



MOUNT VERNON PRESBYTERIAN CHURCH

# GOOD NEWS

DECEMBER 2022



## *A Letter From The Pastor*

BY REV. BARRETT ABERNETHY

### Mission Team Spotlight: Congregational Care

Every week- usually on Thursday or Friday- I write down my to-do list for the following week on a 4x6 sticky note. One of those constants on that list is the phrase "connect with visitors/members," and if I know a specific person, I will write their name ever so small on the same line. Come the next Tuesday when I return to the office, after our staff meeting, I begin the process of connecting with those members and visitors. It's the first thing I focus on during the week. Perhaps it entails- as it did the week of this writing- walking down to the Village or the Towers to check in on some of our members, maybe it means writing a recent visitor a card letting them know how grateful we

are for their presence, or connecting with that longtime church member we haven't seen in a while to let them know we miss them.

In my opinion, congregational care is the most important part of my call. More so than preaching or moderating the Session. It is the personal interactions I have daily with each of you that define my ministry. I am privileged to serve alongside many of you in this call, and I am glad we do this work together.

Currently, our Congregational Care Team is led by Pat Bartee. Early next year, one of our new church officers, Htet Nyunt, will join Pat. This team stays busy far beyond my Tuesday afternoon drop-ins. They provide meals to those hurting. Write cards to those dealing with lament as well as those enjoying life's

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celebrations, and each week they keep you and me in the know through the prayer vine (of which a copy is printed each month in this newsletter).

**There are always ways you can support the Congregational Care Team:**

**Pray:** as a church we believe in the power of prayer. Please reach out to the church office or to Pat Bartee directly if you have a concern, or a praise you would like shared on the prayer vine. If you have not subscribed to this weekly email, please also let the office or Pat know and we will add you to the list.

**Write Cards:** Congregational Care writes notes to members who are homebound, having a birthday, or struggling in some manner. As a body of Christ, we are called to serve and support one another.

**Prepare a Meal:** We try to support those in need, especially upon the death of a loved one or when someone is infirm- a great way to show your care and compassion.

Of course, there are several other ways, which likely get little or no notice, but know we are grateful, because the foundation of any good church is serving the people who collectively make it that unique body.

Advent Blessings and Merry Christmas,

Barrett



## 2022 Session Members & Ministry Teams

### Moderator

Rev. Barrett Abernethy

### Clerk of Session

David Hill

### Christian Education

Mary McClurg

### Congregational Care

Pat Bartee

### Fellowship

David Barclift

### Finance/Administration/

#### Stewardship

Charlie Gray

John Hibbard

### Outreach

Carol Beckman

Beppie Lever

Brent Schwieger

### Senior Adults

Mary Kilgore

### Witness

Angie Hawthorne

Dee Bradford-Smith

### Worship

Gloria Gillespie

Malinda Holmes

Amy Kiley

### Youth

Kyle Cumming

January 1 - October 31, 2022	Actual YTD	2022 Budget
Member Giving Pledge	\$415,857	\$449,000
Member Giving Non-Pledge	\$42,099	\$60,000
Non member giving & Loose offering	\$7,156	10,000
Total Received	\$465,112	\$519,000



# Hanging of the Greens





# OUTREACH

## INTERNATIONAL Women's House

As we move into Advent Season, our Communion offering will be for the International Women's House, a shelter for abused mothers with their children and victims of human trafficking. Needed items are women's toiletry sets, toys, and size small and medium sweaters, pajamas and robes. All items should be new and unwrapped.

Adopt a Family to provide holiday gifts through the Community Assistance Center  
<https://www.ourcac.org/2022/11/02/adopt-a-family-2022/>

Shop Online at the CAC Adopt a Family Amazon Wish List  
<https://www.amazon.com/hz/wishlist/ls/JZKKJ6ZN74K3>

Our next hosting dates for Family Promise are December 18 - 24, look for a SignUpGenius email for more details on how you can help.



Stuff the Bus  
Sunday, Nov. 20





# Outreach



Thank you from Lake Forest Elementary School for all the donations of candy, drinks and treats in October for their Fall Festival!

With our biggest Communion Offering so far, we were able to generously Stuff the Bus with pounds and pounds of food to be included in Stirred Up Ministries Thanksgiving Baskets and stock their food pantry. We also gave them over \$500 in gift cards and checks to buy turkeys and produce.



MVPC Youth Group has adopted the Sandy Springs Education Force Mini Libraries Program, and will be sorting, stamping, and boxing donated books once a month in preparation for them being given out for free to students in the eleven public schools in Sandy Springs.

We welcomed Francis Horton, CEO of Community Assistance Center, on Sunday December 13. For more information about the Community Assistance Center including volunteer opportunities, please go to [www.ourcac.org](http://www.ourcac.org). If you were inspired to hear more about CAC, email [francis.horton@ourcac.org](mailto:francis.horton@ourcac.org) to arrange a time to join him for coffee in his office.

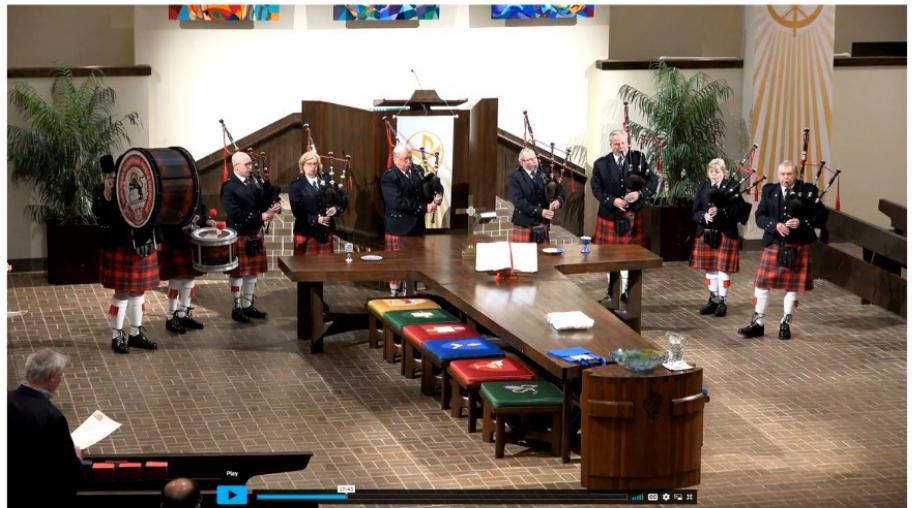


Please help decorate the Outreach Tree for the Homeless by bringing warm clothing items (hat, scarves, gloves, socks, jackets, etc.) for both men and women and placing them on the tree near the church office.





All Saints Day  
October 30  
Bagpipes



"Pounding"  
Matthias  
by the Choir for his new  
house



Donna Martin's  
Painting "Live"!



Presbytery Meeting  
Nov. 12





# This & That



## CHURCH OFFICE HOURS

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



Church Office  
will be closed  
Dec. 26 & Dec. 27



Prayers of  
Thanksgiving

### Church Bulletin Bloopers:

*"Don't let worry kill you off - let the church help."*

*Photos courtesy of: Gloria Gillespie, Christy Hill, Dee  
Bradford-Smith, Donna Martin, Isaac Toney-Schmitt,  
Beppie Lever*

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



# THE ZAMBIAN COLLEGE SCHOLARSHIP PROGRAM

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 9 students now  
enrolled and the 3 new students who  
will enroll in January 2023. 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"

The Zambia College  
Scholarship Program



Eight years ago we established the Zambia College Scholarship fund for deserving students. These students must have successfully completed high school, be very bright, motivated and demonstrate extreme financial need. The fields of study include Health Sciences, Clinical Medical Sciences, Pharmacy, Education, Teaching & Engineering. We strive to keep 9 to 12 students enrolled in college at all times.

This effort requires that \$10,000 be raised each year. The initial \$5,000 in seed money is in place and now we are seeking contributions from the congregation and friends of MVPC to reach the goal. You have supported this mission faithfully for 8 years and we ask that you do so again. This mission has, is and will change the lives of the students, their families and their communities.

We thank you for your loyal support.  
Stan and Ann Williams

To make a contribution please make a check payable to MVPC and mark 'for Zambia College fund' in the memo line, or give online on our website: [mvpchurch.org/give/](http://mvpchurch.org/give/) & select Zambia College Scholarship - Stan

# Youth



Middle School Retreat  
November 4-6  
Camp Calvin



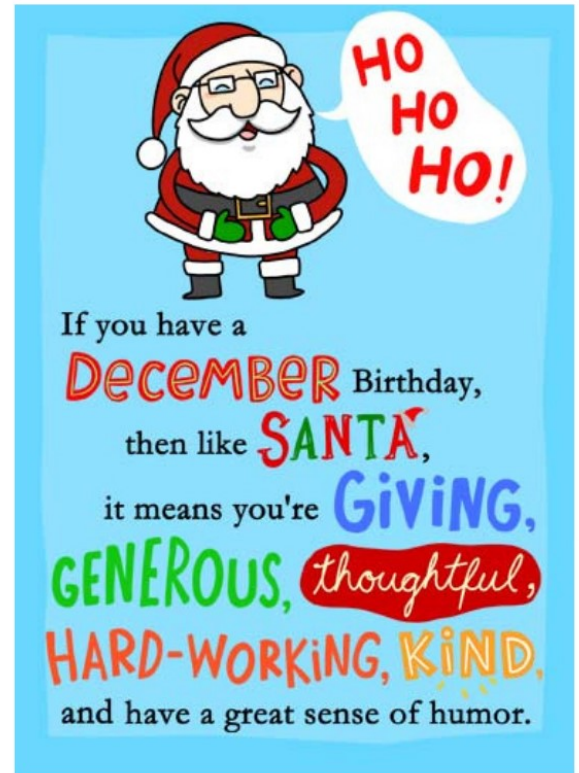
Sandy Springs Education Force  
Sorting/Testing





# December Birthdays

Steve Ray	12/1
Angie Ponsell	12/3
Bob Martin	12/3
Cathy Jenkins	12/5
Linda Young	12/6
Wit Truitt III	12/7
Malinda Holmes	12/8
Sibyl Plumly	12/8
Gerald Fudge	12/9
Gil Hastings, Jr.	12/9
Catherine Bathgate	12/9
Ross Mielke	12/10
Lisa Grove	12/12
Callum Lever	12/15
John Chesnutt	12/17
Pamela Wall	12/20
Nicholas Peji	12/22



## Staff Birthdays

Yvonne White	January 26
Shari Freeman	June 11
Rev. Isaac Toney-Schmitt	June 14
Debbie Nysewander	July 2
Matthias Young	July 15
Rev. Barrett Abernethy	October 30
Steve Ray	December 1

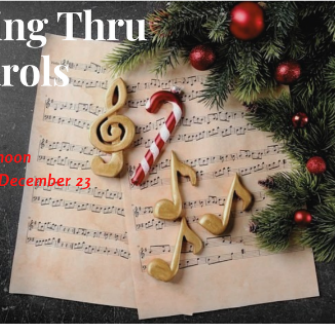
If you have a birthday in December  
and don't see your name on the list,  
please contact  
[debbie@mvpchurch.org](mailto:debbie@mvpchurch.org) or call the  
office.

# December Calendar



## Zooming Thru the Carols

Daily Zoom at noon  
November 28 - December 23



## Christmas at Mount Vernon Presbyterian Church



Worship every Sunday at 10:30am  
"Characters of Christmas"  
Nov. 27 - Jan. 1, 2023

Christmas Eve  
Cocoa & Live Nativity - 4:45pm  
Worship - 5:30pm

[mvpechurch.org](http://mvpechurch.org)

471 Mount Vernon Highway, NE  
Sandy Springs, GA 30328

All are welcome!

Friday, December 2  
Saturday, December 3  
Sunday, December 4

Monday, December 5  
Tuesday, December 6

Wednesday, December 7  
Thursday, December 8  
Friday, December 9  
Saturday, December 10  
Sunday, December 11

Monday, December 12

Tuesday, December 13

Wednesday, December 14

Sunday, December 18

Tuesday, December 20  
Wednesday, December 21

Saturday, December 24

Sunday, December 25  
Monday, December 26  
Tuesday, December 27  
Wednesday, December 28

Young Adult Dinner - 6:00pm  
Children's Christmas Workshop - 10:00-1:00

**Worship - 10:30am**

Adult Sunday School - 9:30am

Elder Training - 11:30am

Caroling - 4:00pm

Senior Adult Ministry Team - 1:00pm

Staff Meeting - 9:30am

PW CT - 10:00am

Volunteer Luncheon - 11:30am

CE Meeting - 5:00pm

Choir Rehearsal - 7:00pm

VCI - 5:30pm

Book Circle - 10:00am

Senior Adults Lunch - 12:30pm

**Worship - 10:30am**

Adult Sunday School - 9:30am

Foundation Mtg. - 11:30am

PW Christmas Lunch - 12:00pm

Atlanta Concert Band Christmas Concert - 4:00pm

Stephen Ministry Team - 2:15pm

FAMT - 5:30pm

Staff Meeting - 9:30am

Day Circle - 10:00am

Staff Lunch Offsite - 11:30am

Worship Committee - 4:00pm

Vernon Springs Bible Study - 11:00am

Witness Meeting - 4:00pm

Choir Rehearsal - 7:00pm

**Worship - 10:30am - Lessons & Carols**

Adult Sunday School - 9:30am

Session Meeting - 12:00pm

Youth - 5:00pm

FAMILY PROMISE FAMILIES ARRIVE

Staff Meeting - 9:30am

Choir Rehearsal - 7:00pm

**GOOD NEWS DEADLINE**

**CHRISTMAS EVE**

*Live Nativity w/ Animals - 4:45pm*

*Worship - 5:30pm*

**Worship - 10:30am**

OFFICE CLOSED

OFFICE CLOSED

**GOOD NEWS PUBLISHED**







# Prayer Vine

*Comfort & peace for Walt and the family of Mary Frances Walker who died November 17. The service is planned for Saturday, Dec. 3 at 2pm.*

*Comfort & peace for the family of Lou Baine who died November 18. The service will be Sunday, January 8 at 1pm.*

**James Ballew** - Patricia Hibbard's brother, has had a post-op procedure before receiving post-op treatment. Chemo will start in a few weeks.

**Eliana** - Carrie Southard's niece is starting a new job and is grateful for the success of medication & therapy.

**Tisa Edge & Jordan Glover** - Anna Morine's former caregivers moved out of state for a better situation for them.

**Mrs. JB** - is in need of a bone marrow transplant.

**Neill Ferrill** - needs strength and courage as he continues clinical trials for Glioblastoma brain tumors.

**Craig Mackie** - Comfort and peace for Moira Speirs' nephew who is at home in Scotland receiving Hospice care. He has a wife and two teenage sons.

**Alistair & Karen Morine** - in New Zealand as he battles side effects of his brain tumor. Karen continues post-surgical treatment for ovarian cancer.

**Elaine Rawlings** - Martha Baitcher's friend who faces a long, complicated surgery for oral cancer.

**Wilma Schmidt** - Braegan Abernethy's mother, as she continues treatment for breast cancer in California, and is experiencing bone pain from one of her medications.


**Rob Southard** - needs determination and confidence as he continues to flourish.

Blessings for all ministries our church supports in Atlanta and in Zambia. Faith and fortitude for the freedom fighters of Ukraine.

Do you need prayer?  
Have our Prayer Vine pray for you!  
Email your requests to [pbartee@yahoo.com](mailto:pbartee@yahoo.com)

# WORSHIP & STEWARDSHIP

2023 MOUNT VERNON PRESBYTERIAN CHURCH ESTIMATE OF GIVING

 Name(s): \_\_\_\_\_

My total gift for 2023 will be \$ \_\_\_\_\_

I plan to give:

☐ 1 time    ☐ Weekly    ☐ Monthly    ☐ Quarterly

**SERVING THE COMMUNITY**

*Using the enclosed envelope, please bring your pledge card by Commitment Sunday, October 23; mail your pledge card to: P.O. Box 76051, Sandy Springs, GA 30358; or send an email to [yvonne@mvpchurch.org](mailto:yvonne@mvpchurch.org).*

It's not too late to turn in your pledge card! We have extra cards at the church if you misplaced your card. Or go to the website: [mvpchurch.org](http://mvpchurch.org)

Watch for the daily email and join us every weekday at noon on Zoom to learn about the "Carol of the Day"

## Zooming Thru the Carols

Daily Zoom at noon  
November 28 - December 23





## Getting to Know...

ANGIE HAWTHORNE  
WITNESS MINISTRY TEAM

### **If you could choose to do anything for a day, what would it be?**

I love being outdoors especially in the Fall. Something about the colored leaves and the crispness of the air makes me so happy. I love to go hiking with my husband (Robby) and dog (Watson). So, hiking in the woods with my family would be the best day.

### **Would you rather ride a bike, ride a horse, or drive a car?**

Robby and I love to bike! This summer we did a bicycle travel adventure trip biking from NYC to Albany, NY. We had an absolute blast and loved seeing the Hudson Valley from 2 wheels!

### **What's my favorite thing about my career?**

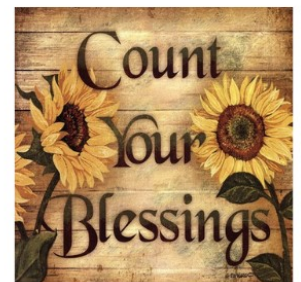
I work at Children's Healthcare of Atlanta as a nurse in the Neonatal ICU. I have been a nurse for 37 years and I absolutely love what I do. It is so hard to think of one thing, but if I had to choose it would be talking and singing to the babies in our unit. Not only are they so stinking cute, but when we lock eyes, it brings so much joy to my heart. It is crazy how smart they are and how they show they recognize my voice when I make rounds each day.

### **What would I sing at Karaoke night?**

Anything from the 1970's!!! Disco, Queen, and Billy Joel are all songs I know the words to.

### **What's my favorite game to play?**

Robby and I have a ritual every Friday night. We fix dinner together, put on some country music, open a cold beer, and play Gin Rummy. Every game I win is so ridiculously over celebrated, because Robby is a better card player than me.



Gratitude fills our hearts at and after Thanksgiving for all our blessings. Sometimes that thankfulness is muted by loss of a job, divorce, grief, a distressing turn in health, a disorienting move, or a culmination of many disappointing events. If it would help to have an encouraging partner through the difficulty to help you clarify goals and find your way, please contact our Stephen Ministry by contacting a pastor or Pat Bartee, Stephen Leader.

# Summary of Session Meeting

## Stated Session Meeting November 20, 2022

Following is a summary of work completed at the November Session Meeting:

- As part of the training for incoming Elders, Meg Christian and Braegan Abernethy were in attendance. Htet Nyunt attended the October meeting.
- Thank you, letters were received from AMIS, as well as from the Alliance for Children Everywhere for Mount Vernon's ongoing financial support for these organizations that are part of our Outreach Ministry.
- The Congregational Care Ministry Team continues its search for a co-director of the Stephen Ministry.
- Fellowship events for 2023 have been set and will be announced in the near future. The first event of the new year will be a Winter Dinner on Sunday, Feb. 5th from 6-8 PM.
- Plans to replace the HVAC system in the Sanctuary Building continue to move forward. The first part of the work will be removal of a small amount of asbestos that covers pipes in the area where the HVAC equipment is located. This work is scheduled to be done when the Mount Vernon School has its Christmas break.
- The Finance and Administration Ministry Team (FAMT) is asking for anyone who hasn't already done so to please get their 2023 pledge cards in. Ministry teams are currently working on proposed budget needs for next year.
- Prior to the Christmas Eve service, the live Nativity scene will be in the courtyard beginning at 4:45. The Witness Ministry Team will provide a hot chocolate bar and music will be provided.
- Thanks to those who volunteer to provide snacks for Connections. Right now, we have the volunteer slots filled through April!
- The church youth are engaged in a couple of outreach projects: one involves helping the Sandy Springs Education Force sort books for children while another involves purchasing gifts for the Memorial Drive ministry.
- Several people were removed from the church rolls who now reside outside of the Sandy Springs area and are attending other churches. One of those – Glenn Grove – was received as an Affiliate Member since he wants to continue to provide his financial expertise to FAMT. Glenn has moved his membership to a church in Chattanooga.
- Commissioners who attended the November Presbytery meeting (Mary McClurg, Malinda Holmes, Dee Bradford-Smith, and Gloria Gillespie) reported on the work of that meeting which included approval of amendments to the Book of Order. These amendments must be approved by a majority of the presbyteries around the country. At the next several meetings Commissioners will be voting on other Book of Order amendments.

*·The next Stated Session Meeting will be  
December 18.*





P.O. 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

<b>Rev. Barrett Abernethy</b>	<i>Senior Pastor/Head of Staff</i>	<a href="mailto:barrett@mvpchurch.org">barrett@mvpchurch.org</a>
<b>Rev. Isaac Toney-Schmitt</b>	<i>Associate Pastor of Faith Formation</i>	<a href="mailto:isaac@mvpchurch.org">isaac@mvpchurch.org</a>
<b>Matthias Young</b>	<i>Director of Worship</i>	<a href="mailto:matthias@mvpchurch.org">matthias@mvpchurch.org</a>
<b>Steve Ray</b>	<i>Church Finance and Operations</i>	<a href="mailto:steve@mvpchurch.org">steve@mvpchurch.org</a>
<b>Debbie Nysewander</b>	<i>Administrative Assistant</i>	<a href="mailto:debbie@mvpchurch.org">debbie@mvpchurch.org</a>
<b>Yvonne White</b>	<i>Financial Secretary</i>	<a href="mailto:yvonne@mvpchurch.org">yvonne@mvpchurch.org</a>
<b>Shari Freeman</b>	<i>Seminary Intern</i>	<a href="mailto:shari@mvpchurch.org">shari@mvpchurch.org</a>

Good News!



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