

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 4

November 22—January 23

So often in the midst of a pledge campaign, you might hear a reading from Second Corinthians 9, and verse 7 will be lifted up. That's the verse which says, "God loves a cheerful giver" and the message becomes: "So give; cheerfully!" And that's great as far as it goes, but if you read a little more broadly in that text, the next verse says, "God is able to provide you with every blessing in abundance so that by always having enough of everything, you may share abundantly in every good work." And the verse before it talks about sowing and reaping; how reaping bountifully happens from sowing bountifully. And from the whole passage together we get the picture that out of blessing comes blessing. What we're given is intended not just for us but for us to share. God works in us so that God might also work through us. That's part of what it means to be the church.

It's wonderful to see how God works through the church. And even with all the church's imperfections and the ways the church has messed up throughout history, there's no denying that the church has done a lot of good work. And there's no denying *this church is doing a lot of good work!*

MVPC has been taking care of people in Mount Vernon and the Skagit Valley for over a century. We've been instrumental in forming at least two organizations which are currently addressing the issue of homelessness and hunger

and we work with them regularly to be part of the solution. A team from our church reaches out to befriend people who are losing their mental faculties. Another team is helping to show people who feel stuck in addiction or gang lifestyle another way to live.

And that doesn't yet mention the blessing we are to each other, the people who are here, 52 weeks a year, growing together in our faith, through worship and prayer gatherings, through small groups and one on one discussions, through education programs and counseling sessions and a whole lot of other things too. This church is doing a lot of good in the world right here where we live and in the lives of the people who are part of our faith community.

There is no doubt in my mind that God has blessed us beyond measure. As we move through our pledge campaign and into the upcoming holiday season, I'd invite you to consider how you might in turn be a blessing.

Grace and Peace,

Pastor Dan



Sunday Worship 10:30 am

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

Stewardship Season is here!

Have you ever wondered what goes on in the church building and why Stewardship is so important? In the next few weeks, you will be hearing more about how this physical building is being utilized and by whom. You will experience the wonderful ministries that you help to support, and we hope



you will be encouraged by their stories. The donations the church receives not only keeps the lights on and the staff paid, but they help people in need and

support people who are helping those who are not as fortunate. In November, you will be receiving a letter and pledge cards in the mail and we are asking that these pledge cards be returned to the church no later than November 20. Thank you in advance for your kind and generous consideration.

The Stewardship Committee

“Forward To A Bright Future” Capital Campaign Update

Update to the Capital Campaign as of October 15, 2022.

Summary of Projects:

Project Budget	Planned	Actual Spent	Remaining Expenses	Under Budget
Year 1-3	\$978,227	\$973,654	\$0	\$4,573
Year 4	\$490,240	\$483,280	\$1,522	\$5,438
Total	\$1,468,467	\$1,456,934	* \$1,522	\$10,011

- **Doesn't include Unspent Budgeted Interest of \$10,550**

Review of Pledges vs Receipts:

Projects	Pledged	Received	Outstanding
Year 1-3	\$978,227	\$834,567	\$143,660
Year 4	\$490,240	\$255,727	\$234,513
Total	\$1,468,467	\$1,090,294	\$378,173



Shortfall: Anticipated Shortfall Total: **\$86,318** or 5% of 3-year Project Outstanding.

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

****MORTGAGE LOAN BALANCE as of 10/15/2022**

\$398,570 Gross Amount
 Less: \$54,000 1-year monthly payments in reserve
 \$344,570 Net balance if paid off in October 2022.

****Note: Loan interest rate will adjust higher than current rate in December 2023, if not paid off by then.**

Takeaway: 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.

Pledge Day and Celebration Luncheon

This year on November 20th, as an act of worship, an expression of faith and as a spiritual discipline you will be invited to offer your pledge to the 2023 MVPC Operating Fund to support the mission and ministries of the church.

If pledged giving hasn't yet been part of your practice, perhaps 2023 will be a good time to start. The pledges of the congregation are the determining factor of the 2023 budget. If pledging is already part of your practice, thank you! Your commitment aids in planning and carrying out all of the good things that go on at MVPC.

After the service, in celebration of God's faithfulness to Mount Vernon Presbyterian Church and your renewed

support, we will hold our annual Giving Thanks luncheon and regardless of the pledge that you are able to make at this time, you are an important part of the MVPC family and we hope that everyone will be part of the celebration!



PER CAPITA: WHAT DO YOU GET FOR YOUR MONEY?



Per capita pays for the operational cost of the church at all levels beyond the congregation. MVPC is assessed a per-member charge that historically has been close to \$50. (\$49.73 in 2022; will go up to \$52.60 in 2023). Of that amount, over 80% goes to the Presbytery, nearly 19% goes to the General Assembly and about 0.5% goes to the Synod. When bundled with other churches payments, per capita payments are what allows the broader church to provide services for congregations and spiritual leaders. Specifically it allows the Northwest Coast Presbytery to fulfill their mission of engaging, equipping and encouraging congregations and their leaders. Here are a few of the highlights of what per capita provides:

- Presbytery Staff
- A Network Of People, Expertise, And Resources.
- Assistance for churches to find, develop and support leadership
- Assistance for churches through transitions and rough patches
- Resources for Reformed Theology and Polity
- Record keeping and Maintenance of History
- Collective wisdom of 58 congregations in a connectional, covenantal relationship - We're in this together!

If you would like to offset your portion of per capita (or 'scholarship' someone else's) for either 2022 or 2023, please make the check out to MVPC earmarked for Per Capita. More information can be found on the Presbytery website (<https://www.northwestcoast.org/per-capita>) and if you have further questions, please contact the church office.

Women's Retreat Saturday November 19, 9am—2:30 pm

MVPC women are invited to a retreat just for us, designed to refresh and lift the spirit before the holidays. We will carpool at the church at 9 am and drive to a beach home northwest of LaConner, near Kiket Island. Come for inspiration, quality time with each other, a bit of creativity, and lunch. For details, call Pat Papadopulos or Lou Cheney or the church office

360-424-7675. Space is limited, so reserve early.



Leadership Development!

Lately, the Session of MVPC has had the opportunity to learn about the credentialing process in the PCUSA and wanted to share what we've learned! In our tradition, there are two routes to obtaining the title "Pastor." One route is ordination, the other is commissioning.

Ordination requires an M.Div. degree from an accredited Seminary, passing ordination exams, and being examined on one's statement of faith on the floor of the presbytery. It is a lot of formal education, head and heart work. Commissioning focuses less on academics and more on experiential training. Commissioned Pastors are people who have a deep sense of calling from the Lord. They work with mentors under the supervision of the Presbytery's Commission on Ministry to develop 10 essential competencies for pastoral ministry.

Not only do we already have an ordained minister (Pastor Dan) and a commissioned pastor (Chris Hoke) serving the people and ministries of MVPC but we also have someone under care of the Session on the ordination track (Carine Ndifon - introduced in the last Grapevine) and someone who is in the commissioned pastor training process (Rebecca Holland). It's exciting to see how God is developing people from within our congregation to lead and to serve the church!

Discipleship Programs - Grow in your Faith!

Nursery - 9 am to Noon on Sundays for free play, bible stories, crafts, and fun

Godly Play - 9 am on Sundays for Bible Stories, wondering, and creative reflection time

Youth Group - Noon on Sundays for pizza, games, exploring the Bible and more

Bible Study - 9 am on Sundays for an in depth exploration and discussion of the Bible

Pause Prayer Group 9 am on Thursdays for contemplative prayer practices

Men's Breakfast - 4th Saturdays at 9 am for a breakfast and rotating topics and speakers

Women's Fellowship - 4th Saturdays at 9 am for a time of connecting with other women

MOPs Moms Group - 9:30 to 11:30 am on the 1st and 3rd Tuesdays for moms to connect

Craft Group - 2nd and 4th Tuesdays at Noon for fellowship and fun while crafting

Seniors Group - 1 to 2 pm on the 1st Thursdays for a delicious dessert and guest speaker

Small Groups Thriving and New

Small Groups Forming

Joining a small group is a wonderful way to feel more connected to others at MVPC and to grow in your faith. There are a number of small groups that are thriving at MVPC, and we are hoping to start a few new groups with the New Year. Please talk with Rebecca Holland, Director of Christian Education and Spiritual Formation if you are interested in being a part of one of the new groups. Consider if you might be willing to lead or co-lead a group. Each group will decide how often they want to meet, where they want to meet, and how they want to format their group. There is a group for you!

MVPC's 2022 Advent Devotional and

Advent Group

Advent is a prayerful time of preparing your heart for Christmas. It is a great season to spend time in daily prayer and scripture reading during the four weeks of Advent leading up to Christmas. MVPC will have "A Surprising God: Advent Devotions for an Uncertain Time" by Thomas Long and Donyelle McCray available in the church office starting November 20th (\$14 suggested donation). There will also be an optional Advent Small Group gathering in person and on zoom to share our thoughts and wonderings about the devotionals from 9 to 10 am on Sunday, November 27th, December 4th, December 11th, and December 18th. Talk with Rebecca Holland, Director of Christian Education and Spiritual Formation, to find out more!

Be a part of the MVPC Christmas Nativity!

We are looking for people of all ages who are interested in being a part of the MVPC Christmas Nativity on Sunday, December 18th during 10:30 am Worship. Please talk with Rebecca Holland, Director of Christian Education and Spiritual Formation if you are interested. We will be practicing on Wednesday, November 30th, December 7th, and December 14th from 5:30 to 6:30 pm.



All Ages Family Christmas Party

Everyone is invited to the MVPC Family Christmas Party after worship in Good Shepherd Hall on Sunday, December 18th for a potluck lunch and Christmas cookie exchange. Please bring food to share, a plate of Christmas cookies or treats for the cookie exchange (you will leave with a plate of an assortment of cookies or treats), and a non-perishable donation for the MVPC Community Pantry. RSVP with Rebecca Holland, Director of Christian Education and Spiritual Formation or in the church office.



CHILDREN, YOUTH AND FAMILIES

Kid's Christmas Afternoon (and Parents Afternoon Out) on November 27th

The MVPC kids and youth get to enjoy an afternoon of Christmas fun while their parents enjoy an afternoon out (and possibly get ahead on Christmas shopping) on Sunday, November 27th from Noon to 4 pm. We will enjoy a pizza lunch, decorate the Good Shepherd Hall Christmas Tree, create a few Christmas gifts, decorate and eat Christmas cookies, and enjoy a few classic Christmas shows. Please RSVP with Rebecca Holland, Director of Christian Education and Spiritual Formation if your kids or youth would like to participate (\$10 donation suggested) or if you would like to be one of the adult helpers!



2021 Christmas

Family Campout



Youth Group



Godly Play



2022 Pumpkin Party and potluck



MISSION

MVPC Christmas Giving Program

For our Christmas missions this year at MVPC, we'll be engaging directly with our local mission partners to be involved in supporting what they're doing with the people they serve in the community. The members and friends of MVPC will have the opportunity to choose which activity fits best for you and which of the mission partners you're inclined to serve. The details are still being finalized. As plans firm up, you'll receive more information via the weekly email and announcements in worship. Right now we know that most of our mission partners will be repre-

sented and the options to serve will include things like: purchasing gifts for individuals or families; buying gift cards to support people being served by our mission partners; writing letters or cards to people in nursing homes or in prison; and gathering socks, hats and mittens for a "warm fingers and toes drive."

The goal is not that you help with all of these opportunities, but that you select one (or more) and engage with them. Throughout the year we hope to build relationships with our mission partners and the people they serve as we share God's love by loving our neighbors.



This year has proven to be very busy, with many needs to fill. Your generosity given in time and talents have helped Love INC reach into the community and change lives in a true and meaningful way. We are grateful.

Thank you to all of those who have given furniture donations. There have been times when the warehouse was quite empty, and then just at the right moment a call came from a donor with something to give. It is incredible to watch the furniture come in, sit for a day or so, and go back out to someone in need of that item.

Furniture Donations



Dress for Success



Family Promise is happy to announce the opening of their new seasonal shelter!

Starting November 1 through February 28, their facility at Bethlehem Lutheran Church in Sedro Woolley will be open every night from 6:00 pm to 7:30 am the next morning. Dinner will be served and "to go" breakfast items will be available.



It is intended to be a cold weather oasis for those who have been living in their cars, whose heat source in their trailer or home is not

working, or, for any other reason, need a warm, dry, safe place to stay the night.

To this end, they need help with having some basic supplies on hand and are looking to churches in the area to supply. The list includes:

- | | |
|--------------|--------------|
| Toothpaste | Lysol Spray |
| Toothbrushes | Paper Towels |
| Deodorant | Toilet Paper |
| Soap | Etc. |
| Shampoo | |

A box will be placed in the narthex for your donations.





Welcome to the new Executive Director, Jonathan Kline

Working in the nonprofit sector with a focus on poverty alleviation for over a decade both domestically and overseas, Jonathan brings a breadth of experience to his role as Executive Director at Friendship House. After leading the Whidbey Homeless Coalition for several years, he joined Skagit Friendship House in the summer of 2022. What he loves most about this type of work is interacting with guests and being able to show them the love and dignity that they deserve.

Emergency Shelter

Friendship House provides two emergency shelters for people struggling with homelessness. There is a women's house and a men's house. We are the largest emergency housing provider in Skagit County and the only single men's shelter. Friendship House offers a self-sufficiency program that focuses on helping residents find employment and stable housing. Our goal is that each person will leave with the tools they need to live a healthy, productive lifestyle.

Residents may live in the shelter for up to 90 days while working on an individual action plan developed with House Managers. Friendship House provides residents with meals, clothing, personal care items and supportive services during their stay. Residents of our houses agree to follow house rules including being clean and sober, refraining from panhandling, following their action plans, being nonviolent and participating in household chores and donation hours.

Clothing Bank

Our clothing bank is located behind the Women's House and is open to the public on Tuesdays and Thursdays from 10 am to 3 pm. Clients are given the opportunity to find several items free of cost and may return as often as needed.

Showers

Women and children may take showers at the Women's House, Monday-Friday, from 1 pm to 3:30 pm. Towels and toiletries are provided.

Men may take showers at the Men's House on Tuesdays, Thursdays and Sundays, from 9:45 am to 11 am. Towels and toiletries are provided.

Love and Laundry

Anyone may use our laundry units for free and it is open to the community from 1 pm to 3 pm, on Thursdays as long as volunteers are available. located behind the Men's House. You must sign up on the sheet attached to the door of the laundry

Encourage others to Seek Services when in Need

Hear from one fellow who found out about Friendship House from a café meal service poster. "I didn't know about Friendship House until I saw a dinner poster in a public bathroom. I went and enjoyed a meal and learned more about the services provided there. This brought me back for showers a few times, before I decided to try the program in the Men's shelter. As a resident, I attended an onsite job fair at the Café one day which led to full time employment for me!"

Four years later he still works there and is living in permanent housing by his own means...but if he had not seen that poster.... ? A simple dinner can become life transformative!

WORSHIP



I am so thankful to be back together to worship in the sanctuary.

The worship team is currently working on planning Christmas and

Advent services. Since Christmas is on Sunday this year, and we will be having our traditional Christmas Eve service, we have decided not to have a service Christmas morning. Families and volunteers can have a leisurely morning!

On November 27, the worship service will share the history and meaning of the Crismons which hang on the tree in the sanctuary throughout the Advent and

Christmas Season. On December 18th the Christmas Nativity will be presented by the congregation. (See p.5 for more info and talk to Rebecca Holland if you'd like to be part of sharing the story.)

Thank you to Rita VanderStoep for stepping in to coordinate and fine-tune communion. Between Rita, Patti Allen and the liturgical arts group, musicians, and tech team and dedicated staff, the worship ministry has a lot of talented people working together. The worship committee is always open for people to join any aspect of worship in which you are interested. Just talk to Rita for communion, Patti for décor, Barbara K. for handbells, Josh for all other music and tech, or Gail LaFleur for liturgists or anything else.

Gail LaFleur

Liturgical arts engage the senses to enhance our encounter with God in worship. At Mount Vernon Presbyterian Church, this creative group has a history that is shown in the banners displayed weekly. The use of scriptures and liturgical seasons is the foundation for liturgical art that has been an ongoing part of celebration of worship since 1970 when the building was completed. The reading of scripture for any given Sunday or liturgical season envelopes the reactions of worshipers' senses. Liturgical arts is an integral part of the worship planning. None of the senses (sight, hearing, touch, taste, or smell) are excluded, although usually the reaction is visual.

A liturgical art group works most effectively with a

defined purpose such as a season e.g. advent. The season provides the reason for inspiration, creativity, and fun working together. Quality is enhanced with multiple ideas. Everyone who is creative and feels moved to express their faith visually is welcome. The season of advent is approaching. We will be "**Hangin' the Greens**", which means the entire building will be decked out with seasonal liturgical art on **Saturday, Nov. 26th** from 9 a.m. to 11 a.m.

We will have a planning meeting on **Sunday, November 13, at 9:30 am in the Fireside Room**. Zoom will be available if desired. Contact Patti Allen (through the church office) with questions, comments or input.



EVENTS

Birthdays and Anniversaries

November

2-Howard Koozer
 4-Sandy Seabott
 6-Martin Boer
 7-Don Wolf
 9-Warren Weeks
 11-Mary Ellen Byerly
 13-Natalia Weeks
 14-Bev Overby
 17-Donovan Maas
 19-Bob Mitchell
 Karen Beckner
 22-Robin Hoke

December

4-Ward Ernst
 Al Berger
 6-Pat Schlecht
 10-Bob Wygal
 11-Kristen Jasper
 14-Kimora Hansen
 15-John Braun
 16-Pat Papadopulos
 Linda Rabenstein
 19-Laurie Parker
 Joe Seabott
 21-Keith Tacker
 Aurelia O'Donnell
 22-Troy Olsen
 28-Barb Clure
 31-Jodie Kercheval
 Carol Peterson

January

1-Connie Shultz
 Dave Wilson
 7-Beth Tacker
 Lucy McLaughlin
 8-Loretta Vander Pol
 9-Rosemary Gale
 10-David Lorente
 15-Kurtis Scoby
 Steve Butt
 19-Arlene Andersen
 22-Betty Anne Friedericks
 Graham Kerr
 24-Allison Scoby
 Sarah Catton
 28-Elisa Gehringer
 Darcy Olsen
 29- Molly Howard
 30-Linda Ream
 Kevin Maas
 31- Kitty Willis

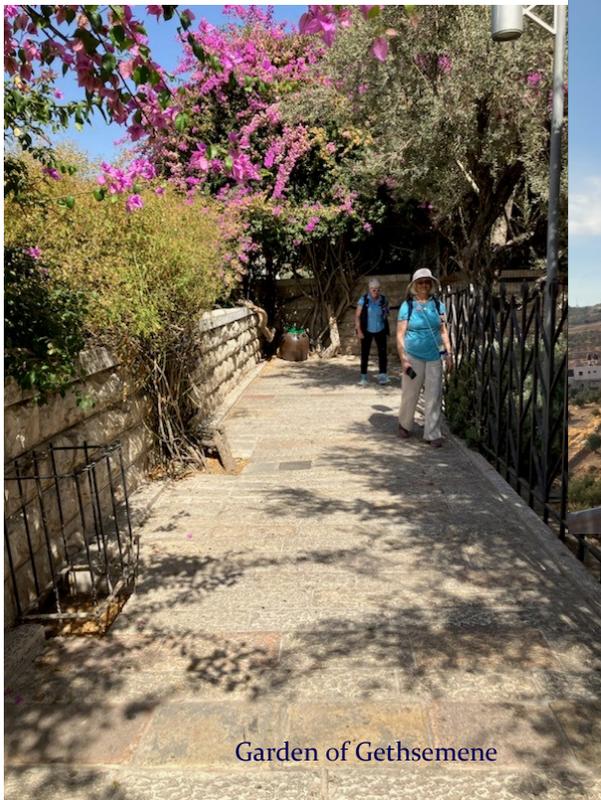


Laurel Coalwell's trip to Israel



Laurel in
Bethlehem

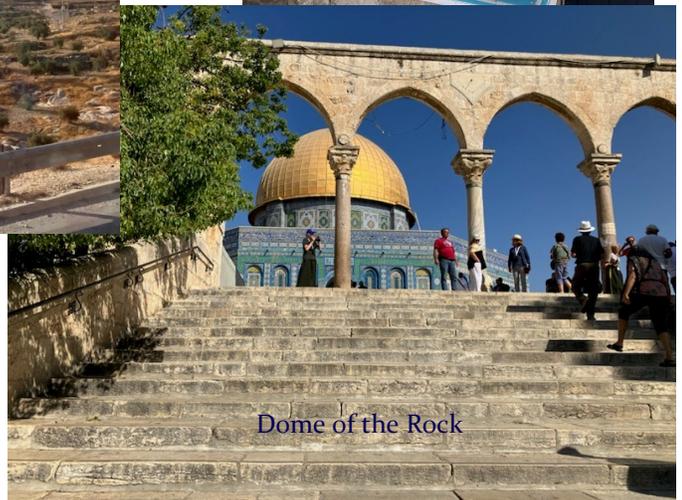
United
 Nations
 Pedestrian
 Gate
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Garden of Gethsemene



Herod's Mount



Dome of the Rock

COMING EVENTS

- Pledge Sunday** ~ November 20 during worship 10:30 am
Giving Thanks Lunch ~ Sunday, November 20, after worship
Advent Devotional Group ~ Sundays 9 to 10 am 11/27, 12/4, 12/11 & 12/18
Hanging of the Greens ~ Saturday, November 26, 9 to 11 am
Kids Christmas Afternoon ~ Sunday, November 27, noon to 4 pm Please RSVP
Longest Night Service ~ Wednesday, December 14, 7 pm
Christmas Nativity ~ Sunday December 18 during Worship 10:30 am
All Ages Family Christmas Party ~ Potluck and cookie exchange; Sunday December 18 after Worship.
Christmas Eve Service ~ Saturday December 24, 7 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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