



# MOUNT VERNON PRESBYTERIAN CHURCH

SECOND SUNDAY OF ADVENT

DECEMBER 8, 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

**"The Friendly Beasts"**

Robert Davis

Rev. Jonathan Freeman

### WELCOME & ANNOUNCEMENTS

Rev. Barrett Abernethy

### OPENING PRAYER

### † LIGHTING THE ADVENT CANDLE *(MVPC Members who live West of the Church-East Cobb)*

**CANDLELIGHTERS:** Undeterred by the rising tides or the flooded banks, we cross the Chattahoochee every time we come to worship God!

**CONGREGATION:** **We celebrate how you are drawn from the waters of life to come to this place to seek the peace of Christ.**

**CANDLELIGHTERS:** We come because Jesus is known to get in the boat, calm the seas, and be the light of the world.

**CONGREGATION:** **Light the Candle of Peace so that tranquility and not trepidation can guide our oars and mark our journey. Let us worship God!**

### † MORNING SONG #12 *(v. 1-4)*

**"People, Look East"**

BESANÇON

People, look east. The time is near of the crowning of the year.

Make your house fair as you are able, trim the hearth and set the table.

People, look east & sing today: Love the guest is on the way.

Furrows, be glad. Though earth is bare, one more seed is planted there:

Give up your strength the seed to nourish, that in course the flower may flourish.

People look east & sing today: Love the rose is on the way.

Birds, though you long have ceased to build, guard the nest that must be filled.

Even the hour when wings are frozen God for fledging time has chosen.

People look east & sing today: Love the bird is on the way.

Stars, keep the watch. When night is dim one more light the bowl shall brim,

Shining beyond the frosty weather, bright as sun and moon together.

People, look east & sing today: Love the star is on the way. Love is on the way.

This Advent hymn has the spirit of a Christmas carol, but still invites the faithful into a time of preparation. We sing it in that spirit and as a fun play on the travels our congregants who live west of the church embark upon each Sunday.

† PRAYER OF CONFESSION

Shari Freeman

O Holy One, we have heard your declaration, "I am the light of the world." Yet, we confess that we live as though the light has never defeated darkness. We live in fear of scarcity and cling to our resources. We fail to stand with those who are vulnerable and instead step back and protect ourselves. We see ourselves as blameless but pass judgment on others.

*The Lord is my light, my light and salvation: in God I trust; In God I trust.*

*The Lord is my light, my light and salvation: in God I trust; in God I trust.*

Forgive us, we pray. Bring us into your light so we may see ourselves and others as you see us. Bring us into your light so we may know we are loved. Bring us into your light so we may live more fruitful and generous lives.

*The Lord is my light, my light and salvation: in God I trust; In God I trust.*

*The Lord is my light, my light and salvation: in God I trust; in God I trust.*

Help us rejoice in the light so that your grace can illuminate the darkened places of our hearts and lives ... *(silent confession)* ... Amen.

† ASSURANCE OF PARDON

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

ALL: **Thanks be to God.**

† RESPONSE

**"We Are Standing on Holy Ground"**

HOLY GROUND

*Glory to God Hymnal*

We are standing on holy ground,  
And I know that there are angels all around;

Let us praise Jesus now;

We are standing in his presence on holy ground. *(2x)*

CHILDREN'S MOMENT

Rev. Isaac 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.)*

THE WORD

PRAYER FOR ILLUMINATION

Rev. Barrett Abernethy

SCRIPTURE

John 8:12-20

HOMILY

*"Planting Trees: The Chrismon Tree"*

This is our final "Planting Trees" sermon. What has been your favorite? Are there sermon series ideas you'd like us to consider? Let the pastors know.

Based on Psalm 27, this Taizé hymn that is within the prayer is intended for us to seek the light amid the dim uncertainty the Advent season often invokes.

## RESPONSE

### † AFFIRMATION OF FAITH (*from the Confession of Belhar, 10.5*)

We believe that God has entrusted the church with the message of reconciliation in and through Jesus Christ.

We believe that the church is called to be the salt of the earth and the light of the world, that the church is called blessed because it is a peacemaker, that the church is witness both by word and by deed to the new heaven and the new earth in which righteousness dwells.

We believe that God's life-giving Word and Spirit has conquered the powers of sin and death, and therefore also of irreconciliation and hatred, bitterness and enmity, that God's life-giving Word and Spirit will enable the church to live in a new obedience which can open new possibilities of life for society and the world.

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

Rev. Toney-Schmitt

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

**"E'en So Lord Jesus Quickly Come"**

Paul Manz

Chancel Choir

### † 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

Minnie Robinson

## SENDING

† SONG FOR DISMISSAL #2 “Come, Thou Long-Expected Jesus”

HYFRYDOL

Come, Thou long expected Jesus, born to set Thy people free;  
From our fears and sins release us; let us find our rest in Thee.  
Israel's Strength and Consolation, hope of all the earth Thou art;  
Dear Desire of every nation, joy of every longing heart.

Born Thy people to deliver, born a child and yet a King,  
Born to reign in us forever, now Thy gracious kingdom bring.  
By Thine own eternal Spirit rule in all our hearts alone;  
By Thine all sufficient merit raise us to Thy glorious throne.

† BENEDICTION

Rev. Abernethy

POSTLUDE

“Tempus adest floridum”

Richard Shephard

### 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

**Rev. Jonathan Freeman**, Guitar

**Chancel Choir** of MVPC

*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

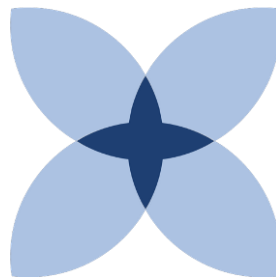
[mvpchurch.org](http://mvpchurch.org)

# MVPC Announcements....



We will be hosting the week of Dec. 22-29. Family Promise sign up is on the MVPC website: [mvpchurch.org](http://mvpchurch.org).

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:



**December 15** Children's Christmas Pageant during worship, Luke 2:1-21, 10:30am

**December 17** Taizé - Longest Night Service of Healing and Wholeness, 7pm, Sanctuary

**December 22** Lessons & Carols, 10:30am



**Zooming Thru the Carols** has begun! Watch for the email at 9am every weekday with the link to the Zoom call at noon. We hope to "see" you there!



**Senior Adults:** The Seniors' Annual Christmas Luncheon is **TODAY** right after worship. We will carpool to La Madeleine's and have an optional "white elephant" gift exchange.



**Senior Adult Movie Matinee:** "It Happened on 5th Avenue", Saturday, December 14 at 1pm in the Session Room.



**Caroling Opportunities** with MVPC! You are welcome to join us.

December 11 Vernon Springs, 12:30pm

December 22 Mount Vernon Towers, 5pm



**Atlanta Concert Band** annual Christmas concert, Sunday, December 15 at 4pm in the Sanctuary.

**December 8, 2024**



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

Giving



**Presbyterian Women:** The Presbyterian Women **Day Circle and Bible study** will meet this Tuesday, December 10 at 10:30 in the **Kirk Center**. Beth Abernethy will lead Lesson 4: *Prayers From the Heart, Hannah*. They will have a Christmas luncheon following the lesson, also in the Kirk Center. The **Book Circle** will meet on December 13 at the home of Ann Williams. Ann Young will lead a review of *Small Things Like These* by Claire Keegan. They will have a Christmas luncheon following the review.



**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:** Jingle bells, jolly St. Nick and joys abound with the activities of Christmas, but if you cannot seem to muster the enthusiasm or delight of the season, please consider talking to us about getting a Stephen Minister to help you walk through the season. A Stephen Minister can help you clarify the root causes of your sadness and unease, help you see a different perspective, and assist you in planning a brighter way forward. Please 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](mailto:pbartee@yahoo.com) or call the church office at 404.255.2211.

**Prayer Concerns:** Bob Addison, Jeannie Chettleburgh, Mary Collins, Viola Crawford, Mike Damron, Joann Egan, Gene Elder, Malinda Holmes, Megan Kendall, Corny Laube, Chitip Likitcharoen, Chuck McCrory, Bill & Susan McLeish, Karen Morine, Andy Nelson, Maeve Ross, and the people of Israel/Gaza, Ukraine, Myanmar, and Zambia

**Attendance:** 12/1 Worship 91, Online 16

**Dates for your calendar:**

December 15	Atlanta Concert Band Performance, 4pm
December 24	Live Nativity 4:30pm Christmas Eve Service 5:30pm
December 29	Lunch Bunch after worship @ City BBQ

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

**Financial Update**

As of November 30	Actual YTD	2024 Budget
Pledge Member Giving	\$474,738	\$509,000
Member Giving Non-Pledge	\$ 56,584	\$ 60,000
Non-Member Giving & Loose Offering	\$ 22,484	\$ 9,000
<b>Total</b>	<b>\$553,806</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](mailto:debbie@mvpchurch.org)