



MOUNT VERNON PRESBYTERIAN CHURCH

GOOD NEWS

DECEMBER 2023



A Note From The Pastor

BY REV. BARRETT ABERNETHY

Advent at Mount Vernon Presbyterian!

Happy New Year! No, seriously, you read that right. With the dawn of Advent here, the Church begins a new liturgical year. To start this new year and new season we will journey to the Christly light of Christmas Eve by celebrating the partnerships we have with several of our outreach and community partners. The overarching theme of Advent this year is “Names for the Messiah”. Each week we will lift

up the messianic names offered in Isaiah 9:6; Wonderful Counselor, Mighty God, Everlasting Father, the Prince of Peace. Here are the dates and the details:

December 3: The Mount Vernon School

Join us as we welcome our friends from The Mount Vernon School. We will hear from their new Head of School, Kristy Lundstrom and enjoy the musical (both vocal and instrumental) gifts of several students. I will also share the pulpit with Elisse Hayes, Head of Community & Culture for the Lower (Church) campus. Elisse leads the weekly chapel services that happen each ...

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Session Summary

Prayer Vine

Wednesday morning on campus, and I am looking forward to collaborating with her as we explore the idea of a Wonderful Counselor from both the educational and spiritual perspective. A lunch will follow in Fellowship Hall.

December 10: Community Assistance Center

The Second Sunday of Advent will offer us the opportunity to see the work of Mighty God through the partnership and bond that we have with CAC. Each Sunday during the lighting of the Advent Candle, we will welcome members of our community who have volunteered/worked with/for the partner organization to lead us in that liturgy. This Sunday we will welcome those of you who have connection and purpose serving our neighbors at CAC.

December 17: Los Niños Primero

Another exciting Sunday as we welcome our friends from Los Niños Primero. It will be a wonderful Advent celebration as the LNP children will sing with the Mighty Voices of Power choir under the direction of Clark Atlanta University Professor Daniel Black. This duo sang together earlier this year at the Los Niños Primero Gala and we look forward to

witnessing the power of the Everlasting Father through our continued partnership.

December 24: Sandy Springs Education Force and Family Promise

On Christmas Eve, join us for our 10:30am morning worship service of Lessons and Carols as we celebrate our new partnership with Sandy Springs Education Force and the work they do to support public schools in our community.

That night, we hope you will come back at 5:30pm for the Candlelight Service as we celebrate the promise we find through the birth of Jesus Christ with the partnership we share with Family Promise. The animals will be here at 4:30pm and we will raise our candles high while singing Silent Night to go back out into the world proclaiming the love of the Prince of Peace.

*Grace & Peace,
Barrett*

January 1 - October 31, 2023	Actual YTD	2023 Budget
Member Giving Pledge	\$400,372	\$421,275
Member Giving Non- Pledge	\$69,607	\$60,000
Non member giving & Loose offering	\$7,389	\$9,000
Total Received	\$477,368	\$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

HANGING OF THE GREENS



OUTREACH

Our November Communion Offering was non perishable food and gift cards to Stuff the Bus for Stirred Up Ministries Thanksgiving Baskets. Cameron, who came with Darryl to help load the bus, was a young camper with Stirred Up Ministries as a child.



Volunteer activities for Youth, Senior Adults, and Friends included Book Sorting and Putting Together Goody Bags for Sandy Springs Education Force and bagging rice for the Community Assistance Center.



Looking towards Advent, we are collecting gifts for the mothers and children at International Women's House, collecting warm clothing on the Advent Tree, and hosting Family Promise the week of Christmas.

SENIOR ADULTS



SSEF Book Sorting



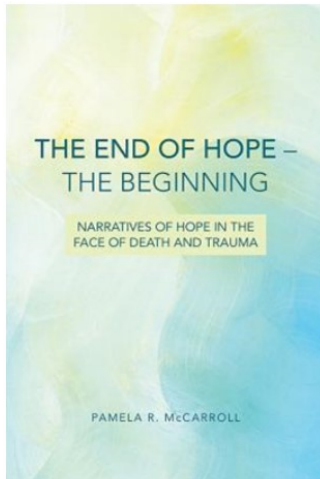
Seniors' Saturday Matinee
Dec. 2, 1pm, Session Room

"The Man Who Invented Christmas"

In 1843 London, author Charles Dickens finds himself with three unsuccessful novels in a row. This brings Ebenezer Scrooge, Tiny Tim and other classic characters to life in "A Christmas Carol," forever changing the holiday season into the celebration known today.

ON DEATH & DYING

SHARI FREEMAN



“Grieving alone lasts forever: grieving together heals.”

David Treadway

I am taking a seminary class on death, dying, and grief. Some of the students in the class are preparing for service in congregational ministry; others hope to move into chaplaincy roles. Throughout the course, we have read books about end-of-life care, visited funeral homes and cemeteries, and reflected on losses in our own lives.

This past week, we discussed grief and how to accompany people during loss. We explored the role of hope in navigating grief, giving much-needed strength to the grieving person, and helping to find peace amid loss. We also discussed the importance of supporting others in their grief. I love the quote above by author and therapist David Treadway, which emphasizes the value of community in times of loss.

Accompanying others during a loss is a vital function of the Stephen Ministry program here at Mount Vernon Presbyterian Church. Stephen Ministers are trained in grief and loss, along with depression, suicide prevention, and divorce. They are available to anyone in the congregation who is in a season of grief or loss.

But it is not just ministers whose job is to help people in grief – it is all of us. So, if you know someone who has experienced a loss, reach out to them. Check-in and see how they are doing; be a listening companion. And, if you are struggling with grief, reach out to someone. Don't struggle alone with your grief. Contact Pat Bartee, who heads the Stephen Ministry program, or any of the ministers here at MVPC. We can all help each other during times of grief and loss.

VOLUNTEER SPOTLIGHT



Thank you to all the MVPC members who donate their time and energy to benefit our community! The Outreach Ministry Team “spotlights” our members to share their volunteer experiences and the many opportunities available. If you know of someone who should be spotlighted, please contact Beppie, Braegan, or Christy.

Pat Davis: A heart for “hands-on service”

How did you get started volunteering? When I was a young girl, I remember helping Mama with her Altar Guild duties (we were Episcopalian). Then later, as a teenager, we were a team when she had to cook and serve dinner for the men’s Vestry Meetings or the luncheon for the Annual Bazaar and Luncheon. Mama also volunteered at the Nearly New Shop which was our version of CAC as well as volunteering during the implementation of Head Start in our area. She was still serving on the Altar Guild at age 91. So, there you have it...I just thought volunteering was what you do.

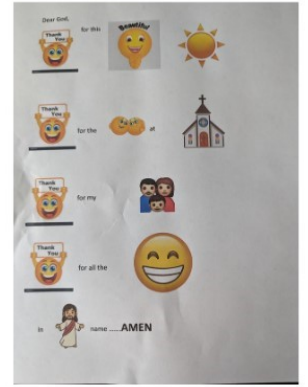
How long have you been involved? We moved to Atlanta in September of 1969 and immediately began attending MVPC. We were accepted into membership in February of 1970. I began working in the preschool area for Sunday School as that was what I had been doing in our Kentucky church. I’ve had a long time to be involved in many different capacities too numerous to list. I will highlight that my favorite in-church activity was leading the two-year-old Sunday School. My favorite outreach activities were the ones that allowed me to provide hands-on services to others.

What do you find rewarding about your work? One of the mysteries of volunteering, especially with hands-on types of work, is this phenomenon: You start out thinking you are providing a mission service. Then an imperceptible shift occurs as you see the faith and humanity of those you are helping and in others also providing help. You then come to the realization that you, yourself, are also being ministered to by being a part of the whole.

How can others get involved? There are many opportunities at MVPC that can get you started. Once you do start people will realize that you are interested in service and ask you to be a part of other missions.



Sophie Galen and her Prayer of Thanksgiving!



Prayer of Thanksgiving



CAC Benefit Concert Nov. 9



The trail leads to a surprise!



The children surprised us again in the office! Thank you to the children of MVPC!

Thanks to all of our volunteers!



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

Church Office
404.255.2211



CHURCH OFFICE HOURS

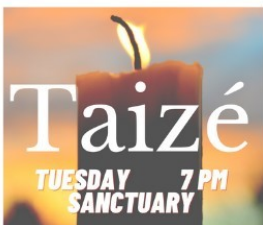
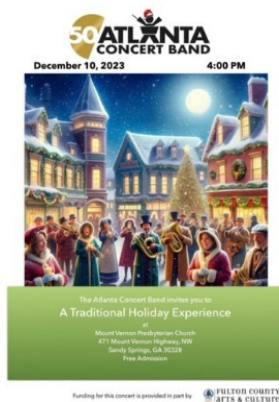
MONDAY-THURSDAY
8 AM - 4 PM
FRIDAY 8 AM - 2 PM

THIS & THAT

Office Closed
Dec. 25, 26, 29



"Here's Your Sign"



December Events:
MVPC Caroling
Dec. 3

Atlanta Concert Band Concert
Dec. 10

Taize Service
Dec. 19

Christmas Eve
10:30am Worship

4:30pm
Live Nativity
5:30pm
Candlelight Service

Church Bulletin Bloopers:

"Eight new choir robes are currently needed, due to the addition of several new members and to the deterioration of some older ones."

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

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

CHRISTMAS EVENTS



Christmas Eve

Live Nativity
4:30pm

Candlelight Service
5:30pm

Week 1

Nov. 27 Christmas Song
Nov. 28 Christmas Tree Farm
Nov. 29 O Come, O Come, Emmanuel
Nov. 30 Last Christmas
Dec. 1 Deck the Halls

Week 2

Dec. 4 Rise Up
Dec. 5 God Rest Ye Merry Gentlemen
Dec. 6 Do You Hear What I Hear?
Dec. 7 Holly & The Ivy
Dec. 8 Christmas, Baby Please

Week 3

Dec. 11 Still, Still, Still
Dec. 12 Once in a Royal City
Dec. 13 Little Town of Bethlehem
Dec. 14 I Saw Three Ships
Dec. 15 Lo, How a Rose E're Blooming

Week 4

Dec. 18 O, Holy Night
Dec. 19 Christmas Must Be Something More
Dec. 20 Go Tell It On The Mountain
Dec. 21 Angels from the Realms of Glory
Dec. 22 Silent Night

*The next Session Meeting will be
December 10.*

DECEMBER CALENDAR

December 2023

SUN

MON

TUES

WED

THURS

FRI

SAT

AA-Chapel

Mon 6:30pm AI-Anon
Tues 7:00pm
Thurs 8:00pm
Fri - 8:00pm

3

Worship 10:30am
9:30am Adult Sunday School
10am Connection Snacks
4pm Caroling GH
7pm ACB-FH

4

Zooming Carols
1-3pm Senior Adult Mtg.-Session
6pm Worship Meeting

5

Zooming Carols
9am Ledger Meeting
10am - PW CT Session
1pm Staff Meeting

6

Zooming Carols
9:30am School Chapel
7pm Choir Rehearsal

7

Zooming Carols

8

Zooming Carols
8am Budget Prep
10am Book Circle-Session

9

Zooming Carols
10am Christmas Workshop - GH

10

Worship 10:30am
9:30am Adult Sunday School
10am Connection Snacks
11:30am Session Mtg.
4pm ACB-Concert

11

Zooming Carols
5:30pm FAMT - Zoom

12

Zooming Carols
11am Staff Lunch Offsite
1pm Staff Meeting

13

Zooming Carols
8am School Chapel
7pm Choir Rehearsal

14

Zooming Carols
11am Vernon Springs Bible Study
12pm SSICA Lunch - Session

15

Zooming Carols

16

Zooming Carols

17

Worship 10:30am
9:30am Adult Sunday School
10am Connection Snacks
11:30am Session Mtg. KC
11:30am Sr. Adult Lunch

18

Zooming Carols
5pm Worship Meeting
6pm Magic Club-FH

19

Zooming Carols
1pm Staff Meeting
7pm Taize

20

Zooming Carols
8am School Chapel
7pm Choir Rehearsal

21

Zooming Carols

22

Zooming Carols

23

Zooming Carols

24

Worship 10:30am
9:30am Adult Sunday School
10am Connection Snacks
5:30pm Christmas Eve
Family Promise

25



26

CHURCH CLOSED

27

Good News Published

28

6:30pm LNP

29

CHURCH CLOSED

30

FAMILY PROMISE

31

Worship 10:30am
11:30 Lunch Bunch



Mount Vernon Presbyterian Church

www.mvpchurch.org
404.255.2211

Blessed to be a Blessing

Sunday Worship
10:30am Sanctuary

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

WEEKDAYS WITH ISAAC

Everything was on pause when I arrived at MVPC in 2020. We are familiar with this story by now: The Covid-19 pandemic did its best to end all in-person gatherings, forever. Thankfully the ‘forever’ part wasn’t true! As organizations eased their restrictions on in-person gatherings in 2022 and 2023, I took the opportunity to hop into schools, outreach programs, and community groups in a way that was not possible when I first arrived.



In the Spring of 2023 I began a weekly visit to one of Atlanta’s two L’arche homes, a co-living space for adults with and without intellectual disabilities. L’arche (a French word that means ‘the ark’) was founded in 1964 and grew to hundreds of homes all around the world. Both of Atlanta’s homes are wonderful spaces where lives are transformed through building community among people with and without disabilities.

In the Fall of 2023 I began reading to elementary students at Lake Forest Elementary as part of Sandy Spring Education Force’s Reading Buddies program. Once a week I spend my lunch-time with two delightful fifth-grade boys, usually reading a science book of some sort. They’re tons of fun!



In the Fall of 2023 I began a yearlong program with Leadership Perimeter, formerly known as Leadership Sandy Springs. Leadership Perimeter brings together ~45 community leaders from Sandy Springs, Dunwoody, and Brookhaven to “inform and guide community leaders to align their individual skills and passions to address community needs.”

My sense of God in our community is deepened by these opportunities, and I want them to be an avenue for others in our congregation to be regularly involved in an off-campus relationships. Would you like to read to Elementary students? Sort food at the Community Assistance Center? Visit with folks at a L’arche event? Connect with another non-profit in our community? Let me know!

Getting to Know...

BRUCE MORINE

Have you ever had a surprise party?

Dale and I tried to get some student friends in London Ontario to go out with us for our 1st anniversary, but they were all busy except one couple. So we went to their place, and it turned out that their apartment was full of all the friends who said they weren't able to join us! A real surprise!



Are you an introvert or an extrovert?

Definitely an introvert, although I enjoy being with family and friends.

What was your favorite subject at school?

Math (surprise!)

How often do you buy clothes?

Very infrequently, and when I do it is from Costco!

Would you rather vacation in Hawaii or Alaska?

Alaska. It is so beautiful, peaceful, and unpopulated!



Sometimes we simply lose our way. It may be triggered by children leaving the nest, a job loss, mid-life hitting us square in the face, a new health diagnosis, caregiving, a move, or some other ordinary event which turns into a major upheaval. Please remember that we have trained, skilled emotional companions called Stephen Ministers to help you through tough times. Contact a pastor or Pat Bartee, Stephen Leader, to get connected.

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
Ross Mielke	12/10
Lisa Grove	12/12
Callum Lever	12/15
John Chestnutt	12/17
Sujay Galen	12/17
Pamela Wall	12/20
Nick Peji	12/22
Sybil Washington	12/26
Moira O'Hare	12/26
Bob Addison	12/29
Ross Spain	12/30



If you have a birthday in December 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

PRAYER VINE



Dede Callahan - gratitude that she continues to get better at Vernon Springs.

Susan Doyle - recovering from RSV.

Eliana - had a setback and is hospitalized. Pray for wise therapists and effective medicine.

Fay Hendricks - gratitude for the strong support of her family for Betsy Cozine's friend who struggles with heart issues.

Megan Kendall - thankfulness that she regained strength to spend Thanksgiving with family before she begins chemo treatments again.

Mary Lynch - mother of Felicia Hutt is undergoing radiation treatment for breast cancer.

Chuck McCrory - Amy Kiley's boyfriend's father, recovering from surgical complications.

Karen Morine - Bruce Morine's sister-in-law in New Zealand needs hope and faith as her cancer has spread to other areas and has begun chemo treatments.

Meredith Nash - gratitude she got to attend a school party. She continues to face a number of medical tests.

Andy Nelson - healing and hope as he continues treatment for leukemia.

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

Carter Ramsey - Steve Whisenant's relative in a north GA boarding school needs renewed health as he battles a rare infectious disease.

Rob Russell - continued recovery to gain strength after a stroke, Lorry Clark's son-in-law.

Elizabeth (Elo) Small - healing and recovery as she battles RSV and vertigo.

Blessings to our homebound members who continue to join us online and hold us up in prayer.

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.

The greens have been hung. Let us keep the true meaning of the season foremost in our thoughts.

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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(See Luke 2:1-16) 12-19-2014
IT HAD A STAR ON TOP SO I FIGURED IT SHOULD HAVE A MANGER AT THE BOTTOM

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