



MOUNT VERNON PRESBYTERIAN CHURCH

Growing Followers Of Christ Since 1902

The Grapevine

I am the vine; You are the branches.

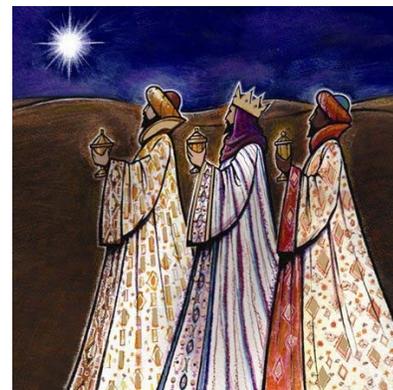
John 15:5

Year 119, Issue 1

January, 2021

Epiphany

At a church function a number of years ago someone asked why we give gifts on Christmas. Apparently, I started preaching (job hazard I guess). I said that if we wanted to claim any Scriptural precedent for gift giving around Jesus' birth, we wouldn't really do Christmas presents at all, we'd do Epiphany presents because Epiphany is the day that we set aside to remember the coming of the wisemen and they're the ones who brought gifts to Jesus. So, that person gave a little gift to everyone in our family that year. He said that my kids could open theirs on Christmas but I had to wait till Epiphany for mine. It was all in good fun, but it also got me thinking.



The gifts the wisemen brought were both impressive and expensive. Gold, Frankincense and Myrrh were gifts worthy to be given to a king. And traditionally one of the questions that's been raised by the gifts of the wisemen is: "What gift will we bring?" or "What do we have to offer the king?" But think for a moment about the word "Epiphany." The word means a sudden insight into the nature of reality. It's the "Aha! moment" when the lightbulb turns on and we understand the world differently. When we remember what Epiphany means, we realize that only a small part of the celebration is about the gifts the wisemen brought, or even the gifts that we bring to the Christ child.

And don't get me wrong, the gifts we bring are important, when we recognize and use our talents and abilities, that's the way the gospel gets shared and spread, and it's the way ministry happens. Giving the gifts we do is exceedingly important for our lives, for our faith development, and even the development of the church. But the gifts that we give, as important as they are for us and our context, aren't really what Epiphany is about. The focus of Epiphany is on another gift entirely - the one that's already been given to us in the person of Jesus Christ! God's grace given not just to some, but to all (which is what the wisemen represent), is the gift that's able to bring about the "Aha! Moment" and transform our lives inside and out. I find myself grateful that Epiphany happens at the beginning of the year as a kind of reminder to start off right, aware of the gifts God has given and the difference that makes for us.

This year at MVPC on the first Sunday of the year, January 3rd, we're hosting a special Epiphany worship service (designed by our own Josh VerHalen). I'd invite you to come, kick off the new year, and celebrate God's gifts!

Many Blessings on your new year! May it be filled with "Aha! Moments" of God's grace,

Pastor Dan

MVPC Sunday Worship 10:30 am on zoom - Meeting #972 436 044

New Position at MVPC

Moving into 2021, the Session of MVPC has created a new part time staff role! The **Director of Christian Education and Spiritual Formation** will help us to draw together and better meet the four priorities Session has been working toward: *Biblical Literacy, Deepening Life of Prayer and Discernment, Caring Relationships, and Unified Mission*. The new role will seek to integrate Christian Education aspects of our faith (classes, worship, etc) with the Spiritual Formation aspects (prayer groups, mission experience, worship, etc.) toward a more full experience of head, heart, and hands growing together for each person and the whole congregation. The position will also foster an intentional move toward teams of volunteers who are recruited, trained, and supported as they run the ministries of the church (including the children's ministry, youth ministry, adult and senior ministries, etc).

We are pleased to welcome **Rebecca Holland** into the new position. Rebecca has been serving as Director of Children and Family Ministries since the Fall of 2017 and, before that, as Director of Children, Youth, and Family Ministries since the Fall of 2013. In addition to a Master's Degree in Marriage and Family Therapy (a perfect degree to work with our large church family) and over 22 years of ministry experience (including 5 different PC(USA) churches), she recently completed a professional degree in Spiritual Direction, deepening her skills in prayerful listening. Rebecca's role at MVPC has already begun to shift into the new position over the last 10 months. She has expanded the Godly Play circle to include the whole congregation and stepped into additional roles that were needed in order to meet challenges of ministry during the pandemic, including helping to create and run the Prayer Group and the Communications Team. She looks forward to working with the whole congregation to help people grow in their faith. We are grateful for the ways she has already served MVPC and are excited about what's to come; please join us in welcoming Rebecca to her newly expanded role at MVPC!

Thank you from all of MVPC to Beth Tacker

We are very appreciative of your 5+ years of service as treasurer here at MVPC. For the many hours of service and attention to detail, Thank you.



Pause Prayer Group

Tuesday 9 am (on Zoom)

Want to grow in your prayer life with the support of a group of friends? Come check out the Pause Prayer Group that meets on Tuesday mornings from 9 to 10 am for a time of prayer and sharing. Please talk with Rebecca Holland or Pat Papadopoulos to get on the email reminder and zoom numbers list.



Godly Play Stories in Worship

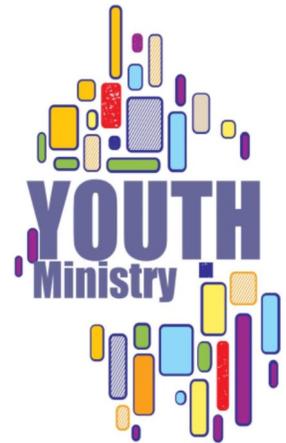
January 3rd Epiphany Sunday
January 10th Baptism Story
January 17th Mary's Story
January 24th The 12 Disciples' Story
January 31st Saul's Story

MVPC Kid's Group (on Zoom)

Wednesdays at 4 pm

Elementary kids (K through 5th grade) are invited every Wednesday at 4 pm for a Story, Games, and Kid's Group Fun! Contact Rebecca Holland, to get on the email reminder and zoom number list.

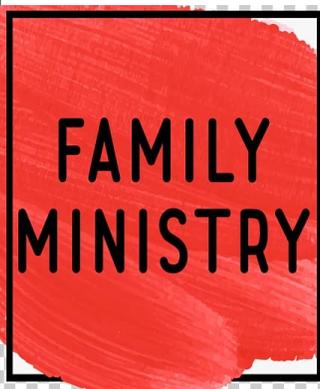
**Middle School
and High
School Online
Youth Group
1st and 3rd
Sundays
7 to 8 pm
(on Zoom)**



Our Youth Group has teamed up with the Youth Groups from First United Methodist Church and St. Paul's Episcopal Church for Online Youth Group on the 1st and 3rd Sundays of every month from 7 to 8 pm. Youth in 6th through 12th grade are invited to join the online faith, fellowship, and fun! Contact Pastor Dan or the church for an email reminder and zoom numbers.

MVPC Family Online Opportunities

All Ages Worship	Sundays 10:30 am
Family Small Group	1st Sundays at 4 pm
Youth Group	1st & 3rd Sun 7 pm
Kid's Group	Wednesday at 4 pm



Family Small Group

1st Sundays at 4 pm

Families of all ages are invited to be a part of the Family Small Group that meets monthly for fellowship, prayer, games, and to grow together in faith. Sign up for email reminders and zoom #s.

Make a Difference by being a Valentine!

Thanks to all the kids, youth and adults who were Christmas Elves in December.

Please sign up to be a Valentine Cupid for January and February. We'll assign you someone to send little notes and artwork to from the congregation!



Be a Valentine Cupid Make a difference at MVPC!

Thank you to everyone who participated as a Christmas Elf in December. During January and February, we will be continuing the fun of sending notes to folks in the church with Valentine Cupids! Please let Head Cupids, Rebecca Holland or Anne Long know if you would like to be a Valentine Cupid or if you know someone who might appreciate receiving a few notes to brighten up their winter months.



A Prayer for Putting on a Face Mask



Creator God, as I prepare to go into the world, help me to see the sacramental nature of wearing of this cloth. Let it be a tangible and visible way of living love for my neighbors, as I love myself.

Christ Jesus, since my lips will be covered, uncover my heart, that people would see my smile in the crinkles around my eyes. Since my voice may be muffled, help me to speak clearly, not only with my words, but with my actions.

Holy Spirit, as the elastic touches my ears, remind me to listen carefully and caringly to all those I meet. May this simple piece of cloth be shield and banner, and may each breath that it holds, be filled with Your love. In Your name and in that love, I pray.

Amen.

Rev. Richard Bott, Moderator Presbyterian Church of Canada

REMINDER

The MVPC church office is not open during Covid. Your staff is working from home except on rare occasions when printing or mailing needs to be done.

MVPC Small Group Relaunch

Every January, we will be "relaunching" the MVPC small groups as a way to encourage everyone in our church to look at how they would like to be involved in small groups in the coming year and for the small groups to take time to prayerfully look toward the coming year.. What is a small group? A small group is a group of people who intentionally commit to meeting together in a way that builds community and faith. Why should you be a part of a small group? A small group is a great way to connect and grow with others in the congregation. What does the relaunch mean for you? If you are interested in joining a small group or would like to see if another group would be a better fit for you - now is a great time to join a new group! If you are in a small group that is interested in welcoming in a few new members - now is a great time to welcome them in and prayerfully look toward the coming year! If you are in a small group that wants to continue as you have been - now is a great time to check in with your members and prayerfully look toward the coming year! Please let Rebecca Holland, the new Director of Christian Education and Spiritual Formation know if you are interested in being a part of MVPC small groups in 2021 and how the church can be supportive to you and your group.



2021 Per Capita

Presbytery	\$40.50
Synod	.25
GA	8.98
Total	\$49.73

PER CAPITA: WHAT DO YOU GET FOR YOUR MONEY? Often called the Presbyterian Covenant Community Fund, per capita pays for the operating overhead of the church at all levels beyond the congregation. It works like an insurance policy: the churches together provide services for congregations and spiritual leaders. Presbytery, funded by per capita, engages, equips and encourages congregations and their leaders. The Westminster Confession states, "all believers, are therefore, under obligation to sustain the ordinances of the Christian religion where they are already established, and to contribute by their prayers, gifts, and personal efforts to the extension of the Kingdom of God throughout the whole earth"

NETWORK OF PEOPLE, EXPERTISE, AND RESOURCES.

PRESBYTERY STAFF

MISSION

HELP CHURCHES FIND, DEVELOP, AND SUPPORT LEADERSHIP

HELP FOR MINISTRY EFFECTIVENESS & CONGREGATIONAL DEVELOPMENT HELP DURING DIFFICULTY e CORPORATE AFFAIRS

RECORDS AND HISTORY

PRESBYTERY/SYNOD/GENERAL ASSEMBLY MEETINGS AND AGENCIES

THE COLLECTIVE WISDOM AND RESOURCES OF... 54 congregations and 9 new church expressions in NWC Presbytery and beyond for the benefit of each.

MVPC will pay the above amount for each member of the church in 2021. If you would like to cover your per-capita and/or scholarship someone else's, please make a check to MVPC with "Per capita" in the memo line. Thank you

Thank you to:



- ♥ Thank you to everyone who helped pull together such wonderful Advent and Christmas Worship Services. Thank you for making this year so special despite the challenges of meeting online.
- ♥ Thank you to Abram, Allison, Anna, Asher, Avalon, Ayden, Ben, Clara, Donovan, Eden, Eli, Gavin, Jace, Jill, Jonny, Kennedy, Kimora, Malik, Matilda, Michaela, Miriam, Natalia, Natalie, Quinn, Robin, Rose, Ross, Sadie, and Warren for participating in the Advent and Christmas Eve Scripture Reading Videos!
- ♥ Thank you to Rebecca for organizing and producing the videos and parents for encouraging and supporting your kids!
- ♥ A huge thank you to Mackenzie Anderson and Laurie Parker for making and canning the traditional MVPC Wassail for the after Christmas Eve Worship Fellowship and for help in handing it out to everyone who drove by to pick up! And thank you to Dan and Rebecca Holland for delivering the Christmas Eve candles, wassail, and kid's craft bags to many folks who were not able to pick their kits up at the church!
- ♥ Thank yous to Barb Clure, Malik Sumareh, Loretta Vanderpol, Dave Gale, Mackenzie Anderson, David Lorente and Mim Ambrose for sharing their stories of "Embracing the challenge and Receiving the blessing" during worship this Advent season
- ♥ Thank you to Josh, Iva and the Choir for Christmas Eve Music!
- ♥ Thank you to Bob Higbee and the building team for seeing the construction process through to completion!

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

To All Women of MVPC

Women's Fellowship is meeting on Zoom the fourth Saturday of the month. A small group enjoys each other's company and want to share that with more of you. All who attend feel the companionship of each other as we blend our Scripture study into our lives amid Covid 19. It is an open group. Come when you can. Our next gathering is Saturday—Jan 23rd. The meeting starts at 9 AM. Welcome all women as you are able to attend.

January Birthdays & Anniversaries

- | | |
|----------------------|---------------------------|
| 1-Connie Shultz | 22-Betty Anne Friedericks |
| Dave Wilson | Graham Kerr |
| 3-Alberta Peters | 23-Madison Yerigan |
| 4-Shirley Leamon | 24-Allison Scoby |
| 7-Beth Tacker | Sarah Catton |
| Lucy McLaughlin | 28-Elisa Gehringer |
| 8-Loretta Vander Pol | Janine Risenhoover |
| 9-Rosemary Gale | Darcy Olsen |
| 10-David Lorente | 29- Molly Howard |
| 15-Kurtis Scoby | 30-Linda Ream |
| 16-Bud Gilbert | Kevin Maas |
| 19-Karin Brown | 31- Kitty Willis |
| Arlene Andersen | 31-Martin & Tonnie Boer |



CRAFTING ON ZOOM

The second and fourth Tuesdays of each month find busy fingers flying as a group of crafters



and knitters meet on Zoom from noon to 1 pm. First January meeting is the 12th. Call Patti Allen for more information.



Mount Vernon Presbyterian Church

Growing followers of Christ

Our Vision Statement

Encounter The Hope

of the living God through Jesus Christ

Engage One Another

in authentic friendship

Embrace The World

with the heart and hands of Jesus

**MVPC
Church Leadership
2020-2021**

Elders			Ministry Area	Deacons		
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
MaryEllen	Byerly	2022	Membership/Evangelism	Tom	Howard	2022
Bill	DeHon	2022	Ministry Support	Sandi	Seabott	2022
Gail	LaFleur	2022	Worship	Sumiko	Shinozaki	2022
Bob	Rauch	2022	Discipleship	Vacant		2022
David	Gale	2023	Membership/Evangelism	Arlene	Andersen	2023
Becky	Goodell	2023	Mission & Service	Rosemary	Gale	2023
Bob	Higbee	2023	Ministry Support	Colleen	Higbee	2023
Joe	Seabott	2023	Mission & Service	Wendy	Bartholomew	2023