

MOUNT VERNON PRESBYTERIAN CHURCH

Growing Followers of Christ Since 1902



The Grapevine

I am the vine; You are the branches.

John 15:5

Year 122, Issue 1
Feb—May 2024

As followers of Jesus, Easter Sunday is the biggest celebration of the year: the resurrection of Christ is the cornerstone of our faith and following the way of Jesus is our collective life's work! This year at MVPC there are a number of ways we're inviting the congregation and community to prepare our hearts for the good news of Easter. On the following pages you'll find service, mission and social opportunities and I wanted to give you a heads up about a lenten study opportunity and what's coming in worship:

We'll begin the season of Lent with a contemplative, tactile Ash Wednesday service. There will be stations set up in the sanctuary using salt and light, oil and water, ashes and more. It will be a time to enter into prayer to experience something of God's grace and God's presence as we gather at 7pm on Feb, 14.

Throughout Lent we invite you to study "Living into Lent" by Donald McKim. (The books are available in the church office; suggested donation \$14). Pastor Rebecca will lead a group engaging together with the book on the Wednesdays of Lent (2/14-3/27) as their guide (more info next page). In worship we'll encounter Jesus and his teaching after he turned toward Jerusalem. We'll be focused on Mark 10-16 if you'd like to read it to prepare. Or just show up and see what God has in store for you as we read some of Jesus' teachings on wealth and greatness, how to enter the kingdom of God, the rejected cornerstone, the destruction of the temple, the need to stay awake and more!

On Palm Sunday, March 24th, we'll have a special service of Scripture and song (think Lessons and Carols but Lent and Easter themed rather than Christmas).

Maundy Thursday we'll celebrate the Lord's supper and venture with Jesus into the night of Good Friday as we read the passion narrative together.

And of course we know that the story doesn't end with the crucifixion of Good Friday, so we'll gather again on Easter to celebrate that "He is Risen!" "He is Risen indeed!"

Saint Augustine said "We are an Easter People. Alleluia is our song!" So this year, I invite you to engage all that MVPC has to offer during the season of Lent and Eastertide in order 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 then in turn we might share God's love broadly in our communities.

Grace and Peace,

Pastor Dan



Feb 14-Mar 27 ~ **Lenten Study** Wednesdays 10 am

Feb 14th 7 pm ~ **Ash Wednesday** Service

March 24th 10:30 am ~ **Palm Sunday**(Scripture and Song)

March 28th 7:00 pm ~ **Maundy Thursday** Service

March 31st 10:30 am ~ **EASTER Sunday** Service

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)

1511 East Broadway Street | Mt Vernon, WA 98274 | 360.424.7675 | www.MountVernonPres.org | mvpcc@MountVernonPres.org

Nomination Season

The Nominating Committee of MVPC is tasked with identifying and inviting people called to serve in five leadership roles at the church. Please take a moment to make a nomination (or a few of them) [using this form](#). Here are brief position descriptions:

Elders on Session are elected by the congregation for a 3 year term to listen for God's invitation to envision possibilities and discern direction for the church's ministry. They allocate resources, manage corporate affairs and evaluate ministries. There is a ministry of governance and leadership.

Deacons who serve on the Board of Deacons are elected by the congregation for a 3 year term to develop and maintain a network of care among the congregation members, friends and guests. They train and empower people to be part of the care network. There is a ministry of compassion, witness and service.

Endowment Committee members are elected by the congregation for a 3 year term to manage two endowments on behalf of the church and determine distributions. They encourage, educate and support practices of good stewardship and generosity.

Nominating Committee members are elected by the congregation for a 3 year term to identify and invite members (and in some cases friends) of the congregation to serve in all of the roles listed here, including future members of the Nominating Committee.

Ministry Coordinators are appointed by the leadership team to a one year renewable term. They work with the pastors and staff to plan and carry out the ministries of the church. There are 6 *Ministry Coordinators who chair teams for: Worship, Discipleship, Mission and Service, Hospitality, Evangelism and Communications, and Ministry Support. A visual map of responsibilities can be found [here](#).*

Praise the Lord

by Josh VerHalen Director of MVPC Music



One of the greatest and most influential hymn writers of all time, Isaac Watts was born in England, the first son of a family of the Dissenting tradition. Though his training in Greek, Latin and Hebrew would have allowed him the opportunity to become an Anglican priest, he chose to pastor a Dissenting congregation.

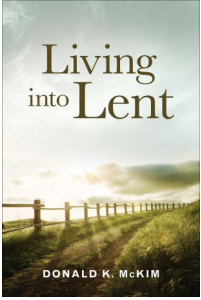
At the time of Watts' birth, churches in England sang only metrical psalms. But by the time of his death, he had planted the seeds of a much more complex hymnody. His 600 hymns found in seven collections made the transition from a rigid, metric psalms to a freer, theologically-based hymnody. In other words, the accessibility and singability of the words became more important than the music surrounding them.

Watts' hymns include complex theology in a format that is ideal for congregational singing. Hymns should echo the themes of the sermon and the worship service. He insisted that hymns should be freely composed and not just hold to the letter of Scripture; and that hymns should give straightforward expression to the thoughts and feelings of the singers and not merely recall events of the distant past.

Watts' best known hymns include "When I Survey the Wondrous Cross", "Joy to the World", "Oh God Our Help in Ages Past" and "Jesus Reign Where'er the Sun". By the time of his death he was credited with penning over 750 hymns.

He also wrote texts to fit the most common psalm meters, allowing them to be sung by any congregation to a variety of tunes in such a way that each line contained a complete thought. This methodology remained popular even into modern times. Many of the hymns we sing each Sunday can be sung to many different tunes. Don't believe it? Try singing the words to "What a Friend We Have in Jesus" to the tune of "Come, Thou Long Expected Jesus"; or "Come Thou Fount of Every Blessing"; or "Live Divine All Loves Excelling". Now, you can share in the confusion music directors face when they can't remember which words go to which tune!

Discipleship



The “Living into Lent” Lenten Devotionals are available in the church office (\$14 suggested donation). “Living into Lent”, written by noted theologian, educator, and author Donald K. McKim, sets aside time during the Lenten season for readers to reflect on their Christian

identities, listen to God’s Word and will, and engage in practices that deepen the Christian experience through discipleship. *There will also be a Lenten Study of the book on Wednesdays 2/14, 2/21, 2/28, 3/6, 3/13, 3/20 and 3/27 at 10 am for those who want to discuss and dive deeper. Sign up in the church office to be on the email reminder list.*

The Power of Prayer: Prayer Requests, Prayer Team, and Prayer Group

We believe in the power of prayer. MVPC has a wonderful Prayer Team and Prayer Group made up of folks who have volunteered to pray for any prayer requests.

•Prayer Requests: If you would like to make a prayer request, let Pastor Rebecca know what you would like shared and she will send out your request as an email to the Prayer Team and also share your request with the Thursday Prayer Group. *If you are sharing a prayer request for someone else, please make sure you have permission from the person to share the prayer request and information. You can ask them something like,*

“Would it be ok for me to ask my/the church prayer team to pray for you? And what would be ok for me to share? What do you especially need prayers for right now?”

•Prayer Team: If you would like to be a part of the Prayer Team and receive emails of prayer requests to hold in prayer, please let Pastor Rebecca know.

•Prayer Group: Everyone is welcome to come and check out the weekly Prayer Group that meets in the MVPC Library at 9 am on Thursdays. We spend time checking in, learning and doing a contemplative prayer practice (very highly recommended for those wanting to grow in their faith and relationship with God), and then spend time praying for any prayer requests. Let Pastor Rebecca know if you would like to get Prayer Group email reminders the day before we meet.

Palm Sunday Potluck and Egg Decorating after Worship on Sunday, March 24th

Everyone is invited to bring their favorite Easter dish or treat to share and to join in decorating Easter Eggs in Good Shepherd Hall after Worship on Palm Sunday. We

are trying out this new event and are hoping it might become another fun all ages MVPC tradition. Come and check it out!



Secret Valentines Celebration after Worship on Sunday, February 11th



Everyone is invited to the Secret Valentine celebration after worship on Sunday, February 11th for cookies, coffee, and a bit of valentine fun. Plus, if you signed up to be a secret valentine, you will find out who was sending you those kind notes and be able to meet your secret valentine too!

Discipleship

Grow in Faith, Fellowship, and Service at MVPC by Pastor Rebecca Holland

We are all on a journey of faith and I'm so glad that your journey of faith has brought you to MVPC. The hope is that, whether you have been a part of the congregation for your whole life or you just started attending or you haven't attended recently but keep thinking about the possibility, MVPC is a place where you can feel welcomed, find community, and grow. And there are so many ways to grow!

Grow in Your Faith...we are all learning and growing. Consider attending a study or group!

- Join the Lenten Study - Wednesdays at 10 am on 2/14, 2/21, 2/28, 3/6, 3/13, 3/20, & 3/27 Pastor Rebecca will be leading the Lenten Study on the "Living into Lent" Lenten Devotionals for everyone who wants to discuss and dive deeper into the study. Sign up in the church office to be on the email reminder list.
- Sunday Bible Study - Sundays at 9 am in the MVPC Library. Retired Pastor Wayne Schneider leads this lively discussion group on a journey through the Bible. All levels of Bible knowledge are welcome.
- Prayer Group - Thursdays at 10 am in the MVPC Library. Pastor Rebecca Holland leads this deeply caring group as they share what is on their heart, learn and explore a variety of contemplative prayer practices, and spend time together in prayer. Everyone is welcome!

Grow in Fellowship...we aren't on this journey alone. Find a group where you can connect!

- Women's Fellowship - 4th Saturdays at 9 am in the Fireside Room.



- Men's Breakfast - 4th Saturdays at 9 am in Good Shepherd Hall with breakfast and speakers.



- Craft Group - 2nd and 4th Tuesdays at Noon in the MVPC Library. Bring your own crafts!
- Small Groups - Meet at various times and places. Talk to Pastor Rebecca if you are interested.
- Souper Seniors - Most 1st Thursdays at Noon for anyone 50 or better with lunch and a speaker.



- The MomCo and KidCo - 1st and 3rd Tuesdays 9:30 to 11:30 am with a program for moms as well as kids.



- Youth Group - Most Sundays at Noon for youth in middle and high school with food, fun, & fellowship.



- Godly Play - Most Sundays starting in Worship for elementary aged kids with a story and reflection time.
- Nursery and Play Room - Every Sunday from 10 am to noon for the young at heart to play.



Grow in Service...we are called to serve others with love. How are you called to serve?

- Care Pals - Monday mornings doing crafts with folks experiencing dementia. Talk to Linda Ream.



- Friendship House - 2nd Tuesday afternoon/evenings making and serving a meal. Talk to Laurel Coalwell.



- Family Promise - A quarterly rotating week long shelter at our church for families in need.
- Mission Partners - Volunteer to help out with various tasks and projects as needed. List on the board.



- MVPC Ministries - Volunteer to help with ministries, groups, and needs at MVPC. Talk to Pastor Rebecca.

As the Associate Pastor for Discipleship part of my calling is to help folks in the congregation connect with what is going to help them grow in faith, fellowship, and service. I would love to meet with you to hear a bit more about your story and help you prayerfully discern what might be the right faith, fellowship, or service opportunity to help you grow!

Reach out to the church and take the steps to get involved and grow in your faith. Try a group or a service project out to see if it might be a good fit for you! You never know until you try!

Mission Partners

New Earth Recovery Update!

A little more than a month ago, we shared at our Christmas concert that we were considering opening a new home in 2024. We had a waiting list of men who had completed our program but had no place safe to go after graduation, and we had applied for a grant to operate the new home for the next two years. It's amazing what can happen in a month!

Two weeks ago, we found out we were granted the funding we had applied for, so we began a conversation with our realtor. We asked him to start looking for a house that had at least four bedrooms and an extra room we could use for an office. It needed to be at least 2,500 square feet and we needed enough bathrooms to suit a community living environment. It also needed to be on a bus line or very close to social services.

Two days later, he sent me an email describing the perfect house. It was more than 4,000 square feet, had five bedrooms, four bathrooms, an office on the main floor, and large common areas for house gatherings and fellowship. The location was perfect and the price was reasonable.

After several miracles and thanks to three generous supporters, as of February 1, we will be 1/3 owner of this amazing home, which we'll be able to use for ministry within weeks. What a whirlwind! As a result, we'll be able to serve up to eight more people at a time for the indefinite



future!

Our next steps are to do some painting and other minor work and to shop for the furnishings and supplies we'll need to set it up. To honor the people we serve, we are only looking for high quality attractive furniture and supplies in good condition. We'll need:

- Tall dressers (as opposed to horizontal wide ones)
- Small desks
- A dining room set that seats at least eight
- A kitchen table and chairs
- Sofas and loveseats
- End tables and lamps
- Good pots, pans, plates, and glasses
- Other supplies you can think of that would help us outfit a new home

Thank you for being a part of the community that welcomes people in recovery. Your continued support is invaluable to our growing ministry. May God bless you in this new year.

Alan Muia and the NER Team



MVPC Family Promise Statistics for 2023

Number of host weeks for Family Promise: 4
of Volunteer Hours: 80.5 hrs X \$25 = \$2,012.50
Meals Provided: meals X \$10 per meal = \$260
Bednights: total guest overnights 22 X \$50/night = \$1,100
Total In-Kind Contributions—\$3,372.50

A graphic titled "WEDNESDAY WIN" featuring a large green "96%" with a gold percent sign. The background is decorated with snowflakes. Below the graphic, text explains that this represents the percentage of families successfully diverted or prevented from homelessness through Family Promise of Skagit Valley in the 4th Quarter of 2023, which represents 67 children who didn't have to experience the trauma of losing their home.

WEDNESDAY WIN

96%

This is the percentage of families who were successfully diverted or prevented from homelessness through Family Promise of Skagit Valley in the 4th Quarter of 2023.

This represents 67 children who didn't have to experience the trauma of losing their home.

Noteworthy

Birthdays and Anniversaries

February

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

March

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-Kyle Jasper
20-Ken Ball
22-Ron & Rita Vander Stoep
25-Brian Anderson
Rob Hall
26-Dottie Thayer
27-Pete & Pat Papadopoulos
29-Joan Lavers

April

1-David & Karen Lorente
2-Sumiko Shinozaki
3-Becky Goodell
4-Aaron Kiesser
6-Bev Wilson
Dave Gale
6-John & Leslie Braun
7-Bill DeHon
9-Benjamin Holland
10-Rogan Milnor
11-Ayden Bartholomew
13-Mary Pugsley
15-Gail LaFleur
17-Roger Hill
19-Jan DeHon
20-Jillian Anderson
22-Ruth Neal
Anna Olsen
23-Leslie Braun
24-Sandy Ball
27-Mary Poppe
30-George Ridgeway
Tammy Riggs

May

4-Louise Cheney
9-Glory Olwete
11-Melissa Macken
12-Ruth Dunn
15-Glenda Mitchell
George & Collie Ridgeway
16-Marcia Taylor
Connie Bowser
17-Craig Riggs
19-Tom Howard
23-Keith & Beth Tacker
24-Gerd Mikkelson
26-David Neal
Bill Ruthford
27-Gloria Olwete
28-Hannah Kercheval
31-Timothy Long

Save the date for the Baby Shower!

Everyone is invited to celebrate and welcome Manas and Lucia's new baby Shalom Agbor (who is due any day now). The Baby Shower will be on Sunday, March 10th after Worship in Good Shepherd Hall. Please join for cake and coffee. If you feel inspired to support the new family, there will be a basket for cards and gift cards/monetary donations as well as a table for gifts (especially size 18 months and larger). Mostly we want to shower them with love.



Deacon Connector Program

Deacon Connector Initial Meeting - February 18th!

Connectors will work closely with the Deacon Board to create a caring network for members and friends of MVPC. Being a Connector will involve making regular contacts and building relationships with people from the congregation as well as being available to navigate and mobilize resources should the need arise. We don't have

as many Connectors as we would like for our congregation. If you are interested in serving as a Connector or learning more, please come to the meeting after worship on Feb. 18th and/or let a member of the Deacon Board know of your interest.

Deacon Board: David Lorente (moderator), Laurel Coalwell, Ward Ernst, Carol Pursell, David Reamer, Kitty Willis,

Lent & Easter at MVPC



- ◇ Lenten Study “Living into Lent” Wednesdays 10 am 2/14 ~ 3/27
- ◇ Ash Wednesday Service February 14th at 7 pm
- ◇ Palm Sunday Service 10:30 am followed by potluck and Easter Egg Decorating in Good Shepherd Hall
- ◇ Maundy Thursday Service March 28th at 7 pm
- ◇ Easter Sunday Worship March 31st at 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*

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Rev. Dan Holland, Pastor
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<http://www.MountVernonPres.org>

Please
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