

MOUNT VERNON PRESBYTERIAN CHURCH

Growing Followers of Christ Since 1902



The Grapevine

I am the vine; You are the branches.

John 15:5

Year 120, Issue 3
Sept—Oct 2022

Stories

Ever since light was spoken into being and people have gathered together in community. The first language of shaping identity is story. We are known by the stories we tell, we know others by the stories they tell. Stories call forth life, they reveal one's soul and give voice to experience. For those of us who sometimes forget who we are and *whose* we are (which is most of us at one point or another), there are always stories nearby waiting to remind us and calling us back home.

When the early church got together to “be church” they didn't ask “how do we prove that God is real?” Or “how do we prove that Jesus was raised from the dead?” What they did do was tell stories. They told stories of people who encountered God and what difference it made for them. They told stories of Abraham, Isaac and Jacob. They told stories of Moses and Aaron and Joshua. They told stories of Gideon, Samson, and Deborah. They told stories of the prophets and the history of the people and they told stories of Jesus who ultimately bound all of those other stories together. The reason the church focused on remembering and telling stories is because they believed in the power that comes from both knowing and sharing them: the power of claiming and embracing one's identity as well as the power of aspiring to be one's best-most-authentic self.

Here at Mount Vernon Presbyterian Church, we have identified Biblical Literacy (knowing and applying the scriptures) as one of the four priorities for our ministry. In an effort to better know the stories of the

bible and how they fit together, beginning on September 11th with our program kick-off Sunday, I'm planning to use the Narrative Lectionary as preaching texts for worship on Sunday morning.

The Narrative Lectionary is a selection of readings that tell the overall biblical story and highlight people who encountered God. It was developed by some professors at Luther Seminary with the hope of reconnecting the church with faith's first language: Story. From September through May, we'll journey from Genesis through Paul's letters connecting the narrative arc of our scriptures. As we engage the stories of the bible we'll see hope and disappointment, suffering and redemption; and we'll see how our own stories connect with the big picture that is God's story. Just like in the early church, I believe that process will help us to know who we are. It will help us to know *why* we are who we are and it will also help us to be formed into the people God has called us to be in Jesus Christ. It'll be a beautiful thing, and I can't wait to see how God will work through it for all of us!

Grace and Peace,

Pastor Dan

Upcoming Readings:

9/11 Genesis 6:11-22, 9:8-17

9/18 Genesis 12:1-9

9/25 Genesis 39:1-23

10/2 Exodus 14:10-14, 21-29

Sunday Worship 10:30 am

In person and on Zoom (Go to zoom.us/j/3604247675 - enter Meeting ID: 360 424 7675 Passcode: MVPC; or Meeting Room 1)

Christian Education Hour at MVPC

The 9 to 10 am Hour on Sundays is Christian Education Hour at MVPC starting Sunday, September 11th (the Sunday after Labor Day). There is something for the whole family!

-**Nursery Care** will be provided in the MVPC Nursery 9 am to noon.

-**Godly Play Kids Program** will be in the Godly Play Room

-**MVPC Bible Study** will be in the MVPC Library

-**Rotation of Classes, Books, and Studies** will be in the Great Room

(please talk to Rebecca Holland, Director of Christian Education and Spiritual Formation if you have a class or book or study you would like to lead - we need more teachers and leaders!)

-**Plus**, you are welcome to enjoy before worship fellowship with friends in Good Shepherd Hall, the Fireside Room, or the Narthex. Jesus was all about getting time to connect with others!

Skagit MOPs Moms Group: 1st and 3rd Tuesdays in Good Shepherd Hall (and all the Christian Education Classrooms) starting September 20th, local Moms will gather from 9:30 to 11:30 am for a program of support, fellowship, and faith while their infants get held, toddlers play, and preschoolers have fun growing in their faith. Moms with kids of all ages are welcome to attend.



Senior Group

MVPC is kicking off a whole new senior ministry on the 1st Thursdays of the month starting October 6th and going from 1 to 2 pm with a guest speaker, connecting time, treats, and more!

Seniors will connect with other seniors, and grow in their faith. Please RSVP in the church office by the last Thursday of the month for the following month so we can plan. Please talk with Rebecca Holland, Director of Christian Education and Spiritual Formation if you have questions or would like to be a part of the volunteer team!

Thank you for supporting Tall Timber Summer Camp!

MVPC has a great tradition of supporting the middle school and high school youth as they head to summer camp at Tall Timber every summer. This year we expanded our support to elementary school kids as well. The older elementary kids and the middle school youth had an amazing time at camp with highlights of the climbing wall, camp games, cooling off in the river, worship, campfire, and even the food! Unfortunately, due to sickness with some of the Tall Timber staff, the younger elementary camp and high school camp had to be canceled this year. The kids and youth who didn't get to go were sad, but still hopeful that they would attend next year. Thank you for your continued support! The campers who did get to go to camp assisted in worship and shared their highlights of camp on Sunday, August 28th.

Also, as a result of the cancellations, Tall Timber Camp is in need of more funds to continue their amazing ministry of hosting retreats and camps in the coming year. If you are able and feel called, please consider donating to this amazing MVPC Mission Partner. You can donate by going to: <https://www.talltimber.org/ways-to-give>. Thank you!

Please talk with Rebecca Holland, Director of Christian Education and Spiritual Formation to find out more or to volunteer with one of our wonderful programs or events.

CHILDREN YOUTH AND FAMILY

MVPC Children, Youth, and Family 2022-2023 Programs Kick Off on September 11th!

Children, Youth, and Families are loved at MVPC! They are welcomed at all of the church worship services with craft bags and a special kids table (on the far side of the sound booth). They are encouraged to come to church events and lunches with kid friendly options and an amazing opportunity to connect with other generations. Plus, they have their very own special programs:

-Nursery: Sundays from 9 am to Noon in the Nursery for the youngest members of MVPC to play and experience God's amazing love through crafts and more!

-Godly Play Kids Program: Sundays from 9 to 10 am in the Godly Play Room for elementary aged kids to experience the stories of our faith through a Montessori based curriculum with crafts and more! This year they will be exploring the stories of the Old Testament.

Annual MVPC Pumpkin Party on Sunday, October 30th!

We hope to see you and your family at the Annual MVPC Pumpkin Party after worship on Sunday, October 30th. Everyone is invited to bring their favorite fall food to share. We will enjoy fellowship, food, and carve (or watch the carving of) pumpkins! Church appropriate costumes are encouraged but not required.



-Youth Group: Sundays from Noon to 1:30 pm in the Great Room starting September 18th for middle and high school youth to enjoy a pizza lunch together, play games, and grow in their faith as they watch Bible Project videos and enjoy discussions and wonderings about anything and everything. This year they will be exploring the stories of the New Testament. Plus, there are a few fun youth only events throughout the year like Lock Ins, Retreats, and more!

Youth Helping With...



Mother's Day Flowers



Father's Day Doughnuts for Dads tablecloth

SUMMER EVENTS

Wedding of Aaron and Monica Kiesser



Installation and Ordination of Elders and Deacons



Tall Timber Junior and Middle School Camps



MVPC Summer Family Campout



MISSIONS

Hi Underground Network,



This is **Alvin**. Since joining Underground over a year ago, I've become the Director of Operations for **One Parish One Prisoner**. Last week, I launched our 36th and 37th parish teams in Washington State. New communities starting a two-year journey of relationship and reentry with one person, one new friend, releasing from prison back into their town.

My favorite part of leading these Kickoff Orientations for new teams is when we start with this question: "**Why did you say yes to this journey of relationship and reentry?**"

Answers vary. Some are big picture: they know about all the problems in our criminal punishment system and believe this is a way they can get directly involved. Some are personal: someone discloses their nephew was in prison, and they never told anyone in their church about addiction, trauma, the shame of incarceration. Until now. We then read what their incarcerated partner wrote to the same question in their application. Like this one on my desk now:

"I told myself that I could do it all on my own, that I don't need anyone because I'm a man. The truth is that I was afraid to ask for help or admit I didn't know anything about being an adult. I've never really had anyone I could trust. I've never felt loved enough to believe I was worth the effort, that I could trust and help without being back-stabbed. I always keep my guard up. I've been through a lot in my life, pushing people away. I've made many bad choices, put a lot of unneeded pain, heartache, and suffering on my wonderful wife and children. I don't want to keep living this way."

Every answer is a story that weaves us back together.

Alvin Shim

Director of Operations, *One Parish One Prisoner*

Underground Ministries

undergroundministries.org

REENTRY NAVIGATORS

Alex Sanchez, Eric Flores, Genaro Sanchez, Ramon Luna and Tony Cienfuegos are now leading our growing Skagit County work as **Reentry Navigators**.





Have you thought about the true impact of your gift to Friendship House?

When you make a donation, you're not only supporting an organization; you're supporting real people in need of food, shelter, love and acceptance.

You are the reason 5,000 hot meals are served from our Café every month.

You are the reason Teresa slept in a real bed for the first time in nearly 2 years, last night.

You are the reason Stephanie has a professional outfit to wear to work.

Each dollar you donate makes a difference in the life of a person struggling with homelessness!

Every day the team at Friendship House has the opportunity to meet face to face with some of our homeless neighbors. No one starts out to be homeless, but we all know "life" happens. People can find themselves out of resources, facing big challenges and have nowhere to turn. We cannot ignore their need. These people find support at Friendship House.

During the first six months of 2022 you helped Friendship House provide shelter to 584 individuals and serve an average of 160 nutritious meals every day, seven days a week to anyone who was hungry.

Jen Hutchison
Development Manager



COMING SOON

ANNUAL

Homeless for a Night Fundraiser

SEPTEMBER 30, 2022

This year's focus will be the many accomplishments of the children who have graduated from programs. Your faces were greatly missed over the last couple years of social distancing and capped event attendance. Your faithfulness to the Family Promise program of Skagit during those times is what kept families served during the pandemic.

It is with your support that 349 families have been placed or sustained in permanent housing since inception.

It is with your support that Family Promise increased to serving 35+ families at a time.

It is with your support that Family Promise is preventing new homeless numbers by serving up to 20 families at a time through Prevention and Shelter Diversion.

In the first few weeks of entrance into programming we often hear "I don't know where we would have gone, we had no hope."

Over the last two years you helped return children to the arms of their parents; and helped us clothe, feed, and shelter children and nurture dreams. Don't miss out on this year's **Homeless for a Night** celebration of children's accomplishments on September 30th as the children share the impact you have made in their lives.



MVPC
Families
hosting a
dinner for
Family
Promise
Families

Homeless for a Night 2022

Friday, Sept 30
Inspire Church
Sedro-Woolley



To become involved please email
jason@familypromiseskagit.org

MILESTONES

“Forward To A Bright Future” Capital Campaign Update

JUST THE FACTS

This letter is meant to provide you with “just the facts” regarding our “Forward To A Bright Future” Capital Campaign as we begin the second half of our objective to pay off our mortgage loan by December 31, 2023. We want and need to be as completely transparent as possible.

The Good News! The work is over (99%) done on time and under budget!

Budget	Planned	Actual Spent	Remaining (excluding unpaid interest)	Under Budget
3 year	\$978,227	\$970,654	\$0	\$7,573
4th year	\$490,240	\$483,280	\$1,522	\$5,438
<i>Total</i>	<i>\$1,468,467</i>	<i>\$1,453,934</i>	<i>\$1,522</i>	<i>\$13,011</i>

Unspent Budgeted Interest \$13,550

More good news! Some generous folks of MVPC have contributed over and above what they pledged. THANK YOU, very much.

Non-pledged gifts received \$71,553

Pledge Summary

Pledges	Amount	Received	Outstanding
3 year	\$978,227	\$814,966	\$163,261
4th year	\$490,240	\$255,727	\$234,513
<i>Totals</i>	<i>\$1,468,467</i>	<i>\$1,070,693</i>	<i>\$397,774</i>



The rough news: between pledging and fulfillment, lots has happened in the world...

Based on people who have moved away or passed on, etc., we expect to have approximately a 9.4% shortfall in receiving pledges that were made.

Shortfall \$138,400 9.4%

We need to make up the shortfall between what was pledged and what we expect to receive.

Total Expenditures \$1,455,456 (not including unpaid interest)
 PLUS, Total Expected Interest \$ 13,550 (variable amount; the sooner we pay, the lower actual interest cost)
 LESS, Total Expected Receipts \$1,401,670 (includes non-pledged gifts and shortfall)

SUMMARY: Non-Pledged Gifts Recv'd [\$71,553 minus \$138,400] Shortfall = \$ 66,847 critically needed additional contributions.

MORTGAGE LOAN BALANCE 8/1/2022 \$423,597

Take away: For those of you who haven't yet pledged or contributed, and for those in position to help make up the additional need, it's not too late! Any contributions will be meaningful and help put MVPC on solid footing moving forward into the bright future to which God is calling us!

Questions? Please feel free to contact: Bruce Lavers, Mary Ellen Byerly or Leslie Braun.

Birthdays and Anniversaries



September

3-Anne Long
Mike & Katie Weeks
4-Micah Hall
5-Megan Nash
7-*Joe & Sandra Seabott*
8-Liz Rogers
9-Pete Papadopoulos
13-Eden Cooksey
Liz Cooksey
14-Vicki McCarty
John and Connie Shultz
15-Phanice Olwete
20-Dan & Anne Long
21-Gary & Vicki Jones
Betty Rogers
22-Val Smith
23-Michaela Holland
29-Claire Coalwell
30-Dan Holland

October

1-Nathan Curtis
2-Patti Allen
4-John Shultz
8-Cameron Hazelwood
Courtney Hazelwood
9-Ben Rogers
10-Rose Cooksey
11-Frances Oyamo
13-Susan Schlumberger
15-Darren Overby
18-Matilda Maas
20-Doris Hansen
Rose Cooksey
26-Sadie Rutledge
27-*Don & Susan Schlumberger*
28-Amanda Scoby
Merlin Zimmerly

From Mary Ellen



Thank You is not enough to express my gratitude to ALL who helped over my terms as Hospitality Ministry Coordinator. This ministry has a place for all kinds of skills; working as a team to set up events and menus, purchasing food for events, preparing the food, setting up GSH, serving, clean-up, and keeping supplies up to date.

There are special activities such as a special breakfast or recognition event, holiday parties that have food, and Sunday morning coffee fellowship after worship. All this requires many volunteers and I have experienced such great support from all of you. This hospitality experience has been extremely rewarding. I hope it was for all who have participated in helping with the various events. Thank you for all the memories.

Ward Ernst has agreed to be the hospitality ministry Coordinator and I look forward to traditional and new ideas as MVPC continues to be welcoming and hospitable to all.



- Mary P., Sumiko, Steve B. for saving us added expense by augmenting our custodial service to vacuum the Sanctuary, Fireside Room and GSH on a weekly, rotating schedule.
- Lou C. for cleaning our kitchen floor with the new mop-head we purchased.
- Bill D., Rob H. and David L. for repairing our BBQ Pit after it was recently vandalized.
- Dan Long for his dedication to work on his new prayer walk garden design.
- Doug C., Leslie B., Jim B and Chris C. for maintaining the lawn maintenance and Ted L. and Sumiko for watering and tending the beautiful gardens.
- Jim Byron for donating a self-propelled power mower.
- Patti Allen, Rosemary Gale and many others for coordinating and organizing a wedding and 2 memorials.
- Heidi Yantz for volunteering to help with a new look for the Grapevine newsletter.
- Dave Gale for preaching while pastor Dan was on vacation.
- Nominating committee for sticking with the process longer than you expected .
- Rebecca Holland for the Bible 101 Class.
- The Bell Choir for a fun, festive addition to the worship service .
- Dan Long and Jessica Jasper, Rebecca and Dan Holland for hosting the youth Lock-in.

Insurance Company Change for MVPC

Session approved changing our insurance company to Brotherhood Mutual Insurance to obtain better coverage for the building and contents at a lower cost. Instead of being part of a “pool” of customers we are covered as an individual entity. The new insurance is effective as of September 1, 2022

Women’s Fellowship

Watch announcements in the weekly updates for September for Women's Fellowship events. A few of us gathered this summer for a walking tour at the Rock Garden in Bellingham and a visit to a lavender farm in Stanwood. We welcome your ideas for programming this fall. Contacts are Sandy Ball, Pat Papadopulos. and Lou Cheney. Regular meeting dates are 4th Saturdays at 9 a.m., in the Church Library.

Ph 360-424-7675.

Men’s Breakfast

The Men’s Breakfast is held the fourth Saturday of the month at 9 am. Ward Ernst works his magic to produce a yummy satisfying meal. Programs accompany the fellowship among each other. If you have ideas for a program please contact Bob Wygal or let the church office know. Ph 360-424-7675

“Come Under Care” of MVPC

Meet Carine (car-een).

Carine Ndifon is a Supply Specialist/Material Control Manager in the Navy with a Presbyterian background. Stationed at NASWhidbey and currently deployed, Carine found a church home with us in the early months of COVID-19 at a time of great introspection in her life. She came seeking guidance and prayer partners. Welcome and caring opened a friendship that developed into mentorship. Looking back it’s easy to see the Holy Spirit at work within our core charism.

Faith has been central throughout Carine’s life. She had considered seminary as a course of study after high school. A pastor’s comment deterred her at the time and she went on to earn multiple secular degrees. It was through a friend for whom she was ministering during a battle with cancer that she heard God’s call to formal ministry. She wonders now if, like Jonah, she ran from God’s call back then. She trusts she is answering God’s call with the exact tools God intended for her and has been spit out on the right shore.

As a session we have committed to provide limited financial support and “all in” on emotional support. Carine covets our prayers as she answers this call:

- Patience and peace that her release from active duty to reserve status will proceed in a timely manner.
- Time and time management that will allow her to complete her in-process doctoral thesis concurrent with her first year of seminary.
- Finances hold out as planned

God’s Blessings on your journey Carine!

From the Worship Team

- Over the next few months we may try out a few different forms of serving communion to attempt to best meet the needs of both the people in the sanctuary and the people worshipping remotely. If you have feedback to offer, please get in touch with Pastor Dan!
- This year, 2022, with Christmas eve falling on Saturday, MVPC is not going to have Sunday morning worship on Christmas Day.

Book Reviews from the MVPC library

By Lou Cheney

The following 2 books may be found in the Biography Section of the library.

Convicted by McGee and Collins

It seems appropriate that a church that supports a ministry to former prisoners would have this book on its shelves. This story takes you through real-life experience of the justice system to forgiveness, reconciliation, and friendship.

Coming Clean by Jorge Waldes

Filled with details of the life of a wealthy, powerful drug dealer, the life of crime he lived is laid bare in this book. The story changes when, in brokenness, he finds Christ.

Summer End Family Picnic/Movie Night/Bonus Youth Lock In





Mark your calendars for Fall Programs and Events!

Sunday, September 4th - Back to School Blessings! During Worship we will pray for all the students and teachers as they head back to school.

Sunday, September 11th - Godly Play Kicks Off (Most Sundays 9 to 10 am) and All Church Salmon BBQ following worship!!!! (Plus Nursery switches to 9 am to Noon!)

Tuesday, September 20th - MOPs Mom's Group Kicks Off (1st and 3rd Tuesdays from 9:30 to 11:30 am for Moms)

Sunday, September 25th - Youth Group Kicks Off (Most Sundays from Noon to 1:30 pm)

Thursday, October 6th - Seniors Group (First Thursdays from 1:00 to 2:00 pm)

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

Know God's Love

Deepening life of prayer and discernment

Growing understanding of the Bible



Share it with Others

Caring for one another, the church and the community

Unified mission with the marginalized

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Please
place
stamp
here