

# The Grapevine

**I am the vine; You are the branches.**  
John 15:5

Year 118, Issue 8  
August 2020

## A Little Reminder

from Rebecca Holland, Director of Children and Family Ministries

God loves you. Yes, you. Let God's love sink in, all the way to your heart, your inner being, your soul. God loves you with all your imperfections and quirks. God knows you, your struggles, your joys, your tears. God is with you on this crazy journey of life, loving you at every twist and turn, as you navigate the complexities of being human. Yes, even when you turn away from God and give in to anger, fear, and hate; God is right there loving you, right there with open arms, ready for you to turn back to love.

God loves everyone. Yes, everyone. Feel God's love expand beyond you to your neighbors, to your community, and all the way out to the world. God's love is beyond our understanding. God's love can hold the pain, the suffering, the hurt. God is relational: Creator God, Redeemer Christ, and Sustainer Spirit. God's love is in us, in others, and in that undefinable space between people called relationship. Feel God's love extending and connecting you and people you know, people you know of, and the masses beyond who you may never know.



We are all in this together and we must choose to live into God's love every moment of every day. Please remember that you are loved and that you have a choice to live your life out of that love. Feel God's love guiding you as you interact with everyone: your family, your friends, the people you pass by, the people you see in the news, the people who you know are out there in the world though you may never get to meet. Live into God's love; let God's love fill you and overflow out of you into the world.



## Sunday Worship

On Zoom

10:30 am

Meeting #972 436 044

Submitted by Josh VerHalen

Over the last few months, I've taken the opportunity to tell you the histories of some beloved hymns and their composers. I feel it's an important part of the worship experience that oftentimes is overlooked; to know the experiences and stories that inspired the writers to pen nearly immortal words such as "Oh Lord, my God, when I, in awesome wonder, consider all the works thy hands have made" or "Though sorrows like sea billows roll...it is well with my soul". This month, though, I want to take the opportunity to get a little more personal and talk about my absolute favorite composition. One that is loved and celebrated the world over in classical music circles, particularly in its country of origin, but often gets buried behind Beethoven's 5th Symphony or Tchaikovsky's "Festival Overture 1812" in its exposure to the masses. One that I, myself, only heard for the first time a few years ago at a symphony hall in Vancouver on a Thursday afternoon. One that touched me so deeply, I had a few bars of its melody tattooed on my forearm so I'll never forget the feeling of hearing it for the first time.

I'm speaking of Edward Elgar's "Variations on an Original Theme Op. 36". It's almost fitting that I've built it up so much yet shrouded it in mystery as the "original theme" is titled "Enigma" and the work collectively is most often referred to as "Elgar's Enigma Variations". The composer himself has even suggested that there is another hidden musical cypher within the piece, and maybe in the coming months I'll dive into that mystery further.

The "Enigma Variations" are not even the best known of Elgar's compositions. His Pomp and Circumstance March (specifically the D Major March No.1 "Land of Hope and Glory") is played at seemingly every graduation ceremony in the United States and Canada (and interestingly, the Philippines), even though it is actually written as a British patriotic hymn with words by English poet A.C. Benson and sung with a sense of, well, pomp and circumstance, that only the English can muster at any number of functions. In fact, if not for his wife's attentive ear, "Enigma" may never have existed at all. It is best if we use the composer's own recollections to describe its genesis:

"One evening after a long and tiresome day's teaching, aided by a cigar, I musingly played on the piano the theme as it now stands. [Lady Elgar] asked with a sound of approval, 'What was that?' I answered 'Nothing—but something might be made of it; Powell would have done this (Var. 2) or Nevinson would have looked at it like this (Var. 12).' Variation 4 was then played and the question asked, 'Who is that like?' The answer was, 'I cannot quite say, but it is exactly the way W.M.B. goes out of the room. You are doing something which I think has never been done before.' Thus the work grew into the shape it has now."

Each unique variation stands as a portrait of a friend or acquaintance of Elgar's beginning with his wife and ending with the composer himself. Some are rather whimsical, like Variation 11 "G.R.S" which tells the story of Elgar's friend George Sinclair's bulldog falling into the Wye River and sheepishly climbing up the bank, ending with a triumphant "BARK!". Others evoke a more sentimental mood, such as Variation 9 "Nimrod", written for his friend August Jaeger (Jaeger is the German word for "hunter" and Nimrod was a great hunter of biblical times). Elgar called this variation a memory of "a long summer evening talk, when my friend grew nobly eloquent (as only he could) on the grandeur of Beethoven, and especially of his slow movements." The theme itself derives much from Beethoven's Sonata No. 8 "Pathetique".

"Nimrod" is by far the best known of the 14 variations and is often played on its own (even a couple of times during worship in the last couple years, accompanied by Lou Cheney!). And it is the moment during the concert in Vancouver I referenced earlier that I knew "Enigma" was going to be my favorite piece of music forever. It is a powerfully evocative and utterly heart rending movement that seems to come out of nowhere in the midst of the 14 variations. It is preceded by Variation 8 "W.N", a brisk tempo, lighthearted segment suggested by a house of aristocratic old ladies sipping their tea and gabbing. The music slows slightly, indicating the end of the variation, but for the first time during the performance, a single note is held quivering by the violins to bridge the two variations in what is called an "attacca". What follows is an Adagio, at a slow-as-slow-can-be tempo, that is overwhelming in its beauty and lyrical fluidity. It rises and falls in glorious dissonant harmony, a wide range of dynamics which at one moment cause you to lean in and at another shakes your bones. And just when you think the emotional ride is over, it peaks one more time in a triumphant manner you never quite hear coming. And then you're left with silence. It is, in fact, the only point in the entire composition that ends with an extended pause...a fermata (a mark indicating a pause of unspecified length) over a rest. As though Elgar himself knew audiences and performers alike would need a moment to collect themselves before moving on. Tears of both joy and sorrow are such a common reaction you can even find articles that attempt to analyze "Nimrod" and why it so reliably has that effect on people.

I mentioned earlier that there is a musical cypher written into "Enigma". Elgar himself was a fan of cryptography and cyphers so it's certainly not a far fetched idea. Elgar himself confirmed that it



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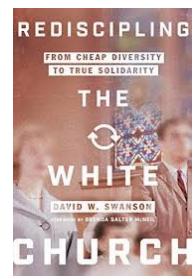
exists and offered a few hints over the years, but never anything concrete, just that it was well known but very well hidden and loosely connected. I won't send us down the rabbit hole I've often fallen into when reading about the various theories, I'll simply say that 120 years after its composition, people are still searching for what this "unheard melody" actually is with theories ranging from a Martin Luther hymn (Elgar was a man of strong Christian faith) to "God Save the Queen".

There are 100s of recordings of Nimrod and "Enigma Variations" as a whole. Any one of them will do you just fine to introduce you to this wonderful piece, however the finest I've heard can be found on YouTube and other places online performed by the Warsaw Philharmonic Orchestra under the direction of Jacek Kaspszyk for a Remembrance Day concert in 2017. I'm happy to pass along a link to anyone who would like to enjoy it, just let Barbara or I know.

#### NEW SUMMER BOOK SERIES:

#### [RE-DISCIPLING THE WHITE CHURCH: From Cheap Diversity to True Solidarity](#) by David W. Swanson

Christians across America are asking important, difficult and overdue questions about the role and work of the church in this age of reckoning with America's past and sins. Our MVPC discipleship ministry is joining other Presbyterian churches in the region who are also prayerfully reading David Swanson's timely book together, Re-Discipling the White Church. What better way to enter these difficult themes than as a matter of growing as disciples of Jesus?



[Order your copy of the book here](#) JOIN US via Zoom Wednesdays 7-8pm, starting July 15 - August 19.

The book series will be guest-facilitated on Zoom by Kevin Riley, our mission partner and pastor in Concrete, and co-hosted by MVPC members Pat Papadopoulos and Paul O'Donnell. Pat and Paul invite you to join this learning journey.

MVPC  
Church Leadership  
2019-2020

Elders		Class Year	Ministry Area		Deacons		Class Year
Patti	Allen	2020	Hospitality		Brian	Anderson	2020
Becky	Goodell	2020	Hospitality		Sarah	Catton	2020
Bob	Rauch	2020	Discipleship		Colleen	Higbee	2020
Bob	Higbee	2020	Ministry Support		Toni	Hulbert	2020
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	Capital Campaign Chair		Tom	Howard	2022
Bill	DeHon	2022	Mission		Sandi	Seabott	2022
Gail	LaFleur	2022	Worship		Sumiko	Shinozaki	2022

#### Notes from July 21st Session meeting

- The Zoom meeting was opened with prayer and listening prayer.
- Thanks were expressed to Patti Allen who is rotating off of Session.
  - Corporate officers will be elected next session meeting.
    - The following appointments were made:
      - Treasurer, Beth Tracker
      - Assistant treasurer, Anne Long
      - Financial Secretary, Leslie Braun
      - Assistant financial secretary, Fran Zimmerly
      - Clerk, Ward Ernst
      - Secretary of Corporation, Ward Ernst
    - The meeting was closed with prayer.



## August Stories

2nd Ten Best Ways

9th The Ark and the Tent

16th The Ark and the Temple

23rd The Exile and Return

30th Back to School Blessings

\* Parents! Please be sure to fill out the survey about Online Kid's Club and other opportunities for kids during Fall 2020.

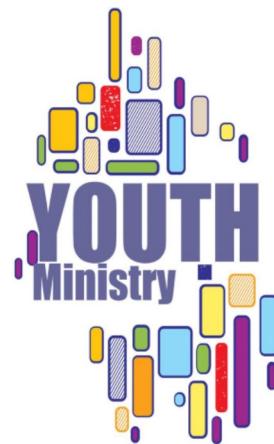
**Incoming MS  
and HS Youth!**

**Join Online  
Youth Group**

**1st and 3rd**

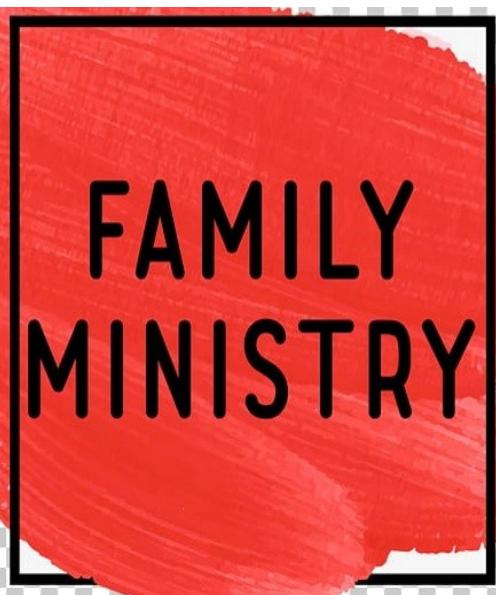
**Sundays**

**7 to 8 pm**



Our Youth Group has teamed up with the Youth Groups from First United Methodist Church and St. Paul's Episcopal Church for Summer Youth Group on the 1st and 3rd Sundays of July and August from 7 to 8 pm. Youth heading in to 6th through 12th grade

are invited to join the online faith, fellowship, and fun! Contact Pastor Dan or the church to get on the list for an email reminder and zoom numbers.



## **MVPC Family Online Opportunities**

**Sundays 10:30 am**

**All Ages Worship**

**Sundays 9 am**

**Bible Study**

**1st & 3rd Sun 5 pm**

**Family Small Group\***

**1st & 3rd Sun 7 pm**

**Youth Group**

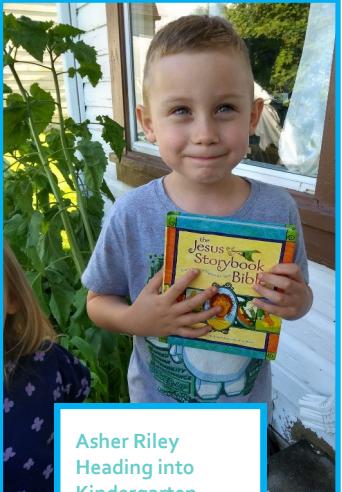
**Wed 7 pm**

**Book Study**

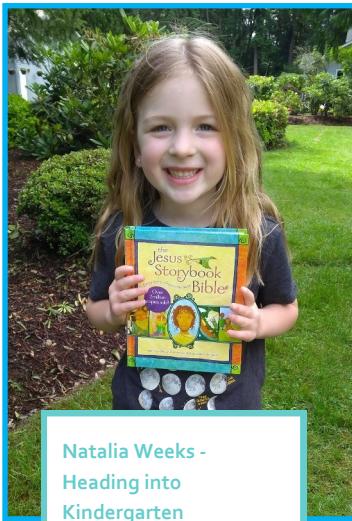
*Contact the church to join the email reminder list, get zoom numbers, and learn about additional opportunities!*

**\*Family Small Group:** Families of all ages and stages are invited to join for online check in, prayer, and games on the 1st & 3rd Sundays from 5 to 6 pm.

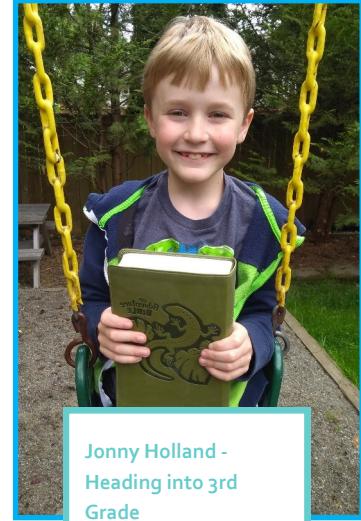
## CONGRATULATIONS 2020 Graduates (K—College)



Asher Riley  
Heading into  
Kindergarten



Natalia Weeks -  
Heading into  
Kindergarten



Jonny Holland -  
Heading into 3rd  
Grade



Warren Weeks - Heading  
into 3rd grade



Rose Cooksey - Heading  
into Middle School



Ayden Bartholomew -  
Heading into High School



Miriam Cooksey - Heading  
into High School



Natalie Holland - Heading  
into High School



Tom Long - Graduating  
from college

**Sunday August 30th is Back to School Blessings**

We will pray for and bless the students and teachers as they get ready to start a new year of classes.

# Coronavirus Response Task Force Report August 2020

Thank you all for your response to the re-opening survey conducted by our deacons. Your responses revealed that our MVPC members and friends consider safety for all as a very high priority.

Our Northwest Coast Presbytery is providing a solid leadership framework. Their invaluable [recommendations](#) as well as those on the [PCUSA national coronavirus website](#) detail how Presbyterian Churches can best respond to this pandemic. We are following our Presbytery's recommendations. Also, Washington State's "Safe Start" guidance for churches is clear about what our plans need to include prior to beginning in-person operations. Here's what it says:

"All religious and faith-based organizations are required to develop for each location (indoor and outdoor if applicable) a comprehensive COVID-19 exposure control, mitigation and recovery plan. The plan must include policies regarding the following control measures:

PPE utilization  
On-location physical distancing  
Hygiene  
Sanitation  
Symptom monitoring

Incident reporting  
Location disinfection procedures  
COVID-19 safety training  
Exposure response procedures  
Post-exposure incident recovery plan

*A copy of the plan must be available at the location for inspection by state and local authorities."*

## The current situation:

- The Northwest Coast Presbytery recommends lagging the State's plan by one phase. For example, while Skagit County is in Phase 2, MVPC will use Phase 1 guidelines. When Skagit County moves to Phase 3 the church building restrictions will be based on Phase 2... and so on.
- Mount Vernon Presbyterian Church is currently closed. The Counseling Centers of North Puget Sound and Underground Ministries' social work offices are classified as essential under strict guidelines.
- We are hopeful that a very safe vaccine is developed, accepted, and made easily available for all. Then we can go back to making joyful noises together again, in person and en masse! In the meantime we will continue to improve our virtual togetherness.

## What your Coronavirus Response Task Force is focusing on now:

- Overall we are taking a "systems approach" while addressing the control measures above and developing a formal document, policies, and plan.
- We strive to diligently understand what risks and benefits there are to the various ways that we can meet the challenges posed by the coronavirus.
- How and when to use our physical church building and assets to further our mission.
- How insurance coverage relates to this situation and how that impacts what we do.
- Responding to non-MVPC groups who desire to use our building.
- How to offer an outdoor in-person and Zoom hybrid worship service as the weather and coronavirus conditions permit.
- How to offer support for wedding and funeral/memorial service gatherings.
- How to gather safely with our other associated groups, youth, small groups, etc.

## What you can do:

- Correctly wear an effective face mask when you are around people other than those in your own household.
- Wash hands frequently with soap and water. Use a hand cleaner or spray bottle with alcohol-based cleaner for convenience if soap and water washing are not available.
- Have a plan and reach out to us for help if someone in your household tests positive.
- To reduce risk, shop at businesses that are following and enforcing current safety guidelines and are excluding unsafe clients.
- For the sake of your household if you have symptoms like a fever, loss of taste, sore throat, malaise, or suspect infection or exposure to the virus, get an accurate test. The very accurate local test at Skagit Valley College's drive through center takes up to 48 hours, and is free with any symptom. Do NOT rely on a 15 minute rapid test as they have unacceptable false negatives rates. Remember that one can be asymptomatic which is contagious without symptoms, so err on the side of caution.

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- Look for the good things however small in this adversity, and focus on them.
- As you are able, help others generously with Love and good judgement.

In closing, please look for the “good fruit” in this time of challenge. After all, that is how they will know us: [Matthew 7:16](#). We urge you not to miss this unique chance to wisely, safely, and carefully help others by expanding your practice of caring, refining your own understanding of your values and how you can express His love for your neighbor through your caring.

Please reach out to Brad Clure with your thoughts or for assistance if you are in need and/or know of someone who needs additional help.

Yours Truly and With Love, Your Coronavirus Response Team Task Force:  
 Brad Clure, Sarah Catton, Lou Cheney, Connie Bowser, Sumiko Shinozaki, Colleen Higbee, Bruce Lavers, and George Ridgeway.

### The Creative Corner

Being "shut in and out" does have its advantages, so it is said. We'd like to take advantage of your attention. As part of our "continuing education" for the church, we are creating a "Creative Corner" segment for the Grapevine. Now, we know that there is a lot of talent out there just waiting to bud out and be shared with everyone. Won't you help keep this newly created segment of the Grapevine going with your creative contributions? Create and submit your talent piece via email to the church office ([mvpc@mountvernonpres.org](mailto:mvpc@mountvernonpres.org))

### Things I have learned in the last 6 months.

By Gail LaFleur

1. I like being with people.
2. We don't all think alike.
3. The size of your bandwidth does matter.
4. Sometimes you have to let people be ignorant.
5. It's nice greeting neighbors while walking.
6. Things are pretty much the same in Scotland.
7. It's okay to watch cartoons.
8. My cats like me being on the desktop computer.
9. You can't believe everything you see, especially on social media.
10. Hiking is safer than going to stores.
11. My church family is very important to me.
12. The dog loves quarantine.
13. It's possible to disagree without being hateful.
14. Grasshoppers are pretty when they fly.
15. Surgical stitches can be removed while sitting in your car during quarantine.
16. Having time to be creative doesn't make me creative.
17. Birds have thumbs.
18. Finding shapes in clouds isn't just for kids.
19. It's okay to work out or take a walk just before a Zoom meeting. They can't smell you.
20. Cats have a primordial pouch. I think I do, too.
21. During a pandemic is not the time to bash others' politics.
22. Parrots can be housebroken.
23. Some older TV shows are just as good the second time around.
24. Nobody likes having their nose covered.
25. Most people care enough about their fellow humans they cover their noses.
26. With all that is going on now, I am so glad God is faithful and loves us all.



## UPDATES FROM MISSION PARTNERS



### Update from Love Inc.

. Here's a brief update as to how Covid has changed things. The furniture ministry is on hold because it is run by volunteers whom we don't want to get exposed going into homes. People can bring furniture to our dock if they first call our Clearing House coordinator to set up a time (360) 419-7061 . Our Dress for success Boutique has also been put on hold due to restrictions, but donations can still be received after calling.

Our Food Bank has been very busy out at Clearlake Community Church. Our Transition House is full with 2 families and has not changed. So we continue to serve where we can!

### FAMILY PROMISE MEALS

Information for MVPC providing meals for Family Promise during Coronavirus challenges.

The plan is for providing dinner meals every Monday for Family Promise families by our volunteers at MVPC. People may contact Briana Gulus by

email [coordinator@familypromiseskagit.org](mailto:coordinator@familypromiseskagit.org) or they may call the office at **360-854-0743** to ask how many are in the Interfaith Hospitality Network at that time. Family Promise is starting to help families move into housing and are accepting new families too, so planning for 12-14 is most likely! Please have your families plan to serve 12-14 people.

- Family Promise is now asking that you bring an entire meal, main dish and sides. The meal may be delivered between 5-6 PM each Monday in July and August.
- If the meal is not fully prepared and ready to be served, there must be someone present with a valid food handlers' card.
- Please remember that masks must be worn at all times you are not social distancing or are in public places. This is especially important now that the face mask mandate will be in place.
- If you need a face mask please let us know.
- Gloves must be worn in the kitchen or when touching food.
- The Meal can be delivered to Bethlehem Lutheran Church address 1006 Wicker Road Sedro-Woolley zip code 98284.

Thank you to our volunteers:

July 6 Laurel & Paul Coalwell

July 13 Sumiko Reamer

July 20 Sandy & Joe Seabott

August 3 Mary Poppe to be delivered by Dee Jobe

August 10 Rob & Tracy Hall

August 17 Sarah & Douglas Catton

August 24 Margo & Don Wortham

**August 31 ?**

(The only request is that they are tired of Spaghetti.)

**Briana has stated that someone there has a food handlers license and can cook if someone wants to finance an evening meal but does not want to cook. You must have a food handlers license to cook at their church.**

### 2020census.gov.

Skagit County has info from **62.4%** of residents - Be sure and be counted!

The faith community is being asked to spread the word about the importance of responding to the Census questionnaire and being counted. The count impacts funding for school breakfasts and lunches, Pell grants for college, roads, bridges, senior and community centers, hospitals and housing programs. It also determines our representation in Congress. Grocery stores and retail all use the data to determine where to open new stores and reduce checkout lines. Library funding is allocated depending on the Census data for the next 10 years.

Everyone counts and we are all equal.

There is translation help in 59 languages.

## Thank You

Thank you all for all the cards, prayers and phone calls of support through the trying experience of my son Kent's death. The MVPC community, and experiencing the power of faith and prayer continues to give me strength. My self reminder everyday is 'you don't know what's around the corner so strive to live each day as God calls us.' God Bless you all.

Mary Ellen Byerly

### Thank you to:

- ♥ Thank you church for your cards and prayers during my time of grieving. Your love, Gods love, mercy and kindness was and is such blessing to me. Thank you!! Ward Ernst
- ♥ For sun and rain and all things beautiful.
- ♥ The Covid-19 task force studying, evaluating and preparing guidelines for opening of MCPC
- ♥ Deacons for calling church members regularly to make sure we are all doing okay!



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](mailto:mvpc@mountvernonpres.org)

## August Birthdays & Anniversaries

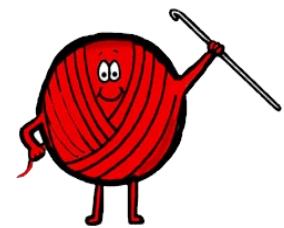
1-David Reamer	20-Paula Rutledge
<i>3-Brad &amp; Barb Clure</i>	21-Tracy Hall
4-Toni Hulbert	22-Pat Skelton
<i>5-Jim &amp; Chris Johnson</i>	25-Peggy Feller
<i>Karen Lorente</i>	26-Ted Langrehr
9-Seaver Milnor	Mike Weeks
11-Mim Ambrose	Gayle Vyskocil
Sarah Maas	Dave & Rosemary Gale
<i>Don &amp; Margaret Semrau</i>	27-Don & Marjorie Riedel
12-Rob & Tracy Hall	30-Britt Swanson
14-Vicki Jones	Alexandra Yerigan
15-Chris Hoke	
<i>15-Paul &amp; Laurel Coalwell</i>	
18-Collie Ridgeway	
19-Douglas Catton	



If you would like to be a liturgist for Sunday mornings, please contact Gail LaFleur or the office. 360-424-7675 or [mvpc@mountvernonpres.org](mailto:mvpc@mountvernonpres.org)

### CRAFTING ON ZOOM

The second and fourth Tuesdays of July find busy fingers flying as a group of crafters and knitters meet on Zoom from noon to 1 pm. Call Patti Allen for more information.



### Mount Vernon Presbyterian Church

Growing followers of Christ

Our Vision Statement

*E*ncounter The Hope  
of the living God through Jesus

*E*ngage One Another  
in authentic friendship

*E*mbrace The World  
with the heart and hands of Jesus