



MOUNT VERNON PRESBYTERIAN CHURCH
SIXTH SUNDAY OF EASTER
MAY 5, 2024 • 10:30 AM

Reaching out to ... Welcome. Worship. Share. Serve.

† *For those who are able, please stand.*

Prior to 1954, there were no Presbyterian churches in Sandy Springs. Presbyterians living in the area were obliged to either join local churches, primarily Methodist and Baptist, or else commute long distances to Presbyterian churches in Roswell or Atlanta. As the community of Sandy Springs grew, Atlanta Presbytery foresaw the need of a Presbyterian church in the area. That foresight led to the purchase in 1953 of the Burdett property on which the Mount Vernon Church is now located. The old Southern-style, white-columned mansion and 7 1/2 acres of land was purchased for \$30,000.

Carroll Bigham, Church Historian, 1988

GATHERING

GATHERING MUSIC

“Prelude in Classic Style”

Gordon Young

RINGING OF THE BELLS

† **PROCESSION HYMN**

“Hymn for a Church Anniversary”
written by Martha Chambliss

Festal Song

Sing praises to our God, who through these fifty years
Has blessed us in so many ways and helped us face our fears.
Give thanks for those who dreamed and then began to build,
And those who over time have worked to see the dreams fulfilled.
Be guided by God’s word in all that’s said and done.
We have the pattern for our lives as given by God’s Son.
Sing praises to our God, whose promises are sure.
When we express our faith through love, our future is secure.

Martha Chambliss was a longtime member of MVPC. She wrote these lyrics for our 50th Anniversary service in 2004.

WELCOME & ANNOUNCEMENTS

Rev. Barrett Abernethy

UNISON PRAYER FOR THE DAY (*this prayer was offered at the 50th Anniversary service*)

God of mercy and grace, we thank you for Mount Vernon Presbyterian Church. We thank you for the vision of the Presbytery of Atlanta which saw the need for a Presbyterian Church in the Sandy Springs area. We thank you for the enthusiastic group of people who first met in the auditorium at Hammond School and consequently organized the church we know and love today. We praise you for the dedication of those people and many others who over the years have worked to glorify you not only within this community of faith, but our brothers and sisters throughout the world; through Jesus Christ our Lord. Amen.

While Presbyterians began gathering for worship in Sandy Springs in February 1954, the first official MVPC service took place on May 2, 1954. The church (along with the rest of north Atlanta) was growing rapidly. By March 6, 1955 a groundbreaking service was held for the building of the first Fellowship Hall on our campus, and it was during that service that they offered the following responsive reading and this opening hymn. Let us rise as God calls us to worship.

† CALL TO WORSHIP (*based on Psalm 84*)

ONE: How amiable are the tabernacles, oh Lord of hosts!

ALL: **My soul longs, yes, even faints for the courts of the Lord. My heart and my flesh cry out for the living God.**

ONE: Yes, the sparrow has found the house and the swallow a nest for herself where she may lay her young.

ALL: **Blessed are those that dwell in your house that they will still praise you.**

ONE: Blessed is the one whose strength is in you. Every one of them in Zion appears before God.

ALL: **O Lord God of hosts hear our prayer. Give us your ear O God of Jacob.**

ONE: Behold, O God Our Shield, and look upon the face of your anointed.

ALL: **For a day in your courts is better than a thousand elsewhere. I would rather be a doorkeeper in the House of my God than to dwell in the tent of the wicked.**

† HYMN #142

“All Hail the Power of Jesus’ Name”

CORONATION

All hail the power of Jesus’ Name! Let angels prostrate fall;
Bring forth the royal diadem, and crown Him Lord of all!
Bring forth the royal diadem, and crown Him Lord of all!

Let every kindred, every tribe, on this terrestrial ball,
To Him all majesty ascribe, and crown Him Lord of all!
To Him all majesty ascribe, and crown Him Lord of all!

O that with yonder sacred throng we at His feet may fall!
We’ll join the everlasting song, and crown Him Lord of all!
We’ll join the everlasting song, and crown Him Lord of all!

It would be almost 15 years before this sanctuary would be built, but on October 12, 1969 the church formally moved into this worship space and it was dedicated on December 7. As people entered the sanctuary and sat down they were invited to reflect upon these words: “It is not enough to dedicate this sanctuary to God: we must dedicate ourselves to God! Doing so we shall know wonders upon wonders and every wonder true.” In the spirit of seeking wonder, let us come to God’s font, and be cleansed by the wonder of Christ’s redeeming nature as we offer the same confession they did that day.

† PRAYER OF CONFESSION

Rev. Isaac Toney-Schmitt

When we worship in this wonderful place, and are lifted up by your presence, we know ourselves. We know how far we are from you in spirit and in truth. We know that the false nature of our pride accepts unhappiness rather than the humility to admit wrong. We know the gluttony of our selfishness which destroys others to get our way. We know the emptiness of our greed which is rich in things and poor in soul. Forgive, O God! Forgive, we pray. Give us the courage to change, to receive your new life now ... (*silent confession*) ... Amen.

† ASSURANCE OF PARDON

ONE: ...In the name of Jesus Christ, we are forgiven.

ALL: **Thanks be to God.**

† RESPONSE

“Better is One Day”

Matt Redman

Jonathan Freeman & Emi Lutz, Soloists

Soloists How lovely is Your dwelling place, O Lord Almighty
 My soul longs and even faints for You
 For here my heart is satisfied, within Your presence
 I sing beneath the shadow of Your wings

Chorus

Congregation **Better is one day in Your courts**
Better is one day in Your house
Better is one day in Your courts
Than thousands elsewhere (2x)

This contemporary song is based on Psalm 84 of which our Call to Worship is based on. It was a common First Cup song.

Soloists One thing I ask, and I would seek, to see Your beauty,
 To find You in the place Your glory dwells (*chorus*)

Soloists My heart and flesh cry out, for You the living God
 Your Spirit's water for my soul I've tasted and I've seen,
 Come once again to me. I will draw near to You.
 I will draw near to You (*chorus*)

CHILDREN'S MOMENT

Rev. Toney-Schmitt

*(All children 5th grade and younger are invited to come forward for storytelling and prayer.
 Afterwards the children are invited to Children's Church in the Chapel.)*

† PASSING OF THE PEACE

(Please greet each other with the peace of Christ, in a manner comfortable for one another.)

Nearly 20 years after borrowing just over a million dollars to build the sanctuary building, the church celebrated fulfilling the loan by burning the mortgage following worship on February 28, 1988. In preparation for this, Rev. Asa Meadows preached from the following scripture, and they closed the service with this hymn.

SCRIPTURE

Isaiah 43:18-19

Shari Freeman

HYMN #376 (v. 1,2,4)

“Love Divine, All Loves Excelling”

HYFRYDOL

Love divine, all loves excelling, joy of heaven to earth come down,
 Fix in us Thy humble dwelling, all Thy faithful mercies crown!
 Jesus, Thou art all compassion, pure, unbounded love Thou art;
 Visit us with Thy salvation, enter every trembling heart.

Breathe, O breathe Thy loving Spirit into every troubled breast!
 Let us all in Thee inherit, let us find that promised rest;
 Take away the love of sinning; Alpha and Omega be;
 End of faith, as its beginning, set our hearts at liberty.

Finish, then, Thy new creation; pure and spotless let us be;
 Let us see Thy great salvation perfectly restored in Thee;
 Changed from glory into glory, till in heaven we take our place,
 Till we cast our crowns before Thee, lost in wonder, love, and praise.

PRAYER FROM HEART SONG

“Springtime Newness”

Shari Freeman

God of newness and vitality:
We praise you for each new day,
conceived in the darkness of night
and born fresh in dawn's first light.
We praise you for buds and early daffodils,
a few teasing, warm days promising spring.
We praise you for the renewal you bring about in communities of faith
and in individuals like us.
You make the impossible happen,
ways in the wilderness,
rivers in the desert.
Open our eyes to the life about us that you are engendering.
When we insist on clinging to old, deadening ways,
peel back the fingers of our grasp
that our hands might let go
of negative attitudes and unwillingness to do anything different
and be open to receive your blessing.
Lead us in an exodus from fear to trust,
from sin to righteousness,
from death to life.
Touch with your power those who need healing,
who need a renewal of health.
Strengthen the recovering.
And for those who are dying in body,
nurture their growth in spirit
as they transition from this life to the next,
for your newness never ends;
your gift of life is eternal.
Empower us to be your agents of creativity
in our worlds of family, work,, school, community, and church.
Give us fresh ideas, cooperative spirits, humble and adventurous hearts.
This we pray in the name of the one you sent to show us a better way to live. Amen.

This prayer was written by Rev. Carol Strickland and can be found in her book *Heart Songs*. It is based on Isaiah 43:18-21 which we just read.

Rev. Abernethy

Five years later, the church partnered with the Mount Vernon Presbyterian School in the Mutual Vision Campaign to develop the campus - resulting in a new Fellowship Hall and Activities Building. The ground-breaking of this campaign took place on February 21, 1993. To open the celebration, they sang “Be Thou My Vision” led by Director of Music, Dr. Dennis Stabler. In honor of that moment, let us sing that hymn with the accompaniment of Dr. Stabler’s baby grand piano. Let us stand.

Be Thou my vision, O Lord of my heart; naught be all else to me, save that Thou art-
Thou my best thought, by day or by night, waking or sleeping, Thy presence my light.

Riches I heed not, nor vain, empty praise, thou mine inheritance, now and always:
Thou and Thou only, first in my heart, great God of heaven, my treasure Thou art.

Be Thou my wisdom, and Thou my true word; I ever with Thee and Thou with me, Lord;
Heart of my own heart, whatever befall, still be my vision, O Ruler of all.

Prior to 1983 and the consolidation of the so-called northern and southern branches of Presbyterianism, Mount Vernon was a member of the Presbyterian Church (US), or the southern branch. In 1977 that denomination composed this confession, titled simply “A Declaration of Faith.” It has been used to corporately affirm our faith here at MVPC during many worship services.

† AFFIRMATION OF FAITH *(from A Declaration of Faith)*

The church’s story with God did not end with the latest events recorded in Scripture. Across the centuries the company of believers has continued its pilgrimage with the Lord of history. It is a record of faith and faithlessness, glory and shame. The church has been persecuted by hostile societies, but it has also known times of privilege and power when it joined forces with dominant cultures. It has sought holiness through separation from society, as well as through involvement in the world’s affairs. It has experienced life-giving reformations. It has known missionary expansion throughout the world, but also periods of dwindling resources and influence. It has divided into rival orders, sects and denominations, but it has also labored for cooperation and union. We confess we are heirs of this whole story. We are charged to remember our past, to be warned and encouraged by it, but not to live it again. Now is the time of our testing as God’s story with the church moves forward through us. We are called to live now as God’s servants in the service of people everywhere.

OFFERTORY

“At The Edge of Tomorrow”

Ruth Artman

(At the end of the Anthem, please join us in the singing of verses 1 & 4 of Hymn #210 “Our God, Our Help in Ages Past” when prompted by our conductor.)

“Our God, Our Help in Ages Past”

ST. ANNE

Our God, our help in ages past, our hope for years to come,
Our shelter from the stormy blast, and our eternal home:

Time, like an ever rolling stream, soon bears us all away;
We fly forgotten, as a dream dies at the opening day.

† DOXOLOGY

“Praise God, from Whom All Blessings Flow”

OLD HUNDREDTH

Praise God, from whom all blessings flow; Praise Him, all creatures here below;
Praise Him above, ye heavenly host; Praise Father, Son, and Holy Ghost. Amen.

† PRAYER OF THANKSGIVING

Holly Duncan

**THE SACRAMENT OF THE LORD'S SUPPER
INVITATION TO THE TABLE
THE GREAT THANKSGIVING**

Rev. Abernethy
Rev. Toney-Schmitt
Shari Freeman

ONE: The Lord be with you. ALL: And also with you.
ONE: Lift up your hearts. ALL: We lift them up to the Lord.
ONE: Let us give thanks to the Lord, our God. ALL: It is right to give our thanks and praise.

PRAYER OVER THE ELEMENTS & THE LORD'S PRAYER

Our Father who art in heaven, hallowed be thy name. Thy kingdom come, thy will be done,
On earth as it is in heaven. Give us this day our daily bread; and forgive us our debts,
As we forgive our debtors; and lead us not into temptation but deliver us from evil,
For Thine is the kingdom and the power and the glory, forever. Amen.

BREAKING OF THE BREAD & COMMUNION OF THE PEOPLE

*(The congregation is invited to follow the choir to receive communion.
If you prefer to remain seated, an elder will bring communion to you.)*

SPECIAL MUSIC

"Pie Jesu"

Andrew Lloyd Webber

Nichol Jacobs & Rebecca Shipley

POST COMMUNION PRAYER

Rev. Abernethy

As the church entered the 21st Century, it began exploring with new ways to worship. On Sunday, August 2, 2004, MVPC started "Awakening." This service would later evolve to be called "Sunday Drive" and subsequently "First Cup" and was known by many in the church to be inviting, casual, and welcoming. Let us stand as we sing one of the songs that was a staple of these services.

† HYMN

"Lord, I Lift Your Name on High"

Lord, I lift your name on high; Lord, I love to sing your praises.
I'm so glad you're in my life; I'm so glad you came to save us.
You came from heaven to earth to show the way, from the earth to the cross my debt to pay;
From the cross to the grave, from the grave to the sky;
Lord, I lift your name on high. *(sing 2x)*

To close this service, we want to harken not to a specific service but rather what has bonded this community of faith through all of these services chronicled and all the ones in between: outreach. A staple of worship in recent years past has been the Mission Report Sundays. Church members would speak about travels to Zambia, Honduras, Asheville, New Orleans, as well as the work done on this campus in conjunction with Family Promise or Los Niños Primero. The 2012 version of this service closed with this hymn:

I, the Lord of sea and sky, I have heard my people cry.
All who dwell in deepest sin My hand will save.
I who made the stars of night, I will make their darkness bright.
Who will bear My light to them? Whom shall I send?

Refrain

Here I am, Lord. Is it I, Lord?
I have heard You calling in the night. I will go, Lord, if You lead me.
I will hold Your people in my heart.

I, the Lord of snow and rain, I have borne My people’s pain.
I have wept for love of them, They turn away.
I will break their hearts of stone, give them hearts for love alone.
I will speak My word to them. Whom shall I send? (*refrain*)

I, the Lord of wind and flame, I will tend the poor and lame.
I will set a feast for them, my hand will save.
Finest bread I will provide till their hearts be satisfied.
I will give my life to them. Whom shall I send? (*refrain*)

† BENEDICTION

Rev. Abernethy

POSTLUDE

“Every Time I Feel the Spirit”

African Spiritual



The Burdett Mansion was the first brick house built in Sandy Springs in 1907.

Leading Today's Worship Service
Rev. Barrett Abernethy, Senior Pastor
Rev. Isaac Toney-Schmitt, Associate Pastor
Shari Freeman, Director of Spiritual Care
Jill Hudson, Music Director
Roger Scanlan, Choral Conductor
Chancel Choir of MVPC
Jonathan Freeman, Guitar
Emi Lutz, Guitar

*If you are interested in joining MVP Church,
go to the Visitor's Table to pick up a visitor bag and a little gift.*

We are located at:
471 Mount Vernon Hwy., NE
Sandy Springs, GA 30328



Our mailing address is:
P.O. Box 76051
Sandy Springs, GA 30358

mvpchurch.org

MVPC Announcements....

Save the Date!
70th Anniversary Service
May 19, 2024

For this service we need pictures; please bring/donate any you have to the church!



70th Anniversary RSVP

Name: _____

People Attending: _____

Welcome! We are glad to worship with you today!

Visitors & Membership: Please go to our website: mvpchurch.org, contact our church office at 404.255.2211, or speak with one of our pastors after the service. Please sign the Friendship Pad and pass it down the pew as you greet your neighbor. If you are a visitor, please stop at the **Welcome Table** and pick up a visitor bag.

Upcoming Services/Events:



- May 12** Esther 4:10-16, Mother's Day/Senior Recognition, Outdoor Service
Shari Freeman
- May 19** 70th Anniversary Celebration and Lunch, Matthew 16:13-19,
Rev. Barrett Abernethy
 - 9:00am Fellowship on the Courtyard
 - 10:30am Worship
 - 11:30am Luncheon in Fellowship Hall



Senior Adults: On Saturday, May 18 we are going to the Monastery. Details and signups are in the Narthex. Come help with the book sorting for SSEF in Gailey Hall TODAY, Sunday, April 28 at 4pm.



Volunteers Needed for our 70th Anniversary on May 19! We will need greeters, gophers, shepherds, set up/cleanup, name tags, parking lot, etc. If you're interested, contact the church office or send an email to debbie@mvpchurch.org.



Committees & Coffee: all are invited who are curious about all the various committees we have going in the life of the church **TODAY** after worship in Fellowship Hall.



Music in the Park: Sunday, May 5 at 6pm, Marietta First UMC, it's free!

May 5, 2024



Make sure to follow us
on social media to stay
up to date!

Giving



Our **May Communion Offering** is for the summer camp program of Stirred-Up Ministries, an enrichment program for at-risk youth in the East Lake area of Atlanta. In addition to the summer camp program, Stirred-Up Ministries offers year-round support to these youth and their families including after school tutoring and mentoring, family counseling and intervention, and a food pantry for emergency needs. For more information, please go to <https://stirred-up.org/>



Presbyterian Women: The **Day Circle** will meet on Tuesday, May 14, and study Lesson 9, *People Encounter Jesus Through the Work of the Disciples* in the Horizons Bible Study. The **Book Circle** will meet Friday, May 10, and review *Lessons in Chemistry* by Bonnie Garmus. All women are invited to come to our PW events!



Adult Sunday School: Discovery meets in the Chapel and is using the curriculum "*The Present Word*". Crossroads meets in the Session Room and is watching a DVD series titled "*Great Figures of the New Testament*" by Amy-Jill Levine. Both classes meet at 9:30am. Contact Rev. Isaac Toney-Schmitt for more information.



Stephen Ministry: Stephen Ministers are here when life's problems are too heavy to bear alone. So often, we tend to wear ourselves out trying to solve our own issues and forgetting that God gave us a built-in need for "community" and for help when we need it most. Please utilize these trained, skilled partners in Ministry at our church by contacting a pastor or contacting Pat Barte, Stephen Leader.

Do you feel a need for prayer? Have our Prayer Vine pray for you! Email your requests to pbartee@yahoo.com or call the church office at 404.255.2211.



Prayer Concerns: Bob Addison, Jeannie Chettleburgh, Willard Deal, Alma Dowdakin, Eliana, Bruce Hagenau, Mark Hughes, Megan Kendall, Chuck McCrory, Karen Morine, Dr. Jane Morrison, Meredith Nash, Maria Nyunt, Maeve Ross, Will Rownd, Greg Slingerland, Linda Thomas, Isabelle Vanucci, Allen Wade, Gail Williams, and the people of Israel/Gaza, Ukraine, Myanmar, and Zambia

Christian Sympathy for the family and friends of long time member Gil Hastings who died on April 18. A memorial service will be Saturday, May 11 at 11am in the Sanctuary.

Attendance: 4/28 Worship Outdoor 86

Dates for your calendar:

- June 30** Los Niños Primero Sunday and Luncheon, 10:30am
- August 10** Vacation Bible School @ MVPC, 9am-2pm
- August 25** Healthy Aging Conference @ MVPC, 1:30-4pm (more details at the Senior Adult table in the Narthex)

Financial Update

April 26-30	Actual	Actual YTD	2024 Budget
Pledge Member Giving	\$ 7,774	\$226,213	\$509,000
Member Giving Non-Pledge	\$ 750	\$ 19,604	\$ 60,000
Non-Member Giving & Loose Offering	\$ 37	\$ 17,287	\$ 9,000
Total	\$ 8,561	\$263,104	\$578,000

If you have any announcements that you would like to appear in the *Happenings* or *Good News*, please email them to debbie@mvpchurch.org