

# MOUNT VERNON PRESBYTERIAN CHURCH

FIRST SUNDAY OF CHRISTMAS

DECEMBER 29, 2024 • 10:30 AM

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

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

## GATHERING

### RINGING OF THE BELLS

### GATHERING MUSIC

**"Come Thou Fount of Every Blessing"**

NETTLETON

Rev. Jonathan Freeman

### WELCOME & ANNOUNCEMENTS

Rev. Isaac Toney-Schmitt

### OPENING PRAYER

### † CALL TO WORSHIP

ONE: On the last Sunday of the year, where should we be?

**ALL: Jesus asks his parents, "Did you not know that I must be in my Father's House?"**

ONE: In that spirit, let us come to this place like he did.

**ALL: Let us come and sit among the teachers, careful to listen, and quick to inquire.**

ONE: For that is how we follow Christ and increase in divine and human favor.

**ALL: May this day spring us toward a new year filled with wisdom. Let us worship God!**

### † MORNING SONG #56 (v. 1-4)

**"The First Nowell"**

THE FIRST NOWELL

The first Nowell the angel did say was to certain poor shepherds in fields as they lay;  
In fields where they lay akeeping their sheep, on a cold winter's night that was so deep.

Refrain:

Nowell, Nowell, Nowell, Nowell, born is the King of Israel.

They looked up and saw a star shining in the east beyond them far,  
And to the earth it gave great light, and so it continued both day and night. *(refrain)*

And by the light of that same star, three wise men came from country far;  
To seek for a King was their intent, and to follow the star wherever it went. *(refrain)*

This star drew nigh to the northwest; o'er Bethlehem it took its rest;  
And there it did both stop and stay, right over the place where Jesus lay. *(refrain)*

Is it "Noel" or "Nowell"? The old French spelling was Noel (meaning Christmas or Christmas-time), but the English spelling shifted to "Nowell" in the Middle Ages. Nowadays, the spelling has shifted back to "Noel".

† PRAYER OF CONFESSION

Shari Freeman

O Holy One, as we look back on this year and especially the season of Advent, we confess that we have too often failed to sit with you, listen to you, or follow you. Instead of encountering your spirit, we focused on glittery greeting cards and holiday extravagances. Instead of receiving your life-giving peace, we experienced the weary, worn-out kind of peace that lingers after the presents have been opened and the goodbyes have been said.

In our hearts, we long for something more. We long for your spirit to infuse our daily lives, filling us with confidence and hope for the future. We long for a strong and lasting peace where families are reconciled, the world's divisions are healed, and human dignity is restored to all.

As we look to the year to come, guide us through our days. Invite us to sit with you and learn from you. May we follow you and carry your spirit and peace into this world ... *(silent confession)* ... Amen.

As Christmas events wrap up, it is natural to feel tired and weary. This prayer of confession acknowledges both our weariness and our desire for life-giving and renewing peace from God.

† ASSURANCE OF PARDON

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

ALL: Thanks be to God.

† RESPONSE *(see insert)*

**"Change My Heart, O God"**

*Glory to God Hymnal*

CHILDREN'S MOMENT

Shari Freeman

*(All children 5th grade and younger are invited to come forward for storytelling and prayer.)*

† PASSING OF THE PEACE

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

THE WORD

PRAYER FOR ILLUMINATION

Rev. Toney-Schmitt

SCRIPTURE

Luke 2:41-52

HOMILY

*"Who Gets to Decide That I Am Lost?"*

## RESPONSE

### † AFFIRMATION OF FAITH *(from the Second Helvetic Confession 5.233)*

The Lord enjoined his ancient people to exercise the greatest care that young people, even from infancy, be properly instructed. Moreover, he expressly commanded in his law that they should teach them, and that the mysteries of the sacraments should be explained. Now since it is well known from the writings of the Evangelists and apostles that God has no less concern for the youth of his new people, when he openly testifies and says: "Let the children come to me; for to such belongs the kingdom of heaven," the pastors of the churches act most wisely when they early and carefully catechize the youth, laying the first grounds of faith, and faithfully teaching the rudiments of our religion by expounding the Ten Commandments, the Apostles' Creed, the Lord's Prayer, and the doctrine of the sacraments, with other such principles and chief heads of our religion. Here let the Church show her faith and diligence in bringing the children to be catechized, desirous and glad to have her children well instructed. Amen.

The staff debated whether we could change the less-common "catechize" to the more common "teach." We chose not to; "catechize" implies a systematic teaching from a collection of teachings passed down over time.

### PRAYER OF THE PEOPLE & THE LORD'S PRAYER

Shari Freeman

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.

### OFFERTORY

**"The Little Road to Bethlehem"**

Michael Head

Jill Hudson

### † 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

Allison Eustis

**SENDING**

**† SONG FOR DISMISSAL #68**

**“What Star is This, with Beams So Bright”** PUER NOBIS NASCITUR

What star is this, with beams so bright, more lovely than the noonday light?

'Tis sent to announce a newborn King, glad tidings of our God to bring.

'Tis now fulfilled what God decreed, “From Jacob shall a star proceed”;

And lo! the Eastern sages stand to read in heaven the Lord’s command.

O Jesus, while the star of grace impels us on to seek Your face,  
Let not our slothful hearts refuse the guidance of Your light to use.

To God the Father, God the Son, and Holy Spirit, Three in One,  
May every tongue and nation raise an endless song of thankful praise.

**† BENEDICTION**

Rev. Toney-Schmitt

**POSTLUDE**

**“Carol of the Bells”**

Mark Hayes

Leading Today’s Worship Service

**Rev. Isaac Toney-Schmitt**, Associate Pastor

**Shari Freeman**, Director of Spiritual Care

**Jill Hudson**, Music Director

**Rev. Jonathan Freeman**, 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

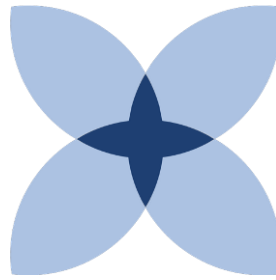


[mvpchurch.org](http://mvpchurch.org)

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

# MVPC Announcements....

Sunday School  
9:30 - 10:15am



Connection  
10-10:25am

Worship  
10:30-11:30am

**Welcome! We are glad to worship with you today!**

**Visitors & Membership:** Please go to our website: [mvpchurch.org](http://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.

## Upcoming Services/Events:



**January 5, 2025** Epiphany of the Lord/Chalking of the Door, Communion, Matthew 2:1-12, Rev. Isaac Toney-Schmitt

**January 12, 2025** Baptism of the Lord, Luke 3:15-17, 21-22, Rev. Barrett Abernethy



**CHURCH OFFICE CLOSED:** January 1, 2025. We will close at noon on December 31.



**Lunch Bunch** Please join Isaac and Shari for lunch after worship TODAY at City BBQ.



**Presbyterian Women:** Presbyterian Women enjoyed all of their Christmas activities. Next year, the **Day Circle** will meet on Tuesday, January 14. Sarah Chalpan will teach Lesson 5: Speaking Word of Lord, Huldah. The **Book Circle** will meet on Friday, January 10. Marion Satterfield will lead a review of *The Tattooist of Auschwitz* by Heather Morris. Merry Christmas and Happy New Year from Presbyterian Women!

**December 29, 2024**



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

Giving



**Adult Sunday School: Discovery** meets in the Chapel and is using the curriculum "The Present Word". **Crossroads** meets in the Session Room and is studying "Understanding the New Testament" by David Brakke, Ph.D. Both classes meet at 9:30am. Contact Rev. Isaac Toney-Schmitt for more information.



**Stephen Ministry:** Stephen Ministers are here to walk through the weighty issues of life with you and help you with perspective, clarity, and focus as you make decisions about moving forward. Contact Pat Bartee, Stephen Leader, or a pastor to get connected.



**Do you feel a need for prayer?** Have our Prayer Vine pray for you! Email your requests to pbartee@yahoo.com or call her at 404.626.2432.

**Prayer Concerns:** Dee Bradford-Smith, Jeannie Chettleburgh, Mike Damron, Joann Egan, Gene Elder, Jeanne Gilliland, Malinda Holmes, Helen Johnson, Kirt Lattanze, Corny Laube, Chitip Liticharoen, Karen Morine, Freida Townsend, and the people of Israel/Gaza, Ukraine, Myanmar, and Zambia

**Christian Sympathy** for the family of Hazel Cofield who died on December 14. A service will be held on Sunday, January 26 at 2pm at Patterson's Funeral Home in Sandy Springs.

Attendance 12/22: 116, Online 16

*There is still time! Please consider giving a pledge for 2025 if you have not done so.*

As of December 24	Actual YTD	2024 Budget
Pledge Member Giving	\$495,706	\$509,000
Member Giving Non-Pledge	\$ 63,484	\$ 60,000
Non-Member Giving & Loose Offering	\$ 22,811	\$ 9,000
<b>Total</b>	<b>\$582,001</b>	<b>\$578,000</b>

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