



MOUNT VERNON PRESBYTERIAN CHURCH

GOOD NEWS

FEBRUARY 2023



A Letter From The Pastor

BY REV. BARRETT ABERNETHY

New Beginnings

We celebrate new beginnings often in the life of the church. At Easter, we celebrate the new life we find at resurrection. Around Thanksgiving while the world is feverishly trying to finish up the year, the season of Advent marks a new time. Of course, at Christmas we celebrate a new life entering the world, and then right after that we all acknowledge the new year that has dawned.

This past month your Church Session held its annual retreat. We saluted those who have rolled off

Session such as Carol Beckman, Brent Schweiger, Mary Kilgore, and Kyle Cumming (who will stay on Session until he leaves for college this summer), and welcomed new & returning elders Braegan Abernethy, Meg Christian, Htet Nyunt, David Hill, and John Hibbard. The retreat is always a time to acknowledge where we have been and to wonder where we are going, and for me, this is where we turn toward the year ahead. So even though it is February, I want to tell you what I am excited about as we start this new beginning.

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Session Summary

In February, I am excited about the Winter Mystery Dinner (sign up!) on the 5th, the Burning of the Palms at the end worship on 19th so we can prepare for Pancakes and Ashes on the 22nd, and then our Annual Meeting luncheon on the 26th.

In March I am excited to see how the Terrible Texts sermon series will inspire us to see challenging verses anew.

In April I am excited for our Holy Week Noonday Services and our Maundy Thursday Agape Meal as we prepare for the promise of Easter hope.

In April and May, I am excited for the return of Outdoor Worship!

In June and July, I am looking forward to worshipping in the Fellowship Hall as we thankfully have our new HVAC installed in the sanctuary building.

In August, I am excited to offer our 1-day Vacation Bible School that was a huge hit last year!

In the Fall, I am excited to return to the sanctuary as we kickoff a new year of programs and look forward to more outdoor services (you might need to bring your pet for one...), new sermon series, and all the hanging of the greens/pumpkin palooza/Christmas caroling we can handle!

This is of course, an incomplete list. There are so many other things I look forward to as well. The unexpected joys of gathering with you in your home or over coffee. The daily joy of seeing children outside my office window shouting at the excitement of discovery. The spiritual togetherness we find one minute through prayerful silence and the next minute wrestling with tough questions as we welcome the wisdom of the Holy Spirit. It all happens here, and we all get to faithfully take the journey.

Cheers to new beginnings!

Grace and Peace,
Barrett

2023 Session Members & Ministry Teams

Moderator

Rev. Barrett Abernethy

Clerk of Session

David Hill

Christian Education

Mary McClurg
Meg Christian

Congregational Care

Pat Bartee
Htet Nyunt

Fellowship

David Barclift

Finance/Administration/ Stewardship

Charlie Gray
John Hibbard

Outreach

Beppie Lever
Braegan Abernethy

Senior Adults

Dee Bradford-Smith

Witness

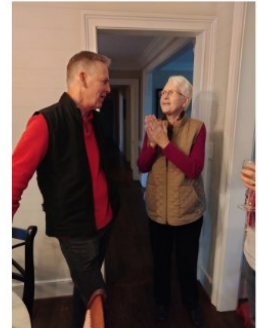
Angie Hawthorne

Worship

Gloria Gillespie
Malinda Holmes
Amy Kiley

January 1 - January 25, 2023	Actual YTD	2023 Budget
Member Giving Pledge	\$77,809	\$421,275
Member Giving Non- Pledge	\$4,685	\$40,000
Non member giving & Loose offering	\$318	\$8,000
Total Received	\$82,812	\$469,275

SESSION RETREAT



WORSHIP



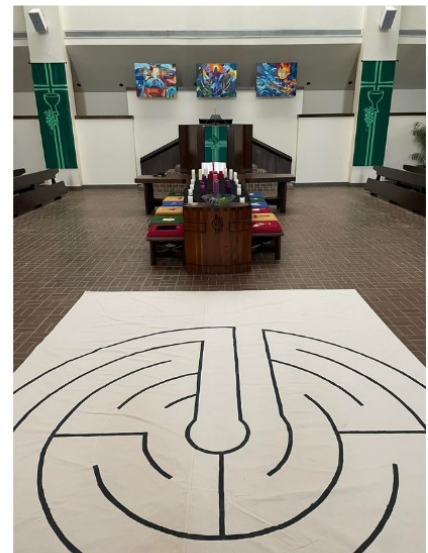
Taize Returns

We are glad to announce that after a hiatus, we are bringing the Taize Prayer service back. This service will take place every fourth Wednesday at 8:15pm.

What is Taize? This is a service of songs, silence, and scripture. It began in 1940 amid the violence of World War II in France. In line with these beginnings, Taize prayer is intended to suspend time for the parishioner. The simplistic songs are meant to be a chant that become prayers, while the silence invites one to talk to God, or more importantly, for God to speak to you.

Our first service was Wednesday, January 25. We hope you will join us and contact the church office for more information.

Next service: Wednesday, February 22 after the Ash
Wednesday Pancake Dinner.



PRAYER AT THE LABYRINTH



Choose a walking finger and breathe smoothly. As you trace the path, from the outside opening at the bottom to the center, move at whatever pace feels right for you. As you do, you may quiet your mind, pray for yourself or others, or lift certain emotions and experiences to God. Once you reach the center take a few deep breaths and then when you are ready, retrace the path back to the entrance.

OUTREACH



INTERNATIONAL
Women's House



At the beginning of the New Year, we sorted your very generous donations to the Outreach Tree. The donations were divided up between many of our Outreach Ministry Partners. We were able to “Stuff the Bus” again for Stirred-Up Ministries with warm clothes, as well as many boxes of hand sanitizer and face masks. We also distributed items to the International Women’s House, Clifton Night Shelter, Community Assistance Center and the VA Domiciliary, a residential level of treatment for homeless Veterans. The Domiciliary will be a new Outreach Ministry Partner for us. It was brought to our attention by Shari Freeman after she did a summer seminary internship at the VA Hospital.

The January Communion Offering was non-perishable food for the Food Pantries of the Community Assistance Center.

The February Communion Offering will be cereal, snacks, coffee, sugar, new twin sheets, new men’s socks, and new Men’s Underwear (size M and L) for Clifton Homeless Shelter.



A Letter from Pastor Jane at the Garden Hills Presbyterian Church in Zambia, thanking us for sending Outreach funds for them to buy more chickens:

I trust you are well. Here in Zambia we are in good shape. What we have done is to increase the number of chicks from 100 to 250. So these are in two deliveries, after two weeks we are getting another 125 so that there will be no gap in the sales.

So far things seem to be going well despite the heavy rains that are being experienced in the country. We want to take advantage of the rains and the chicken droppings and also invest in vegetable gardening. We have so far employed one person to watch over the chicken run. Will keep on updating you.

Regards to everyone, Jane

VOLUNTEER SPOTLIGHT

Volunteer Spotlight: Sam McClurg



Sam has been involved with Los Niños Primero for many years, serving as Chairman of the Board, bus driver, First Aid provider for skinned knees and boo-boos on little heads – anything that is needed, Sam jumps in. Anyone who knows Sam, knows his love and commitment to LNP. Below, Sam answers the question: Why do I serve?

Los Niños Primero was founded at Mount Vernon Presbyterian Church in 2001 to foster the academic skills of Latino children in Sandy Springs to enable them to perform at the level of other youngsters in early elementary school. The first person to be hired to start this new program was Maritza Morelli, who is now the Executive Director of LNP, but was then an employee of the Fulton

County Schools and functioned as the liaison between the Latin community in North Fulton County. It was agreed from the outset that LNP must offer quality programs, but it must be a joy to be a participant, or the children would not want to attend.

An example of how children feel about Los Niños Primero is the boy who attended the LNP program for two years before he was enrolled at Lake Forest Elementary for kindergarten. He told his mother after the first few days that he wanted to go to the Los Niños Primero school instead of Lake Forest because it was a lot more fun.

Academically LNP's success is demonstrated by comparing how Los Niños children perform compared to those who have not had the opportunity to attend its programs. Also, all children who attend the summer program are tested before the program starts and at its conclusion every year. The progress the children make in five weeks is remarkable. All the faculty in the program are certified with the required educational training. Many of the LNP teachers return either for the summer program or Saturday school, or both and therefore give up five weeks of their summer break or two Saturdays a month. The joy the teachers receive from being able to practice their professions as they have been trained, is demonstrated by their willingness to return Saturday after Saturday or summer after summer.

It is not just the excellent teachers who make the programs successful. Each classroom has two or three teen volunteers who are there to assist the teacher. They may help children one-on-one, take a child to the restroom, provide comfort when first aid is required for a scrape or bruise, or assist in providing snacks and lunches. Like the teacher, the teen volunteers experience joy from LNP that causes them to return like the teachers do. A number of volunteers have decided to major in Early Childhood Education in college and have returned to teach at LNP upon graduation and certification.

The success of Los Niños Primero has been not just the quality of its academic programs, but the joy it brings to its participants: The children, the teachers, the teen volunteers, the parents, as well as the adults who volunteer to serve the organization. If you would like to participate in the joy that LNP brings to its participants, there are positions on committees that deal with fund raising, budgeting and financial management, human resources, recruitment, and the teen volunteers. Contact Maritza Morelli, Executive Director of LNP at 471 Mount Vernon Highway, NE, Sandy Springs, GA 30328, call (404) 285-6653, or email info@losninosprimemrousa.org.



Sujay, Htet, & Sophie
visit Moira Speirs in
Scotland!
November 2022

Towson University
Chorale Concert
January 26

Ordination &
Installation
of Elders
January 22

New Members:
Nikki Player
James & Christian
Wolters



THIS & THAT



CHURCH OFFICE HOURS

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

Church office phone:
404.255.2211

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

Connection Snacks



Spring Cleaning The Balcony

Church Bulletin Bloopers:

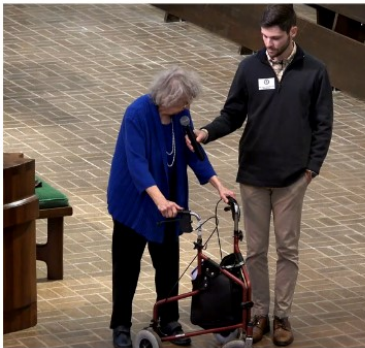
*"The Senior Choir invites any member of the congregation
who enjoys sinning to join the choir."*

*Photos courtesy of: Dee Bradford-Smith, Donna Martin, Carol
Beckman, Beppie Lever, Gloria Gillespie*

The Winter Issue of
THE MVPC MEMBERS' GIFT OF WISDOM
is available in the Narthex.

FEBRUARY BIRTHDAYS

Mike Hughes	2/2
Jack Nelson	2/6
Rose Nelson	2/7
Ella Ponsell	2/9
Erin Jackson	2/15
Kate Christian	2/15
Louise Lord	2/17
Steve Ponsell	2/20
George Hammett	2/22
Taylor Doyle	2/23
Viola Crawford	2/23
John Allen	2/24
Chad Plumly II	2/28



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 February and don't see your name on the list, please contact debbie@mvpchurch.org or call the office.

FEBRUARY CALENDAR

February 2023

SUN

MON

TUES

WED

THURS

FRI

SAT

SUN	MON	TUES	WED	THURS	FRI	SAT
<p>5</p> <p>Worship 10:30am 9:30am Adult Sunday School 11:30am PW Mission Lunch - KC 11:30am Inquirer's Lunch FH 5pm SSEF 5pm Youth</p>	<p>6</p> <p>1pm Senior Adult Mtg - Session</p>	<p>7</p> <p>1pm Staff Meeting 10am PW CT - Chapel 6:30pm Vespers@Towers</p>	<p>8</p> <p>8:15am School Chapel 4pm Witness-Session 7pm Choir Rehearsal</p>	<p>9</p> <p>Noon SSICA - Session 1pm Vernon Springs Bible Study 2pm Ledger Meeting</p>	<p>10</p> <p>8am Budget Prep 10am Book Circle-Session</p>	<p>11</p> <p>9am Bagpipes-GH 9am Presbytery Meeting @ First Presbyterian Covington</p>
<p>12</p> <p>Worship 10:30am 9:30am Adult Sunday School 11:30am PW Mission Lunch - KC 11:30am Inquirer's Lunch FH 5pm SSEF 5pm Youth</p>	<p>13</p> <p>5:30pm FAMT - Zoom</p>	<p>14</p> <p>1pm Staff Meeting 10am Day Circle-Chapel 5pm Worship Meeting 6:30pm Vespers@Towers</p>	<p>15</p> <p>8:15am School Chapel 2pm Stephen Ministry 7pm Choir Rehearsal Good News</p>	<p>16</p>	<p>17</p> <p>NO SCHOOL</p>	<p>18</p> <p>9am Bagpipes-GH</p>
<p>19</p> <p>Worship 10:30am 9:30am Adult Sunday School 11:30am Burning the Palms 11:30am Session Mtg. KC</p>	<p>20</p> <p>6pm Magic Club-FH NO SCHOOL</p>	<p>21</p> <p>1pm Staff Meeting 6:30pm Vespers@Towers</p>	<p>22</p> <p>ASH Wednesday 8:15am School Chapel 5:30pm Pancake Dinner 6:30pm Worship/Taizé 7pm Choir Rehearsal</p>	<p>23</p> <p>6:30pm LNP Good News Published</p>	<p>24</p>	<p>25</p> <p>LNP Saturday School 9am Bagpipes-GH</p>
<p>26</p> <p>Worship 10:30am 9:30am Adult Sunday School 11:30am Annual Mtg/Lunch-FH 5pm-Youth - GH</p>	<p>27</p>	<p>28</p> <p>1pm Staff Meeting 6:30pm Vespers@Towers</p>	<p>AA - Chapel Mon 6:30pm AI-Anon Tues 7:00pm Thurs 8:00pm Fri - 8:00pm</p>	<p>AA Kirk Center Mon 8:00pm Tues 8:00pm Wed 8:00pm Thurs 8:00pm Fri 8:00pm</p>	<p>Office Hours M-Th 8am - 4pm Fri 8am - 2pm</p>	

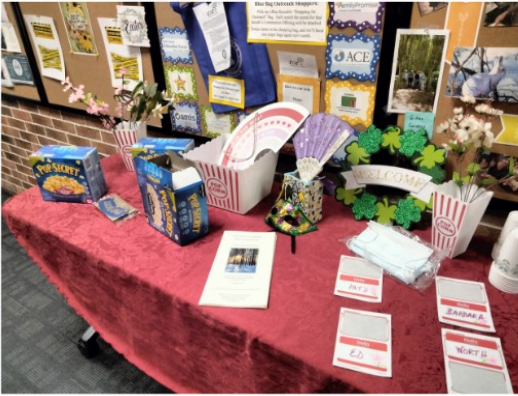


Mount Vernon Presbyterian Church

Blessed to be a Blessing

Sunday Worship
10:30am Sanctuary

SENIOR ADULT MOVIE MATINEE

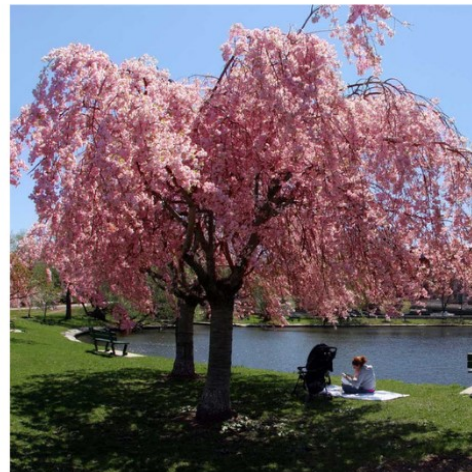


"Fried Green Tomatoes"
January 29



March Day Trip
March 25

Macon Cherry Blossom Festival
with a stop at the Whistle Stop
Café



Getting to Know...

MALINDA HOLMES
WORSHIP MINISTRY TEAM

If you could live anywhere, where would it be?

Though not a swimmer I would love to spend my days watching and walking along the ocean's edge, marveling at God's never-ending majesty. In comparing two very different locals a Presbyterian writer concluded with, "God made the mountains, but He lives at the seashore." I'd enjoy that also!

If you could only eat one meal for the rest of your life, what would it be?

A medium-rare steak dinner is always my favorite, but I loved eating and learning how to cook Asian cuisine when I lived in Japan and Korea.

Have you ever had a nickname? What is it?

I chose my cheerleader name, "Mindy" as my grandmother name. Only problem was that my grandchildren didn't know I was their grandmother when they were little since they called me "Mindy"!

What's your favorite zoo animal?

I answered this as a 7-year-old on a local radio show: — a giraffe, so I could see and know everything going on! I'm still like that!

What is your favorite family tradition?

I grew up in the Washington, DC area and we always went to see foreign dignitaries when they came to the U.S. for official visits. Also, we saw and spoke with President Truman several times on his early Sunday morning walks. We would go see the cherry blossoms in the middle of the night, to avoid all the crowds!



"Happiness is a choice, not a result. Nothing will make you happy until you choose to be happy. No person will make you happy unless you decide to be happy. Your happiness will not come to you. It can only come from you."

Ralph Marston

When your unhappiness becomes burdensome and unbearable, please remember we have a skilled, trained team of laypeople who want to help you and walk with you while you seek and find a life of peace and restored joy. Contact Stephen Ministry today.

SESSION MEETING SUMMARY

Stated Session Meeting & Retreat January 20 & 21, 2023

Following is a summary of the meeting:

- New Elders were examined to prepare for their ordination and installation on January 22. The following Elders make up the Class of 2025: Braegan Abernethy (ordained and installed to serve a three-year term); Htet Nyunt (ordained and installed to serve a three-year term); Meg Christian (installed to serve a one-year term); John Hibbard (installed to serve a second consecutive three-year term); and David Hill (installed to serve a second consecutive three-year term).
- The Fellowship Ministry Team has all of its 2023 events scheduled and on the church calendar. Upcoming is a Mystery Dinner planned for Sunday evening, February 5.
- February 26 was approved as the date for the MVPC Annual Meeting which will take place following the church service. A lunch will be part of that meeting.
- The annual statistical report for PC(USA) was approved; the Clerk will pass along to PC(USA) various statistics about MVPC.
- Recently a committee led by Steve Ray and composed of Elizabeth Abernethy, Pat Davis, and David Hill made updates to the MVPC Personnel Handbook which has now been approved by the Session.
- The church budget for 2023 was approved.
- A slate of officers for the MVPC Corporation was approved to present to the congregation for approval at the Annual Meeting. The slate includes John Hibbard, President; Charlie Gray, Vice President; Pat Davis, Secretary; and John Christian, Treasurer.
- Commissioners were elected to represent MVPC at the February Presbytery meeting.
- The MVPC By-Laws require the yearly election of the Session Clerk and the Church Treasurer. Session elected David Hill to continue as Clerk and Steve Ray to continue as Treasurer.
- The pastoral staff has mapped out the worship schedule for the year which will include two outdoor services in the spring and another two in the fall. Since the HVAC system replacement will take place this summer, worship services will be held in Fellowship Hall. We will make accommodations for the Los Niños Primero and Family Promise programs; both programs use Fellowship Hall for portions of the summer.

*The next Stated Session Meeting will be
February 19.*



P.O. Box 76051
Sandy Springs, GA 30358

Return Service Requested

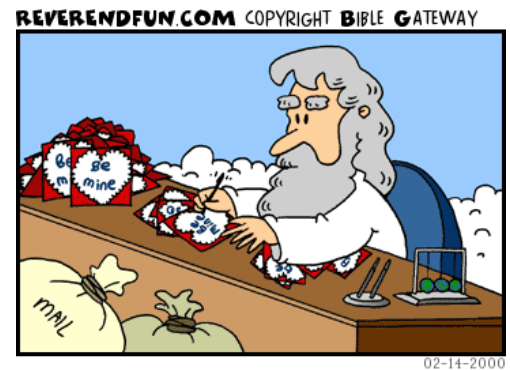
Got News? We'd love to hear from you! Send us your news so we can celebrate, laugh, and/or cry with you. After all, we are FAMILY. Deadline for news is the third Wednesday of each month for the *next month's* newsletter. Send your submissions to debbie@mvpchurch.org.

If you no longer wish to receive the Good News, please send an email to debbie@mvpchurch.org.

Good News!

Mount Vernon Presbyterian Church Staff

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



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