



January 2021

# Good News

## Month At-A-Glance

January 1  
Office Closed

January 3  
Online Worship 11am

January 10  
Online Worship 11am

January 13  
Taizé 5pm

January 17  
Online Worship 11am

January 18  
Office Closed

January 23  
Session Retreat  
Zoom 8am-noon

January 24  
Outdoor (Reservations  
Required) / Online  
Worship 11am  
Installation of New Elders

January 31  
Online Worship 11am

2021  
Happy

*For surely I know the plans I have for you, says the Lord, plans for  
your welfare and not for harm, to give you a future with hope.*

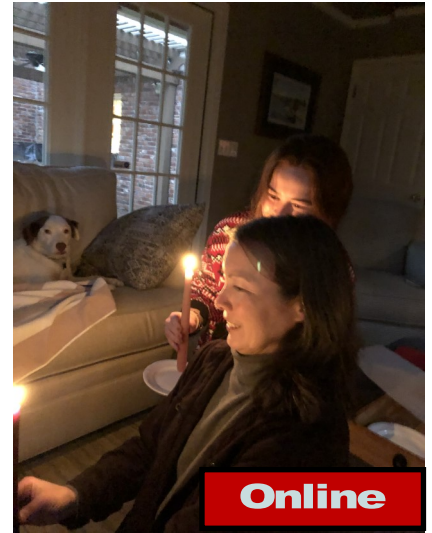
*Jeremiah 29:11*











**Online**

If Viewing Online

**WATCH OUR CHRISTMAS EVE SERVICE BELOW!**



## **MVPC December 20, 2020, Session Meeting Summary**

The Session held its monthly meeting via ZOOM on December 20<sup>th</sup>. Rev. Abernethy opened the meeting with prayer. Fifteen of the sixteen Session members were present. There were no visitors at the meeting.

### **Announcements/Reminders:**

The annual Session Retreat will be a ZOOM meeting on Saturday, January 23<sup>rd</sup> from 8:00 am until noon.

New Elders (Ben Barber, Angie Hawthorne, and Amy Kiley) will be ordained in the January 24<sup>th</sup> worship service.

The Presbytery of Greater Atlanta has posted on their YouTube channel the recent townhall meeting, “A House United” led by Allen Hilton. This is a wonderful townhall based on Hilton’s book by the same title. The author contends the church at large has contributed greatly to the divide in our country, but the church can and must lead in reuniting the country. Access the townhall by going to the Presbytery website – <https://www.atlpcusa.org/> – and on the right side of the home page clicking on the little YouTube symbol. Once you get to YouTube, click on “Subscribe” since this helps increase the visibility of our Presbytery in the YouTube world. Then look for the townhall video featuring Allen Hilton.

### **External Communications:**

Rev. Lindsey Armstrong, Executive Director of our Presbytery’s New Church Development Commission (NCDC) sent an email to MVPC thanking us for our support of NCDC’s emergency fund through our COVID-19 Fund. The money MVPC sent was used to purchase food for immigrant and refugee families impacted by the pandemic.



## Ministry Team Reports

Each Ministry Team presented its monthly report. The **Christian Education** Team reported that 15 homebound members received Christmas cards made by the children of the church. Carrie Southard thanked Donna Neumann for providing the materials to make the cards and Joy Carden who helped identify who would receive the cards. Small group surveys have been collected and will be tabulated to provide the Christian Education team data regarding how we can continue to provide meaningful small group learning opportunities. **Congregational Care** has been able to extend its outreach to shut ins with help from Stephen Ministers. This has worked very well in providing additional contact with older members.

The **Finance and Administration** Ministry Team approved year-end bonuses for church staff who have worked under difficult circumstances during this pandemic year. November giving was slightly lower than expected, but December is almost always a month when giving increases so the ministry team believes we will reach our budgeted giving for the year. Because of the pandemic, church expenses are down so this also will help MVPC complete the year within budget. Even though the stewardship campaign has ended, the church has not received pledge cards from many people who normally give. The committee will begin making contacts to be certain all have had a chance to pledge for 2021. A big thanks goes out to John Chestnutt and David Barclift who are responsible for the new cross that was constructed and placed on the Sanctuary Building exterior overlooking the courtyard where our outdoor services are held. Staff recently installed the new cross.

The **Outreach** Ministry Team reported that the COVID-19 fund continues to receive and disburse funds. A significant contribution has been received in the last few days. Yearend giving should also

Continued on page 10...

provide additional funds for the identified ministries supported by the fund. To date the fund has received more than \$60,000. John Hibbard, reporting for the **Witness** Ministry Team, presented a detailed report of attendance comparing 2019 and 2020 church attendance. Attendance for 2020 has been good using an online format and later in the fall a combination of online and outdoor services. He explained the challenge of counting online attendance. To be as accurate as possible online participants were counted as 1.5 persons at each computer since available data counts computers, not people. Analyzing this data on an ongoing basis will help us examine and consider possible ways we can reach those who may never come to an on-campus worship service. The **Youth** Ministry Team reported that the Youth program has had a successful fall with the arrival of Associate Pastor, Isaac Toney-Schmitt. Attendance on Sunday evenings has seen a high of 13 with 10 regular attendees. The youth put together hygiene kits that have been delivered for homeless people at Atlanta Mission.

### **Old and New Business**

During the pandemic, the Session continues to list use of the church campus as an item of business each month. The baptism of Jacqueline Penelope Nix needs to be rescheduled because of family illness so the Session approved her baptism for a future worship service.

Calendars for the 2021 church year were approved including the dates for:

Stated Session meetings – Session will meet the third Sunday of each month except for January when the Session meeting becomes part of the Session Retreat; there is no Session meeting scheduled for June.

Communion – Communion is scheduled for the first Sunday of each month. In addition, communion will be celebrated on other special occasions. Once First Cup is able to resume on-



campus worship services communion is approved for those services.

Communion Offerings and Special Offerings – various outreach partners were designated for offerings throughout the year including the special Presbyterian offerings.

### **Pastors' Reports**

Both pastors indicated they are working on innovative ways to create meaningful worship experiences during online and outdoor worship services. Worship services for most of January will be online; the next outdoor service is scheduled for January 24<sup>th</sup>. Some of the events coming up in the near future include the burning of the palms in February, Ash Wednesday, and a possible Easter vigil the night before Easter. One upcoming service will address how we might think about our faith statements in six words. Sounds interesting!

With all business completed, Rev. Abernethy offered the closing prayer and then adjourned the meeting.

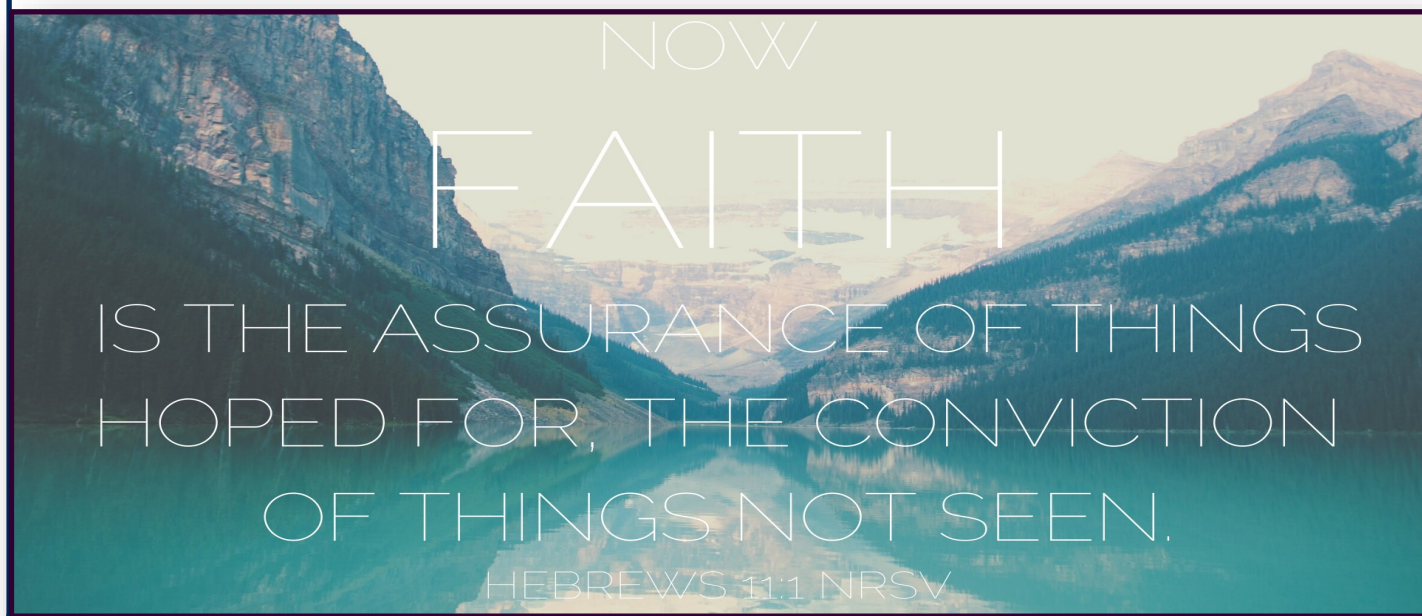


## *Six-Word Story of Faith*

I spent so much of this past year thinking, discussing, and preaching about what we lost. 2020 will be a forever lament. Yet as we turn to 2021, I want to ponder what we gained. Because as a church we did gain, or rather were forced to out of necessity. Pastors and theologians have been saying for some time now that with all the technology at our fingertips we need to engage our congregants as more than people in the pews but rather as conversation partners. They point to parts of worship, like the sermon, that are more like a lecture rather than a conversation. So in that spirit I want to invite you – well, it's January so let's call it a resolution– to share with me (either openly or anonymously) your *Six-Word Story of Faith*.

That's right, I want you to think/pray/ponder and then write out the six words that most fully represent your faith. For instance, my six words would be:

Forged by family,  
compelled by community.





These six words succinctly tell the story of how my faith is rooted in the family that made church a priority and opened me to the story of Christ, and how that example has continued on past childhood through a communion of saints that have served, supported, nurtured, and loved me and in turn motivated me to share this vision with others through the vocation of pastor. Below is a space with six lines for you to consider your six-word story. I hope you will take time to do it, or if more than one person is in your household, might you offer them a piece of paper to complete this exercise and when done, either send it by snail mail to the church or drop it in the collection box at one of our outdoor worship services. Or if that is too “old school” for you, simply email the church and share with us your six words. These “stories” will be utilized throughout the Lenten Season, which begins on February 17<sup>th</sup>. As you share, you open us to your story of faith and we in turn share ours with you. Blessings to you, and I look forward to this conversation with you.

Barrett

### NEW YEAR'S RESOLUTION

We look forward to receiving your Six-Word Story of Faith!

471 Mount Vernon Highway NE  
Sandy Springs, Georgia 30328

[barrett@mvpchurch.org](mailto:barrett@mvpchurch.org)

Drop off in the collection box

_____	_____	_____
_____	_____	_____

Grace & Peace,

As 2020 winds down, I find myself turning again to one of my favorite poems. It is a journey poem, a relationship poem, and an awareness poem. It is an invitation into deeper connection with our neighbors and the world around us. And for us, I lift it up as prayer for the experience of 2020 and the hope of 2021.

*Everything is Waiting for You*

By: David Whyte

Your great mistake is to act the drama  
as if you were alone. As if life  
were a progressive and cunning crime  
with no witness to the tiny hidden  
transgressions. To feel abandoned is to deny  
the intimacy of your surroundings. Surely,  
even you, at times, have felt the grand array;  
the swelling presence, and the chorus, crowding  
out your solo voice. You must note  
the way the soap dish enables you,  
or the window latch grants you freedom.  
Alertness is the hidden discipline of familiarity.  
The stairs are your mentor of things  
to come, the doors have always been there  
to frighten you and invite you,  
and the tiny speaker in the phone  
is your dream-ladder to divinity.

Put down the weight of your aloneness and ease into the  
conversation. The kettle is singing  
even as it pours you a drink, the cooking pots  
have left their arrogant aloofness and  
seen the good in you at last. All the birds  
and creatures of the world are unutterably  
themselves. Everything is waiting for you.

Peace,

*Isaac*



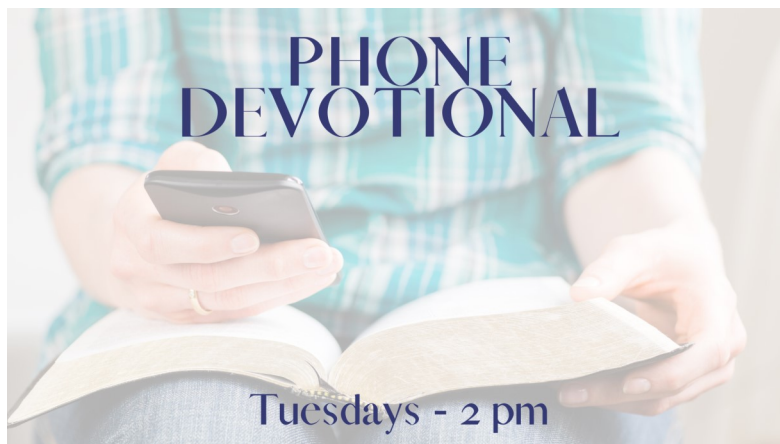
# OUTDOOR SERVICE FROM 12/20/20



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



Our next Livestream  
Taizé  
Service will be on  
January 13,  
2021, at 5 pm. [Signup  
here](#) if you plan to join  
us in person outside of  
Gailey Hall. Space is  
limited to 15.



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](https://mvpchurch.org). If viewing online click on the links below.



**ONLINE**



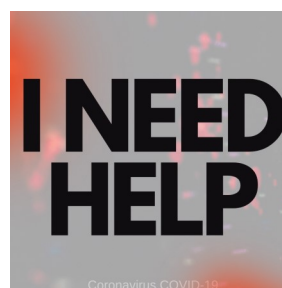
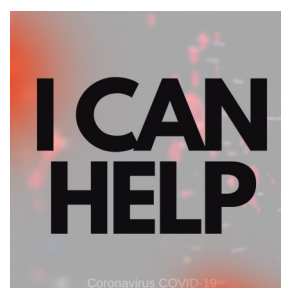
<https://mvpchurch.org/give/>

**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



BRINGING THE CHURCH HOME!

## Outdoor Live Worship

**Sunday, January 24 | 11 am**

Reservations Required | Space Limited

[www.mvpchurch.org](http://www.mvpchurch.org)

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

2021 Giving Envelopes will arrive by Jan 15th. You may pick one up at the January 24th outdoor service, swing by the office, or I can mail it to your home. For questions or concerns, please contact Yvonne ([yvonne@mvpchurch.org](mailto:yvonne@mvpchurch.org)). Sorry for any inconvenience, please continue to make your January contributions.

Dec 17 - Dec 22	Actual	Actual YTD	2020 Budget
Member Giving Pledge	\$4,155	\$403,761	\$439,217
Member Giving Non-Pledge	\$1,424	\$77,773	\$80,000
2020 Prepaid Pledges	\$0	\$21,983	\$21,983
Loose Offerings	\$3,000	\$20,929	\$15,000
<b>Total for week</b>	<b>\$8,579</b>	<b>\$524,446</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](#).

**Thank you** to all who contributed toys, clothing, and gift cards for the Santa Shop at the International Women's House, a shelter for abused refugee and immigrant women and their children. We received this note from IWH after the donations were delivered on Friday, December 18:

*To the generous people at Mount Vernon Presbyterian Church,*

*On behalf of International Women's House, please accept my gratitude for your generous donations this holiday season. We are so very appreciative of the checks, the many gift cards, the toys, and the new children's clothing. All the items you donated will be very much appreciated and enjoyed by our clients. Your gifts will bring joy to the lives of individuals who are currently living in a joy-less time. It is organizations such as yours who help make the journey from living with violence to violence-free living an easier path to travel.*

*Thanks,*

*Lynn Tarnow  
International Women's House  
Volunteer/Outreach Coordinator*





The Information Center is outside the Church office if you need Upper Room Devotionals (Jan.-Feb.), These Days Devotionals, the Good News, Stephen Ministry information, the MVPCC 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](mailto:terri@mvpchurch.org).





New year. New aspirations. Same old scenario. Hard to be enthusiastic.

But... there is promise of vaccines, and a God of continuing love. And we have one another. Perhaps, that is our tangible handhold.

Please know that your Stephen Ministry team is here for you in the long and the short of it. Contact us through a call or email to Barrett, to Isaac, or to Pat Barte, Stephen leader.



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.



Pictured left is Church Member, Bev Northrop.

Share your holiday photos with us at  
[Terri@mvpchurch.org](mailto:Terri@mvpchurch.org) or tag us on  
Facebook #MVPC\_HappyHolidays

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

John and Patricia Hibbard's daughter and son-in-law, Sarah and Brian, tested positive for Covid, and are improving rapidly and now have mild symptoms. Prayers for perfect healing.

Cole McAdam is finally feeling better after colon pain. Prayers for a complete recovery and healing.

Vivien Rothwell does not have pneumonia and feeling much better. She is waiting to be released from quarantine.

Several church families who have tested positive for Covid had mild symptoms and have all recovered! Praise the Lord!

Prayers for a quick recovery for Sid Kilgore, Mary Kilgore's son and past member, who has Covid.

Prayers for peace and comfort for Karen, the sister of Mary Lea Woods, who has inoperable brain cancer.

Prayers for Carol Beckman who is in radiation therapy.

Prayers for a swift recovery from a fall for Corny Laube.

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

Pray for renewed health and strength for Eleanor Brazell.

Pray for healing and strength for Elizabeth Small.

Pray for healing and comfort for Barbara Hughes.

Prayers for continued healing for Julie Chesnutt.

Prayers for freedom from addiction for Rob Southard.

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

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

Prayers for health and peace for our children, parents, and teachers at school and for those who opt for homeschooling or a gap year navigating education during a pandemic.

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 in business.



Huge thanks to all who supported our Families this past week. They are incredibly grateful for the donations of cards and supplies and our overnight hosts. It is not too late to hand in anymore gas or grocery cards. Wanda, our case worker is working with several other families to support them as they also face challenges. Here are a couple of photos of St. Luke's overnight accommodations and the work St. Luke's have done to make the rooms used very festive.

We were fortunate to receive baked goods again from Publix and a large donation of soup and salad from the Gallery Cafe. Truly it takes a village!





Watch our very own Matthias Young perform in British composer, Jeffery Wilson's "Didymus the Twin" Lunchtime Concert, Episode 30.



You can also view him on Great Day Live as he and his partner, Scott Plato talk about their music and perform a holiday song.





In December we had a wonderful Christmas program, *Home For Christmas*, via zoom. Members shared a special Christmas ornament or item and explained why it meant so much to them. Cathy Austin sang and played a flute solo, and we read several scriptures celebrating the birth of Jesus Christ. It was great to see so many of us and share memories, faith, and traditions. Reverends Barrett Abernethy and Isaac Toney-Schmitt participated, and Barrett closed the program with a prayer. We also wanted to make this a special Christmas by donating \$660 to the CAC Adopt-a-Family program.

The Book Club will meet on January 8, 2021 and review *The Island at the Center of the World* by Harold Smith. The Day Circle will meet on January 12, 2021 and the Sunday Circle will meet on January 10, 2021. They will study lesson 6: *Seventh Word: Hold Your Marriage Sacred*, led by Sarah Chalpan.

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 weekly emails. You can also pick up a printed version outside of the church offices, at the Information Center.



*The following persons made special contributions to the MVPC Foundation Covid-19 Fund in honor or loving memory of those listed beside their names.*

Catherine Bathgate	In memory of Frank Bathgate and Cathy Lewandowski
Pat Davis	In memory of her parents, Allen and Mary Elizabeth Summerville
Mark Fifield	In memory of Earl D. & G. June Fifield, William O'Hara
Bruce & Wendy Hagenau	In memory of Jenny Hammett
George Hammett	In memory of Joyce Hawthorne,
Robby & Angie Hawthorne	Winnie Belle Stevens
David Hill	In honor of Carol Beckman, Christy Hill, and Jeanne Mielke for their tireless service on the Covid-19 Task Force
Malinda Holmes	In honor of Franklin, Lily, Jackson, and Charlie
Mary Kilgore	In memory of Wayne Kilgore
Ken Mead	In honor of Los Niños Primero
Marguerite Nelson	In honor of family
Mary Sanford	In memory of Donald Skow Sanford



*January*

Sun.	Mon.	Tue.	Wed.	Thur.	Fri.	Sat.
					<b>1</b> Office Closed	<b>2</b>
<b>3</b> Online Worship 11am Youth Group 5pm GH	<b>4</b>	<b>5</b> CE Meeting Zoom 7pm	<b>6</b>	<b>7</b>	<b>8</b>	<b>9</b> Taizé 5pm
<b>10</b> Online Worship 11am Youth Group 5pm GH	<b>11</b>	<b>12</b> Worship Committee Zoom 4pm	<b>13</b>	<b>14</b>	<b>15</b>	<b>16</b>
<b>17</b> Online Worship 11am Youth Group 5pm GH	<b>8</b> Office Closed	<b>19</b>	<b>20</b>	<b>21</b>	<b>22</b>	<b>23</b> Session Retreat Zoom 8-noon
<b>24</b> Outdoor/ Online Worship 11am Installation of New Elders Youth Group 5pm GH	<b>25</b>	<b>26</b>	<b>27</b>	<b>28</b>	<b>29</b>	<b>30</b>
<b>31</b> Online Worship 11am Youth Group 5pm GH						

## January Birthdays

Garrett	Hahn	Jan. 1	John	Christian Jr.	Jan. 23
Bert	Hels	Jan. 1	Aidan	Ray	Jan. 24
Brian	Eustis	Jan. 2	Dale	Turner	Jan. 24
Quinton	Fisher	Jan. 3	Charlie	Gray	Jan. 25
Christy	Hill	Jan. 5	Betsy	Hastings	Jan. 26
Gloria	Gillespie	Jan. 7	Joe	Kelvington	Jan. 26
Donna	Neumann	Jan. 11	Lisa	Hughes	Jan. 27
Mark	McGuire	Jan. 19	Charlie	Thompson	Jan. 28
Anna	Morine	Jan. 19	Mary Lea	Woods	Jan. 31
Corny	Laube	Jan. 21			

If you have a January birthday and your name does not appear in our birthday list, please contact [Debbie@mvpchurch.org](mailto: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](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>
Rev. 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>

REVERENDFUN.COM COPYRIGHT BIBLE GATEWAY



Thanks to Josiah Gilman

01-18-2008

TODAY'S SERMON WILL BE ON HOW TO  
DRESS MODESTLY IN AN INCREASINGLY  
IMMODEST AGE

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