



# Good News

Month At-A-Glance

February 2020

- February 2  
Annual  
Congregational  
Meeting 10am  
Lent Small Group  
Signup
- February 9  
PW Mission Lunch  
& Program 12pm
- February 14  
MVS Half Day
- February 16  
Quarterly Team  
Meeting 10am  
Session Meeting  
12pm
- February 17  
MVS Holiday
- February 23  
Youth Sunday  
Fellowship of the  
Carpenter 7:30am  
Lent Small Groups  
Begin  
Burning of the  
Palms 12pm
- February 26  
Ash Wednesday  
Pancake Dinner  
6pm  
Service 7pm

## A Faithful Vision

Often around stewardship season pastors start to ask one another, "What are you going to preach on Stewardship Sunday?" Personally, I have always found that an irrelevant question. I think every sermon is a stewardship sermon and I think every Sunday is Stewardship Sunday. I say that because I don't believe one sermon, or one worship service can compel anyone to be moved in a grand fashion. I am not saying it's not possible, but I believe stewardship, like faith, is fashioned over a period of time, a lifespan more accurately, with a piece of each Sunday hopefully molding that final image into a pristine clay jar.

This past December, your jars, the ones shaped by the faith you express and continually molded by the love you receive from Christ revealed itself in your benevolence of this church. **Because of your stewardship we finished 2019 with a \$10,000 surplus.**

Continued on page 2...

## 2020 Elders



The Finance Team and I are overjoyed by this gratitude you have shown and are incredibly grateful as we begin 2020. We hope this year will live into the *New Beginning* stewardship theme we lifted up last fall. Hopefully it will be a year that sees us welcome a new Associate Pastor that will help shape our Children, Youth, and Christian Education ministries. Your Associate Pastor Nominating Committee is already hard at work to ensure that happens. Hopefully it will be a year which you will find the Holy Spirit through worship and ritual- an intentional respite amid the busyness of life. Hopefully it will be found around small group tables, on mission trips, at committee meetings, or in fellowship on the courtyard over a bowl of chili.

This time of year, I am tasked to consider and think broadly about the vision of the church. At the Session retreat (on January 24-25) I gave my thoughts about where I see the “state of the church” while on Sunday, February 2<sup>nd</sup> at 10am we will have our annual church meeting in the Fellowship Hall. Admittedly though, those words and thoughts have no basis without the faithfulness within you and that you choose to express. Otherwise it’s a vision without a picture. You are what gives the vision it’s color, it’s clarity, and with the boundless love of Jesus Christ, together we can live into this beginning.

So THANK YOU for your expressions of faith. They give me great hope as we begin 2020. May that same hope continue to spark through the worship we share, the music we sing, and the sermons that are spoken, for collectively they inspire our visions and shape what I believe will be a new beginning.

Grace and Peace,

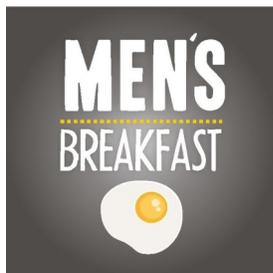
Barrett



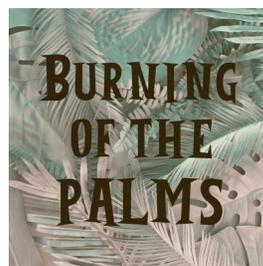


### Coming Back in 2020: Dinner With Friends (With a Pastor Twist)

Do you like to eat? Do you like to meet people? Do you actually want to get to know your pastor? We are introducing Dinner with Friends! We have put together a Sign-up Genius with different dates throughout the year. The number of guests varies per signup and we hope all will participate whether you plan to come alone or with someone. Most of the time Barrett will try to be there, and hopefully, Braegan can join. Our first gathering will be February 29 at the home of Ben and Lisa Cumming. Each host will coordinate the menu and everyone signed up will bring something from the menu. Please let us know if you would like to host a "Dinner with Friends" night. Please limit signups to one per person so everyone has a chance to take part in a gathering. If viewing online, click [here](#) to signup.



We hope that all men will join us for Fellowship of the Carpenter from 7:30-8:45 am on February 23.



After our 11am Youth Sunday Service on February 23, please join us for Burning of the Palms.



We hope to see you on Ash Wednesday for a Pancake Dinner at 6pm followed by service at 7pm.



## Session Report

The Session of Mount Vernon Presbyterian Church met for their annual retreat on January 24-25 at the Calvin Center south of Atlanta. Much of the time was spent in reflection on the year that was and brainstorming for the year ahead. In the course of this discernment, the Session did hold their formal meeting.

On Friday night, Elders-elect Bryce Cumming, Brent Schweiger, Carol Beckman, John Hibbard, Mary Kilgore, Wendy Hagenau, and David Hill all read aloud their statements of faith to the entire body. Following a time of questions by the current elders, a motion to accept the Elders-Elect was sustained.

Following an adjournment, the Session formally reconvened on Saturday afternoon to resume the meeting.

Session members were encouraged to sign-up for various duties such as: attending quarterly meetings of the Presbytery of Greater Atlanta and serving monthly communion.

Session then approved the consent agenda which included approving: the previous meeting minutes; dates to serve Holy Communion in 2020; dates to hold Quarterly Team Meetings; the elder ministry team assignments; the monthly outreach and special offerings; David Hill to serve as clerk of session; Steve Ray to serve as treasurer; John Hibbard, Mary Kilgore, and Donna Martin to attend February 8<sup>th</sup> Presbytery Meeting at Alpharetta Presbyterian Church.

Following the unison Affirmation of Faith from the Second Helvetic Confession, session engaged in the following business:

Elected Charlie Gray, Chair and Carrie Southard, Vice-Chair of the Church Nominating Committee.

Elder John Hibbard reviewed the 2019 financials and went through the 2020 budget that Finance/Administration Team brought before the session. Session approved the 2020 operating budget as presented. Approved the 2019 statistical report presented by Elder David Hill to be sent to the PC(USA) national office.

Rev. Abernethy gave a report on the Organist Search and upon request from the Search Committee presented Justin Maxey as the finalist for the position. Rev. Abernethy shared that Mr. Maxey comes to Mount Vernon after previously serving as the organist at Roswell Presbyterian Church. Session approved the recommendation. Mr. Maxey's first Sunday will be February 16<sup>th</sup>.

Elder David Barclift reported that the Associate Pastor Nominating Committee (APNC) is starting to meet and hopes to have the Ministry Information Form (MIF) online soon. A MIF is the church equivalent of a resume for pastors to read and learn more about our church.

Rev. Abernethy offered his pastor's report which included the following: he will meet with students who are completing coursework at Austin Seminary and share with them more about our open Associate Pastor position; he is talking with Columbia Theological Seminary to discuss ideas about fostering an internship program between the church and a seminary student; working with Congregational Care to ensure MVPC pastoral care needs are being met; he is trying to be visible in the community through offering prayers at Sandy Springs City Council meetings and teaching Mount Vernon School elementary students about Advent and Epiphany.

Rev. Abernethy closed the meeting with prayer and the retreat ended with a brief service where the sacrament of Holy Communion was administered.

Submitted,

Rev. Barrett Abernethy



Come check out Gailey Hall! The original windows have finally been replaced and new lighting and a refrigerator have been installed. Slightly used furniture has also been donated by church members.



A big THANKS to Sylvia McAdam and Carol Beckman for taking on the initiative of purging and donating the years of accumulated items to multiple organizations!! This is now a storage area for all Family Promise items.



Youth-Led Services  
February 23  
9am & 11am

Youth Mission Trip to Asheville  
May 31 – June 5.  
Do not let money be a  
deterrent. Scholarships are  
available for those in need.

**MOUNT VERNON YOUTH BOWLING NIGHT**



PLEASE JOIN US FOR  
**AMIS DAY 2020**



**SUNDAY, FEBRUARY 9, 2020 | 2-4 PM**

North Avenue Presbyterian Church | 607 Peachtree St. NE | Atlanta, GA 30308

*Celebrate the Sweetness of International Friendship*  
**WITH DESSERTS FROM AROUND THE WORLD**

For 42 years, AMIS has been building bridges and friendships between international college/graduate students and Americans in the greater Atlanta area. Come celebrate our Annual AMIS Day at North Avenue Presbyterian Church as we make new friends, reconnect with old ones, and enjoy desserts from around the world.



**WELCOMING** and **CONNECTING** International Students with **FRIENDS** in the Atlanta area

Register at [www.amis-inc.org/events](http://www.amis-inc.org/events) or email [office@amis-inc.org](mailto:office@amis-inc.org)

AMIS is the French word for "friends" and symbolizes our mission to welcome and connect international students with friends in the greater Atlanta area. **Right now, we have students from Nigeria, Ethiopia, India, Pakistan, China, and Vietnam that we are looking to connect with a local friend.** As an Amigo Friendship volunteer, we ask you to meet at least once for a meal, event, or outing and continue your friendship over the year as you have time and opportunity. Your friendship and support will mean so much to an international student far away from home. Learn more at [www.amis-inc.org/amigovolunteer](http://www.amis-inc.org/amigovolunteer) or email us at [office@amis-inc.org](mailto:office@amis-inc.org).

You are invited to **AMIS Day 2020 on February 9 from 2-4 pm** at North Avenue Presbyterian Church (607 Peachtree St. NE) in the Overlook Hall as we "Celebrate the Sweetness of International Friendship" with desserts from around the world. We will gather with AMIS international students from colleges/universities all over Atlanta, enjoy sweets, music, and hear from a panel of international students who will share about their experiences. Go to [www.amis-inc.org/events](http://www.amis-inc.org/events) to register.



**The February Communion Offering** is non-perishable food for the Food Pantry at the Community Assistance Center (CAC). Most needed items include canned meats and beef stew, canned fruits and vegetables, cereal, peanut butter, jelly, macaroni and cheese, canned pastas, spaghetti sauce, rice, instant potatoes, dry or evaporated milk, soup, crackers, and cookies. Paper and plastic grocery bags are also needed. Please place your donations in the outreach bin near the church office any time during the month of February. Thank you for your generosity.

To my MVPC family,

How can I even begin to thank you for the notes and cards, the gifts, the extra hard hugs, the generous love offering, and the awesome send off party you gave me?! It was all perfect, and exactly what I hoped it would be. Having Rick Sommers show up (much to my surprise) was extra special since he's the one who hired me. I enjoyed seeing people from all the different eras of MVPC and catching up with former youth. I felt celebrated and special. So thank you to everyone who planned it (especially Steve Ray, David Barclift, Yvonne White and Barrett Abernethy), those who came, the youth who served, and those who were there in spirit. Thank you also for the love offering.

I have loved this church deeply for almost 22 years. I have loved the energy there and the weird shape of the sanctuary. I have loved going to Honduras, Raleigh, Florida, Kentucky, Memphis, Asheville, Chicago, King College and more, all with groups of teens and brave adults. Those trips have given me memories that I will always treasure. I've loved doing skits that made a point (LEGO Challenge or Yuk the Y2K Bug, anyone?) and leading Youth Sunday services (while keeping students from rappelling down from the overhead skylight). I've loved leading Youth Group, teaching Sunday School and Confirmation, and speaking to various groups. I've loved doing outreach programs here in Atlanta, especially our Feed the Homeless program that the teens and I started in 2002. I've loved starting Cakes4Kids at Lake Forest, hanging with the staff and laughing with them while admiring their gifts, being in the Praise Band from the very beginning, getting to know our Senior members, who told me hilarious and moving stories of their lives, playing games with those seniors and sharing meals with them, and being a part of our services and worship times. Honestly, there were very few Sundays that I *didn't* drive home thinking how blessed I was to be at MV.

But most of all I have loved *you*. All of you. You've shared your wisdom and ideas with me. You've shared your hearts and let me share mine. You've let me preach creative and different sermons like singing a "Hamilton" song, giving out Oscars on a red carpet (and getting to win one at both services – best day ever!!) or showing you my lovely 5th grade picture. You've shared your teens and your Senior adults freely with me. I know that both groups have taught me way more than I taught them. The outpouring of love and support you offered when my mom and dad died still just stuns me and fills my heart. (In the words of the immortal Milt Hibbard, "how do people manage loss when they don't have a church?") You have taught me, you have encouraged me, you have BEEN the church for me. And I don't have the words to adequately tell you how much I have loved it all. I couldn't love all of you more or be more grateful for my time here. I really did love it all.

I ended a note on social media that seems appropriate here, so I'm using it again. In the words of that great philosopher Winnie the Pooh: "How lucky I am to have something that makes saying goodbye so hard."

Peace, Grace, and Traveling Mercies, my friends-

Elo (Elizabeth)

Stay in touch! [Elizabethsmalloo@gmail.com](mailto:Elizabethsmalloo@gmail.com) Cell: 678-642-6213, 3111 Spring Creek Lane, Atlanta, GA 30350 (And the secret password will remain "The Wet Dog Sleeps in the Front Yard")





Our families have been staying at a Baptist church, a Presbyterian Church, a Temple congregation and are about to go to a Methodist church. I love that Family Promise brings so many different congregations together to help homeless families.

One of our families has graduated the program, our young mom has gotten a part-time job and has moved back home. A new family has joined the program and Wanda, the caseworker is interviewing another family this week.



## Announcements from CAC

### **CAC Opens Dunwoody Office, Grand Opening Event Feb. 28**

The Community Assistance Center's new branch office in Dunwoody is open! Join us for a grand opening event on Friday, February 28 at 9 a.m. with Dunwoody Mayor Lynn Deutsch. CAC's Dunwoody office is located at 5 Dunwoody Park South, Building 5, Suite 113, Dunwoody GA 30338. The office offers access to families who live in that area, particularly those with no car, to CAC services. CAC expects to serve about 400 families a year at the new office. [More Information.](#)

### **Join the CAC Volunteer Team to Help Our Neighbors!**

Make a difference in the lives of our neighbors in times of need. Join the more than 1,700 volunteers at the Community Assistance Center (CAC) helping to prevent homelessness and hunger. Give your time to meet with clients to assess needs, work in the food pantry or thrift shop. Volunteers are also needed to teach adult education classes and more. Visit [www.ourcac.org](http://www.ourcac.org) for a [list of current volunteer opportunities!](#) Contact Nolan at [volunteer@ourcac.org](mailto:volunteer@ourcac.org).

## Zambia High School Scholarships

The new school year started in Zambia in January and there are numerous students from Garden Presbyterian School who need assistance attending high school at Garden Hill High School. Thank you for your prior support of these students. In 2019 we supported over 22 students and we expect to have 27 in 2020. The donations cover tuition and testing fees for the students. If you would like to donate to the project, you can drop a check in the offering plate or to the church marked as "Hannah's scholarship fund" or you can donate online through the church website and choose "Hannah's Zambia Scholarship Fund". All assistance is appreciated!

John Roberson—passed away 12/10, service to be determined

Inez Cole—recovering at home from surgery

Evelyn Allen—recovering/home

Kirk Pumphrey—recovering/brothers

Please keep these individuals and their families in your prayers.



When we started this ministry a year ago, each person who committed to the ministry felt strongly called to it. We felt all along that God wanted us involved. Here, a year later, all Stephen ministers are serving care receivers. It seems like God has provided what our congregation and community needed. We will consider training more ministers in the fall. If you are interested, contact Pat Bartee.

Do you feel a need for prayer?  
Have our Prayer Vine pray for you!  
Email your requests to  
[prayerrequests@mvpchurch.org](mailto:prayerrequests@mvpchurch.org)  
or call the church office at  
404-255-2211.



**2020 Session Members and Ministry Teams**

**Clerk of Session**

David Hill

**Christian Education**

Carrie Southard

**Congregational Care**

Joy Garden

**Fellowship**

David Barclift

**Finance/Administration**

Charlie Gray—Chair

**Outreach**

Carol Beckman

Brent Schwieger

**Personnel**

Donna Neumann

**Senior Adults**

Mary Kilgore

**Stewardship**

Wit Truitt

**Witness**

John Hibbard

Mackenzie Truitt

**Worship**

Dale Morine

Wendy Hagenau

**Youth**

Jon Barber

Bryce Cumming

**Moderator**

Rev. Barrett Abernethy



**Save the Dates for Small Groups!**

Our spring cycle for small groups is scheduled for Lent. Get these dates on your calendar and plan to join one of the four groups for study, fellowship, and food: Feb. 23, March 1, 8, 15, 22, and 29 for groups meeting on Sunday; the group that meets at Mount Vernon Towers will meet on Thursdays – Feb. 27, March 5, 12, 19, 26, and April 2<sup>nd</sup> 2:30-4:00 in the Game Room. Studies may be five or six weeks as determined by the groups. As in the past, there will be a group meeting at the church shortly after the 11:00 service and two that meet on Sunday evenings in homes, in addition to the weekday group meetings at the Towers. Signup will begin on February 2<sup>nd</sup> before and after the 9:00 and 11:00 services. Participants will be asked to pay \$10.00 for study books; materials will be provided for those unable to pay. Stay tuned for information regarding study topics and group facilitators. We had a great turnout for study groups in the fall and expect even more this spring!

	January 20-26	Actual YTD	2020 Budget
Pledge Member Giving	\$4117	\$25,782	\$439,217
Non-Pledge Member Giving	\$500	\$1,900	\$80,000
Loose Offering		\$21,983	\$21,983
Prepaid 2019 Pledges	423	\$872	\$15,000
<b>TOTAL</b>	<b>\$5,040</b>	<b>\$50,537</b>	<b>\$556,200</b>

Sun.	Mon.	Tue.	Wed.	Thur.	Fri.	Sat.
						1
<b>2</b> 9am & 11am Worship No Church School Annual Congrega- tional Meeting 10am Small Group Signup	<b>3</b>	<b>4</b> PW CT Meeting 10am-SR Christian Education 7pm-SR	<b>5</b> Stephen Ministries 5pm-SR Choir Rehearsal 7:30pm	<b>6</b> APNC-5pm	<b>7</b>	<b>8</b>
<b>9</b> 9am & 11am Worship 10am Church School PW Missions lunch 12pm	<b>10</b> Finance Admin. Meeting 6:30pm	<b>11</b>	<b>12</b> Worship Committee 12:45pm Stephen Ministries 5pm-SR Choir Rehearsal 7:30pm	<b>13</b> APNC-5pm	<b>14</b> MVS Half Day PW Book Circle 10am SR	<b>15</b>
<b>16</b> 9am & 11am Worship Quarterly Team Meeting 10am-FH Session Meeting 12pm-KC	<b>17</b> President's Day MVS Holiday	<b>18</b> Newsletter Deadline	<b>19</b> Stephen Ministries 5pm-SR Choir Rehearsal 7:30pm	<b>20</b> APNC-5pm	<b>21</b> Women's Prayer Group 8am	<b>22</b>
<b>23</b> Fellowship Of The Carpenter 7:30am 10am Church School Youth Sunday 9am & 11am Burning of the Palms 12pm Lent Small Groups Begin 2:30pm	<b>24</b>	<b>25</b>	<b>26</b> Stephen Ministries 5pm-SR Ash Wednesday Pancake Dinner 6pm Service 7pm Choir rehearsal 8pm	<b>27</b> APNC-5pm Newsletter Published	<b>28</b>	<b>29</b> Dinner with Friends begins

**February Birthdays**

Mike Hughes	2/2	Jack Ward	2/11	Leigh Thompson	2/18
Eli Maulding	2/3	Kate Christian	2/15	Steve Ponsell	2/20
Jack Nelson	2/6	Erin Jackson	2/15	Kim Bridgford	2/22
Ella Ponsell	2/9	Louise Lord	2/17	George Hammett	2/22

**February 2020****10:00 a.m.****February 2**No Church School Activities**Childcare:** (Sanctuary Building, Room 120, Infants-K)**Congregational Meeting****February 9**10:00am Church School Activities**Childcare:** (Sanctuary Building, Room 120, Infants-K)**Children:** (Kirk Center, Grades 1-5)**Youth:** Confirmation Class**Adult:** 1. *Discovery Bible Study* (Chapel) – Joy Carden  
2. *Quest* (Session Room)**February 16**No Church School Activities**Childcare:** (Sanctuary Building, Room 120, Infants-K)**Quarterly Team Meeting**

All are welcome! If you are interested in being involved with any of the ministry teams, please join us at 10 am.

**February 23 – Youth Sunday**10:00am Church School Activities**Childcare:** (Sanctuary Building, Room 120, Infants-K)**Children:** (Kirk Center, Grades 1-5)**Youth:** Confirmation Class**Adult:** 1. *Discovery Bible Study* (Chapel) – Pat Davis  
2. *Quest* (Session Room)

Viola Crawford	2/23	Thomas Ufere	2/25
Taylor Doyle	2/23	Karen Camp	2/28
John Allen	2/24	Chad Plumly II	2/28



**Candlelight  
Service & Nativity**





### Church Office Hours

8:00 a.m.—4:00 p.m.

### Service Times

9:00 a.m. & 11:00 a.m.

### Church School

10:00 a.m.

Presbyterian Women  
Mount Vernon Presbyterian Church

#### Mission Program

**Rev. Dr. Fahed Abu-Akel**

BA Education  
SouthEastern  
University, Lakeland  
Fla.  
Master of Divinity  
Columbia  
Theological  
Seminary  
Doctor of Ministry  
McCormick  
Seminary, Chicago



Moderator, 214<sup>th</sup>  
General Assembly, PC  
(USA)  
Executive Director  
Atlanta Ministry with  
International  
Students (AMIS)  
Holy Land Christian  
Ecumenical  
Foundation Advisory  
Board



### My Journey as a Christian Living in Palestine

Sunday, February 9  
After the 11:00 service  
Kirk Center

Lunch and childcare  
will be provided



All church members are invited. Please let Marguerite Nelson or Sarah Chalpan know if you would like to bring a guest.



471 Mt. Vernon Hwy, NE  
Sandy Springs, GA 30328

PLACE  
STAMP  
HERE

Return Service Requested

**Got News?** We'd love to hear from you! Send us your news so we can celebrate, laugh, and/or cry with you. After all, we are FAMILY. Deadline for news is the third Tuesday of each month for the *next month's* newsletter. Send your submissions to [terri@mvpchurch.org](mailto:terri@mvpchurch.org). *If you'd no longer wish to receive the Good News monthly, please email Debbie at [debbie@mvpchurch.org](mailto:debbie@mvpchurch.org).*

+++  
**Good  
News!**

### Mount Vernon Presbyterian Church Staff

Rev. Barrett Abernethy	Pastor	<a href="mailto:barrett@mvpchurch.org">barrett@mvpchurch.org</a>
Matthias Young	Music Director	<a href="mailto:matthias@mvpchurch.org">matthias@mvpchurch.org</a>
Steve Ray	Church Finance and Operations	<a href="mailto:steve@mvpchurch.org">steve@mvpchurch.org</a>
Debbie Nysewander	Administrative Assistant	<a href="mailto:debbie@mvpchurch.org">debbie@mvpchurch.org</a>
Terri Clayton	Communications Coordinator	<a href="mailto:terri@mvpchurch.org">terri@mvpchurch.org</a>
Yvonne White	Financial Secretary	<a href="mailto:yvonne@mvpchurch.org">yvonne@mvpchurch.org</a>



[www.mvpchurch.org](http://www.mvpchurch.org)  
[facebook.com/mountvernonpresbyterianchurch/](https://facebook.com/mountvernonpresbyterianchurch/)  
Instagram: [mvp\\_church](https://instagram.com/mvp_church)