



December 2020

Good News

Month At-A-Glance

December 6
Outdoor Live
Worship 11am

December 9
Taizé 5pm

December 20
Outdoor Live
Worship 11am

December 21
Longest Night Ever
Livestream 6:00pm

December 24
Christmas Eve
Service 4:30pm

December 25
Merry Christmas!

COVID 19

Protocols for Outdoor Gatherings

Outdoor events for up
to 15 people have been
approved.

[View the Protocols here.](#)

Outdoor Worship
limit-125



*Happy
Holidays*

Folks had a good time decorating our trees with Chrismons. It was wonderful watching people look for their favorites to hang! Pictured below is the youth group decorating. On the front cover pictured top left to right are Moira O'Hare and Rev. Isaac Toney-Schmitt. Bottom left to right are Jeanne Lee and Ryan Sawyer on the keyboard.



The youth of Mount Vernon have focused their November and early December on collecting toiletries and hygiene products to donate to the Atlanta Mission. This project, first suggested by our Youth Elder Bryce Cumming, has grown from a youth-only project to a congregation wide initiative.

We are currently collecting travel sized hand sanitizers, shampoo, toothpaste, and deodorant. You can drop off hygiene products in the Outreach Box in the church office or reach out to Isaac with questions. Our youth will organize these items into hygiene kits and get them out to the community!

Peace,

-Isaac





Joy and Sorrow

The Advent season has always been marked differently between the church and culture. It's why my friends and I have always hemmed and hawed when someone says there is a "war on Christmas!" Because of anything, cultural Christmas starts on black Friday, and for many of you, or at least the guy in our neighborhood whose front yard compares favorably to the Griswold's, Christmas has already begun. No, you ask plenty of pastor types, and we'll tell you the war is on Advent. For Advent is actually a solemn time. More "Watchman, tell us of the Night" and less Mariah Carey. A time of preparation, a time when the light is dim (hence why we light the Advent candle). Theologically, Advent asks us to contemplate a frightening reality, that we wonder what the world would be like without Christ. That's why the first Sunday often focuses on the Parable of the Ten Bridesmaids in Matthew 25 which ambiguously states "we do not know the day or the hour" of when Christ will come.

Back in July, I wrote a sermon titled An Advent State of Mind because so much of this year has been about preparation/anticipation. We stocked up on the essentials in preparation for hunkering down. We have waited anxiously for a vaccine to arrive.

Continued on page 4...

We have tried to be cautious and loving toward one another, not knowing the day or the hour when life might return to “normal.” In some respects, this year has been one long Advent Season. That’s why we are augmenting some of what we usually do this time of year – in hopes you will find more joy while also giving you the opportunity to acknowledge the sorrow that has consumed this year.

This Advent we will sing the songs within the scripture. Each Sunday we will focus on the songs of Mary (Nov. 29), Zechariah (Dec. 6), the Angels (Dec. 13), and Simeon (Dec. 20), that will hopefully allow us to celebrate what has been missing from so much of our worship experience: the gift of song. Through that, we will lean into the Christmas season more than I have ever before as a pastor. We need what is comforting and nostalgic this year. We need to remember what is hopeful.

On the other end of this spectrum, we must not ignore what has been and continues to be. That’s why on December 21st, the longest night of the year, we will offer a “Longest Night Service.” This is a service that recognizes the loss, the grief, and the lament that we have shared collectively and as individuals. To help us find Christ even in the depths of darkness, Christina Toney-Schmitt, the spouse of Rev. Isaac Toney-Schmitt, will help us lead and facilitate this service. Christina currently works with breast cancer survivors and specializes in ministry dealing with grief. We are still in the planning stages of this service, but once we have firm details, we will be sharing that with you all.

Peace to you amid these short days and long nights. May the light within all of us shine bright, for so many are in need of a hopeful glimpse.

Grace and Peace,
Barrett



CELEBRATING *the 4 Songs of Advent*

Advent
Sermon Series
“Celebrating the
4 Songs of Advent”
beginning 11/29

Longest Night Ever Service

Livestream—6 pm
Monday, December 21



*Longest
Night
Service*

A service of hope in a time of lament.

6 p.m. Livestream

December 21, 2020



Ordination & Installation

• ISAAC TONEY-SCHMITT •



We celebrated the Ordination & Installation of Rev. Isaac Toney-Schmitt on November 1, 2020!



View our Director of Music and Worship Production, Matthias Young, along with his colleague, Scott Plato in their instrumental guitar music video above! CDs are now available!



Our next Livestream
Taizé

Service will be on
December 9, 2020, at
5 pm. [Signup here](#) if
you plan to join us in
person outside of
Gailey Hall. Space is
limited to 15.

Outreach Tree for the Homeless



Please bring warm winter clothing items and grooming products to decorate the Outreach Tree located in the hallway outside the church office. Most needed items include: gloves, hats, scarves, socks, coats and jackets, flannel shirts, sweat pants, sweat shirts and hoodies, sturdy shoes, sneakers, rainwear and

blankets; please, no dressy clothes or shoes. Grooming supplies (toothbrushes, toothpaste, deodorant, lotion, Chapstick, etc.) are also needed; travel sizes preferred.

The December Communion Offering is new, unwrapped toys and clothing for the children at the International Women's House, a shelter for abused refugee and immigrant women and their children. Gifts for children of all ages from infants through teenagers are needed, as well as new clothing items such as sweaters, pajamas, hats, gloves and scarves. Walmart and Target gift cards are always welcome by the teenagers.

December Communion Offering

International Women's House Donations

December 6, 2020



Please bring all donations to the outdoor worship service on December 6 or drop off at the church office any time before December 18. Thank you for your generosity!

Covid-19 Fund

Reaching Out to Help Children

We are all aware of the adverse effects the pandemic has had on children. This is especially true of children living in households experiencing food and housing insecurity, those who live in homeless shelters, and unfortunately, those who sometimes live in their family car.

Thanks to the generosity of the congregation, the Covid Fund has provided funding to several of our partner ministries who in turn provide much needed assistance to these vulnerable children and their parents. These ministries include the Community Assistance Center, Family Promise, Stirred Up Ministries, the Alliance for Children Everywhere/Zambia, the Drake House, Los Niños Primero, Garden Presbyterian Church and School/Zambia, and our Presbytery's New Church Development Commission (refugee and immigrant congregations).

Another outstanding ministry that Mount Vernon has supported for many years, including a donation from the Covid Fund, is the International Women's House, a shelter for abused immigrant and refugee women and their children. In addition to financial support, the shelter has been the recipient of numerous communion offerings and the annual toy drive for their Santa shop. Just this week, Anna Blau, IWH's executive director, wrote "*I did not want to miss the opportunity to let you know how special Mount Vernon Presbyterian Church is to us*". Please see the separate notice in this publication for more details on this year's Toy Drive.

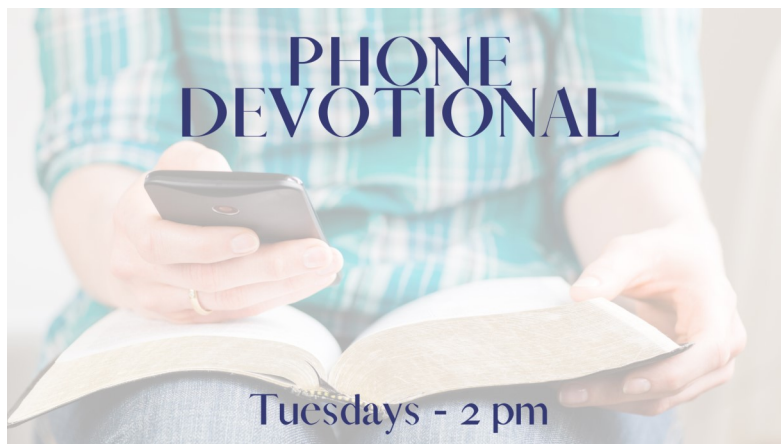
Contact Barrett, Isaac, or Pat Bartee, Stephen Leader (pbartee@yahoo.com) to get connected.



We want to thank you for your support of MVPC. If you have not yet made your pledge for 2021, or are still discerning how you would like to help us continue in our mission to serve God and neighbor, you can submit a pledge either by filling out a virtual pledge card here ([Pledge 2021](#)) or by mailing in your pledge card. Blessings to you as you prepare for the Holidays. We hope you can celebrate with those you love while staying safe.

Nov 19- Nov 24	Actual	Actual YTD	2020 Budget
Member Giving Pledge	\$9,040	\$369,641	\$439,217
Member Giving Non- Pledge	\$2,694	\$66,478	\$80,000
2020 Prepaid Pledges	\$0	\$21,983	\$21,983
Loose Offerings	\$35	\$17,274	\$15,000
Total for week	\$11,769	\$475,376	\$556,200

2021 Pledge Envelopes: If you would like an envelope, please notify yvonne@mvpchurch.org or call 404-255-2211 ext. 216 ASAP.



Join us on Tuesdays at 2 pm
for a phone devotional!
Dial 701-802-5094
Access Code: 5154569

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. If viewing online click on the links below.



ONLINE



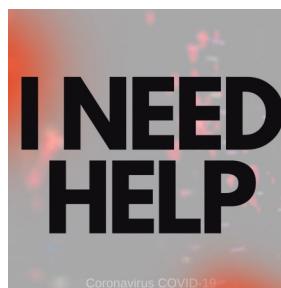
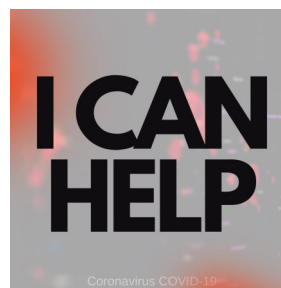
<https://mvpchurch.org/give/>

**WAYS
TO
GIVE**

MAIL



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



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

MVPC November 15, 2020, Session Meeting Summary

The Session held its monthly meeting via ZOOM on November 15th. Rev. Abernethy opened the meeting with prayer and the clerk noted that 14 of the 16 Session members were present. There were no visitors at the meeting.

Announcements/Reminders:

The Presbytery of Greater Atlanta is holding a town hall meeting Saturday, November 21, 10:00–11:30 am, entitled, A House United: How the Church Can Save the World. The author of the book by the same title, Allen Hilton, will lead the town hall that will focus on bridging the divisions in such a divisive political atmosphere. People interested in participating can contact Session Clerk, David Hill, who can provide you with information about this ZOOM meeting.

Ministry Team Reports

Each Ministry Team presented its monthly report. The Congregational Care Team reported that Stephen Ministers will begin making contact with elderly shut-ins as a way of helping them connect with the church. Since the pandemic has limited the caseloads of Stephen Ministers, this will be a good way to use their expertise in serving older members of the congregation who are more isolated by the pandemic.

The Finance/Administration team reported that pledges continue to come in and we remain close to where we need to be with the budget. Members are encouraged to continue their pledge giving, but also give to the COVID-19 fund since so many people have been adversely impacted by the pandemic. The Session appreciates members who have created the short stewardship videos that spotlight their commitment to stewardship at MVPC.

The Outreach Ministry Team reported that the COVID-19 Task Force continues to disperse funds to various organizations in support of their work during the pandemic. The fund right now is down to only a few hundred dollars so continued giving is important. At this point, about \$57,000 has been dispersed to various area ministries and to our work in Zambia.

Family Promise families continue to be housed at St. Luke's during the pandemic. The earliest we will see Family Promise back on the MVPC campus will be July 2021.

The Worship Ministry Team announced the outdoor worship service schedule for the remainder of the year includes outdoor services on December 6th and 20th and a 4:30 pm Christmas Eve candlelight service limited to 125 people. Members will have the opportunity to sign-up for the Christmas Eve service first before it is opened-up to others. If the demand is great, there is the possibility of adding a second Christmas Eve outdoor service. Because January is such a cold month, outdoor service will not resume until January 24th.

The Youth Ministry Team reported that high school youth continue to meet outdoors on Sunday afternoons. They are in the process of creating hygiene kits that will be distributed to nearby homeless shelters.

Old and New Business

During the pandemic the Session continues to list use of the church campus as an item of business each month.

Continued on page 14...

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](#).

The Session discussed whether meeting regulations related to Gailey Hall can be expanded beyond what is presently allowed. After discussion, members felt that there should be no changes at this time since safety in the pandemic continues to dictate limited use of indoor spaces.

Three new business items were addressed. First, MVPC Commissioners to the November 10 Presbytery Meeting gave a summary of that meeting. No action by the Session was needed. Second, the Session determined the annual Christmas Eve offering this year should be designated for the COVID-19 fund. Third, the baptism of Jacqueline Penelope Nix was approved and will be part of the December 6th service with December 20th as a back-up date.

Pastors' Report

Rev. Toney-Schmitt reported that he continues to enjoy getting to know members and work with the youth. He looks forward to post-pandemic times when his work can be done in a more normal environment.

Rev. Abernethy reports having worked with the Administration and Finance Ministry Team to develop an In-Reach Fund policy. The In-Reach Fund is a small part of the budget that can be used to assist members with financial problems. In normal years the fund is rarely used but with the pandemic more people are needing assistance. Before, there have been no written guidelines to provide structure to the fund and processes for making decisions about disbursement of funds. The Ministry Team approved the guidelines that will assure a fair and equitable process for use of the fund. Rev. Abernethy also reported that staff evaluations have been completed. He indicated staff feel very supported by Session and the congregation.

With all business completed, Carrie Southard offered the closing prayer, and the meeting was adjourned by Rev. Abernethy.



The Information Center is outside the Church office if you need Upper Room Devotionals, These Days Devotionals, the Good News, Stephen Ministry information, the MVPC PW Fall Newsletter, or Care Notes.

Sundays 3-5 pm

Thursdays 8-10 am

Appointment Only-Contact Barrett

Office Hours

Tuesdays 8-10 am

Wednesdays 12-2 pm

Appointment Only-Contact Isaac



**STAY
CONNECTED!**



Check out our [Facebook page](#) where we bring a Mount Vernon Moment each weekday!

Anyone who is interested in hosting a Zoom meeting, please contact Terri Clayton at terri@mvpchurch.org.

*For nothing will be
impossible with God.*

Luke 1:37 NRSV



Your Stephen Ministers are actively involved in serving others during the Pandemic. While some Stephen Ministers have on-going relationships, others are helping with Congregational Care to be sure no one in our church feels they have to walk alone through illness or loss. We are here to help.



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



Please keep these individuals and their families in your prayers.

Bruce and Dale's son-in-law, Stan, was admitted back into the Cleveland Clinic with fluid around his heart.

Barbara Bruce is back at home and improving every day although she does not feel well.

Prayers for healing, comfort, and the ability to walk soon for Rylynn.

Prayers for complete recovery and the ability to walk again for Arlene Carden.

Pray for renewed health and strength for Eleanor Brazell.

Elizabeth Small is recovering from a stroke.

Barbara Hughes is recovering from a broken arm.

Julie Chesnutt continues chemotherapy.

Prayers for freedom from addiction for Rob Southard as well as a successful surgery.

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

Vulnerable children, families, and staff we support at schools and an orphanage in Zambia, Los Niño's Primero, Community Assistance Center, and Family Promise.

Children, parents, and teachers at school and for those who opt for homeschooling or a gap year navigating education during a pandemic.

Those who have lost employment or whose revenue is drastically reduced, and business owners who are trying to stay in business.

Praise the Lord for two vaccines approved for Covid! 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.



Our next week of support for Family Promise is 12/20/2020 through 12/27/2020. Be on the lookout for the Signup Genius. We will be providing support for the families in the program and one overnight volunteer each night as they stay in place at St. Luke's Presbyterian Church.

An additional signup will be sent to all congregations in North Fulton /DeKalb to give all of our volunteers a chance to provide a Christmas Gift for those in the program, should they wish. This is to ensure that all families have a chance to receive something approved by their parents.

We have three families in the program. One family is almost ready to graduate and another is waiting to take their place. The two other families have recently joined us. A single dad with an 8-year-old son and a Mom and Dad with three young children, 8, 6, and 5 months. We know that with the support from the Family Promise staff and our congregations they will benefit from our program.

Family Promise Update

Thank you all so much for continuing to work so hard for us from afar. The supplies, gift cards, and cleaning fees are crucial to our families and to our affiliate! Because of YOU, we have not skipped a beat!!!!

We have been able to broaden the scope of services so we can assist families experiencing homelessness, outside our affiliate. We are able to provide blessing bags, gift cards, hotel stays, supplies, snacks, water, and more.

Family Promise North Fulton/DeKalb received \$50,000 from the City of Dunwoody! Along with 7 other Dunwoody organizations, we received these funds through the Cares Act and the City of Dunwoody to serve our community and the most vulnerable population that has been impacted by Covid-19. We are so grateful for these funds that will help us continue to expand our scope of services.

Kayla and Isiah graduate! Kayla and Isiah transitioned to their own apartment on the third weekend in October and are doing well.

FPNFD gets started on Homeless Management Information System (HMIS) this is a program where providers like us share information and coordinate services. This system will also assist Wanda with quality data entry such as case notes, compliance, and accurate reporting. HMIS also complements our grant writing efforts because we can track our families and their outcomes. The best part is that Family Promise National received a Federal Grant which will support the cost!

Sam Klein joins the Family Promise Board of Directors! Although Temple Beth Tikvah is taking a break from the rotation in 2021, Sam will be serving on our Board of Directors.

Gradual Rotation Start-Up in 2021 Thanks to our Advisory Committee we plan to leave St. Luke's a static site in January. We are working with 3 congregations to house our families for a month at a time beginning in January 2021. This will be the first phase to a gradual process of re-opening and since all the congregations have different amenities each will have different procedures all with limited volunteer contact. *As a congregation, we will still ask for your help with food and/or gift cards, supplies, and overnight volunteers. These three congregations will ONLY be housing our families unless it is their week on the host schedule.*

Join us for a Presbyterian Women Christmas Celebration,

Home for Christmas.

December 8, 2020 10:00 am
Via Zoom

Bring a favorite Christmas ornament and tell us briefly why it is special!

Please let Malinda Holmes (malinda128.holmes@gmail.com) know if you can attend.



The newly formatted **Winter Issue 2021**, an **MVPC PW Publication**, **THE MVPC MEMBERS' GIFT OF WISDOM**, will be available in early January. It can be viewed on the MVPC website by a link in the January Good News. You can also pick up a printed version outside of the church offices, at the Information Center.

BRINGING THE CHURCH HOME!

Outdoor Live Worship

Sunday, December 6 & 20 | 11 am

Reservations Required | Space Limited

**Visit our website or contact the church office
by Saturday at 6:00 p.m. to register.**

www.mvpchurch.org



**Christmas
Eve
SERVICE**

DECEMBER 24, 2020 | 4:30 PM

**Christmas
Eve
Candlelight
Service**
4:30 pm
December 24
[Signup Here](#)

If anyone would like the 2020-2021 Directory mailed to them, please call the church or send an email to debbie@mvpchurch.org.

December

Sun.	Mon.	Tue.	Wed.	Thur.	Fri.	Sat.
		1 Coordinating Team Zoom 10am	2	3	4	5
6 Outdoor Worship 11am	7	8 Day Circle Zoom 10am	9 Taizé 5pm	10	11	12
13	14	15 Good News Deadline	16	17	18	19
20 Outdoor Worship 11am	21 Longest Night Ever Livestream 6pm	22	23 Good News Published	24 Christmas Eve Service 4:30pm	25 Merry Christmas!	26
27	28	29	30	31 New Year's Eve		

*Thanks be to God for his
indescribable gift!*

2 Corinthians 9:15

December Birthdays

Steve Ray	12/1	Ross Mielke	12/10
Margo Gray	12/2	Lisa Grove	12/12
Angie Ponsell	12/3	Callum Lever	12/15
Bob Martin	12/3	John Chesnutt	12/17
Linda Young	12/6	Bryan McClintock	12/19
Wit Truitt	12/7	Pamela Wall	12/20
Malinda Holmes	12/8	Nicholas Peji	12/22
Sibyl Plumly	12/8	Patsy Plumly	12/28
Gerald Fudge	12/9	Bob Addison	12/29
Gil Hastings	12/9	Ross Spain	12/30
Catherine Bathgate	12/9		

If you have a December birthday and your name does not appear in our birthday list, please contact Debbie@mvpchurch.org.



The Discovery class meets Sundays at 10 am via Zoom.
 Preschool Zoom – 1 pm Mondays
 Elementary girls are meeting once a month in person
 outside to do an outreach project.



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. *If you'd no longer wish to receive the Good News monthly, please email Debbie at debbie@mvpchurch.org.*

Good
News!

Mount Vernon Presbyterian Church Staff

Rev. Barrett Abernethy	Pastor	barrett@mvpchurch.org
Rev. Isaac Toney-Schmitt	Associate Pastor of Faith Formation	Isaac@mvpchurch.org
Matthias Young	Music Director	matthias@mvpchurch.org
Steve Ray	Church Finance and Operations	steve@mvpchurch.org
Debbie Nysewander	Administrative Assistant	debbie@mvpchurch.org
Terri Clayton	Communications Coordinator	terri@mvpchurch.org
Yvonne White	Financial Secretary	yvonne@mvpchurch.org



WHAT DO YOU BUY THE GUY WHO HAS
EVERYTHING, MADE EVERYTHING, AND HAS
GIVEN US EVERYTHING?

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