



MOUNT VERNON PRESBYTERIAN CHURCH

Growing Followers Of Christ Since 1902

The Grapevine

I am the vine; You are the branches.

John 15:5

Year 118, Issue 5

May 2020



Pentecost

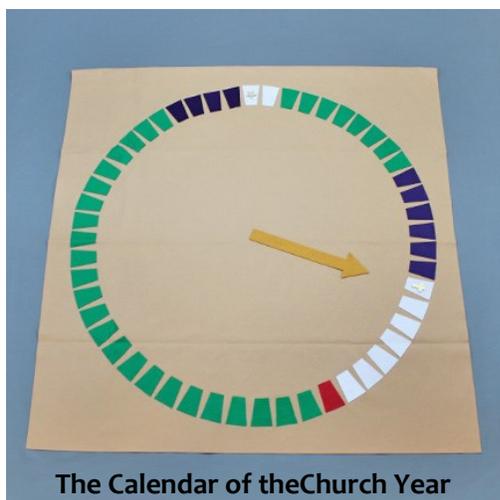
2020

One in the Holy Spirit

“When do we get to hear THAT story?” the kids ask throughout the year, pointing to the large red box on the shelf in the Godly Play classroom, amongst many boxes and baskets full of items that are a part of the Godly Play stories. The red box has stood out to the kids from the beginning, when we first opened the classroom almost two years ago. You see, the red box holds the Pentecost story. We didn’t open the red box last year because we heard about Pentecost during a different series. I’ve promised them that we would open the red Pentecost box together this year for Pentecost on May 31st and I want to reassure them that, even though it will most likely be during online worship, we still will!

The kids are reminded about Pentecost weekly, as they shift the arrow on their calendar of the church year through the green Sundays of ordinary time that we call the “green growing time”, the purple Sundays of the “preparing times” of Advent and Lent, the white Sundays of the “celebrating times” of Christmas and Easter, and the one red Sunday of Pentecost. It’s unique. It’s a mystery. And it’s “ouch, hot!” It’s hard to hold the mystery of Pentecost.

It’s about a great wind. It’s about tongues of fire. It’s about understanding each other, despite our differences. Pentecost is about each of us coming close to God and God coming close to each of us, in a whole new way. It’s a time for us to all wonder, celebrate, and hold on to, especially now, when our world has been turned upside down. As we approach Pentecost, I hope that we are all able to feel the wonder, the mystery, and then the celebration of this “ouch, hot” day.



The Calendar of the Church Year



The Pentecost Box



What a Friend.mp3

What is your favorite hymn? Submitted by Music Director Josh VerHalen



If we posed this question to the entire congregation, I'm guessing everyone would have a ready answer. There would probably be 20 or 30 unique answers with classics like "How Great Thou Art", "Holy, Holy, Holy", "Great is thy Faithfulness" and "Be Thou My Vision" leading the way. As we find ourselves isolated from the world in ways many of us have never experienced, many are turning more and more to their faith for solace. These familiar, time honored hymns are some of the easiest and most meaningful ways for many of us to connect to our faith and feel a sense of peace. But how many of us know the stories behind the text of these hymns? I thought I'd take the time this month to share with you all the story of my favorite hymn of faith.

One Hundred fifty years ago two businessmen stood on a Port Hope, Ontario street corner as a little man carrying a saw walked by. One of the businessmen said, "Now there is a man who is happy with his lot in life. I wish I could know his joy. Perhaps I can get him to cut my winter's supply of wood."

"I know that man. He would not cut your firewood." said the other. "He cuts wood only for the financially destitute and for those who are physically handicapped and cannot cut their own firewood."

That young woodcutter was named Joseph Scriven. Son of a captain in the British Royal Marines, Joseph was born in Ireland in 1819. After receiving his university degree from Trinity College in London, he quickly established himself as a teacher, fell in love, and made plans to settle in his hometown. Then tragedy struck. The day before his scheduled wedding, his fiancé drowned.

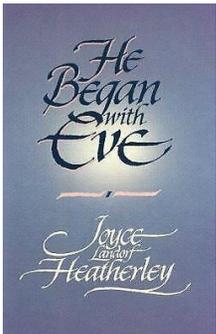
Overcome with grief, Scriven left Ireland to start a new life in Canada. He established a home in Rice Lake, where he met and fell in love with Eliza Rice. Just weeks before she was to become Joseph Scriven's bride, she suddenly grew sick. In a matter of weeks, Eliza died.

A shattered Scriven turned to the only thing that had anchored him during his life — his faith. Through prayer and Bible study he found not just solace, but a mission. The twenty-five year old Scriven took a vow of poverty, sold all of his earthly possessions, and vowed to give his life to the physically handicapped and financially destitute.

Ten years later Scriven received word that his mother had become very ill. The man who had taken a vow of poverty did not have the funds to go home to help care for her. Heartsick, and feeling a need to reach out to her, he wrote the story of his life in three short verses he called "What a Friend We Have in Jesus."

One of my favorite things to remember about Jesus, something that I find is often lost, is that he was a regular guy like us. Sure, he was the Son of God, performed miracles, was sacrificed for our sins and ultimately rose from the dead, but he was also fully human and experienced the same feelings and emotions as us. He shared meals with friends, went to parties, laughed, cried and even got angry. And that's why "What a Friend" is my favorite hymn. We refer to Jesus by so many monikers: Messiah, Savior, King of Kings, Redeemer, Lamb of God etc. But when's the last time we thought of Jesus as our friend? He's the one we can talk to when things aren't going well, celebrate with when they are, and just have a chat whenever. Where else can we find a friend so faithful? Who else will be by our side through all our sorrows and joys? We DO have a pretty great friend in Jesus. And what a privilege that is!

He Began with Eve by Joyce Landorf (book review by Lou Cheney)



Published in 1983, Landorf's work could be considered an outcome of the equal-rights-for-women movement. She takes the Biblical stories of Eve, Rahab, Bathsheba, and others, and weaves culture, Jewish tradition, and history into their stories. In doing this, she elevates their importance in the stories much beyond what Scripture tells us. For example, in the Second Book of Samuel, the story is told of King David arranges for Uriah's death so that his widow, Bathsheba, can become his wife. The author greatly expands this story.

If you find the Old Testament difficult to study, and if you are not offended by some romanticizing of the Bible characters, check out this book, shelved in the church library on the shelf labeled "Women".

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) to entertain all of us, and become a beacon of hope while we are all separated from one another. It can be a poem, a short story, a story about a particular talent you have and how it came about, funny antidote of something you experienced, a photo of something cheerful, artwork, something your kids/grandkids did, anything.

As the first submission to our newly-created "Creative Corner", I thought I would briefly share with you my experience in writing a book that was just published in March called "Clueless in Alaska".

Have you ever wanted to get out of your comfort zone and do something that you never thought possible? I found myself doing just that, twice, once in a kayak in a very unfamiliar and scary place, and then again in front of my computer writing about it. I went from a "sheltered" and "protected" person to a daring and adventurous one, throwing caution to the wind without ever questioning my sanity, and then exposing a more confident and stronger person to the world on paper.

I always envied people who were able to be creative and master the art of putting words to paper. I never in my wildest dreams ever thought I had that talent. At the constant urging of my husband, I decided to "pick up pen and paper" and write a true adventure story of a kayak trip John and I did in 1994. I wanted so much to share this adventure with the world, to be able to say "I DID IT!", in more ways than one.

At first, it was a daunting task, wondering how and where to start. Thank goodness I had copies of detailed letters that I had sent my mother, along with very descriptive and detailed information, long forgotten, recorded on mini cassette tapes that I did during our trip. All this information gave me the timeline I needed to write this story in the manner that I did, giving the reader a daily sense of what we had to do to come out of this alive and well.

Authors are taught to first do an outline of ideas for the book they are pursuing, but, as usual, I had to do it "my way". To get started, I looked at published books to see how other people created their "masterpiece". Then I started putting the pieces together with a lot of "cut and paste" rituals. My draft started coming together very nicely with reading the full extent of this draft over and over again to be sure the sequence of events were in the right order and everything made sense.

I became consumed with this project, waking up in the middle of the night with ideas, or seeing them come to me during a walk, or as I was talking with someone. My draft finally came to fruition after dozens and dozens of readings and revisions, to the point of being "sick" of it.

As an adjunct to my narrative, I perused the many slide photos I had taken, converted them to photographs, fine-tuned them in my Photoshop program, and added them to the book manuscript. Photos are a wonderful way to transport the reader into the narrative for their own unique experience.

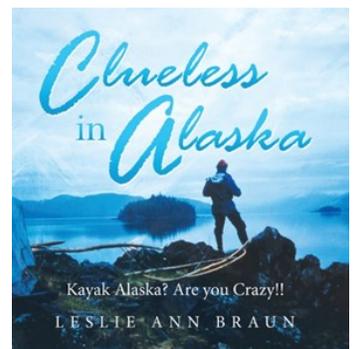
God does work in mysterious ways and I never realized it until now. He took me from a "clueless" girl and made me into a confident and strong woman, sometimes in not too subtle of ways. He was my "paddle" and my "ordered and analytical" intellect in making this trip, and writing about it, a success.

Here is a little snippet from the book:

"My heart was thumping in my chest; but with shaky hands, I paddled for my life. What had been a dream in my mind was now a reality, and I wasn't sure how to handle this new "reality". You watch stories on television about crazy people who do extreme things. Never in my life would I have dreamt that we would be the "crazy people" doing something as "extreme" and out of our comfort zone as this. Where did our sanity go? The next few days were our proving ground and true reality checks, enlightenment and "Oh, my God" moments."

"Clueless in Alaska" can found at: <https://www.authorhouse.com/en/bookstore>

Thank you for allowing me to open my heart and mind in sharing this with you.
Leslie Ann Braun



May 2020 Children and Family Ministries

A bit of encouragement from your Children's Ministry Volunteers:

"When I think of our MVPC children, I smile. I can't help it! Thank you all for your energy, your smiles, your insight, your love. You make a difference in my life. I miss you all." - Ms. Mim

"Hi kids, I appreciate Zoom church but I sure miss seeing you all in person. On the bright side my garden and landscape are getting more attention in my free time. Bet you are growing as fast as my weeds. We might be shocked when we see you again." - Ms. Becky



"To the children - it would be so great to see you all again, but in the meantime, be thankful for something every day. I am thankful for YOU." - Ms. Lou

"So even though I am old - singing songs can lift one's spirits. To sing 'You are my sunshine' or 'I've got the Joy, Joy, Joy, Joy down in my heart' make me and others smile. Additionally, the beautiful flowers blooming! When someone is sad or hurting, a flower can bring joy." - Ms. Ruth

"Hello to all of my Godly Play friends! The last couple of months reminds me of our children's bible because Jesus is always teaching us 'in a whole new way' and haven't we all been doing just that! Can't wait to hear about this special gift of time with your families that God has given us." - Ms. Laurie



"I want our kids to know that we think about them and pray for them all the time. Have a story time with family each day, play games with family, do some type of project or craft. We want you to keep smiling and be happy until we can get together in person again." - Ms. Barbara



MVPC Family Online Opportunities



Sundays 10:30 am	Worship with Godly Play
Sundays 5-6 pm	Family Small Group
Wed. 8:30 am	Mid-week Break (Adults)
Wed. 2 or 7 pm	Reflections Bible Study
Thursday 7 pm	Youth Group (for MS & HS)

Contact the church to find out about these and additional opportunities and to get on the mailing list for weekly Zoom meeting numbers and passwords.

MVPC Family Small Group

The MVPC Family Small Group is meeting for online games, fellowship, and prayer every Sunday from 5 to 6 pm. Everyone is welcome! Talk to Rebecca for mtg # and password.

Online Kid's Camp Planning

Kid's Camp will most likely be online this year and we need your help with ideas and planning on Monday, May 11th from 9 to 10 am. Talk to Rebecca for online mtg. # and password.

Questions? Contact Rebecca Holland, Director of Children and Family Ministries.

2020 Virtual Visit to Mr. Gary's Farm

This virtual visit is special to see newborn lambs. Usually they are seen gamboling in the fields at a month + old.



Youth & Family Ministries

May 2020



Youth Group!

(middle & high school)

Youth Group meets weekly online via Zoom for conversation, inspiration, games and prayer.

Thursdays at 7:00pm

The Zoom meeting code/password will be emailed to youth families in advance. Friends and newcomers are welcome, as always! Please share the Zoom meeting information with any friends who would like to join. Please do not post the information on social media, to avoid party-crashers.



A Thank You

From Jodie

The end of April marked the end of my nearly three year adventure directing our youth ministries. In that time I've learned a few things I got to witness first hand that I wanted to share.

1. **MVPC cares.** I'm so thankful for our wonderful congregation! You all consistently came through with supporting our youth program, attending our events, supplying volunteers, and encouraging our students. Our youth program was healthy because MVPC is healthy.



2. **Our middle and high school students are fabulous.** The more time I spent with our preteens and teens, the more I appreciated what a high quality group of students I got to work with. Our youth care about God, each other, and the world around them. They want to be a part of an active and alive church that is serving the world and each other. They are creative and inquisitive and funny and smart; and I feel so blessed to have been part of their youth program!



3. **MVPC's youth ministries are important.** Our world is constantly moving, keeping us busy and entertained and productive. That's great! But it can also foster a society that doesn't slow down often enough to stay healthy, nurture relationships, care for our spirits, and consider things outside of ourselves and the small part of the world that we encounter daily. Our kids and emerging adults need a place where they can slow down. A place where its okay to let their guard down. A place they know is safe from judgment, performance standards, evaluation, and expectations. A place where they can learn how to and practice listening to God, and share with each other what they hear. Our youth need a space at MVPC that is theirs, the same way our adults need a choir to sing in or a Bible study to attend or a mission to serve in or a sanctuary to worship in.

While we are transitioning between youth ministries directors, I want to encourage everyone to keep the youth ministries at MVPC active and alive. Adults can volunteer to help with online youth group (its fun!), and once we're able to gather together again, there will be plenty of opportunities for adults to serve as teachers, event coordinators and helpers; to mentor students on liturgy training, choir involvement, ushering, and other activities that keep our church going; and to get to know our youth by initiating conversations and inviting them into the part of "being church" that you enjoy.



Thank you all for allowing me to serve as our Youth and Family Ministries director. It has been a wonderful experience.

With Love,
Jodie

Elder Bio ~ Mary Ellen Byerly

I am a "transplant" from Illinois. Home town Elgin, B.S from University of Illinois, married the person that changed my life-Ken Byerly- in 1957. Ken then completed MA studies and Army draft time, and we finally settled in Mt. Vernon. After teaching P.E. at MVHS for 4 years we decide that 'more space' for our family would really fit our lifestyle and hence moved to a small farm in Lyman. I finished my teaching career at SWHS specializing in study skills and helping students become successful in their classes and obtaining their diplomas. In 'retirement' Ken and I raised buffalo until his sudden passing in 2001. Over the years I have served as deacon, and elder and enjoyed being part of lots of projects and committees.



Long ago I read the following and I can definitely witness to it's truth.

"When we serve, it takes our minds off our desire to be served. The danger of being a lover of self is inherent within each of us, regardless of our health. But as we put aside our own desires and become more selfless, we will enrich those around us, show God's love wherever we are, and develop the mind of Christ." (Author unknown)

In Memory of

Virgil Parker

June 24, 1930
to
April 18, 2020

Virgil and Debbie joined MVPC in 1956 when the church was downtown across from the courthouse. Virgil served in several positions over the years and was on the building committee for the current facility.

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
MaryElle	Byerly	2022	Capital Campaign Chair	Tom	Howard	2022
Bill	DeHon	2022	Mission	Sandi	Seabott	2022
Gail	LaFleur	2022	Worship	Sumiko	Shinozaki	2022

Notes from April 21st Session meeting

- The Zoom meeting was opened with sharing and prayer.
- We listened for God, by Praying with Scripture: Lectio Divina Luke 24:13-35 (Disciples on Road to Emmaus).
 - Remember that Jesus shows up when and where we don't expect him, i.e. He is always with us.
 - Be aware of opportunities to share our faith/"Good News".
 - Ideas were shared about how to be church in these times.
- The Nomination process is almost complete.
- Deacons reported that weekly calls are being made as part of congregational care.
- A process is being developed to conduct congregational meetings via Zoom.
- The phase 1 work with Trico is progressing on schedule.
- A PPP loan application is completed and submitted if funds become available.
- The finance report show income for March is \$ 3,198.68 ahead of expenses.

“Forward To A Bright Future Capital Campaign “ Progress Report



Construction Loan Task Force Team:

- Team met April 16, 2020 to review the Draft Loan Application and some of the supporting documentation.
- The DRAFT documents are being sent on April 17, 2020 to Dean Mielke, MDC (Mission Development Certificates), our chosen lender, for review and guidance in preparation for accepting a formal construction loan application. The amount of the loan required has not yet been determined, but will be needed by July 1, 2020.

Construction Project Task Force Team:

- Session approved a rationale document that allows Trico to perform specified work as Essential under the Stay Home - Stay Healthy Proclamation.
- On Monday 4/13/2020 Trico representatives Art Solbakken and Mark Knudson brought two subcontractors to the facility to perform investigative work. We can expect their reports in about a week or so.
 - Thom Davis of Whatcom Environmental Services performed the state mandated Haz Mat survey to collect samples to be evaluated for asbestos and lead paint.
 - Suvad Tanjo of Bee Consulting LLC performed infrared scanning of the church interior for evidence of moisture penetration indicating possible locations of rot and mold. He also performed a thorough visual inspection of the building interior and exterior looking for the same.
- After Trico receives the two reports, they will perform limited destructive testing to further evaluate for rot and mold.
- On Wednesday 4/15/2020 Trico representatives Art Solbakken and Mark Knudson were again at the facility, this time with architect Peter Carletti to examine and measure the roof in support of new roof design and potential issues with rot.
- On Monday morning 4/20/2020, we will have the first project meeting.

Campaign Financial as of March 31, 2020:

Total Commitments - \$ 978,227 Total Received - \$ 373,658 Total Spent - \$ 29,908

Blessings, Mary Ellen Byerly and Bruce Lavers

When Normality Returns...

- ♥ Men's Breakfast on the 4th Saturday of the month
- ♥ Women's Fellowship the 4th Saturday of the month
- ♥ MVPC Knitting/Crafts group the 2nd & 4th Tuesdays
 - ♥ Intercessory Prayer Tuesday mornings
 - ♥ Membership Orientation
- ♥ Special Events like the Youth Family Bowling Party, the Family Picnic at the Farm, and more.

Online Giving Program

We are pleased the opportunity is here and “live” on the Mount Vernon Presbyterian website. If you are interested, please visit the MVPC website at www.mountvernonpres.org and read all the information we have posted on the Online Giving page under the heading “About Us”. If you have questions that the website has not answered, please feel free to ask Barbara Koozer in the office, Bruce Lavers or Leslie Braun.



Mount Vernon Presbyterian Church

Growing followers of Christ

Our Vision Statement

Encounter *The Hope*
of the living God through Jesus

Engage *One Another*
in authentic friendship

Embrace *The World*
with the heart and hands of Jesus

May Birthdays & Anniversaries

- 1-Rob Wortham
- 4-Louise Cheney
- 9-Glory Olwete
- Lynda Weston
- Merlin & Fran Zimmerly
- 11-Melissa Johnson
- 12-Rob & Tracy Hall
- Ruth Dunn
- 13-Ron McCarty
- Jace Swanson
- 15-Glenda Mitchell
- George & Collie Ridgeway
- 16-Marcia Taylor
- Connie Bowser
- 19-Tom Howard
- 23-Keith & Beth Tacker
- 24-Gerd Mikkelson
- 26-David Neal
- 27-Gloria Olwete
- 28-Hannah Kercheval
- Carl Friedericks
- 30-Darlene Mailliard
- 31-Timothy Long



Blessed to be a Blessing

If you are fortunate enough to not be suffering income loss during this covid19 crisis and find yourself in position to get by without the government funds from the stimulus package in these uncertain times. There are many ways you may want to use your stimulus check. You may consider patronizing local businesses to help strengthen our local economy. You may want to paying off debts, rent, mortgage, utility bills, etc. to secure your own financial house. You may also want to consider using that money, or at least a portion of it, to be a blessing to those who are in greater need at this time due to a job loss or income reduction. Some have chosen to give their stimulus check to the deacon fund. We don't know what need will be expressed, but money received which is marked for Deacon Benevolence will be set aside to help those in our church community who need it.

Spring Yard Work

Work parties postponed for the time being. If you are interested in working on the grounds on your own schedule please do! Dan Long is the Grounds Coordinator. If you're looking for suggestions or an area you are interested in, let him know. Check in your directory for contact information.

Bloodworks had paused all mobile blood drives thru May 31st. The MVPC Blood Drive on May 13th has been cancelled. Bloodworks is asking all who would like to donate blood, to make an appointment at their nearest center. In Skagit Valley this is Bellingham and Everett. All centers are only taking walk-ins to control the number of people in the building at one time. You can make an appointment by



Calling 1-800-398-7888 or
visiting www.bloodworksnw.org

Thank you to:

- ♥ Jodie Kercheval for her leadership for our youth.
- ♥ Thank you Iva for the beautiful Easter solo during Easter Worship .
- ♥ Thanks to all the 'tech' wizards that help keep Worship on Sundays and important meetings happening.
- ♥ All who have made and contributed face masks.
- ♥ Rebecca Holland for the Godly Play stories in worship.
- ♥ Pastor Dan Holland for his leadership and inspiration.
- ♥ Bob Higbee for the many hours of meetings and reports keeping the building project on the timeline.
- ♥ The whole finance team for your work and making needed decisions.



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