



GOOD NEWS

AUGUST 2023



A Letter From The Pastor

BY REV. BARRETT ABERNETHY

Centering toward Holiness

I want to begin this article with a huge THANK YOU to your church staff. These last two months have truly been a grind. Your staff has worked in 80-to-90-degree heat in their offices as we have eagerly anticipated the return of central air in the sanctuary building. So when you see Isaac, Steve, Yvonne, or Debbie, please extend to them a well-deserved note of gratitude.

I also want to extend further thanks to all of you who have traversed these last two months

with us across the campus as we have sought sanctuary. Admittedly, it has been a bigger lift logistically than I thought, and thus, I must cite my colleague, Rev. Isaac Toney-Schmitt. He has worked extremely hard to figure out the audio-visual logistics essential to running a service for those who gather in person and those who join us online. I am also grateful to those of you in the congregation who were adventurous spirits and found holiness on different parts of our campus. Those of you who helped prepare the space on Fridays, who drove your neighbors to church, and our Usher teams who willingly served and augmented plans on short notice should be commended.

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As I write this from the air-conditioned north wing of the sanctuary building that has been the staff refuge this summer, I pray that by the time you are reading this, the need for these logistics will be a thing of the past and you and I will be turning our heads toward fall and a return to normality. As you return to your busy lives, I want to encourage you (and I), to be intentional about setting aside time for God. Last month, I was reminded of the words of John Calvin (and in turn reminded you all) that prayer is the “chief exercise of faith.” A timely reminder when worshipping in a gym!

One of the ways I have exercised in the past is through the practice of Centering Prayer. Founded by Catholic Monk, Thomas Keating, Centering Prayer is both very simple and quite challenging. It involves three simple movements:

1. Find a comfortable prayer posture that allows for stillness and peace.
2. Let go of all your thoughts and focus/center yourself toward God. As you let go of your worldly thoughts, find a sacred word that will center you in prayer.

Examples include God, Christ, Love, Grace, Mercy, Forgiveness, Joy, and Guidance. Of course, you may choose a word that is central to your walk with God.

3. Allow whatever word you choose to become “front and center.” Keating describes it this way, “Introduce the sacred word into your imagination as gently as if you were laying a feather on a piece of absorbent cotton.” Keep in mind, however, this word is just a word, the sole focus of the sacred word is God.

Should those worldly thoughts creep back in as you pray (I can assure you they will), simply recall your sacred word and return to your centering prayer. This might last for 1-2 minutes, or you can get together with a prayer partner or two like I did in seminary, and we would engage in this practice for 20 minutes. A dimly lit or even dark room allows for a better prayer experience.

Peace to you as your turn to God this fall as we return to the comforting confines of the Sanctuary.

*Grace and Peace,
Barrett*

January 1 - June 30, 2023	Actual YTD	2023 Budget
Member Giving Pledge	\$271,733	\$421,275
Member Giving Non- Pledge	\$35,324	\$60,000
Non member giving & Loose offering	\$4,090	\$9,000
Total Received	\$311,147	\$540,275

2023 Session Members & Ministry Teams

Moderator(s)

Rev. Barrett Abernethy
Rev. Isaac Toney-Schmitt

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

We are all witnesses to the love of Jesus Christ.

Worship

Gloria Gillespie
Malinda Holmes
Amy Kiley

LOS NINOS SUNDAY

Sunday, July 2



SUMMER AT MVPC



SENIOR ADULTS



Senior Adult Trip to High
Museum
July 9



Family
Promise



Senior Adult Team
Planning Lunch



OUTREACH



Darryl Jones picked up our May Communion Offering of snacks, food and sports equipment for **Stirred Up Ministries** Summer Camp and Food Pantry. They also received a portion of our Pentecost Offering for Youth at Risk.



Our June Communion Offering was for Clothes, Paper Goods, Cleaning Products, Diapers and Women's Grooming Items for the **International Women's House**. We said goodbye to IWH Executive Director, Anna Zaiabel Blau, who retired after 25 years and welcomed the new Executive Director, Dr. Tonya Ferguson.

Our July Communion Offering was for men's grooming items and casual clothes for the **VA Domiciliary for Homeless Vets**. Our special offering for Friends in **Zambia** was very successful, and since Barbara Hughes and Isaac Toney-Schmitt couldn't travel to Zambia in June, we will be working with **Alliance for Children Everywhere** to use the funds for House of Moses and the FaithWorks Schools.

On Father's Day we had a special collection for the Caring Hands Fund for **Presbyterian Homes of Georgia**. On Sunday, July 2, we hosted **Los Niños Primero** families for worship, and donated \$500 of that day's offering to them.



Book Sorting for the Sandy Springs Education Force Mini Libraries is continuee over the summer.



Under leadership of our local coordinator, Penny Kiel, we hosted **Family Promise** in Fellowship Hall July 9-23. We welcomed our guests (3 Moms and 6 children ages 2 1/2 to 13). Thank you to all the groups who provided dinner and individuals who shopped, donated, and spent the night.



ZAMBIA SCHOLARSHIPS



IMPACT OF COLLEGE SCHOLARSHIP

Finance plays an important role in the education sector. The students that have good financial status get the opportunity to avail effective education from the renowned educational institutions, whereas students belonging to the poor family remain unable to continue their education and receive the higher education from the well reputed educational institutes. The function of scholarships in higher education is to make tuition fee affordable

EFFECTS OF SCHOLARSHIPS ON LOW-INCOME STUDENTS & FAMILIES

Scholarships allow students to access education they otherwise might not have. The connection between poverty and educational failure is subtle. Most of the pupils at our school are from low-income families. Over 60% of the communities with annual dropouts are low-income. The basis for opportunity, achievement, and fulfillment is a high-quality education which is essential for low-income pupils.

Scholarships for college have changed the lives of many people from low-income families by breaking the cycle of poverty and improving their chances of escaping it through higher education. Scholarships have also provided and still continues to provide a clear exit from a vicious cycle. In addition, Scholarships have been utilized as tools to close the gap between what is covered by financial aid and the overall cost of attending college. College affordability is crucial for these students to complete their degrees.

Scholarships in Zambia, however, have helped and continue to help our past and present students relieve financial stress, allowing them to devote more mental energy to their academics and their aspirations for life after college. One of our former benefit students, Tanangachi Mvula, who concentrated on his aim of creating furniture after college, as well as many other students studying, such as Ruth Malunga, who is doing her fashion, tailoring, and design, can attest to this.



Scholarships offer students the option to pursue their interests and abilities, which will help them build sustainable economic futures. Scholarships are an important part of the process of completing college. Not only can students' lives alter drastically when given the chance to get a top-notch education, but also those of their families.



Milestone Birthday



Bev Northrop celebrated a milestone - 90 years old June 23!

Braves Game

I want to give a big "Shout Out" to the entire Seniors Ministry Team for all the great work leading up to our outing to the Atlanta Braves game last month!
Charlie Gray



Thanks for our Connection Snack volunteers this summer!



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

Church Office
404.255.2211



CHURCH OFFICE HOURS

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

THIS & THAT

"Here's Your Sign"



Lost & Found



Sandy Springs **EDUCATION FORCE**
 Electronics Recycling & New School Supply Drive
 August 19, 2023 / 10am-1pm: 7447 Roswell Road
 North Springs High School Parking Lot
 \$20 Donation to SSEF to Recycle Electronics*
 All data securely deleted / Free to Donate School Supplies



*Additional per pound fees for some items. Visit website for details.
Visit www.SandySpringsEducationForce.org for details

August Events:

Senior Adult Camaraderie Lunch - Aug. 6

VBS
Aug. 12

PW Installation
Aug. 27

Sandy Springs Education Force
Electronic Recycling
August 1

Church Bulletin Bloopers:

"Ladies Bible Study will be held Thursday morning at 10. All ladies are invited to lunch in the Fellowship Hall after the B.S. is done."

Photos courtesy of: Dee Bradford-Smith, Donna Martin, Beppie Lever, Barrett Abernethy, Isaac Toney-Schmitt

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

AUGUST CALENDAR

August 2023

SUN	MON	TUES	WED	THURS	FRI	SAT
AA-Chapel Mon 6:30pm Al-Anon Tues 7:00pm Thurs 8:00pm Fri - 8:00pm	AA Kirk Center Mon 8:00pm Tues 8:00pm Wed. 8:00pm Thurs. 8:00pm Fri. 8:00pm	1 10am PW CT - Chapel 5pm CE Meeting	2 9pm Staff Meeting	3	4	5 9am Bagpipes-GH
6 Worship 10:30am 9:30am Adult Sunday School 10am Connection Snacks 11:30 Sr. Adult Lunch @ La Madeleine	7 1pm Senior Adult Mtg.- Session/Chapel	8 1pm Staff Meeting	9 11am Vernon Springs Bible Study	10 2pm Ledger Meeting	11 8am Budget Prep	12 9:30-3:00 VBS 10-2 LNP Bingo 9am Bagpipes-GH
13 Worship 10:30am 9:30am Adult Sunday School Committees/Coffee 10am Connection Snacks 5pm Sr. Adult - SSEF	14 5:30pm FAMT	15 5pm Worship Meeting 1st Day of School	16 8am School Chapel 1pm Staff Meeting	17	18	19 9am Bagpipes-GH 10-1 SSEF Electronic Recycling-offsite
20 Worship 10:30am 9:30am Adult Sunday School 10am Connection Snacks 11:30am Session Mtg. KC 7pm ACB-FH	21 6pm Magic Club-FH	22 1pm Staff Meeting	23 8am School Chapel Good News Deadline	24 6:30pm LNP	25	26 LNP Sat. School 8-1 9am Bagpipes-GH
27 Worship 10:30am 9:30am Adult Sunday School 10am Connection Snacks 11:30 PW Installation-KC 7pm ACB-FH	28	29 1pm Staff Meeting 6pm AMIS - Session	30 8am School Chapel Good News Published	31		



Mount Vernon Presbyterian Church

Blessed to be a Blessing

Sunday Worship
10:30am Sanctuary

Office Hours
M-Th 8am - 4pm
Fri 8am - 2pm

AUGUST BIRTHDAYS



Sid Kilgore	8/1
Jeff Chesnutt	8/1
Susan Sawyer	8/1
Joanna Mielke	8/3
Julia Northrop	8/4
Moira Speirs	8/6
Sarah Northrop	8/6
Wendy Hagenau	8/7
Paul Wade	8/8
Doug Sawyer	8/11
Bob Boyer	8/14
Alma Dowdakin	8/14
Lois Johnson	8/16
David Barclift	8/18
Pat Bartee	8/20
Duncan Jackson	8/21
Tom Rounds	8/21
Linda Bliss	8/24
Kathryn Wade	8/25
Pieter Badenhorst	8/27
Kyle Hagenau	8/29
Cameron Gray	8/29
Ethan Ray	8/29

Staff Birthdays

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

If you have a birthday in August and don't see your name on the list, please contact debbie@mvpchurch.org or call the office.

MVPC GOES TO THE GAME

Atlanta Braves Game June 11



Getting to Know...

DIANE BUMGARNER

What is my favorite family vacation?

Because our children now live on different coasts and have other families to consider, we don't always get to see them on holidays. Every August, we rent a house at the beach and we all get together – kids, spouses, and grandchildren. It's like Christmas for me! Normally, we go to Pawley's Island. This year will be different. As a child, my family had a beach house in Sandbridge, VA. My parents sold that house when my children were in high school. We are going to rent that house this year, so that the grandchildren can see where their parents went to the beach when they were growing up.



What did I want to be when I was small?

I always wanted to be First Lady. I have no idea why – I guess it seemed glamorous. I have since rethought that idea and have absolutely no desire to be First Lady.

Did I ever have a nickname?

Yes, my parents nicknamed me Mussolini when I was little because I was so bossy and always had to have the last word. Keith would probably tell you that things have not changed much 😊.

What's my favorite fast food chain?

Chick-fil-A – Hands down. You can agree with their position on issues or you can disagree, but nobody does it better. And, the food is good!

If I could go back in time to change one thing, what would it be?

If I could go back in time and change one thing, it would be to let our Founding Fathers know that we need term limits in Congress. That's the only place I think they really missed it. I don't think the intent of public service was to be a career.

"Most folks are about as happy as they make up their minds to be."

Abraham Lincoln



Old Abe had a pretty keen observation about happiness, but it isn't that easy to align intentions with actual well-being. Our Stephen Ministers are specially trained to help you unmuddle, re-clarify, and move forward. If your unhappiness is obstructing your way forward and ruining your enjoyment of current circumstances, please call on us to journey with you as you try to make sense of your unease.

SESSION MEETING SUMMARY

Stated Session Meeting July 16, 2023

The following business was conducted at the July Session Meeting:

- The Christian Education Ministry Team is finalizing plans for Vacation Bible School which will be from 9:30-3:00 on August 12. The number of children registered so far matches last year's numbers.
- The Finance and Administration Ministry Team announced that the financial outlook continues to be good. Year to year comparisons show that giving this year is in line with giving last year at this time. Also, the HVAC project is on schedule to be completed at the end of the month. The Sanctuary has been painted and the communion table and baptismal font have been repaired and refinished.
- The Senior Adult ministry continues to engage many seniors in various activities and service projects. Seniors are planning a fall trip on the Blue Ridge Railroad.
- The Vital Congregations Initiative (VCI) committee brought to Session a proposed tag line that will be used in church publications, the website, and as a tool for organizing the work of Session. Session approved the following:

Reaching out to...

Welcome.

Worship.

Share.

Serve.

- Session heard reports from 1) the Safety Committee that is currently developing a safety handbook that will address weather, medical, fire, and intruder emergencies and 2) the Fellowship Ministry Team that will organize welcome dinners to help new members get to know long-time members. These dinners will begin in late summer or early fall.
- Session approved September 24 as the date for a Congregational Meeting to receive and act on the report of the Nominating Committee.
- MVPC Commissioners were elected to represent our church at the August 15 Presbytery Meeting at Shallowford PC. Those elected include David Barclift, Malinda Holmes, and David Hill.
- Rev. Toney-Schmitt has been selected to participate in the Leadership Perimeter program. He will also attend the CREDO Conference which provides learning opportunities for early career pastors.
- Rev. Abernethy announced the new Book of Order has just been published. Over the next few months and at the Annual Session Retreat (January 26-27, 2024) Session members will examine Book of Order changes and participate in training required by the Book of Order.

*The next Session Meeting will be
August 20.*

PRAYER VINE



James Ballew - strength as he encounters some post-surgical complications.

Eliana - Carrie Southard's niece is waiting to hear of acceptance into graduate school.

Patricia Hibbard - healing and smooth recovery following surgery to repair ligaments around her ankle.

Barbara Hughes - thankful to be home after gallbladder surgery.

Megan Kendall - Hill's niece, celebrates that test results showed no metastasis.

Kendra Kirz - Hill's neighbor, gratitude for successful surgery and waiting for test results & next steps.

Martha Krenson - is recovering well from spinal surgery and thriving in rehab.

Loise Lord - continued faith & peace as she receives home health and hospice care.

Frank Mayer - Colleen Nelson's father celebrates the end of a six month round of chemo.

Chuck McCrory - Amy Kiley's boyfriend's father, comfort and faith as he battles severe cirrhosis.

Anna Morine - comfort and love after losing her beloved dog, Nala.

Neil Morrison - Betsy Cozine's friend is grateful for successful surgery.

Meredith Nash - Hill's friends daughter, strength and courage as she heads into the toughest chemo treatment, doctors are very optimistic.

Mrs. JB - still waiting on a bone marrow donor.

Blessings to our homebound members who often tune into our services.

Blessings upon the ministries our church supports here and in Zambia.

Faith and courage for those reeling from disaster, gun violence, oppression, and injustice and those fighting for freedom and identity.

Do you need prayer?
Have our Prayer Vine pray for you!
Email your requests to pbartee@yahoo.com



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.

Mount Vernon Presbyterian Church

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
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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

Good News!

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HERE IS THE CHURCH, HERE IS THE STEEPLE ... OPEN THE DOOR, AND THERE ARE THE PEOPLE

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