



January 2022

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## PASTOR'S DESK

*Welcome!*

### *Vital Congregation*

Happy New Year, MVPC!

You often heard me say that 2021 was a liminal time. We straddled the threshold between the proverbial Covid world and normal life. As we begin 2022, I believe we are more or less stepping out of the Covid realm and while that does not mean the pandemic is over, it does mean that we have learned to navigate life amid its ever-mutating presence.

Moving forward with this understanding, this past fall a group of Session members formed an ad hoc task force that became known as the Mission and Ministry Planning Team. Isaac and I met with these five officers to discuss what was next for the church. Much brainstorming led us in many different directions but with no definitive clarity.

Beginning in October, however, we were notified that the Presbytery, our regional body of churches, was sponsoring a cohort of churches to go through a review process to discern current and future communal gifts. This cohort is called the Vital Congregations Initiative, or VCI. Last month, our Session approved a plan for Mount Vernon Presbyterian to be a part of this cohort which will begin this month.

What is VCI? It is a multistep process that allows churches to pray, discern, and analyze who they currently are as a body of Christ and who they want to be. It invites congregations to think about vitality through prayer, visioning, study, preaching, and assessments. Throughout the year as your pastoral staff gets more exposed to the curriculum, we in turn will collaborate with you on how best to discern our vital marks as we take this next step.

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If you are wondering, VCI is not a one size fits all prescription. In fact, I believe we are already vital, we are healthy. You show that to me every Sunday and you confirm it Monday-Saturday. As we take this next step, however, and ask these questions of one another amid a spirit of returning normalcy, we look forward to learning from our Presbytery community and each other. Because what makes us vital is you and the ability to grow together.

Peace to you amid this season of creativity and hope.

*Barrett*

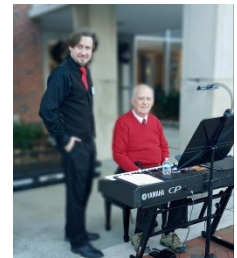


**VITAL CONGREGATIONS INITIATIVE**  
Developing the 7 Marks of Vital Congregations  
Presbyterian Mission Agency: Theology, Formation & Evangelism

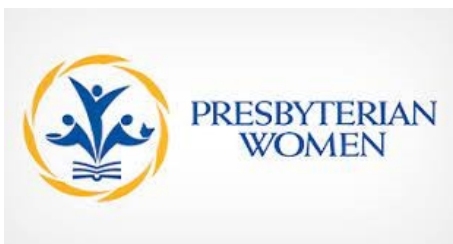




## Christmas Eve 2021







## Christmas Luncheon December 12



The Winter Issue of THE MVPC MEMBERS' GIFT OF WISDOM  
will be available in January.

## Getting to know.....

Steve Ray  
Church Finance and Operations



### What is my favorite vacation?

*We have had some amazing beach, ski, and exploring vacations. The two that were life changing for me were Maui and Big Sky/Yellowstone. To see nature in these places is unbelievable!!*

### Favorite thing about my career?

*It's amazing where God leads you. I have been in business development, in multiple industries, my entire career, some good, some really not. The experiences and knowledge I've been exposed to have assisted greatly with my current role with the Church.*

### What really makes me mad?

*Ignorance and Punctuality*

### What/who makes me laugh the most?

*John Stewart, Stephen Colbert, John Oliver, John Krazinski, Steve Carrell, Trevor Noah, and all the silly stuff my family does!!*

### Biggest complaint about my job?

*That's a no brainer. Of course, it's the people I work with.....HA!!!! So blessed to work with such an amazing, awesome group of people!!*

Contact: [steve@mvpchurch.org](mailto:steve@mvpchurch.org)

# ATLANTA CONCERT BAND

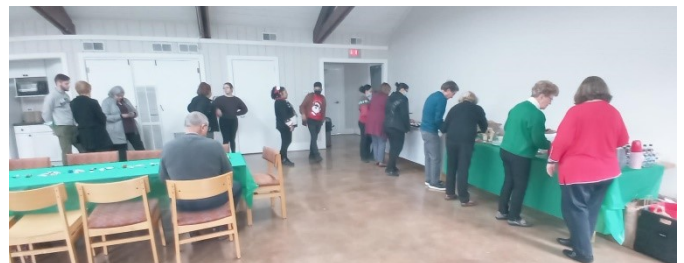
December 12





# Volunteer Luncheon

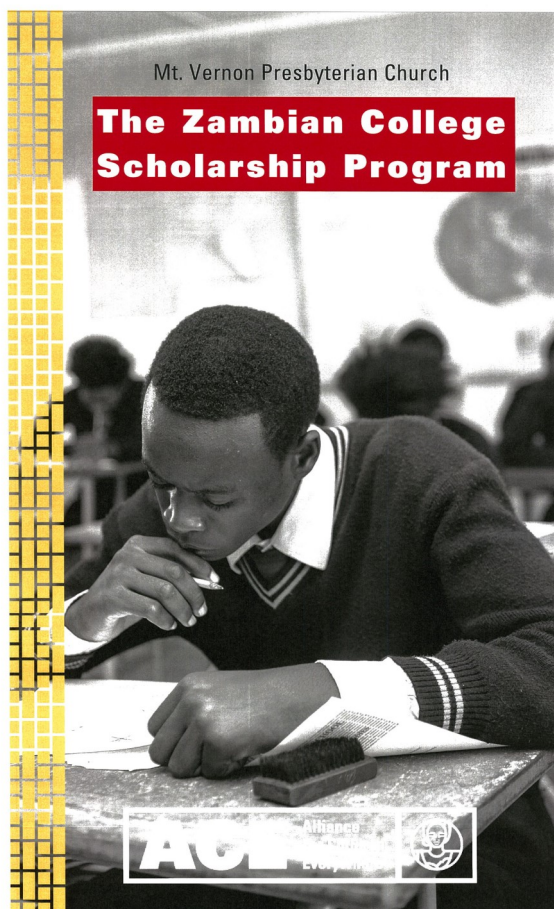
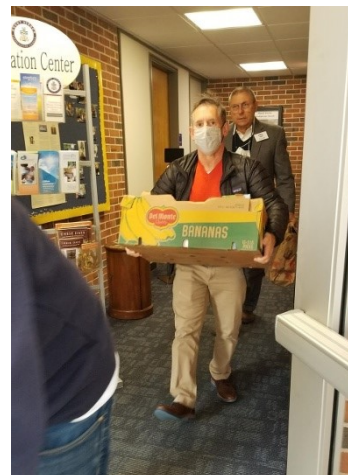
December 15



Photos courtesy of Dee Bradford-Smith

# OUTREACH

## Stuff the Bus



## To the Congregation

**You have once again shown your generous spirit.**

We are pleased to announce that our annual goal for the Zambia College Fund in the amount of \$10,000 has been reached. These funds will provide scholarships for the 7 students now enrolled and the 2 new students who will enroll in January 2022. This mission is changing the lives of the students, their families, and their communities.

Thank you and may God bless you for this effort. Stan & Ann Williams

Hebrews 13:16 "Don't forget to do good and to share what you have because God is pleased with these kinds of sacrifices"



# THIS AND THAT!



Taizé is a simple, meditative form of worship.  
January 11, 7pm in the Sanctuary



Church Office will be closed:

Monday, January 3  
Monday, January 17



Join us on Tuesdays at 2 pm  
for a phone devotional!  
**Dial 701-802-5094**



## CHURCH OFFICE HOURS

MONDAY-THURSDAY  
8AM-4PM  
FRIDAY 8AM - 2PM

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

Mailing address:  
MVPC  
P.O. Box 76051  
Sandy Springs, GA 30358

# January Calendar of Events



January 2

**Worship - 10:30am**

January 3

**CHURCH OFFICE CLOSED**

January 4

Staff Mtg. - 9:30am

PW - 10:00am - Zoom

Phone Devotional - 2:00pm

Christian Ed. - 5:00pm Zoom

January 5

Witness Team - 4pm

Choir Rehearsal - 7:00pm

January 9

**Worship - 10:30am**

PW Sunday Circle - 12:15pm

Youth - 5:00pm

January 10

FAMT - 5:30pm Zoom

January 11

Staff Mtg. - 9:30am

PW Day Circle - 10am

Phone Devotional - 2:00pm

Worship Committee - 4:00pm Zoom

Taizé - 7:00pm

January 12

Choir Rehearsal - 7:00pm

January 13

LNP - 7:00pm

January 14

PW Book Circle - 10am

January 16

**Worship - 10:30am**

Session Meeting - 11:30am

Youth - 5:00pm

January 17

**CHURCH OFFICE CLOSED**

January 18

Staff Mtg. - 9:30am

Phone Devotional - 2:00pm

January 19

Choir Rehearsal - 7:00pm

**GOOD NEWS DEADLINE**

January 21-22

**Session Retreat**

January 23

**Worship - 10:30am**

Youth - 5:00pm

January 25

Staff Mtg. - 9:30am

Phone Devotional - 2:00pm

January 26

Choir Rehearsal - 7:00pm

January 27

**GOOD NEWS PUBLISHED**

January 30

**Worship - 10:30am**

Elder Ordination & Installation

Youth - 5:00pm





# January Birthdays



Brian Eustis	1/2
Quinton Fisher	1/3
Christina Toney-Schmitt	1/4
Christy Hill	1/5
Gloria Gillespie	1/7
Donna Neumann	1/11
Anna Morine	1/19
Mark McGuire	1/19
Corny Laube	1/21
John Christian Jr.	1/23
Aidan Ray	1/24
Charlie Gray	1/25
Betsy Hastings	1/26
Joe Kelvington	1/26
Lisa Hughes	1/27
Charlie Thompson	1/28
Mary Lea Woods	1/31



**ONLINE**

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

**MAIL**

  
Mount Vernon Presbyterian Church  
PO BOX 76051  
Sandy Springs, GA 30358

**WAYS TO GIVE**

**QR CODE**





January 1 - November 30, 2021	Actual YTD	2021 Budget
Member Giving Pledge	\$455,177	\$438,290
Member Giving Non- Pledge	\$38,905	\$70,000
Non member giving & Loose offering	\$8,285	\$6,000
<b>Total</b>	<b>\$502,367</b>	<b>\$514,290</b>

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).



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

Carol Beckman – Prayers for successful treatment and remission of non-Hodgkins lymphoma. Carol is doing well but will continue to quarantine for a few more weeks.

Inez Cole – prayers for perfect healing following a broken hip.

Bruce Hagenau – prayers for perfect heart rhythm and elimination of prostate cancer. Bruce is feeling MUCH better.

John Moran – Praise God for the life of Charlie Gray's friend who passed away on December 24.

Alistair Morine – Prayers for strength and a miracle of healing.

Richard Player – prayers for pinpoint accuracy for his diagnosis, medication and plan of action going forward.

Rob Southard – prayers for freedom from addiction.

Katie Spotloe – prayers for healing and the elimination of a blood clot near her brain with medication. Katie is Charlie Gray's niece.

Rev. Isaac Toney-Schmitt – both he and Christina are recovering from Covid.

Dave Whitacre – prayers for healing and reduction of pain.

Yvonne White – prayers for her niece and friend who are recovering from injuries following a car accident.

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

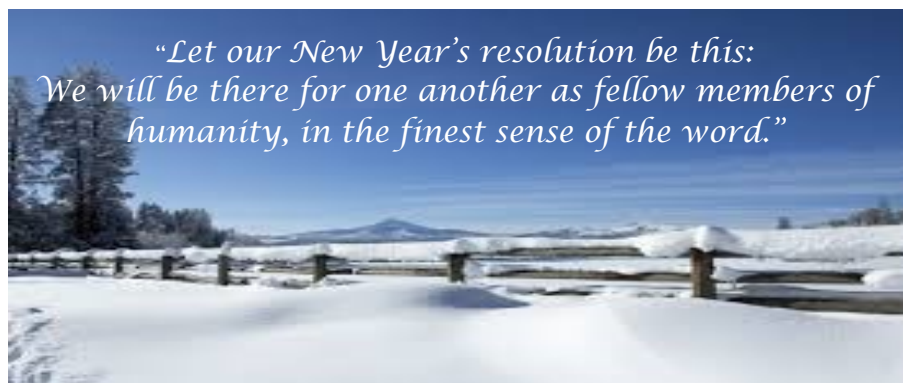
Do you feel a need for prayer?  
Have our Prayer Vine pray for you!  
Email your requests to  
[prayerrequests@mvpchurch.org](mailto:prayerrequests@mvpchurch.org)  
or call the church office at  
404.255.2211





It is a New Year full of promise and, surely, surprise. If you are beginning the year without a sense of hope, please call upon a Stephen Minister to encourage you, to offer new perspective, and to walk with you until you find some clarity and surety.

Contact a minister or call Pat Bartee, Stephen Leader, to get connected with us.





## SESSION MEETING

### Summary of Session Meeting December 19

The Session met on December 19 for its regular monthly meeting. Following is a summary of the meeting:

The Finance and Administration Ministry Team reported that pledged giving continues to be strong. At the end of November, we have exceeded the amount pledged for the year. The Session was cautioned, though, that FAMT created a deficit budget for 2021; even with what has been given, we are below where we would be with a fully funded budget. Pledges for 2022 look good; hopefully more will come in as the 2022 budget is being finalized.

Approval was given for the 2022 communion offerings and special offerings.

Three Commissioners – David Barclift, David Hill, and Mary Kilgore – were elected to represent MVPC at the February 12, 2022 Presbytery meeting.

Proposed 2022 fellowship events and dates were presented by the Fellowship Ministry Team and approved by Session.

The date for the Annual Congregational Meeting was set as February 27, 2022. Information regarding this meeting will be announced beginning January 23.



## 2021 Session Members and Ministry Teams

Moderator  
Rev. Barrett Abernethy

Clerk of Session  
David Hill

Christian Education  
Carrie Southard

Congregational Care  
Joy Carden

Fellowship  
David Barclift

Finance/  
Administration/  
Stewardship  
Charlie Gray  
John Hibbard

Outreach  
Carol Beckman  
Brent Schwieger

Personnel  
Vacant (merged with  
FAMT for 2021 only)

Senior Adults  
Mary Kilgore

Witness  
Angie Hawthorne

Worship  
Wendy Hagenau  
Dale Morine  
Amy Kiley

Youth  
Jon Barber  
Ben Barber

The Session will hold its annual retreat on January 21-22, 2022.

The ordination and installation service for the new class of elders will be during the worship service on January 30.

## DEFINITION OF RULING ELDER FROM THE BOOK OF ORDER (G-2.0301)

“As there were in Old Testament times elders for the government of the people, so the New Testament church provided persons with particular gifts to share in discernment of God’s Spirit and governance of God’s people. Accordingly, congregations should elect persons of wisdom and maturity of faith, having demonstrated skills in leadership and being compassionate in spirit. Ruling elders are so named not because they “lord it over” the congregation (Matt. 20:25), but because they are chosen by the congregation to discern and measure its fidelity to the Word of God, and to strengthen and nurture its faith and life. Ruling elders, together with ministers of word and sacrament, exercise leadership, government, spiritual discernment, and discipline and have responsibilities for the life of a congregation as well as the whole church, including ecumenical relationships.”



PO Box 76051  
Sandy Springs, GA 30358

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 Wednesday of each month for the *next month's* newsletter. Send your submissions to [debbie@mvpchurch.org](mailto:debbie@mvpchurch.org).

*If you no longer wish to receive the Good News, please send an email to [debbie@mvpchurch.org](mailto:debbie@mvpchurch.org).*

## Mount Vernon Presbyterian Church Staff

Rev. Barrett Abernethy	Pastor/Head of Staff	<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	Director of Worship	<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>
Yvonne White	Financial Secretary	<a href="mailto:yvonne@mvpchurch.org">yvonne@mvpchurch.org</a>
Dr. Kenneth Sass	Principal Organist	
Shari Freeman	Seminary Intern	<a href="mailto:shari@mvpchurch.org">shari@mvpchurch.org</a>

Good News!



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