

# MOUNT VERNON PRESBYTERIAN CHURCH

SECOND SUNDAY AFTER EPIPHANY

JANUARY 19, 2025 • 10:30 AM

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

† For those who are able, please stand.

## GATHERING

### RINGING OF THE BELLS

### GATHERING MUSIC

**"All Who Are Thirsty"**

Brenton Brown

Rev. Jonathan Freeman

### WELCOME & ANNOUNCEMENTS

Rev. Barrett Abernethy

### MINUTE FOR MISSION

Francis Horton, CAC Executive Director

### OPENING PRAYER

### † CALL TO WORSHIP

ONE: Sisters and brothers, rejoice. We live sustained by God's presence and love.

**ALL: Thanks be to God.**

ONE: As we mourn the wounds of God's children,

**ALL: God weeps with us.**

ONE: As we give thanks for brothers and sisters who have lived in faith,

**ALL: God gives thanks with us.**

ONE: As we struggle for justice,

**ALL: God struggles with us.**

ONE: As we strive for peace,

**ALL: God strives with us.**

ONE: As we work to build the beloved community,

**ALL: God works with us.**

ONE: As we offer our gifts to all,

**ALL: God blesses us.**

ONE: Sisters and brothers, rejoice.

**ALL: Sustained by God's presence and love, let us worship God.**

Melva Costen was a highly respected hymn writer within the PCUSA for decades. She broke many boundaries for African-American females in our denomination and retired as Professor of Music and Worship at the Interdenominational Theological Seminary in Atlanta. She died in 2023.

### † OPENING HYMN (#394)

**"There Is a Balm in Gilead"**

arr. Melva W. Costen

(see Blue Hymnal)

† PRAYER OF CONFESSION

Rev. Isaac Toney-Schmitt

God of Justice, challenge us to be more and more like you.

We have developed science and technology so that we may be connected to anyone around the world, but we have failed to develop a true communion around the world.

We have developed an economic system that has given us the opportunity to make a living, but we have failed to make a life together. God never intended for a group of people to live in superfluous, inordinate wealth while others live in abject, deadening poverty.

We have developed a freedom of religion so that all may worship you in their way, but we have failed to unify the divisions within the Protestant church alone.

We continue to live and work in segregated spaces, failing to overcome the sins of racism and division that separate us from our brothers and sisters in Christ.

Forgive us, God of Justice, for decades of difficulty and missteps. Challenge us to be more like you, and fill us with the hope that comes from living by your example. ... *(silent confession)* ... Amen.

In 1958, Rev. Dr. Martin Luther King Jr. delivered a sermon to the northern Presbyterian Church where he challenged them on many of their current social justice issues. Those challenges will ring true in 2025; today's confession revisits these challenges laid out by Dr. King.

† 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”

Eddie Espinosa

† 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.)*

THE WORD

PRAYER FOR ILLUMINATION

Rev. Barrett Abernethy

SCRIPTURE

Romans 8:22-27

HOMILY

“Letter to American Christians”

Dr. King’s sermon in 1958 was inspired by Dr. Frederick Meek, who delivered his sermon to the congregants of Old South Church, Boston in February 1954.

## RESPONSE

### † **AFFIRMATION OF FAITH** (*Confession of 1967, Inclusive Language Version, 9.46c*)

The reconciliation of humankind through Jesus Christ makes it plain that enslaving poverty in a world of abundance is an intolerable violation of God's good creation. Because Jesus identified himself with the needy and exploited, the cause of the world's poor is the cause of his disciples. The church cannot condone poverty, whether it is the product of unjust social structures, exploitation of the defenseless, lack of national resources, absence of technological understanding, or rapid expansion of populations. The church calls all people to use their abilities, their possessions, and the fruits of technology as gifts entrusted to them by God for the maintenance of their families and the advancement of the common welfare. It encourages those forces in human society that raise hopes for better conditions and provide people with opportunity for a decent living. A church that is indifferent to poverty, or evades responsibility in economic affairs, or is open to one social class only, or expects gratitude for its beneficence makes a mockery of reconciliation and offers no acceptable worship to God.

### **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**

**"Offertory"**  
Chancel Choir

John Ness Beck

### † **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**

Lois Johnson

## SENDING

† CLOSING HYMN (#563)

“Lift Every Voice and Sing”

James Weldon Johnson

Lift every voice and sing till earth and heaven ring,  
Ring with the harmonies of liberty.  
Let our rejoicing rise high as the listening skies;  
Let it resound loud as the rolling sea.  
Sing a song full of the faith that the dark past has taught us;  
Sing a song full of the hope that the present has brought us;  
Facing the rising sun of our new day begun,  
Let us march on, till victory is won.

Stony the road we trod, bitter the chastening rod,  
Felt in the days when hope unborn had died;  
Yet, with a steady beat, have not our weary feet  
Come to the place for which our fathers sighed?  
We have come over a way that with tears has been watered;  
We have come, treading our path through the blood of the slaughtered,  
Out from the gloomy past, till now we stand at last  
Where the white gleam of our bright star is cast.

God of our weary years, God of our silent tears,  
Thou who hast brought us thus far on the way;  
Thou who hast by Thy might led us into the light;  
Keep us forever in the path, we pray.  
Lest our feet stray from the places, our God, where we met Thee;  
Lest, our hearts drunk with the wine of the world, we forget Thee;  
Shadowed beneath Thy hand may we forever stand,  
True to our God, true to our native land.

Initially a poem for a school assembly at which Booker T. Washington spoke on Lincoln's birthday in 1900, this text and tune have gained national recognition and devotion, not only within the African American community, but also among all who seek liberation from oppression.

† BENEDICTION

Rev. Abernethy

POSTLUDE

“Jesus Shall Reign”

arr. James Koerts

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**

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

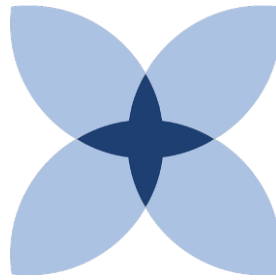


Our mailing address is:  
P.O. Box 76051  
Sandy Springs, GA 30358

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

# MVPC Announcements....

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.

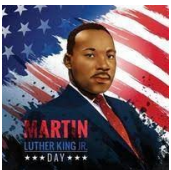
## Upcoming Services/Events:



**January 26** Ordain/Install New Church Officers, Luke 4:14-21, Rev. Barrett Abernethy

**January 28** Taizé, 7pm in the Sanctuary

**February 2** Scouting Sunday & Communion, "The Eagle Spirit", Isaiah 40:21-31  
Rev. Barrett Abernethy



**Church Office Closed** tomorrow in honor of Martin Luther King, Jr. Day.



**Presbyterian Disaster Assistance** is actively responding to the devastating wildfires in Southern California. Please consider donating to support their relief efforts at the link provided. You can also donate to MVPC online or by check and specify California Wildfires: <https://mvpchurch.org/give/>.



In January, MVPC is the **Congregation of the Month** for the Community Assistance Center. CAC provides basic needs assistance for Dunwoody and Sandy Springs neighbors to prevent homelessness and hunger while promoting self-sufficiency and empowering them to thrive. For more information, please go to [www.ourcac.org](http://www.ourcac.org).



**Senior Adults:** **Book Sorting**, today at 4pm in Gailey Hall; **Games & Lunch** (Checkers, Chess, Backgammon, Chinese Checkers, Jenga, Sorry, Rummikub, Dominos), Jan. 23 at 10:30am in Gailey Hall; **CAC Tour** Jan. 29, meet at the church at 12:45pm to carpool. Please sign up at the Seniors table in the Narthex.

**January 19, 2025**



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

Giving



**Presbyterian Women:** The Day Circle met on Tuesday, January 14. Sarah Chalpan taught Lesson 5: *Speaking the Word of the Lord, Huldah*. When weather permits, the Book Circle will meet and Marion Satterfield will lead a review of *The Tattooist of Auschwitz* by Heather Morris.



**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:** Sometimes, burdens get too heavy to carry alone. As enlightened, mature folk, we expect to handle and solve our own problems without assistance, but our bodies and souls begin to let us know when to seek help. Stephen Ministers are here to help and empower you as you make decisions. We listen carefully and ask questions that help you clarify your path forward. It is a process that works for many who have temporary bumps in the road. 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 her at 404.626.2432.

**Prayer Concerns:** Dee Bradford-Smith, Jeannie Chettleburgh, Mike Damron, Joann Egan, Gene Elder, Jeanne Gilliland, Kirt Lattanze, Corny Laube, Chitip Liticharoen, Thazin Win Maung, Karen Morine, 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 1/12:** 76, Online 20

<u>Dates for your calendar:</u>	
February 23	Youth/Young Adult Sunday, 10:30am, Annual Church Meeting and Brunch, 9am in Fellowship Hall
March 5	Ash Wednesday Pancake Supper (5:30pm) and Service (6:30pm)

**Financial Update**

As of January 16	Actual YTD	2024 Budget
Pledge Member Giving	\$ 69,021	\$509,000
Member Giving Non-Pledge	\$ 2,077	\$ 60,000
Non-Member Giving & Loose Offering	\$ 107	\$ 9,000
<b>Total</b>	<b>\$ 71,205</b>	<b>\$578,000</b>

**\*\*Note: 2024 giving statements have gone out by email or mail. If you have questions, please contact Yvonne.\*\***

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)