



MOUNT VERNON PRESBYTERIAN CHURCH

GOOD NEWS

SEPTEMBER 2023



A Letter From The Pastor

BY REV. BARRETT ABERNETHY

The Future of Ministry

First off, I want to extend thanks to all of you for the new stole you presented me during the August 20 worship service. It was a most unexpected acknowledgment of my 10 years of ordained ministry and was a wonderful reminder of how much I enjoy being a pastor. We believe in the priesthood of all believers, and while it is often said that the pastor is the leader of the church, what is true is that the pastor must listen to the people. Hence, we are disciples to one another. Just as I serve you, you serve me.

During that same service, I also mentioned that unfortunately there are very few in our denomination answering the call to serve the church. In fact, within the incoming class of my alma mater, Austin Presbyterian Theological Seminary, not one PCUSA student is planning to enter parish ministry. Recently, Isaac and I had a long talk about why that is, and we think there are many many reasons for this: the secularization of society, the mistrust of institutions (church included), the fact that many professions make more money than pastors, the difficulty to maintain work/life balance, and perhaps the fact that weekend trips are often difficult since we work on Sundays.

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Prayer Vine

As we got past the “Why?” however, we began to ask, “What can we do about it?” Which brings us back to discipleship. We must make space for people to wonder about ministry, and this is not just for young people, this is for all people. Our staff, from Isaac to Shari, is living proof that discipleship can help people discern a call to seminary and church ministry at any point in their lives. For the church is where this sense of call is cultivated. The work to get someone to seminary and the subsequent call to serve in the parish begins in the parish itself. We are a priesthood because you shape the pastors (or lack thereof) of tomorrow.

To give someone the space, we must empower them to see how ministry is carried out. This is important not just for the church, but society. One of the things Isaac and I discussed is how people are neglecting the spiritual side of their lives and how they lack the language to confront this void. A recent *Washington Post* piece illustrated this point when the author confessed that though he has drifted from the church and considers himself a “none,” he sees that many people have a “church sized hole” in their life.[1]

We can welcome the Holy Spirit into that hole. The work of the church is about more than eternal salvation. Let God handle that. The work of the church is about cultivating community in the name of Christ so we can celebrate and share the work that God has done, is doing, and will do. Be the priesthood, church, and the church will reward you with the gift of devoted priests who love the church.

*Peace,
Barrett*

[1] Perry Bacon, Jr. “I Left the Church-and Now Long For a Church for the Nones,” *Washington Post* (August 21, 2023).

January 1 - July 31, 2023	Actual YTD	2023 Budget
Member Giving Pledge	\$302,941	\$421,275
Member Giving Non- Pledge	\$41,710	\$60,000
Non member giving & Loose offering	\$4,470	\$9,000
Total Received	\$349,121	\$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

VACATION BIBLE SCHOOL 2023

PETS UNLEASHED



OUTREACH

Our August Communion Offering was School Supplies for Sandy Springs Education Force and Stirred Up Ministries.



At VBS, our “Project with a Purpose” was bagging dog and cat food for the CAC Food Pantry and making pet toys out of socks.



SENIOR ADULTS



Sandy Springs Education Force



PW INSTALLATION

Sunday,
August 27



HOW I SPENT MY SUMMER

Shari Freeman

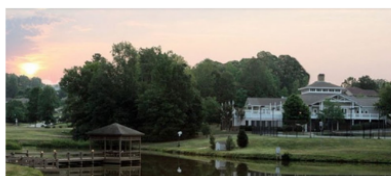


I was blessed to spend seven weeks this summer working as a Chaplain intern at Presbyterian Village, a retirement community in Austell. Presbyterian Village is a Continuing Care Retirement Community offering a full spectrum of living and healthcare services for senior citizens. Currently serving around 275 residents, the living environments include independent living, supportive living, memory care, rehabilitation, and skilled nursing. As a continuing care community, residents move to different levels of care as their needs change.

Like all retirement communities associated with the Presbyterian Church, Presbyterian Village employs a full-time chaplain. And it is definitely a full-time job. The Chaplain at Presbyterian Village leads a weekly Sunday Morning worship service, a Sunday School class, and an afternoon discussion group. During the week, the Chaplain leads four devotional services for various groups in the community and offers a weekly art class for memory care residents. The Chaplain oversees a Stephen's Ministry group and leads a Wednesday evening vespers service. Along with all of this, the Chaplain meets all day long with individual residents, checking in on them and providing a listening ear. The Chaplain makes it a priority to visit daily with every resident in the hospital. Finally, the Chaplain steps in when a resident dies, meets with the family for pastoral care, and plans memorial services for the deceased. During my internship, the full-time Chaplain took a couple of different vacation trips, leaving me with all of the weekly responsibilities. I was busy!



I learned a lot about providing worship and devotional sessions for the different groups of people in retirement communities, especially those in memory care and skilled nursing environments. I came to appreciate the value of congregational singing. I led so much singing during the weekly devotional services that my voice would be hoarse by the end of the day. But the most important thing I experienced was the need to slow down and be present with the residents. I learned that offering my presence and undivided attention to someone was more important than preparing the perfect worship service or sermon.





10 Years in Ordained Ministry

Church Office has AC!



We celebrated Barrett's 10 year anniversary in ordained ministry!

We celebrate air conditioning in the offices!



Thanks for our lovely Connection Snack volunteers!



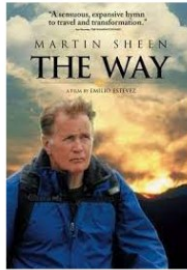
Mailing address:
MVPC
P.O. Box 76051
Sandy Springs, GA 30358

Church Office
404.255.2211



CHURCH OFFICE HOURS

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



Church Bulletin Bloopers:

"The agenda was adopted ... the minutes were approved ... the financial secretary gave a grief report."

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

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

THIS & THAT

Church office closed Monday, September 4

"Here's Your Sign"

New lanyards for visitors

September Events:
Fall Kick-Off BBQ
Sept. 10

Senior Adult Movie Matinee
Sept. 16

Men's Breakfast
Sept. 24

Called Congregation Meeting
Sept. 24

MVPC TAKES A HIKE

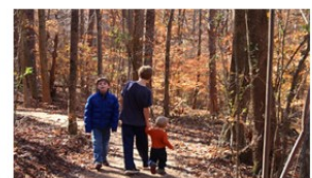
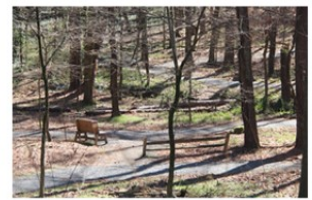
An easy hike for all ages!

HIKING WITH THE SAINTS

Monday, September 25 @ 8:30AM

Meet at the church at 8:15am to carpool or join us at Lost Corner.

Join us as we walk the trails of Lost Corner Preserve at:
7300 Brandon Mill Road, Sandy Springs, GA 30328



The path I walk, Christ walks it. May the land in which I find myself be without sorrow. May the Trinity protect me wherever I stay, bright angels walk with me, the ninefold people of heaven come with me. May I arrive at every place I enter. Well does the fair Lord show us a course, a path.

From a sixth-century hymn attributed to St. Columba

History of Lost Corner

Peggy Miles



Margaret "Peggy" Miles was born on the property in 1922 and died there in 2008. She lived in the house and on the property for her entire life. She was a well educated woman who graduated from Chattahoochee High School and went on to college. She worked for Emory as an epidemiologist. She never married and did not have children. She loved Lost Corner and wanted to protect it for future generations. She deeded Lost Corner to the Trust for Public Land and the City of Sandy Springs. It was her generosity that has made Lost Corner Preserve a reality.

SEPTEMBER CALENDAR

September 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 Wed. 8:00pm Fri. 8:00pm	Fellowship Hall Tues. 8:00pm Thurs. 8:00pm			1 8am Budget Prep 10am Book Circle - Session	2 9am Bagpipes-GH
3 Worship 10:30am 9:30am Adult Sunday School 10am Connection Snacks 7pm ACB-FH	4 CHURCH CLOSED	5 10am - PW CT Chapel 1pm Staff Meeting 5pm CE Meeting	6 8am School Chapel 1pm Senior Adult Mtg. - Session	7 2pm Ledger Meeting	8 8am Budget Prep 10am Book Circle - Session	9 9am Bagpipes-GH LNP Sat. School 10:30am Catherine Bathgate Funeral
10 OUTDOOR Worship 10:30am 9:30am Adult Sunday School 10am Connection Snacks 11:30am Fall Kickoff BBQ 7pm ACB-FH	11 5:30pm FAMT - Zoom	12 10am Day Circle-Chapel 1pm Staff Meeting	13 8am School Chapel 10am Security Mtg. Session 7pm Choir Rehearsal	14 11am Vernon Springs Bible Study 1:30pm Villages Devotional	15	16 9am Bagpipes-GH Sr. Adult Matinee - Session
17 Worship 10:30am 9:30am Adult Sunday School 10am Connection Snacks 11:30am Session Mtg. KC 7pm ACB-FH	18 6pm Magic Club-FH 6pm Worship Meeting	19 1pm Staff Meeting	20 9:30am School Chapel 7pm Choir Rehearsal Good News Deadline	21	22	23 9am Bagpipes-GH LNP Sat. School
24 Worship 10:30am 8:30am Men's Breakfast 9:30am Adult Sunday School 10am Connection Snacks 11:30 Cong Mtg.	25 8:15am Church Hiking Trip - Lost Corner Preserve	26 1pm Staff Meeting 7pm Taizé	27 8am School Chapel 7pm Choir Rehearsal Good News Published	28 6:30pm LNP	29	30



Mount Vernon Presbyterian
Church

Blessed to be a Blessing

Sunday Worship
10:30am Sanctuary

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

Getting to Know...

LOIS JOHNSON

Who are your heros?

My grandparents, parents, and children.

What is your favorite family vacation?

Returning to Oxford, MS for family reunions and vacations.

What is your proudest accomplishment?

Being the first one in my immediate family to get a college degree.

What did you want to be when you were small?

A ballerina

If you were a super-hero, what powers would you have?

To heal the sick, and share my blessings.



Looking for NEW Stephen Ministers!!!

If you have a desire to enlarge your spiritual outlook, want to learn more effective ways to listen and truly hear other people, and wish to deepen your service to our church, please ask questions and pick up an application at our table in the Narthex in September.

Loss, loneliness, and overwhelming situations propel most people to us. Skilled responses are crucial, so ministers spend several months in training and practice. Confidentiality keeps the program grounded and ministers learn how to guard that aspect. Once training is over, monthly meetings occur for peer supervision and on-going training.

Please prayerfully consider joining us!



SEPTEMBER BIRTHDAYS

Betsy Cozine	9/3
Nancy Kennedy	9/3
Kirk Pumphrey	9/4
Chris Gray	9/4
Hazel Cofield	9/4
Channing Snypp	9/5
Emma Plumly	9/6
Carolyn Spain	9/6
Lee Wall	9/6
Suzanne Snypp	9/10
Jim Loth	9/13
Meg Christian	9/14
Sam McClurg	9/15
Stephanie Skidmore	9/20
McLaren Christensen	9/20
Minnie Robinson	9/21
George Henry	9/24
Penny Kiel	9/26
Barbara Wasson	9/26
Jack Bobeng	9/30



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

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



SESSION MEETING SUMMARY

Stated Session Meeting August 20, 2023

The MVPC Session met for its regular monthly meeting on August 20. Following is a summary of that meeting:

- The Christian Education Ministry Team reminded Session members that Small Group registration begins August 27 and will continue for several Sundays. Small groups will begin their studies on September 17. Sign-ups will be before and after church in the Narthex.
- The Fellowship Ministry Team is planning an after church barbeque on Kick-off Sunday, September 10.
- Discussions and planning are underway as our church approaches its 70th anniversary next year. As part of that celebration there is discussion of hosting a Presbytery meeting on our campus as well as updating our photo directory of members. Church members are encouraged to volunteer to help plan the events that will commemorate the founding of MVPC.
- The baptism of Elaine Frances Player, daughter of member Nikki Player and her husband, Richard, was approved for September 17.
- A special offering for CAC was approved and will be collected on November 19.
- The first new member dinner was held recently for those who have joined Mount Vernon this calendar year. Eight new members joined a cross section of long-time members for dinner at the Barclift's. We will have these dinners periodically as a way to help newcomers become acclimated.
- The Safety Committee is currently updating church emergency procedures which will be finalized in the next month or so. In the near future safety information related to weather, fire, medical and intruder emergencies will be available. CPR training will be offered in the coming months as well.

*The next Session Meeting will be
September 17.*

PRAYER VINE



Catherine Bathgate died August 22. The service will be held at MVPC on Saturday, September 9 at 10:30am.

Beverly Northrop died August 27 and the service will be held at MVPC Saturday, October 7 at 2pm.

James Ballew - continued healing as he completes chemo.

Kathy Havey - pray for a smooth recovery after spinal surgery.

Fay Hendricks - healing and comfort for Betsy Cozine's friend who has heart issues.

Megan Kendall - Hill's niece, courage and strength as her chemo treatments are taking toll on her.

Mary Lynch - wisdom for doctors and faith for Felicia Hutt's mother as she deals with breast cancer diagnosis.

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

Meredith Nash - Hill's friends 4 year old daughter, faith and strength as October tests should give her doctors more information on future treatment.

Andy Nelson - continued healing as he receives treatment for leukemia.

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

Carter Ramsey - Steve Whisenant's relative in a north GA boarding school has contracted a rare infectious disease

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	Senior Pastor/Head of Staff	barrett@mvpchurch.org
Rev. Isaac Toney-Schmitt	Associate Pastor of Faith Formation	isaac@mvpchurch.org
Steve Ray	Church Finance and Operations	steve@mvpchurch.org
Debbie Nysewander	Administrative Assistant	debbie@mvpchurch.org
Yvonne White	Financial Secretary	yvonne@mvpchurch.org
Shari Freeman	Seminary Intern	shari@mvpchurch.org

Good News!

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Thanks to Kerry Hodgkinson 02-01-2013
IF GOD CREATED ALL THIS DOES HE HAVE TO PAY THE ELECTRIC BILL TOO?

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