



September 2020

# Good News

## Month At-A-Glance

September 1  
Phone Devotional 2pm

September 4  
MVS Early Release

September 7  
Labor Day  
Office Closed

September 8  
Phone Devotional 2pm

September 9  
Taize Online 7pm

September 15  
Phone Devotional 2pm

September 22  
Phone Devotional 2pm

September 29  
Phone Devotional 2pm

Due to the COVID-19 pandemic most activities have been canceled until further notice. See our virtual options.



## Welcome, Isaac Toney-Schmitt!

Your congregation voted UNANIMOUSLY to call Isaac Toney-Schmitt to serve as your Associate Pastor of Faith Formation.

We are excited to welcome Isaac and his wife Christina to Mount Vernon!

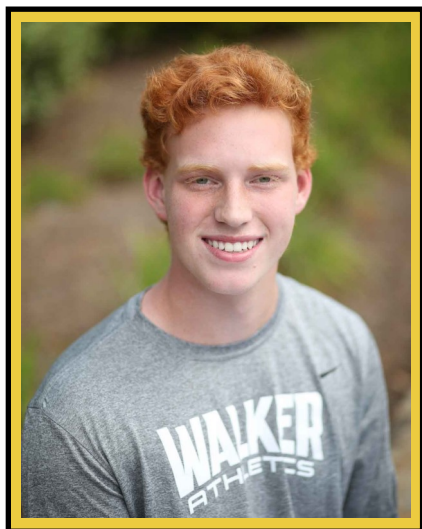
If viewing online, click on the photo above to view his video message.



### **Associate Pastor of Faith Formation**

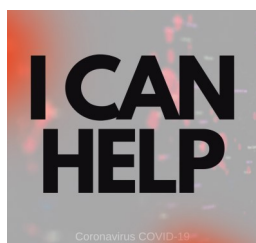
Isaac grew up in Athens, Georgia, and attended First Presbyterian Church of Athens with his family. He moved away from Georgia to attend Centre College in Danville, Kentucky, where he received a Bachelor's in History and Religion. At Centre, Isaac learned what a seminary even is and discerned a growing push to share holy space with others. In 2016 he moved to Atlanta and attended the Candler School of Theology at Emory University, where he received his Master of Divinity in 2019. Isaac's experience in churches before coming to Mount Vernon has shaped his call to listen for and lift up the voices of our youth. He served in a part-time internship during seminary at Shallowford Presbyterian Church which focused on youth ministry and worship leadership. Most recently he served as Youth Director at Independent Presbyterian Church in Birmingham, Alabama. Isaac began his call at Mount Vernon, August 2020. Isaac is married to Christina, and they spend a lot of time rock climbing and hiking.

## Welcome Organ Apprentice, Ryan Sawyer




Ryan Sawyer is a Sophomore at Brown University, where he studies Music and Applied Math. His musical interests include composition, organ, piano, and percussion. Ryan also works as a teaching assistant for Theory of Tonal Music at Brown. Ryan attended MVPC during his elementary school years and graduated from The Walker School. His other interests include rock climbing, bowling, and ice skating. Ryan is the son of MVPC Members Doug and Susan Sawyer.


If you would like to know how you can help or if you need help during these unprecedented times please visit our website at [mvpchurch.org](http://mvpchurch.org). If viewing online, click on the “I CAN HELP?/I NEED HELP” links.



If you normally bring your tithe and offering to church, please consider giving online by clicking on the image below or visiting our website at <https://mvpchurch.org/give/>.




**ONLINE**



<https://mvpchurch.org/give/>

**WAYS  
TO  
GIVE**

**MAIL**



Mount Vernon Presbyterian Church  
471 Mount Vernon Hwy NE  
Sandy Springs, GA 30328

## Session

The Session of Mount Vernon Presbyterian Church met on Sunday, August 16, 2020, via Zoom for their monthly stated meeting.

Moderator Rev. Barrett Abernethy called the meeting to order and opened the meeting with prayer.

Clerk of Session David Hill recorded attendance and announced that a quorum was present.

A few announcements were shared:

Isaac Toney-Schmitt, our new Associate Pastor began work on Monday, August 24<sup>th</sup>.

Small Groups will begin their fall sessions on September 27<sup>th</sup> and run for 5-6 weeks. More information will be forthcoming.

Elder Mary Kilgore offered a devotional based upon the book, *Heart Songs* by former MVPC Pastor Rev. Carol Strickland. It focused on Jesus's call to love one's enemies.

Clerk Hill announced dates for upcoming Presbytery meetings in September and November, and also shared friendly communications from the Atlanta Mission to International Students (AMIS) and Thornwell Children's Home. Moderator Abernethy noted the church had also received a kind note from Los Niños Primero following a successful mission drive to help them receive used laptops and tablets.

The body then approved the consent agenda.

Moderator Abernethy led the body in an Affirmation of Faith from the Westminster Shorter Catechism.

Ministry Team Reports were then given:

Elder Carrie Southard gave the Christian Education Report. She shared she is continuing to serve the children of the congregation via Zoom gatherings each week.

*Continued on page 5...*

Elder Joy Carden offered the report of Congregational Care. Additionally, she also provided an update for the Stephen Ministry, which has continued to serve people within and beyond the congregation throughout the pandemic.

Elders Charlie Gray and Wit Truitt provided the updated Finance and Administration report. Both offered their gratitude to the congregation for their continued generosity throughout the pandemic toward both the general fund and the Covid-19 fund.

Elders Carol Beckman and Brett Schweiger gave the Outreach update. They offered a broader overview of the Covid-19 Fund, noting that to date \$42,694 had been raised and \$38,427 had been dispersed. These funds have benefitted partner organizations that have responded to the pandemic by providing for those facing food and home insecurity. These organizations stretch from Sandy Springs to Lusaka, Zambia. Moderator Abernethy thanked them for this good work and expressed hope that we double the Covid-19 fund before the end of the year.

Elder Donna Neumann updated Session on the work Personnel has been undertaking. She noted that performance evaluation documents have been updated and will be utilized by the staff for reviews beginning in January, 2021.

Elder Mary Kilgore (Senior Adults) and Elder John Hibbard (Witness) offered brief reports.

Elders Wendy Hagenau and Dale Morine gave the Worship Report. Much of what they discussed was a preamble to discussion of returning to church campus that was discussed during old business.

Elders Bryce Cumming and Jon Barber offered the Youth report. They noted their excitement to help Isaac Toney-Schmitt on board as our new youth leader.

During Old Business the body approved:

*Continued on page 6...*

A plan put forth by the MVPC Foundation to fund grants solely through interest to simplify the accounting process. It was noted that since the inception of the Foundation, more than \$400k had been dispersed to partner organizations.

Also in Old Business the body discussed use of the church campus, and approved that:

Employees would return to work on a staggered basis as long as they felt comfortable to do so. The office will only be open to church members who call in advance and abide by the mandate to wear a mask and maintain proper social distance for the duration of their appointment.

Small groups (max 15 people) can meet outside for church functions as long as they (1) maintain proper social distance and (2) wear a mask that covers their mouth and nose at all times.

Any group that wishes to meet must make a reservation with the church and if they want to meet during Mount Vernon School hours space will be limited to the back porch of Gailey Hall. After school hours, groups can meet at other spots on campus. Restrooms will be made available for groups as well as proper hygiene products (soap, hand sanitizer). Note: this does not apply to youth as Isaac Toney-Schmitt will determine how best to work with them.

Stephen Ministry may hold 1 on 1 caregiver/care receiver conversations inside Gailey Hall provided the staff adequately informs Session of proper cleaning protocols.

In New Business:

The body was informed of the actions taken at the August 15<sup>th</sup> Presbytery Meeting of the Presbytery of Greater Atlanta. It was noted that Isaac Toney-Schmitt's evaluation of the Presbytery floor went wonderfully well.

*Continued on page 7...*

It was determined that the Nominating Committee would begin to carry out its duties to discern the next class of elders. Moderator Abernethy informed the body of a legal issue involving the Mount Vernon School. He is in contact with the school regarding this matter and the church is not involved in any way.

Moderator Abernethy offered his Pastor's Report. He thanked the body for their support upon his receipt of a Healthy Pastors, Healthy Congregations grant from the PCUSA's Board of Pensions. He thanked the body for their support as he begins his Doctor of Ministry Degree at Columbia Theological Seminary next month. He spoke of his hope to complete confirmation for our confirmands who went through the coursework last fall and winter, as well as his plans to work with Isaac Toney-Schmitt. He also shared how the first two in-person gatherings had gone, noting the celebration of being able to be in physical community but also the unique challenges posed during this season.

Moderator Abernethy then closed the meeting in prayer.

Respectfully Submitted,

Rev. Barrett Abernethy,  
Moderator

## Office Hours

Sundays 3-5 pm  
Thursdays 8-10 am

Appointment Only-Contact Pastor Barrett



**BRINGING THE CHURCH HOME!**

## The COVID Fund: Something to think about....

The need in our community continues to grow. Please consider the following:

Since most of us are staying or working from home and many businesses are still closed, have you saved money due to COVID; on gas, food, shopping or entertainment?

Please consider donating any money you have saved to the COVID Fund. Some of our neighbors are struggling to feed their families. Some can't afford transportation, school supplies or rent, and face eviction. Please continue to donate. Let's help our neighbors.

## Update: Covid-19 Fund

Thank you for all the support you have given to the Covid-19 Fund. The pandemic has left some of us financially untouched, but others are suffering greatly because of job loss. Below is how our church has supported our ministries to date:

Total contributions of - \$54,783  
Disbursements to date - \$38,427

**Community Assistance Center (CAC):** Funding to provide food and financial assistance (rent, utilities, etc.) to prevent hunger and homelessness in our local community. CAC has seen a 400% increase in requests for assistance since March 2020.

**Family Promise:** Funding for added expenses related to sheltering in place at St. Luke's, plus individual assistance for parents unable to work but still faced with bills for car expenses, insurance, and medical bills.



**Alliance for Children in Zambia:** Funding for medical supplies for two children's homes and to provide food and medicine for 50 destitute families with young children.

**Garden Presbyterian Church and School in Zambia:** Funding to provide food for needy families in our sister congregation in Lusaka, Zambia.

**Los Niños Primero:** Funding to provide educational materials for at-home learning due to the cancellation of the summer program at MVPC.

**Stirred Up Ministries:** Funding for food and other necessities for families of at-risk youth in the East Lake area of Atlanta.

**International Women's House and Drake House:** (Both are shelters for homeless mothers with children): Funding for living expenses to ensure that homeless families sheltered there can remain safe and secure during the pandemic.

**Lake Forest:** Funding to assist Lion's Pride Fund set up by teachers to help struggling Lake Forest Elementary families.

**Presbytery's New Church Development Commission (NCDC):** Funding to help new worshiping communities serving at risk populations, mainly refugee and immigrant families, who were already struggling with poverty prior to the pandemic.

The COVID Team meets every other Tuesday to discuss current needs and/or requests. Disbursements are made weekly/monthly as necessary.

**All of our ministry partners are extremely grateful for the continued support of the MPV congregation. One program director said "MVPC is such a wonderful group of folks that REALLY care; you continue to wow us with your support. My love and gratitude to you all."**

A total of 534 pounds of non-perishable food was brought to the church during the “drive-thru” event Sunday afternoon, August 9. Many thanks to all who participated! In addition to the food, ten laptops and tablets were donated to Los Niños Primero to allow their students to continue virtual learning for the next school year.



**The Community Assistance Center** continues to serve an increasing number of local residents adversely impacted by job loss and other issues caused by the pandemic. Since mid-March, 1,667 families in our community have been provided with food on a regular basis, and 721 families have been provided with rent and other financial assistance. Also, CAC is delivering food to approximately 100 senior citizens and medically fragile individuals each week.



We are making a difference in the lives of vulnerable families in our community!

**The CAC Food Pantry** has an on-going need for non-perishable food items. These may be dropped off at the church at any time using the bin outside the door to the office area.

**The CAC Thrift Shop** reopened on August 17 and is now taking donations of nearly-new clothing for men, women, and children in addition to household/decorative items. Clients are given vouchers to shop for themselves and their children, and the public is also invited to shop (following proper safety protocols including wearing a mask). The shop is open for shopping on Mondays, Wednesdays, and Thursdays from 9:30 AM to 1:30 PM. Donations are accepted on Tuesdays and Thursdays from 9:30 AM until 1:30 PM. The address is: 8607 Roswell Road, Sandy Springs, GA 30350

For more information, go to the CAC website at [ourcac.org](http://ourcac.org).



The Information Center will be placed outside the Church office Mon.-Fri. 9-5 if you need Upper Room Devotionals, These Days Devotionals, Good News, Stephen Ministry, MVPC PW Summer Newsletter, or Care Notes.

2020 Session  
Members and Ministry  
Teams

Christian Education  
Carrie Southard

Senior Adults  
Mary Kilgore

Fellowship  
David Barclift

Outreach  
Carol Beckman  
Brent Schwieger

Finance/Administration  
Charlie Gray

Stewardship  
Wit Truitt

Youth  
Jon Barber  
Bryce Cumming

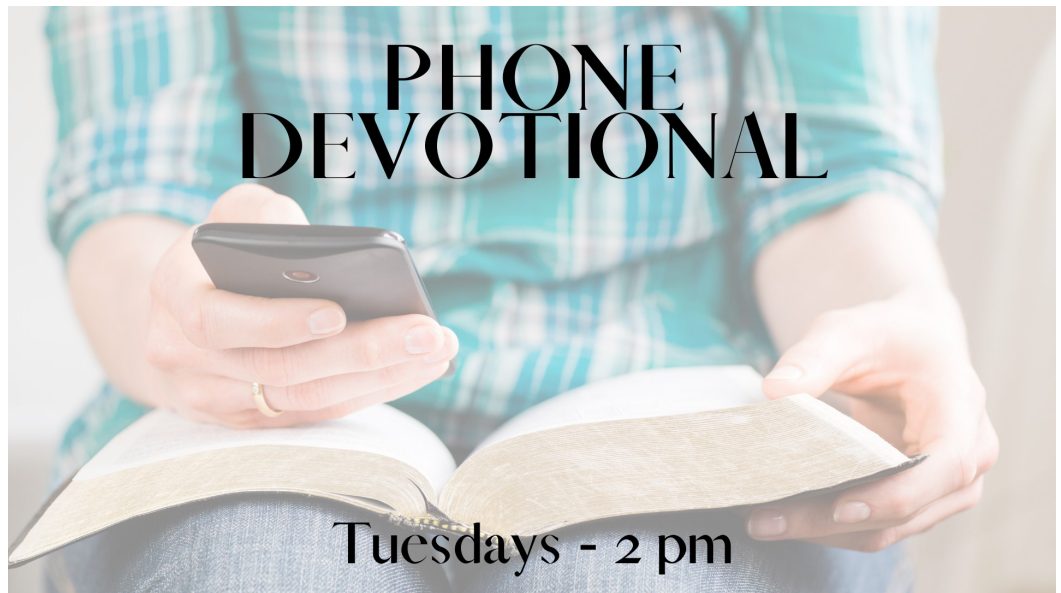
Congregational Care  
Joy Carden

Witness  
John Hibbard  
Mackenzie Truitt

Worship  
Wendy Hagenau  
Dale Morine

Clerk of Session  
David Hill

Moderator  
Rev. Barrett Abernethy



Dial 701-802-5094  
Access Code: 5154569



Our next Online Taize Worship Experience will be  
September 9 at 7 pm via Zoom.

Anyone who is interested in hosting a Zoom  
meeting, please contact Terri Clayton at  
[terri@mvpchurch.org](mailto:terri@mvpchurch.org).



## PW Officers

Moderator, Ann Williams; Vice Moderator, Joan Rownd; Past Moderator, Sarah Chalpan; Secretary, Gail Williams; Treasurer, Beppie Lever; Publicity, Jeanne Gilliland; Community Mission, Pat Davis; World Mission, Marguerite Nelson; Spiritual Growth, Linda Bhame; Resource Development, Clarice Elder; Historian, Jeanne Gilliland & Iva Corbin; Day Circle, Malinda Holmes & Anne Baynham; Sunday Circle, Pat Davis; Book Circle, Clarice Elder; Circle of Grace, Shelly Ray; Search Committee, Pearl Attaway, Iva Corbin & Jeanne Gilliland.

**To watch the video of the PW Installation, click on the photo above.**

[The Summer Quarter of the MVPC PW Newsletter can be viewed here](#) as well as on the Mount Vernon Presbyterian Church website and in the MV Good News. You can pick up a printed version outside the church office at the information center.



Your Stephen Ministry has ministers available to walk with you through trying times. We listen, help you think things through, let you talk it out, and offer encouragement, hope, and resources. Please contact us by calling our pastor or Pat Barte, Stephen Leader.

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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.

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## Praise God!

Red Harmon's cancer is in remission! He is at home, and his family thanks you for your prayers.

Praise to God for Yvonne's family; her father, Roosevelt McGee, is at home recovering from COVID.

Baby Gray is improving! The hospital continues to run tests and monitor him. Please continue to pray for perfect health.





**Please keep these individuals and their families in your prayers.**

Prayers for our new Associate Pastor, Isaac Toney-Schmitt and his wife Christina!

Prayers for health and peace for our children, parents, and teachers as they return to school or head off to college and for those who opt for home schooling or a gap year navigating education during a pandemic. Lord keep our people safe!

Prayers for Louise Lord, who suffers from pulmonary fibrosis and arthritis in her spine.

Prayers for strength and peace for Julie Chesnutt as she continues chemotherapy.

Prayers for healing for Inez Cole, both for mending a broken hip and for perfect vision from an eye infection.

Prayers for freedom for Rob Southard.

Prayers for the use of his left hand and arm for Kirk Pumphrey.

Prayers for strength and provision for the children, families and staff we support at schools and an orphanage in Zambia, with Los Niño's Primero, and with Family Promise.

Prayers for financial stability and recovery for those who have lost employment or whose revenue is drastically reduced, and business owners who are trying to stay afloat.

Prayers for the speedy containment, cure, and a vaccine for the Coronavirus.

Prayers for a hedge of protection around family, friends, church members, our elderly, health care workers, first responders, grocery store workers, and those who are most vulnerable.

## *Dreams of Our Fall*

As I write this, the football season is still up in the air, schools are opening with great hope but much trepidation, and we seem a long way from any certainty as to when a regular, in-person worship service will transpire.

Yet while I would classify the church as aspirational, but not essential, I do believe that the church is foundational to our existence. It is within her walls that we have sought God to faithfully point us toward righteousness or reconciliation to the great questions of the human experience. It is these questions that give context to our story as people and as a church. Someone recently asked me what I do well as a minister, and I responded by saying the ability to share and to celebrate the Mount Vernon story with you. The way I do that, and have tried to do that, is by hearing your questions, your aspirations, and the dreams you have that connect you to the solid rock of Jesus Christ.

So with that in mind here are the dreams I have for fall. I don't know if they will happen. If they don't, they will be the dreams for the winter, or where the rainbow will end come spring.

I dream that our congregation will remain firmly rooted to its belief that we are blessed and as such we have a call to be a blessing.

I dream that our congregation will get to know Isaac Toney-Schmitt, our new Associate Pastor. I dream he will bond with youth and they with him. I dream that the church will feel renewed energy by his presence.

I dream that we connect creatively as a congregation. I dream that small groups foster relationships and inspire the next questions.

I dream that we live into the questions we have, and to wonder how we can still be leaders and followers of Christ at this moment.

I dream that our confirmands will be confirmed into the life of our church. I dream that those who have watched from afar, those who



may have called themselves visitors know that we believe this is as much a home for them as anyone else. I dream for those who have been away from the church a long time to know they are not forgotten.

I dream that we will celebrate the saints who have joined the church triumphant and whose families have grieved without a sense of closure.

I dream we double the giving of the Covid-19 Fund (for context we are around \$42,000 as of this writing).

I dream that we always acknowledge those who have lost the capacity or the hope to dream.

I dream we will make our budget this year.

I dream we will have a service in the image of God on Christmas Eve (translation: I don't know what it will look like, but I dream for it).

I dream that all of you remain healthy and safe.

That last dream is my first dream. For without your health and well-being at the center of all of this, then we cannot ask the questions and we cannot dream the dreams. So before I ask and before I rest to dream, I begin this fall with this prayer:

May you know God is present with you and may you be present to your neighbor, and may we, together, acknowledge one another for the questions we long to answer and the dreams we long to see fulfilled. May God help us in this endeavor. Amen.

Grace and Peace,

Barrett

# September

Sun.	Mon.	Tue.	Wed.	Thur.	Fri.	Sat.
		<b>1</b> Coordinating Team 10am Zoom Phone Devotional 2pm Christian Education, 7pm (Zoom)	<b>2</b>	<b>3</b>	<b>4</b> MVS Early Release	<b>5</b>
<b>6</b> Online Worship 11am Isaac Preaches	<b>7</b> Labor Day MVS Closed MVPC Closed	<b>8</b> Phone Devotional 2pm Day Circle 10am Worship, 4pm (Zoom)	<b>9</b> Taize Online 7pm	<b>10</b>	<b>11</b>	<b>12</b>
<b>13</b> Online Worship 11am	<b>14</b> Finance Zoom 6:30pm	<b>15</b> Phone Devotional 2pm	<b>16</b>	<b>17</b>	<b>18</b>	<b>19</b>
<b>20</b> Online Worship 11am Session Zoom 12:30pm	<b>21</b>	<b>22</b> Phone Devotional 2pm	<b>23</b>	<b>24</b>	<b>25</b>	<b>26</b>
<b>27</b> Online Worship 11am	<b>28</b>	<b>29</b> Phone Devotional 2pm	<b>30</b>			
<b>30</b> Online Worship 11am	<b>31</b>					

**Virtual Days**  
 Barrett brings a Mount Vernon Moment each weekday on Facebook (usually) at noon!  
 Be sure to tune in!

## September Birthdays

Betsy Cozine	9/3	Mary Lou Newma	9/12
Kirk Pumphrey	9/4	Jim Loth	9/13
Chris Gray	9/4	Meg Christian	9/14
Hazel Cofield	9/4	Sam McClurg	9/15
Channing Snypp	9/5	Nancy Lesser	9/16
Ginny Little	9/5	Brian Carberry	9/17
Emma Plumly	9/6	Stephanie Skidmore	9/20
Carolyn Spain	9/6	McLaren Christensen	9/20
Lee Wall	9/6	George Henry	9/24
Suzanne Snypp	9/10	Penny Kiel	9/26
Mason King	9/10	Ellen Lesser	9/27
Louise Aldrich	9/10	Jack Bobeng	9/30
Sylvia McAdam	9/12		

<b>Aug 21-26</b>	<b>Actual</b>	<b>Actual YTD</b>	<b>2020 Budget</b>
Member Giving Pledge	\$6,985	\$284,465	\$439,217
Member Giving Non-Pledge	\$2,469	\$36,409	\$80,000
2020 Prepaid Pledges	\$0	\$21,983	\$21,983
Loose Offerings	\$100	\$14,288	\$15,000
<b>Total for week</b>	<b>\$9,554</b>	<b>\$357,145</b>	<b>\$556,200</b>

If you are not receiving our weekly emails and would like to stay up to date on the latest MVPC news, please subscribe on the contact page of our website or [click here](#).



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

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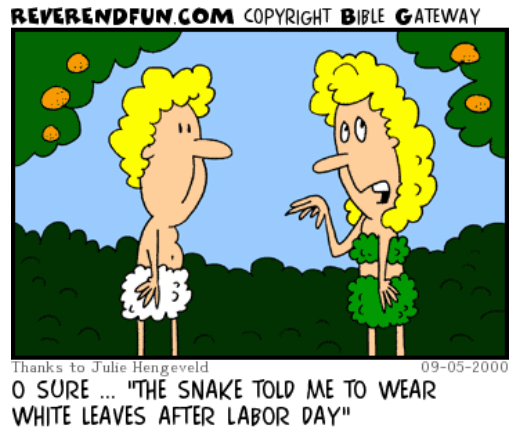
Return Service Requested

**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>
Isaac Toney-Schmitt	Associate Pastor of Faith Formation	<a href="mailto:Isaac@mvpchurch.org">Isaac@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>



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Instagram: [mvp\\_church](https://instagram.com/mvp_church)