship alone.

The only way to do this, any of this, is together. Every pairing is different and has their own unique circumstances, but the answer is always to stay in relationship together.

Thank you, MVPC community, for doing this with us.





COVID-19 Vaccine & Blood Donation: There is no wait to donate if you receive the Pfizer, Moderna, Johnson & Johnson/ Janssen, Novovax or AstraZeneca COVID vaccine. For more vaccine guidance, visit bloodworksnw.org/coronavirus.

All Donations are by appointment only.

BLOOD DRIVES

[Salem Lutheran Church](#)

2529 N. Laventure Ave. Mount Vernon
May 4th, 7th, & 8th June 4th & 5th

[BOOK HERE](#)

[Seventh-Day Adventist](#)

4520 E College Way. Mount Vernon June 8th, 9th, & 10th

[BOOK HERE](#)

Deepening Life of Prayer and Discernment: Intercessory Prayer

By Rebecca Holland, Director of Christian Education and Spiritual Formation

Intercessory prayer is a fancy way of saying prayer for others. Jesus' ministry, life, death, and resurrection demonstrated the ultimate example of living our lives to serve others and spread God's amazing love and healing to all. As followers of Jesus we're called to pray for others not just as a part of living the Christian life, but also as a way of being in the world. So, *how do we pray for others?* There are so many ways! Most of us, when we hear of someone hurt, sick, or in need of prayer, are willing to spend a moment or two praying on their behalf. Practicing intercessory prayer goes beyond the prayers of the moment to committing to a daily practice of praying for others. Pick a time of day that works well for you to spend a few minutes in prayer. Set a reminder for yourself to pray for others every day. The prayer can be spoken or silent, long or short, or however it needs to be. Find a way that works for you. Some people find that it's helpful to keep a prayer list or even a prayer journal to help them remember everyone they are holding in prayer. As you practice daily intercessory prayer, you may find yourself praying for others throughout your day. It's a wonderful way to pray without ceasing! So, *who should we pray for?* Start with your friends and family and expand out from there to the community, region, continent, and world. Pray for the people who are on your heart. You'll find that the more you practice intercessory prayer, the more God will put on your heart the people who are in need of prayer. And remember to include those difficult people in your life. Yes, the people that you have issues with need prayer too. Jesus calls us to pray for our enemies and those who persecute us. Even if you don't know what to pray for, God knows what they need and the challenges they face. Simply lift them up in prayer and God will do the rest.

Why should we pray for others? Practicing intercessory prayer not only makes a difference in the lives of others (there are a number of studies and stories out there that show that prayer makes a difference), but it also makes a difference in our own lives. Praying for others helps you to live a life focused on others and on God. It lifts you out of your own little world to see the amazing work of God all around you, connecting you more deeply with others and with God.

Contact the church office if you would like to be added to the MVPC Prayer Email List to receive emails when the church receives a request for prayer. You are also always welcome at the MVPC Prayer Group on Thursdays at 9 am, where we spend time connecting and practicing a variety of forms of prayer.

Next Month's Prayer Focus: The practice of Lectio Divina or praying with Scripture.

Thank you to:

- ♥ Everyone who has been helping to keep our buildings and grounds beautiful.
- ♥ Margo Wortham, Laurie Parker, Becky Goodell, Mim Ambrose, Gary Jones and the Godly Play Team for their willingness to share stories on Sunday mornings.
- ♥ Huge hugs to David Lorente and Aaron Kiesser for volunteering to help the behind the scenes of worship with the staff team every Sunday morning.
- ♥ Brian Anderson and Bob Higbee for all the work to find a good sound system set up for MVPC.
- ♥ The "Easter Bunnies" who sent out Kind Notes the Lent and Easter: Toni Hulbert, Lou Cheney, Carol Peterson, Laurel Coalwell, Gail LaFleur, Bev Helton, Penny Holland, Aaron Kiesser, Joe Seabott, Tracy Hall, Patti Allen, Connie Bowser, Arlene Anderson, Liz Rogers, Pat Papadopoulos, Mim Ambrose, Kimora Hansen, Natalie Holland, Michaela Holland, Ben Holland and Jonny Holland.
- ♥ Bruce Lavers for managing the PPP paperwork.
- ♥ The choir for an inspiring Easter performance! and David and Josh for collaborating on Easter music.
- ♥ To Pastor Dan for a wonderful "I Am" sermon series.



If you would like to acknowledge your gratitude for someone's role in the church in next month's newsletter please email Barbara in the church office. mvpc@mountvernonpres.org

OUR ENDOWMENT FUND how and why it got started

From an interview with Bill DeHon, by Dave Gale

About fifty years ago, three individuals batted around the concept of being able to give Mount Vernon Methodist Church gifts that could live in perpetuity for the ministries of the church. Wouldn't it be great, they asked themselves, if we had a unique system where people could make special gifts to that end? Those folks were Mike Minor, Judge A. O. Holte, and Bill DeHon. They wrote up a proposal to that end. In 2010, that proposal was re-written and implemented for MVPC by Bill, Mary Ellen Byerly, and Pastor Dan. The fund was established!

The resolution they wrote states that the fund is solely for charitable purposes. Its objectives are:

The promotion and development of religious, charitable, and educational activities, and
Expenditures related to maintenance and purchase of church properties.

The fund can be used for purposes beyond the annual budget of the church. We're in the early years of developing and growing the fund, but at some point, special distributions can be made for the ministries of the church and to benefit our community and world. What a great thing to be able to give some "extra" back! Special gifts to OPOP, youth camps, missions, community kitchens, etc., could be made.

As of the end of 2020, the fund has over \$100,000 in it. Fantastic! In the coming months look for more articles on ways you can be involved and contribute. But for now, let's give thanks to God and to the vision of those folk who got this off and running.

Kind Notes Ministry

Thank you to everyone who has participated in MVPC's Kind Notes ministry of sending a kind note or two to others during Advent/Christmas (Christmas Elves), January/February (Valentine Cupids), and Lent/Easter (Easter Bunnies). The Kind Notes ministry has provided a wonderful opportunity for folks to reach out to others who might be going through a more challenging time or need a kind note or two. Please contact the church office or talk with Rebecca Holland if you are interested in participating in the Kind Notes ministry as we head into summer or if you know people who could use a kind note or two sent to them. Keep reaching out to others and spreading the love of God in all you do. Little acts of kindness make a big difference in this broken world.

Pause Prayer Group changing to THURSDAYS!

The Pause Prayer Group is changing their meeting times from Tuesday mornings at 9 am to Thursday mornings at 9 am, starting on Thursday, May 6th, to better meet the needs of people in the group. The group also decided to continue to meet over zoom rather than shifting to an outdoor or hybrid meeting, because it's been a wonderful experience for us to meet from the comfort and ease of our own homes. If you are interested in connecting with a caring group and spending time growing in prayer, please come and join us on Thursdays at 9 am in Zoom Room One. Everyone is welcome!



April 2021 Session Notes

- * The session meeting opened with Lectio Divina prayer.
- * A motion passed to send out pledge cards for the sanctuary update with a return requested by May 7, 2021.
- * A motion was approved to award Trico the bid to repair the drainage problem at the South entrance to the Narthex up to \$10,000 out of the maintenance reserve funds.
- * A report was received on the nominating process and progress.
- * Approved a motion to reopen building according to phase 3 guidelines (except for worship) beginning June 1, 2021.
- * A motion passed to approve groups to serve food at Friendship House and work with other mission partners following Covid Guidelines.
- * The paperwork is completed to have the PPP loan forgiven.
- * The financial report shows a year to date difference through March, 2021 of \$10,418.16

May Birthdays & Anniversaries

1-Rob Wortham

4-Louise Cheney

8-David Romano

9-Glory Olwete

Lynda Weston

Merlin & Fran Zimmerly

11-Melissa Macken

12-Rob & Tracy Hall

Ruth Dunn

13-Jace Swanson

15-Glenda Mitchell

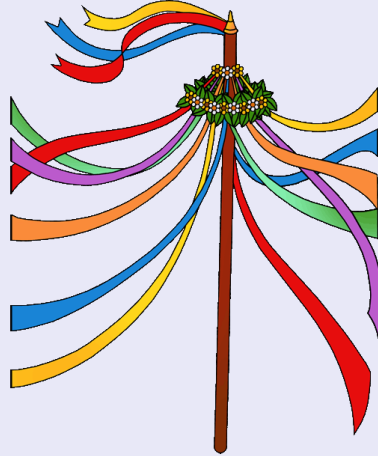
George & Collie Ridgeway

16-Marcia Taylor

Connie Bowser

17-Craig Riggs

19-Tom Howard



23-Keith & Beth Tacker

24-Gerd Mikkelsen

26-David Neal

27-Gloria Olwete

28-Hannah Kercheval

Carl Friedericks

To All Women of MVPC

The Women's Fellowship Zoom meeting will be on the 4th Saturday, May 22. As usual, we will gather for a check-in conversation at 9 a.m., followed by a Bible study for an hour. It is a good time to come out of isolation for casual exchange of ideas and supportive listening.

CRAFTING ON ZOOM

The second and fourth Tuesdays of each month find busy fingers flying as a group of crafters and knitters meet on Zoom from noon to 1 pm. May meetings are the 11th and 25th. Call Patti Allen for more information.



**Mount Vernon
Presbyterian Church**

Growing followers of Christ

Our Vision Statement

Encounter The Hope

of the living God through Jesus Christ

Engage One Another

in authentic friendship

Embrace The World

with the heart and hands of Jesus

MVPC Church Leadership 2020-2021

Elders			Ministry Area	Deacons		
Lou	Cheney	2021	Worship	Danya	Wolf	2021
Chris	Hoke	2021	Discipleship	Ruth	Neal	2021
Bruce	Lavers	2021	Ministry Support	Connie	Bowser	2021
Anne	Long	2021	Membership/Evangelism	Tracy	Hall	2021
MaryEllen	Byerly	2022	Membership/Evangelism	Tom	Howard	2022
Bill	DeHon	2022	Ministry Support	Sandi	Seabott	2022
Gail	LaFleur	2022	Worship	Sumiko	Shinozaki	2022
Bob	Rauch	2022	Discipleship	Vacant		2022
David	Gale	2023	Membership/Evangelism	Arlene	Andersen	2023
Becky	Goodell	2023	Mission & Service	Rosemary	Gale	2023
Bob	Higbee	2023	Ministry Support	Colleen	Higbee	2023
Joe	Seabott	2023	Mission & Service	Wendy	Bartholomew	2023