



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 4

April, 2021



Spring is in the air! Sunday is Easter, daffodils are blooming, and tulips are coming soon. The sun is shining more often and the weather is getting warmer. In a lot of ways, it seems like we've turned a corner! There are many from MVPC who have received their first covid vaccine and some who have already gotten their second. It's exciting! Understandably, some people are wondering when we are going to be ready to throw open the doors of the building and get back together in person.

It's coming... we can see it, but we are not quite there yet. The most recent update to the [State of Washington's Guidance for Religious and Faith Based Organizations](#) lists a whole bunch of things that are permitted and yet also says "With continuing reports of COVID-19 outbreaks at spiritual gatherings, the Governor still strongly encourages religious leaders and communities to conduct services remotely." It sort of reminds me of when Paul said "All things are permissible but not all things are beneficial." (1 Cor 10:23 in a totally different context).

There's no doubt that many of us want to be together for worship again as soon as possible. The question before the Session of MVPC is: how do we return to in person worship in a responsible manner, spreading God's love... and not COVID-19. Our current policy can be found on our website (<https://www.mountvernonpres.org/covid-19-updates>). More info will come soon as plans for the next step into the bright future God has for us are firmed up. Meanwhile, keep reaching out to those who are on your heart, keep the Session and staff of the church in your prayers, keep connecting with other members and friends of MVPC, and keep paying attention to the nudges of the Holy Spirit, spreading God's love and Jesus' message to the world.

With Hope, Pastor Dan

We look forward to Sunday where we get to proclaim "He is risen!" But we don't get there without first going through Holy Week. We only get to be Easter People because of what Jesus went through on Good Friday.

On Maundy Thursday, **4/1 at 7pm, in MVPC's Zoom Room 1**, the story (from Matthew and John's perspectives) will take center stage in a worship service highlighted with masterpieces of art history depicting the events leading up to the cross.

The message of Easter is about Jesus defeating death, but the message of Holy Week is about how he refused to avoid it. The cross is foolishness, the apostle Paul says, to those who don't understand, but it is the power of God displayed for those who do. **You are invited.** Come experience Holy Week.

Maundy Thursday Service April 1st
7:00 pm Zoom Meeting Room 1

Easter Worship Service April 4th
10:30 am Zoom Meeting Room 1
Invite your family and friends!

A few years back at a retreat of the Session of MVPC, the elders were asked to consider *what we do as a congregation and why we do it. With each answer that was given we again asked ... "and why do we do that?" or "Why is that important?"* As you can imagine there were many reasons given for the many activities and practices of the church but the place where there seemed to be convergence of purpose was with the statement: ***"We do what we do in order to know God's love and to share it with other people."***

Session talked at length about what that means and developed four priorities for the congregation that will help us to live more fully into our purpose. The priorities are:

- Biblical Literacy,
- A Deepening Life of Prayer and Discernment,
- Caring Relationships and
- Unified Mission.

We decided that we would seek to use the existing groups of the church to help everyone grow in relationship to the priorities in order that we might, more fully, know God's love and share it!

In an effort to shed a little light on what those priorities mean, some of the leadership of the congregation have agreed to write a primer on the subject from their perspective. Last month Dave Gale shared with us about Biblical Literacy. This month (and in a coming series in the *Grapevine*) Rebecca Holland writes about a *Deepening Life of Prayer and Discernment*.

Deepening Life of Prayer and Discernment: Prayers We Know By Heart

I have been invited to share what it means to have a deepening life of prayer and discernment. In the journey of faith, prayer and discernment not only draw us closer to God, but they open our lives to transformation, as only God is able to do. To have a deepening life of prayer and discernment is to say yes to God and to all that God calls you to do and be in life. Prayer can calm, focus, and transform our lives, helping us to discern God's will for us. So, how do we "deepen" the prayer and discernment in our lives? There are so many ways! We are going to have an ongoing section in the *Grapevine* that highlights a different way to deepen your life of prayer and discernment every month.

Let's begin with those prayers we hold in our hearts. Most of us have memorized a prayer or two. There's "Now I lay me down to sleep...", "God is great, God is good...", "For what we are about to eat...", and so many more. Take a moment to think of the prayers you grew up learning and the prayers you continue to pray, whether before a meal or as you head to bed or before you travel or whenever you find yourself saying a prayer. What prayers do you know by heart and say regularly? How have these prayers helped to shape who you are? To "deepen" these prayers, take a moment to think about what the prayers mean to you and as you find yourself praying them, take a moment to not just say the words, but to let yourself dive deeper into the meaning of the words, the memories the prayers hold for you, and what the prayers might be calling you toward in your life today. Are there other prayers you feel called to learn by heart to add to your life of prayer?

One of the most memorized prayers we all know by heart, is one we say together as a congregation, every Sunday in Worship, joining together to pray the prayer Jesus called us to pray, 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 sins, as we forgive those who sin against us.
Lead us not into temptation, but deliver us from evil.
For Thine is the kingdom, and the power and the glory forever. Amen.*

To "deepen" this prayer, take time to think about each line and what it means. Not just what it means logically, but what it means if you really let it into your heart. Read the words and let them transform who you are right now, today. Carry them with you always, not just as you find yourself connected to others as we say the prayer together in worship, but as you are connected to all of the people of faith of the past, present, and future. The deeper you let these prayers you know by heart enter into your heart and your life, the more powerful they become in transforming your life and drawing you closer to God.

Rebecca Holland
Director of Christian Education and Spiritual Formation

Next Month: Intercessory Prayer

Looking Forward at MVPC: **A call to congregational meeting 4/18/21**

The funding for our *Forward to a Bright Future Capital Campaign* was sufficient to address nearly all of the priorities for the exterior of the building. With the Covid-19 closures, our day to day functioning was essentially not affected by the repairs. Over the last year, we've learned to be church together online, which is no small feat for our congregation! And, while we miss being in person, it's also been great to see how God has worked in our church and in our community even throughout this less-than-ideal season where we have been forced to be distant.

With the vaccine distribution ramping up and the construction on the exterior of the building winding down, we all want to be able to worship in person together as soon and as safely as possible. At the same time, MVPC is in a unique position right now. We have been presented with a window of opportunity, while there is still uncertainty about whether the risks of Covid have diminished enough to re-open the building safely, there is also the time to take further steps toward the *Bright Future into which God is inviting us*.

This window of opportunity can allow for four things to happen simultaneously.

1. Installation of an upgraded communication system to offer hybrid (in-person and online) worship services when the building is reopened.
2. Sanctuary upgrades with new lighting, paint, carpet and audio/visual equipment so that when the building re-opens the interior will look as good as the exterior now does!
3. Volunteer training so that when our building does re-open, our processes will be smooth and volunteers will be ready.
4. Resolution of the few issues not addressed in the scope of the exterior phase of the building project.

Before the Session decides whether to take advantage of this window of opportunity we wanted to consult with and hear input from the congregation because it would mean two things for the congregation:

1. The reopening of the church building for Sunday morning worship would likely be pushed out into the future by a number of months while the interior work on the Sanctuary is completed.
2. We would extend our *Forward to a Bright Future capital campaign* for one year and seek additional pledges to fund the work in number 2 and 4 above. (Point 1 is already funded by a grant from our Presbytery.)

To receive congregational input, MVPC will be having a congregational meeting after worship on Zoom on 4/18/2021.

More detailed information will be made available to the congregation before the congregational meeting.

March 2021 Session Notes

- * Session opened with prayer and check in.
- * Reports were received and previous minutes approved
- * The financial report showed a monthly difference of (\$6276.51). Year to date difference through February is (\$8425.78).
- * Regretfully received the report from Deacons that Colleen Higbee, moderator is stepping down from the position of Deacon. A thank you from Session is being sent.
- * Passed a motion to move toward a new session structure - to distinguish the roles of governance and program ministry. Elders have been delegated to investigate the path ahead.
- * Approved a motion to spend up to \$2400 dollars from the hospitality budget to replace 50 year old heavy dinnerware (plates and cups) with lighter weight items.
- * Approved a motion to upgrade to new internet provider, increasing broadband width and wireless capabilities ASAP.

Children, Youth, and Family Ministries April 2021

Dear MVPC Families,

Happy Easter! I wanted to use this opportunity to remind you that YOU are the greatest influence of your children and youth's faith. Kids and teens can go to church, attend all the programs and activities, and get to know a whole team of people who help them grow in their faith, but YOU are still the biggest influence on their ongoing faith journey. So, please, take time to talk with your children and youth about faith. Share with them about your own faith and make faith a part of your family life. Easter is a great time to take on new family practices of prayer, scripture, reaching out to others, and serving others. Please let me know if you are in need of ideas or resources to help your whole family grow in faith. I hope you all have a wonderful Easter, full of both faith and chocolate!

March 28th Palm Sunday Service at 10:30 am

March 28th Youth Group Easter Celebration at 12:30 pm

March 31st Kid's Group Easter Celebration at 4 pm

April 1st Maundy Thursday Service at 7 pm

April 4th Easter Sunday Worship at 10:30 am

Blessings,

Rebecca Holland

Director of Christian Education and Spiritual Formation

Mount Vernon Presbyterian Church



MVPC Kid's Group (k-5th)

Wednesdays at 4 pm on Zoom

Story, Games, and Fun!

April 7th No Group (Spring Break)

April 14th Going Home: The Ascension

April 21st God Sends Help: Pentecost

April 28th A New Way to See: Paul

MVPC Youth Group (teens)

Sundays at 12:30 pm on Zoom

Video, Discussion, and Games!

April 4th No Group (Easter)

April 11th No Group (Spring Break)

April 18th Shema / Listen

April 25th YHWH / Lord

Godly Play Stories in Sunday Worship on Zoom

April 4th Easter Sunday! The Many Faces of Easter Story.

April 11th Knowing Jesus in a New Way: Known in Absence

April 18th Knowing Jesus in a New Way: Known in the Breaking of Bread

April 25th Knowing Jesus in a New Way: Known in Doubt





Happy Spring!

Here's a few photos from around Skagit Valley and of the baby lamb's from Mr. Gary's farm for everyone to enjoy.



Thank you to:

- ♥ Colleen Higbee for her years of service and leadership as a Deacon.
- ♥ All those who have helped clean the church after the construction and year of absence.
- ♥ To Bruce Lavers for organizing the cleaning.
- ♥ To Pastor Dan for devising a more efficient system for Zoom meetings.
- ♥ To Rebecca for keeping Christian Education and Spiritual formation happening while we are distanced from each other.
- ♥ Aaron Kiesser who helped make the assigned breakout rooms happen in Lent during Worship.
- ♥ David Lorente for coordinating the power point and recordings during Worship every week.
- ♥ everyone who helped make the short term Lenten small groups so wonderful on Wednesdays and Sundays: Patti Allen, Pat and Pete Papadopoulos, Bev Helton, Mim Ambrose, Fran Zimmerly, Jan Earkes, David Reamer, Toni Hulbert, Ruth and David Neal, Rosemary Gale, Becky Goodell, Rebecca Holland, Lou Cheney, and Loretta VanderPol.
- ♥ The grounds team for beginning spring work on the landscape.
- ♥ All those volunteers that contributed to cleaning the church: Patti A., Joan L., Sarah C., Lou C., Leslie B., Linda R., Barbara K., Connie B., Rebecca H., Chris H., Alvin S., Mary Ellen B., Ruth & David N., Arlene A. and anyone else I missed.
- ♥ Those that continue to keep a secure watch over our church all this past year and now: Ted L., Doug Catton., Doug Chandler, Bruce L., Bob W. and Pete P.



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. mvpcc@mountvernonpres.org

Pause Prayer Group Tuesday 9 am (on Zoom)

Want to grow in your prayer life with the support of a group of friends? Come check out the Pause Prayer Group that meets on Tuesday mornings from 9 to 10 am for a time of prayer and sharing. Please talk with Rebecca Holland or Pat Papadopoulos to get on the email reminder and zoom numbers list.



Accepting Nominations

⁴ Now there are varieties of gifts, but the same Spirit; ⁵ and there are varieties of services, but the same Lord; ⁶ and there are varieties of activities, but it is the same God who activates all of them in everyone. ⁷ To each is given the manifestation of the Spirit for the common good. -- 1 Corinthians 12:4-7

We are called into the church of Jesus Christ by baptism, and marked as Christ's own by the Holy Spirit. The common calling of all Christians is to be disciples and servants of our Lord, Jesus. Within the community of the church, some people are called to particular service. The task of the nominating committee is simple: to identify people who are called into four roles at MVPC (Elder, Deacon, Nominating Committee member and Endowment Committee member). The slate of nominees will be presented to the congregation before the Spring/Summer annual congregational meeting to be held in May, but the process starts long before that. The Nominating committee has already begun meeting and we are entering into the stage of the process where we gather input from you, the congregation.

We are ready and excited to receive your nominations! Please consider whose faith and service you admire, whose counsel you trust, whose compassion shines through, and whose life reflects the love of Christ. These are the kind of people we want to lead MVPC and we encourage you to nominate them! Nominations can be made using this online **Nomination Form**: <https://forms.gle/9D8X4Ad7VYyKWNN46> . You can also nominate someone by emailing mvpcc@mountvernonpres.org with the word Nomination in the subject line.

Mission Partners

The Genesis Process

(a program used by New Earth Recovery for understanding and healing of compulsive behaviors)



Alan and Amy Muia will be leading a full Genesis Counselor Training soon, April 26-29th. "It will be fully interactive, in real-time but online." I participated in this zoom training last October, and learned so much about how addiction works for others and, of course, for myself. I now feel encouraged and supported enough to work with clients who are in recovery from drug and alcohol addiction. These clients encourage me with their persistent hope and trust in God. The Genesis Process also has a program that encourages small groups to explore their own stuck places. In the future, I would love to bring a group together at MVPC for those interested in understanding our compulsive behaviors. "Though many come to help others, attenders often find healing for themselves". Please feel free to talk to me if you have any questions about this wonderful program. - Pat Papadopoulos

If you would like to find out more about this training or register for the training here is the link:
www.NERecovery.org/events



Hi there. My name is Alvin Shim, the new One Parish One Prisoner Coordinator at Underground Ministries. I'm in Room 3 here inside MVPC, surrounded by white boards, post-its, and hot cups of coffee.

My role, as I see it, is to be the logistics muscle behind One Parish One Prisoner. I coordinate the resources that help get the players to the table. There are 15 post-its on the board here, meaning there are fifteen active relationships with a recently-incarcerated individual and a congregation in their release area. On the next whiteboard, there are 25 unpaired players to match. Lots of work to do to on-board them, find timelines and locations that fit, and pray that the Spirit continues to set the work before us.

Next to those post-its are bigger ones: Los Angeles, New Jersey, Sacramento, Chicago. Pre-assembled networks of chaplains, parole officers, staff at synod, archdiocese, presbytery, etc. that love the incarcerated and call on us to plug and play our system into their regions. We got off the Zoom yesterday with NW Ohio this week. The team knew about incarceration. They worked faithfully in accompaniment to the despair that it brings to the individual and the system. They wanted, "to see some things handled differently."

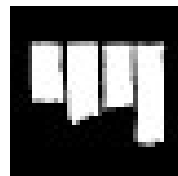
We begin the first run of One Parish One Prisoner: Ohio this week. Two weeks ago, we began the first run with Hagar's Community Church, serving the Washington Corrections Center for Women.

We've got work to do. We're gonna need more white boards.

Thank you, Mount Vernon Presbyterian Church. This space is a very generous gift, and we are putting it to use! May God inform and enable our work.

With Gratitude,

Alvin Shim
One Parish One Prisoner Coordinator
Underground Ministries



April Birthdays & Anniversaries

2-Sumiko Shinozaki

3-Bruce Cummings

Becky Goodell

4-Aaron Kiesser

5-Al & Sue Berger

6-Bev Wilson

Dave Gale

6-John & Leslie Braun

7-Bill DeHon

9-Benjamin Holland

10-Rogan Milnor

11-Ayden Bartholomew

12-Annie Gilbert

15-Gail LaFleur

17-Roger Hill

19-Jan DeHon



20-Jillian Anderson

22-Ruth Neal

Anna Olsen

23-Leslie Braun

23-Wayne & Chris Yerigan

24-Sandy Ball

27-Mary Poppe

30-George Ridgeway

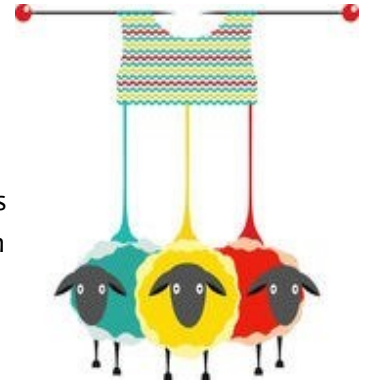
Tamara Riggs (Tammy)

To All Women of MVPC

The Women's Fellowship Zoom meeting will be on the 4th Saturday, April 24. 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. April meetings are the 13th and 27th. 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