Mount Vernon Presbyterian Church

Growing Followers of Christ Since 1902

Year 121, Issue 1

I am the vine; You are the branches.

journey to get there.

John 15:5

As followers of Jesus, we are an Easter People! We

celebrate the resurrection all throughout the year and

as we look at the season of Lent we're reminded of the

commemorate and celebrate specific points along the journey:

- Ash Wednesday will kick off the season of Lent by embodying the metaphor of a journey with a Labyrinth in Good Shepherd Hall.
- Palm Sunday will celebrate Jesus' triumphal entry into Jerusalem Ash Wednesday with a Cantata performed by February 22 7:00 pm MVPC's chancel choir.
- Maundy Thursday remember the upper room where Jesus first instituted the Lord's we'll supper, and his journey commemorate through the darkness of Good Friday as he was crucified, died and was buried.

Palm Sunday will April 2, 10:30 am

February-May 23

Maundy Thursday April 6 7:00 pm

Easter Sunday April 9 10:30 am

This year as we follow the narrative lectionary in worship, we'll be reading some of the parables in Matthew's gospel. These are stories Jesus used to teach people about the kingdom of heaven. Through them, we'll learn something about forgiveness and fairness, welcome and preparedness, hope and healing, and the profound depth of God's grace. Parables are great because they're simple stories that hold deep truth. The Godly Play introduction to parables reminds us that "we need to keep coming back to parables." In different seasons of our life journey they'll speak to us differently and no matter how many times we hear these stories, they can always offer something new and different because the Holy Spirit is alive and active among us!

In addition to worship, there are a few other new ways to connect and grow at MVPC this lenten season. On Wednesday mornings Patti Allen will be leading a Bible Study guided by the book "Parables and Passion" written by John Inermark. It will cover some of the same ideas and some of the same texts in a different way than Sunday worship. On Sunday morning, in addition to the ongoing Bible Study that Dave Reamer is leading, Pastor Rebecca will lead a Prayer course for people seeking to deepen their relationship with God during this season.

And of course there will also be special services to

Easter Sunday we'll see the culmination of the journey with a joyful celebration that "He is Risen!"

We celebrate the resurrection of Christ as the cornerstone of our faith and the meaning of it all becomes clearer as we walk the journey together. So this year, I invite you to engage all that MVPC has to offer during the season of Lent and Eastertide so that we might come to better understand the depth of God's love, the extent of God's grace and the difference it makes for our lives; and we might share God's love broadly in our communities.

Grace and Peace, Pastor Dan

Sunday Worship 10:30 am

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

LENTEN CLASSES

LENTEN DEVOTIONAL STUDY:

Everyone is invited to explore this year's Lenten Devotional Study of John Indermark's book <u>Parables and Passion: Jesus' Stories for the Days of Lent</u>. Books will be available in the church office starting Sunday, February 12th (with a \$12 suggested donation) or online. Feel free to explore the study on your own or attend the Wednesday Morning Bible Study starting Ash Wednesday, February 22nd at 9 am in the church library or in Zoom Room Two. Pastor Dan Holland chose the study because of its focus on the parables during lent which we will also be exploring during Sunday Worship during Lent.

SUNDAY MORNING PRAYER 101 LENTEN CLASS with Pastor Rebecca:

Lent is a time of prayerfully preparing for the mystery of Easter and a wonderful time to explore and take on a new prayer practice to help you grow in your faith and in your relationship with God. During the Sundays of Lent starting February 26th, the Prayer 101 class will be meeting at 9 am in the Great Room and online in Zoom Room One to explore and experience a number of prayer practices to help us all grow in faith, including Lectio Divina (or the divine reading), the Ignatian Awareness Examen, Welcoming Prayer, Centering Prayer, and the Stations of the Cross. Everyone is welcome whether you consider yourself new to prayer or feel you have experience and wisdom to add to the class. Feel free to come to one or all of the sessions (and folks in glorify, choir, and bells, feel free to come and sneak out early as needed).

EASTER CELEBRATION

Easter Breakfast

April 9, 2023 9:00-10:00 am

Coffee

Pastries

Yogurt

Fruit

Enjoy fellowship and the Grace of Resurrection

Day as a family of one or forty before Easter

Worship.



MVPC Membership Orientation

You are invited to attend MVPC's late-spring 2023 Membership Orientation Course. You'll have a chance to share your story, get to know other people considering membership and explore three fundamental questions:

"Who are we at MVPC?"

"What do we do?"

"Why does it matter?"

The course is designed primarily for people exploring the possibility of becoming members of MVPC but everyone is welcome. If you've ever wondered how the church functions, or who's responsible for which aspects of the church's ministry; if you question what it means to be Presbyterian or what the larger church believes; if you want to ask questions of the MVPC leadership or to get more involved in our local faith community, this course is an excellent opportunity!

We will meet for 4 Sundays from noon to 1:30 (to include lunch):

- April 16th: Introduction led by Pastor Dan Church will provide lunch
- April 23rd: Ministry Coordinators, and other church leaders - potluck lunch by course participants
- April 30th: Q&A for Pastor Dan potluck lunch by course participants
- May 7th: Prospective New Members meet with Session - Session will provide lunch

Get in touch with Pastor Dan with questions or sign up with Barbara in the church office. If you're interested but the proposed dates/times don't work for you, please let Barbara know and we'll explore other possibilities.

The Importance of Endowment Giving

Julia Gray Cook was a member of our congregation who passed away in July of 1985 leaving a *charitable remainder trust* to four individuals and MVPC. Last year, after a long process, the trust was completed and the funds disbursed. An agreed upon portion went to the one remaining individual beneficiary and the rest came into MVPC's stewardship. We received a little over \$260,000 which will be held as endowed funds to generate future income to be used according to the trust dissolution agreement..

Throughout the period of the trust, distributions accumulated, relatively small and inconsistent amounts added up to the point we had over \$10,000 at the start of 2022. The intentions of Julia Gray Cook are quite clear that the proceeds are to go to people in need in our community and NOT to the purchase, repair, or

renovation of church property or buildings. This guideline has been carefully followed.

In 2022 we were able to make sizable donations to some of our mission partners based on expressed, specific needs. We helped out Family Promise, OPOP, and New Earth Recovery in substantial ways. Moving forward, now that we are stewards of the endowed funds we will be better able to plan for and coordinate disbursements to help the community in the ways Julia Gray Cook imagined and God calls us to do.

This is, first and foremost, a thanks-be-to-God for making this all possible. It's also an encouragement for all of us to consider the ministries of MVPC as part of our legacy. If you'd like to learn more, feel free to talk with me or any member of the Endowment Committee

God bless, Dave Gale, MVPC Endowment Committee

Thanks for continuing to supply the MVPC Community Pantry: Thank you

to everyone who has been helping to keep the MVPC Community Pantry (located as you come in the South Parking lot) thriving! Folks in the community have been appreciating and enjoying the pantry - they especially like cereal, canned soups, easy to prepare meals, and anything that is grab and go like packaged granola bars and snacks. Please only leave non-expired non-perishable food that is packaged for safety and to keep rodents and bugs away. Feel free to leave items in the pantry or in the bin in the Narthex. Thank you for spreading God's love and helping to keep the community fed.



DISCIPLESHIP

Christian Education:

Godly Play Journeys through the Old Testament:

The Godly Play Circle welcomes children, youth, and, yes, even adults as they journey through the stories of the Old Testament most Sundays at 9 am. When you sit in the Godly Play room, you are literally surrounded by the stories from the Bible, with beautiful objects for each story waiting ready to be discovered and shared. This year, starting with creation, the Godly Play circle has followed the people of God through the flood, the stories of the great family, the exodus, and all the way into the promised land where they are now hearing the stories of the judges, kings, and prophets. Come on the journey.

MVPC Youth Explore the New Testament:

You may have noticed the youth group picking up their pizza delivery in Good Shepherd Hall after worship, excitingly racing back to the Great Room for youth



group. Have you ever wondered what they do back there? They spend time sharing about their week or answering a get to know you question while they enjoy their lunch together. If there is a lot of energy after lunch, they play a quick game and if you stay after church long enough you might see them running around playing their favorite game of Sardines (a reverse hide and seek). When they are ready, they dive into their lesson using an online curriculum called the Bible Project where they watch (and often pause) a video on one of the books of the bible with in depth wondering

and discussion on what they notice. This year they are exploring the New Testament and have completed their study of the Gospels, Acts, Romans, and are now in the depths of Paul's letters (which lead to some very good discussions). The Youth are in need of a few additional Mentors who rotate through attending youth group and getting to know the kids, especially as we are looking toward offering a confirmation class next year. Training and fun provided!

Sunday Morning Bible Study Dives into Daniel

Everyone is welcome and invited to attend the Sunday Morning Bible Study either in person in the conference room or online in Zoom Room Two every Sunday at 9 am. The Bible Study is made up of a group of people who love the

Bible and enjoy a good discussion but please come, even if you are new to the study of the Bible! After taking some time to follow the narrative lectionary during Advent, they are now studying the book of Daniel. Talk with David Reamer to find out more.

NEW Wednesday Morning Bible Study

Begins Ash Wednesday with the Lenten Devotional Study: Many people hold wonderful memories of midweek Bible Study at MVPC. Patti Allen was one of the folks who was drawn into it when she was a young mom, enjoying the support, fellowship, and faith growth during her adult years, and now that she is a retiree, feels the call to get it going again! Starting Ash Wednesday, February 22nd, at 9 am, the Wednesday morning Bible study will be meeting every Wednesday at 9 am in the library and online in Zoom Room Two following various topical bible studies to dive deeper in faith through fellowship and growing together in a greater understanding of the bible. They will begin with the Lenten Devotional Study of John Indermark's book Parables and Passion: Jesus' Stories for the Days of Lent. Books will be available in the church office starting Sunday, February 12th (with a \$12 suggested donation).

Join the MVPC Discipleship Team!

We are in need of folks to prayerfully discern and support Discipleship opportunities for the congregation and beyond as part of a MVPC Discipleship Team. If you are involved in any of the Christian Education or Spiritual Formation groups or simply love God and want to help others grow in their faith, prayerfully consider being part of the Discipleship team. Let Pastor Rebecca know if you have any questions or are ready to sign up! We have a lot of amazing Discipleship programs at MVPC and need a team to help keep everything going and growing!

Spiritual Formation and Small Groups:

NEW Family Small Group Forming for Families of All Ages, Stages, and Sizes: The Family Small Group is planning to kick off again. In the past it has included sharing a potluck meal, fellowship, and prayer. We are looking for families of all ages, stages, and sizes who might be interested in participating in the group to help discern when we want to meet and what we want to do. Please talk with Pastor Rebecca Holland if you and part or all of your family are interested in participating.

MOPs Moms Group Needs Garage Sale Items! The

MOPs moms group has been meeting on the first and third Tuesday mornings every month with food, fellowship, and faith formation for Skagit Valley moms. They are thankful for the amazing



childcare team and ongoing support from MVPC. They are gearing up for their big annual Spring Garage Sale (happening in Good Shepherd Hall on April 28th and 29th) and are in need of good condition items to sell. Please talk with Sarah Maas or Rebecca Holland if you have any items you might be willing to donate.

Pause Prayer Group Welcomes Everyone! If you feel yourself in need of a mid-week time of connecting with others and spending time in prayer, please consider this your invitation to "pause" the week with the Pause Prayer Group. We meet Thursday mornings at 9 am in the church library and in Zoom Room One for sharing and prayer. Please talk with Pastor Rebecca Holland if you are interested in getting on the email list for the weekly reminder email or if you want to find out more (or feel free to just show up).

Women's Fellowship Celebrates Lou Cheney and Looks to the Future: The MVPC Women's Fellowship has enjoyed their time together this year on the fourth Saturday mornings with a number of fun events and

gatherings including the Fall Women's Retreat. They

met in January to thank Lou Cheney for her over 20+ years of leading the Women's Fellowship Group, sharing laughter and tears along with their favorite stories and immense appreciation for Lou and her amazing gift of ministry. The group decided that it would take a team of women to fill



her shoes to take the Women's Fellowship forward. A number of women have stepped up to the plate. For February's gathering on Saturday, February 25th, Pat Papadoplous will be leading the prayer and scripture reflection and Laurel Coalwell will be presenting photos and stories from her recent journey to the Holy Lands.

Men's Breakfast Enjoys Good Food and Programs MVPC Men's Breakfast meets on the fourth Saturdays from 9 to 10 am for a delicious breakfast, inspiring

speakers, and great discussion. Everyone is welcome! For more information or to find out about coming speakers, talk with Bob Wygal.



Just Call Us the "Shepherds": The Seniors have voted for their newly formed group to be called "Shepherds" after Good Shepherd Hall where they meet and their desire to be shepherds in faith for the church. With a delicious dessert homemade by Laurie Parker; and coffee and tea served from MVPC's silver set, the Shepherds Group enjoys fellowship, singing a beloved hymn, hearing from an inspiring guest storyteller, and sharing their own stories based on the theme of the day. Everyone is welcome on the 1st Thursdays from 1 to 2 pm (Shepherds will meet in March and May but will not meet in April due to Holy Week/Easter/Spring Break).

Pictures from the last 3 months at MVPC













Giving Thanks Lunch November 2022





Women's Fellowship ~ January







MISSION PARTNERS

New Earth Recovery

4 days: February 10 - 11 & 17 - 18 (Friday/Saturday format)



Join us for this in-person four-day Genesis training, as we explore the roots of destructive patterns that keep others—and ourselves—trapped in cycles of addiction: workaholism, food, anxiety, codependency, sex, shopping, alcohol, porn, substances, and other self-comforts.

The Genesis Coach Training (formerly called Genesis Counselor Training) is designed for lay persons, pastors, or agency/ministry workers who want to take individuals through the one-on-one Genesis process. It is also open to those who want to explore their own addictions or stuck places; family members or friends who want to gain a greater understanding of why their loved ones are struggling; and anyone who wants to better understand how addiction works

We'll tackle questions like: How do compulsions function in the brain? Why is it so hard to get free, despite our promises and resolve? How do false beliefs contribute to our stuck behaviors? How do destructive

patterns get started? What's the role of trusting relationships in healing? How can we get free? And how can we best help those who are struggling?

Explore the mystery of addiction in a grace-filled, safe environment. Come to better understand yourself or those you love. We look forward to meeting you.

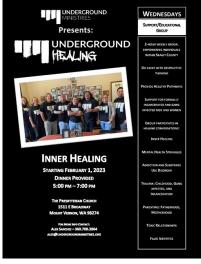
Facilitators:

New Earth Recovery Director Alan Muia has been coaching NER residents and other clients through the Genesis process since NER's founding in 2011. He has facilitated numerous Genesis groups and has been training Genesis Coaches with his wife and NER cofounder Amy since 2018. Sara Wevodau currently directs the women's recovery program at New Earth Recovery. She has been facilitating the Genesis Process since 2018 in combination with her expertise in horticultural therapy.

Underground Ministries

My name is Alex Sanchez, Alex for short. I grew up here in Skagit Valley, am formerly incarcerated, and also formerly gang affected. I spent close to a decade in prison most of that time in solitary confinement. Upon my release in May of 2019, I started working on my Re-entry with Chris Hoke and Underground Ministries, doing the

big part of inner healing work and working on both my internal and external barriers so I can embark on this new journey called life. I am now a full time employee here at Underground Ministries as the Lead Re-entry Navigator, helping those coming home from prison and the underground of life's traumas, addiction, and gang involvement. I am also set to graduate this summer with my AA in Human Services "Social Work". During my time here at Underground Ministries, and my education at Skagit Valley College, I was able to create and launch a new program called "Underground Healing" targeting re-entry men and women who are coming home from prison, and stepping out from the underground. Our focus is to target areas of vulnerability with traumas, either childhood, adult, gang or prison, toxic relationships, mental health substance abuse disorders, accountability and struggles of parenthood. We will also focus on Inner Healing and individual empowerment, creating a safe space to open up, and create relationships of trust within the community



Family Promise 2022 Summary

Services Summary:

Stabilized the new shelter Diversion program started last year.

- Prevented 83 families from becoming homeless through Prevention and Shelter Diversion program. We used our one-time prevention assistance to stabilize 17 families who had fallen behind due to minor setbacks, 66 families were served with up-to 90 days of case management along with supportive financial assistance to help them restabilize. While one family may need financial assistance, others need nothing besides someone to walk alongside and advocate for them.
- Permanently housed 9 families through out housing programs in one of the most difficult housing years we have experienced since inception.



- Added a new seasonal shelter program that can help house up to an additional 25 individuals during the winter months.
- MVPC Church Rotation weeks: 4

Volunteer Hours: 319 = \$6,380

Meals Provided: 182 = \$1820

Bednights: 53 guests over 19 nights = \$10,150

Monetary Contributions: \$12,872

Total In-Kind and Monetary = \$31,222

These are funds and help given by the MVPC congregation. Thank you!



When you walk into one of our homes, you immediately feel the warmth of community. Our homes are safe places of joy, humor, grace, and progress. We welcome our resident guests to stay for the full 90 days of our initial program to discover their individual opportunities during their time with us.

When our new residents arrive, they are amid the most vulnerable, painful times of their lives. They are suffering and facing adversity that is intense and challenging. However, there is hope and through their struggle they can shine and strive towards betterment and self-sufficiency. Their resilience demonstrates the strength of the human spirit and the healing power of community.

This year, we have seen 14 of our residents move directly from our shelters into their own permanent housing. This is the hard evidence that our programs allow people a safe place for healing to begin. Residents have the opportunity to reorganize their lives and assess their personal goals and attain stability. We see many others move into Oxford style housing or our own transitional home, as they continue to build their savings and search for their next permanent home. For some of our residents, the time they spend here will encourage and motivate them for years forward after they leave our network.

Maria, a previous resident who ame to the Women's House after spending a year in an intense drug treatment program found our self-sufficiency program offered her more freedom than she had been used to. Nervous at first, she kept herself focused by signing up for extra House and Café Chores. After demonstrating her strong leadership skills with staff and other residents, the House Manager promoted her to be a Housing Assistant, which gave her even more responsibility.

Maria successfully completed our 90 day program and went on to New Earth Recovery, a long-term housing program for adults going through recovery. She now returns to Friendship House to give back to the community as a volunteer herself.

Thank you for the opportunities your support provides.

STEWARDSHIP

"Forward To A Bright Future" Capital Campaign Update

as of January 12, 2023.

We have now moved into our last year of the campaign.

Our objective is to pay off the mortgage by December 31, 2023.

This first insert provides a *Summary of the three year and fourth year combined project status:*

			Remaining Expenses	Current
Project			(*not including un-	status Un-
Budgets	Planned	Actual Spent	spent loan interest)	der Budget
Total	\$1,468,467	\$1,461,170	\$1,522	\$5,775

*Unspent Budgeted Interest \$6,314.

The second insert shows *actual* figures for combined Pledged & Given Amounts. They reflect changes that have been communicated to us over the past couple of years:

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

Total	Amount Pledged	Amount Given	Amount to be Given has been adjusted down by \$26,319 due to life changes.
	\$1,425,743	\$1,121,876	\$303,867 - \$26,319 = \$277,548 **

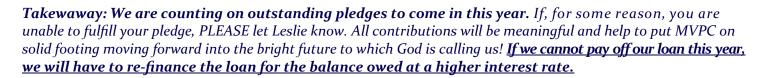
**MORTGAGE LOAN BALANCE as of 01/12/2023

Principle Balance: \$376,266

Less: <\$54,000> 1-year of monthly payments held in reserve
\$322,266
Net balance if paid off in February
2023.



Projected SHORTFALL (not including additional Interest payments) = \$44,718 (Loan Balance **\$322,266** <u>minus</u> Amount to be Given **\$277,548 = \$44,718**)



THANK YOU, for all your generosity. It is graciously received with love.

Questions? Please feel free to contact: Bruce Lavers or Mary Ellen Byerly, your Campaign Co-Chairs or Leslie Braun, our Financial Secretary.



NOTEWORTHY

Birthdays and Anniversaries

February

- 1-Rita VanderStoep
- 2-Lindsav Hall
- 4-Oliver Rogers
- 6-Danya Wolf
- 9-Mackenzie Anderson Irene Johnson
- 13-John Hazelwood Don Wortham
- 15-Natalie Holland Margaret Semrau
- 16-Dan Long
 - John & Barb Hazelwood
- 17-Paul Coalwell
- 18-Rebecca Holland
- 19-Bill Bowser
- 20-Brad Clure
 - Jonathan Holland
- 21-Bill Ream
- Clara Swanson
- 23-Laurel Coalwell
- 26-Dan & Rebecca Holland
- 27-Steve Hansen

March

- 2-Ruth Haines
 - Lucy Nash
- 5-Jim Byron
 - Don Schlumberger
 - Katie Weeks
- 6-Ben Cooksey
- 8-Barbara Hazelwood
- Marjorie Riedel
- 9-Bruce Lavers
 - Nello Bottari
- 10-Margo Wortham
- 15-Brad Vardy
- 19-Kurt Swanson
 - Kyle Jasper
- 20-Ken Ball
- 22-Ron & Rita VanderStoep
- 25-Brian Anderson
 - Rob Hall
- 26-Dottie Thayer
- 27-Pete & Pat Papadopulos
- 29-Joan Lavers

- 1-David & Karen Lorente

- - John & Leslie Braun
- 7-Bill DeHon
- 9-Benjamin Holland
- 10-Rogan Milnor
- 13-Mary Pugsley
- 15-Gail LaFleur
- 17-Roger Hill
- 19-Jan DeHon
- 20-Iillian Anderson
- 22-Ruth Neal
 - Anna Olsen
- 24-Sandy Ball
- 27-Mary Poppe
- 30-George Ridgeway

- 2-Sumiko Shinozaki
- 3-Becky Goodell
- 4-Aaron Kiesser
- 6-Bev Wilson
- Dave Gale

- 11-Ayden Bartholomew

- 23-Leslie Braun

MVPC Grapevine publication times

We have changed to publishing four times a year corresponding to the rhythms in the church year with the following approximate publication dates:

Lent, Easter, Pentecost and Spring ~ early in February

- Summer Activities ~ end of May
- Fall Program Kick off ~ late August

Advent. Christmas and New Years ~ early to mid November

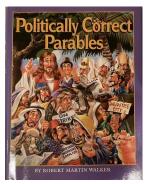
Thank You

Praise God for MVPC folk. Thank you for reflecting the love of Jesus. Thank you for your prayers for healing. Thank you for your willingness to serve through the Meal Train. Thank you all for covering for me while I'm unable to fulfill my commitments. Thank you God for your healing. Thank you all for your love and support. Blessings, Ward.

MVPC Story Wall:

A rotating MVPC Story Wall is in the library hallway to share our stories. Take a few minutes to get to know folks by reading their short biographies, then finding them and asking them about anything that sparks your interest. January and February's featured folks include most of the MVPC Staff and Session Elders. Look forward to March and April featuring some of the hard working Ministry Coordinators and MVPC Finance Team!

Book Review by Lou Cheney



Some years ago, an interim pastor who served our congregation, Kevin Nollette, left in our library a small book, Politically Correct Robert Parables, by Martin Walker.

The author retains all characters of the parables but transposes them into character types we are familiar with. "Tax collectors and outcasts" become "morally different persons" and "underachievers". This little book has humor, but it is mainly a hard look at our politically correct thinking and practical, logical patterns that dismiss compassion. Reading the author's versions of Jesus's stories, leaves the reader asking questions he never asked before. When was I in that situation? How is Jesus asking me to do some soul searching?

You will find this book in the New Testament section of the church library. Notice the library is organized into categories that may streamline your search for what you need. If you want to donate a book, just leave it in the two-door cabinet in the library to be stamped and shelved by the library committee.

COMING EVENTS



Ash Wednesday Service ~ February 22, 7:00 pm

Palm Sunday ~ April 2, 10:30 am

Maundy Thursday ~ April 6, 7:00 pm

Easter Sunday ~ April 9, 10:30 am



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

Mount Vernon Presbyterian Church **Rev. Dan Holland, Pastor** 1511 East Broadway Mount Vernon, WA 98274 (360) 424-7675

http://www.MountVernonPres.org

Please

place

here