



MOUNT VERNON PRESBYTERIAN CHURCH

GOOD NEWS

MARCH 2025



A Note From the Pastor

Rev. Barrett Abernethy

*12 Years, 12 Lessons
How To Be a Manager*

This lesson might be the biggest difference between my first call and my second call. My first call, for those of you who don't know, was in Livingston, AL. The church had about 80 members and on average 40 people worshipped together each Sunday. I was the only full-time employee. We had a part-time office administrator who oversaw the bookkeeping as well, along with a rotating cast of musicians that would join us on Sunday mornings. Alas, I was largely on my own. I was 60 miles from the nearest Presbyterian Church and 120 miles from the Presbytery office.

There was an independent coffee shop in town, and most days I would set up my office there. I wrote many sermons, planned services, and offered impromptu pastoral care to any and all who walked in to get a cup of joe.

This is how I learned to be a pastor.

When Mount Vernon Presbyterian Church called me to be their next senior pastor, I knew I had learned the gifts to do the pastoral part of the job. What I had not learned, and what I did not know, was how to be a manager of a church. Learning this has been my biggest growing edge here at Mount Vernon Presbyterian.

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This is what I have learned:

To be a manager begins with listening. It means slowing down on whatever ideas you used to run with in the coffee shop and rather sit in the conference room with your colleagues to debate ideas. I have learned that without this order, no trust can be built. Without this, the stress among the staff will rise and the richness of what can be accomplished is rendered void. I believe that it is no mistake that the sermon series like the Planting Trees one was well received because the worship staff and I have developed a healthy amount of trust.

To be an effective manager means understanding how each decision can affect another part of the ministry. What may be a great idea for one part of the church or for a specific ministry might not work for another part. It very much lives into the idea that we are one body with many members. To be a good manager of that body means that each part of the body is working effectively with the other. That is why Session retreats, staff retreats, committee meetings, and asking questions can be so valuable.

To be an effective manager means understanding what your fellow staff members value. If I want them to succeed, I need to hear their thoughts and questions. This, hopefully, will inspire motivation and excitement to be here. To do that, I know I need to check in with them every so often - both in a group

setting and one-on-one. We do annual reviews but beyond that we check in weekly during our staff meetings. This checking in goes beyond work items. We address prayer concerns and other matters. This humanizes our work and welcomes God’s grace in the otherwise “daily grind.”

Finally, to be an effective manager means to serve with mutuality. What this means is that I want our staff and congregation to feel mutually aligned. That we are listening to what the congregation values and how they see God working through our community and in turn that the staff feels valued by the congregation and sees purpose to serving God’s people in their various roles.

Learning and witnessing this growth has been a struggle at times as I have seen how certain habits at one point in my pastorate are no longer helpful, but that has also been the beauty of knowing that I am growing both as a person and a pastor. It’s a sign that the Holy Spirit has and continues to work through those around me. I believe this is due to the congregation identifying leaders, who then hire staff, who then are called to work together to learn and grow.

To God be the Glory for good colleagues and wise leaders,

Barrett

2025 Session Members & Ministry Teams

Moderator(s)

Rev. Barrett Abernethy
Rev. Isaac Toney-Schmitt

Clerk of Session

David Hill

Christian Education

Carrie Southard

Congregational Care

Barbara Brooks
Htet Nyunt

Fellowship

Keith Bumgarner
Ed Spain

Finance/Administration/ Stewardship

Ben Cumming
John Hibbard

Outreach

Braegan Abernethy
Mike Havey

Senior Adults

Mary Lea Woods

Witness

Lois Johnson

Worship

Penny Kiel
Malinda Holmes

| January 31, 2025 | Actual YTD | 2025 Budget |
|--------------------------|------------|-------------|
| Member Giving Pledge | \$109,876 | \$500,000 |
| Member Giving Non-Pledge | \$10,880 | \$60,000 |
| Loose Offerings | \$423 | \$26,000 |
| Total YTD | \$121,179 | \$586,000 |

FEBRUARY WORSHIP

Children/Youth/Young Adult Sunday

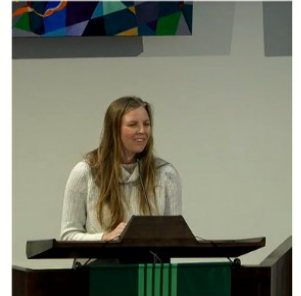
February 23



MacKenzie Truitt



Gill Hutt



Rev. Christina Toney-Schmitt



Joey Noszek



Samantha Fifield



Sage Allen



Travis & Sam Block

Eagle Scout projects we celebrated during Scouting Sunday

February 2

2011

Alex Butler



2018

Connor Plumly



2011 & 2023

Alex Butler & Andrew Sevcik



2016

Connor Hughes



2009

Robert Barcliff



2016

Charley Plumly

LENT

As you read this newsletter, you may find yourself at the beginning of Lent. Lent is the period of 40 days (46 if you include Sundays) that lead to Easter. Lent begins this year on Wednesday, March 5 (Ash Wednesday), and ends on Saturday, April 19 (the day before Easter.) During Lent, we are encouraged to consider our human condition, including sin and failures, and ponder the new life offered to us by Christ Jesus. These 40 days are an opportunity for growth in our faith through prayer, Scripture, spiritual discipline, and self-examination.

If you are interested in diving deeper into Scripture during lent, below is a suggested daily reading of Scripture from the Revised Common Lectionary for 2025. May your Lenten practices lead you closer to Christ.

Peace, Shari Freeman

Daily Scripture Readings During Lent

| | |
|-------------------------------------|-------------------------------------|
| Wed, Mar 5: Psalm 51:1-17 | Sun, Mar 30: Luke 15:1-3, 11b-32 |
| Thurs, Mar 6: Psalm 91:1-2, 9-16 | Mon, Mar 31: Psalm 53 |
| Fri, Mar 7: Acts 7:35-42 | Tues, Apr 1: Revelation 19:1-10 |
| Sat, Mar 8: John 12:27-36 | Wed, Apr 2: 2 Kings 4:1-7 |
| Sun, Mar 9: Luke 4:1-13 | Thurs, Apr 3: Psalm 126 |
| Mon, Mar 10: Psalm 17 | Fri, Apr 4: Philippians 2:19-29 |
| Tues, Mar 11: Zechariah 3:1-10 | Sat, Apr 5: John 11:45-57 |
| Wed, Mar 12: Luke 21:34-22:6 | Sun, Apr 6: John 12:1-8 |
| Thurs, Mar 13: Psalm 27 | Mon, Apr 7: Psalm 20 |
| Fri, Mar 14: Philippians 3:17-20 | Tues, Apr 8: 1 John 2:18-28 |
| Sat, Mar 15: Matthew 23:37-39 | Wed, Apr 9: Luke 18:31-34 |
| Sun, Mar 16: Philippians 3:17-14:1 | Thurs, Apr 10: Psalm 31:9-16 |
| Mon, Mar 17: Psalm 105:1-42 | Fri, Apr 11: Isaiah 54:9-10 |
| Tues, Mar 18: 1 Corinthians 10:1-13 | Sat, Apr 12: Luke 22:1-13 |
| Wed, Mar 19: Luke 13:22-31 | Sun, Apr 13: Luke 19:28-40 |
| Thurs, Mar 20: Psalm 63:1-8 | Mon, Apr 14: Hebrews 9:11-15 |
| Fri, Mar 21: Revelation 3:1-6 | Tues, Apr 15: John 12:20-36 |
| Sat, Mar 22: Luke 6:43-45 | Wed, Apr 16: Hebrews 12:1-3 |
| Sun, Mar 23: Isaiah 55:1-9 | Thurs, Apr 17: John 13:1-17, 31b-35 |
| Mon, Mar 24: Psalm 39 | Fri, Apr 18: John 18:1-19:42 |
| Tues, Mar 25: Ezekiel 17:1-10 | Sat, Apr 19: Matthew 27:57-66 |
| Wed, Mar 26: Luke 13:18-21 | |
| Thurs, Mar 27: Psalm 32 | |
| Fri, Mar 28: 2 Corinthians 5:6-15 | |
| Sat, Mar 29: Luke 15:1-10 | |

GIFT OF WISDOM



The optimism of Spring.

The excitement you bring!

A butterfly emerges as nature surges.

Daisies remind us of childhood innocence,

Memories give us a reflective glimpse

Loyalty, purity, pleasure and bliss,

More will be added to this list.

Revival's energy is in the air.

Silver linings, without a care.

A new season in your faith.

So many blessings on your plate.

Poem: Dee Bradford-Smith

Artwork: Donna Martin

VOLUNTEER SPOTLIGHT



Thank you to all the MVPC members who donate their time and energy to benefit our community and our world! 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 Braegan, Mike or Christy.

Steve Ray shares his love and experiences with Family Promise

"I have worked with Family Promise since its inception here at Mount Vernon Presbyterian Church in 2013. It has been a blessing to help with this week-long program for the three times a year that the families stay with us."

"Family Promise of North Fulton/Dekalb is an excellent organization that does great work in keeping families together through short term homelessness. The impact can be life changing! The volunteers who help out with this very hands-on ministry are absolutely wonderful people!"

"The work I do at MVPC is to ensure that all buildings and systems are operating efficiently and effectively on a daily basis. Shelly, Ethan, Aidan, Penny and I have been very involved over the years with Family Promise from set up, tear down, dinners, hosting, fund raising, and anything else needed."

"I feel blessed to live so close and to be part of the day-to-day operations while our Family Promise families are on the Church campus. One of the many reasons that we joined the Church is the amazing mission work the MVPC members do locally and globally. We are a small bunch, but highly effective in terms of time, treasures and talents. Helping those with short and long term situations is a great opportunity for others church members to get to know each other and share their blessings. I would highly recommend getting involved with our outreach programs, in any capacity, because you meet some incredible people who you may see just on Sundays."

OUTREACH

The Outreach Ministry Team is thrilled by your very generous donations to the Community Assistance Center in January. We donated over 400 pounds of non-perishable food and toiletries as well as over 6000 diapers.



Utilizing 2024 year-end funds for our local schools, we donated a \$220 Amazon gift card for STEM supplies to Woodland Elementary School.

The church session voted to increase our Outreach budget, which will allow us to give increased financial support to all of our ministry partners, as well as adding two new lines for Presbyterian Disaster Assistance and the New Church Development Commission's Emergency Fund. We will also be able to continue supplementing our Communion Offerings, Special Offerings, and support needs that come up at the local public schools.

The February Communion Offering was for Clifton Sanctuary Ministries. Carol delivered some of the donations and our montly meal, as well as leftover sandwiches from Session that were packed into sack lunches.



Senior Adults and friends continue to meet monthly to sort books for Sandy Springs Education Force. The March Communion Offering is for the Columbia Theological Seminary Student Food Pantry.



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Small Group

Sophie as an Acolyte



Owyn Malcolm receives a bible



Baptism of Bob Addison's Great-Grandson, Liam Andrew Qualls

John & Patricia Hibbard's last Sunday at MVPC



Mailing Address:

MVPC

P.O. Box 76051

Sandy Springs, GA 30358

404.255.2211

mvpchurch.org



CHURCH OFFICE HOURS

MONDAY-THURSDAY

8AM-4PM

FRIDAY 8AM - 2PM

This & That

MARCH EVENTS

Burning the Palms

3/2

Ash Wednesday &

Pancake Supper

3/5

Lunch Bunch

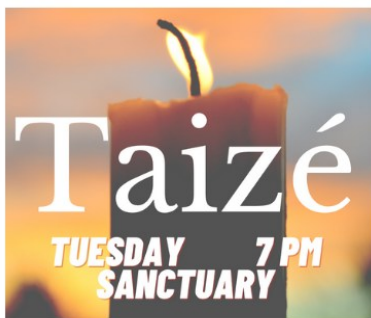
3/23

Taize

3/25

Men's Breakfast

3/30



*Photos courtesy of: Barrett Abernethy, Braegan Abernethy,
Shari Freeman, Dee Bradford-Smith*

(Please send any pictures of your events to debbie@mvpchurch.org)

GETTING TO KNOW ...

SARAH CHALPAN

What really makes you angry?

People who litter and also dog walkers who leave their dogs' poop on sidewalks and in other people's yards.!! (Very irritating when you're out taking a walk!)

What is/was your favorite thing about your career?

In my career as a teacher, I always was encouraged when I felt that my students were motivated to do their best and to produce their best work after instruction.

What makes you laugh the most?

I would have to say that Kirk's dry sense of humor makes me laugh quite often!

What is your favorite game or sport to watch?

I love to watch the Georgia Bulldogs and the Atlanta Braves.

What two radio stations do you listen to in the car the most?

90.1 FM and 93.7 FM, The Fan



Talking with a trusted person who is non-judgmental and who will not be sharing your information with others provides for a major unburdening and frees one to begin seeing the way forward. It is a process and takes time to fully tell your story and be fully heard. Sometimes, families and well-meaning friends lack the listening skills and resources that a trained Stephen Minister can provide. If we can help, we want to. Please call Pat Bartee or a pastor to get connected. Leave a text message if we are unavailable, so we can call back.

Please contact Pat Bartee, Stephen Leader, or a pastor to get connected.

MARCH BIRTHDAYS

| | |
|------------------|------|
| Rachel Emery | 3/1 |
| Pat Hudgins | 3/1 |
| Alice Ann Lever | 3/3 |
| Gill Hutt | 3/6 |
| John Hibbard | 3/9 |
| Bruce Northrop | 3/11 |
| Alex Sprung | 3/12 |
| Pat Davis | 3/13 |
| Elizabeth Small | 3/14 |
| Deborah Galloway | 3/18 |
| Michelle Smart | 3/20 |
| Mary Kilgore | 3/21 |
| Bruce Hagenau | 3/22 |
| Mike Gillespie | 3/23 |
| Connor Plumly | 3/24 |
| Jodi Jackson | 3/26 |
| Kirk Chalpan | 3/27 |
| Katie Sprung | 3/27 |
| Beppie Lever | 3/28 |



If you have a birthday in March 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 |
| Jill Hudson | October 21 |
| Rev. Barrett Abernethy | October 30 |
| Steve Ray | December 1 |

MARCH CALENDAR

Mar 2025 (Eastern Time - New York)

MVPC Events, barrett@mvpchurch.org

| Sun | Mon | Tue | Wed | Thu | Fri | Sat |
|--|---|---|---|---|---|--|
| 23 | 24 | 25 | 26 | 27 | 28 | 1 |
| 9:30am - Crossroads 9:30am - Discovery 10:30am - Worship / 4pm - Funeral Service @ 4pm - MVPC St Lukes 5pm - Small Groups @ | 1pm - Senior Adult 6:30pm - AI Anon @ 7pm - Scouts @ Gailey 8pm - AA @ Kirk Center | 10am - Staff Meeting @ 1:30pm - Staff Worship 5:30pm - CE Meeting 7pm - AA-Women's Big 8pm - AA @ Fellowship | 8am - School Chapel @ 9am - Session Prep @ 10am - Busy 1pm - PS weekly meet @ 2:30pm - Stephen 5:30pm - Ash Wednesday | 7:45am - MVAA @ 2pm - General Ledger 8pm - AA @ Kirk Center | 8am - Finance/Admin 8pm - AA-Primary | 7am - LNP- Interviews @ 8:45am - Bagpipes @ GH |
| 2 | 3 | 4 | 5 | 6 | 7 | 8 |
| 9:30am - Crossroads 9:30am - Discovery 10:30am - Worship @ 7pm - AA @ Kirk Center 7pm - Atlanta Concert | 1pm - Senior Adult 6:30pm - AI Anon @ 7pm - Scouts @ Gailey 8pm - AA @ Kirk Center | 10am - Staff Meeting @ 1:30pm - Staff Worship 5:30pm - CE Meeting 7pm - AA-Women's Big 8pm - AA @ Fellowship | 8am - School Chapel @ 9am - Session Prep @ 10am - Busy 1pm - PS weekly meet @ 2:30pm - Stephen 5:30pm - Ash Wednesday | 7:45am - MVAA @ 2pm - General Ledger 8pm - AA @ Kirk Center | 8am - Finance/Admin 8pm - AA-Primary | 6:30am - LNP- Interviews 8:45am - Bagpipes @ GH |
| 9 | 10 | 11 | 12 | 13 | 14 | 15 |
| 12pm - Family Promise @ Fellowship Hall and Gailey Hall | 12pm - Family Promise @ Fellowship Hall and Gailey Hall | 10am - Staff Meeting @ 1:30pm - Staff Worship 5:30pm - CE Meeting 7pm - AA-Women's Big 8pm - AA @ Fellowship | 8am - School Chapel @ 9am - Session Prep @ 10am - Busy 1pm - PS weekly meet @ 2:30pm - Stephen 5:30pm - Ash Wednesday | 7:45am - MVAA @ 2pm - General Ledger 8pm - AA @ Kirk Center | 8am - Finance/Admin 8pm - AA-Primary | 8:45am - Bagpipes @ GH |
| 16 | 17 | 18 | 19 | 20 | 21 | 22 |
| 9:30am - Crossroads 9:30am - Discovery 10:15am - Minute for 10:30am - Worship @ 11:30am - Session Mtg @ | 5:30pm - AFHC @ Church 6pm - Magic Club @ 6:30pm - AI Anon @ 7pm - Scouts @ Gailey 8pm - AA @ Kirk Center | 10am - Staff Meeting @ 1:30pm - Staff Worship 4pm - Stephen Min. - 7pm - AA-Women's Big 8pm - AA @ Fellowship | 8am - School Chapel @ 1pm - PS weekly meet @ 2pm - Worship 5:30pm - Mission and 6:30pm - Cubs @ GH 7pm - Choir Rehearsal @ | 9am - SSICA @ City 8pm - AA @ Kirk Center | 8pm - AA-Primary | 8:45am - Bagpipes @ GH |
| 23 | 24 | 25 | 26 | 27 | 28 | 29 |
| 9:30am - Crossroads 9:30am - Discovery 10:30am - Worship @ 12pm - Lunch Bunch @ 4pm - Book Sorting @ | 5:30pm - AFHC @ Church 6:30pm - AI Anon @ 7pm - Scouts @ Gailey 8pm - AA @ Kirk Center | 10am - Staff Meeting @ 1:30pm - Staff Worship 7pm - AA-Women's Big 7pm - Taize, Isaac @ 8pm - AA @ Fellowship | 8am - School Chapel @ 1pm - PS weekly meet @ 7pm - Choir Rehearsal @ | 8pm - AA @ Kirk Center | 8pm - AA-Primary | 8:45am - Bagpipes @ GH 2pm - Cory Laube |
| 30 | 31 | 1 | 2 | 3 | 4 | 5 |
| 8:30am - Men's Breakfast 9:30am - Crossroads 9:30am - Discovery 10:30am - Worship @ | 5:30pm - AFHC @ Church 6:30pm - AI Anon @ 7pm - Scouts @ Gailey 8pm - AA @ Kirk Center | 10am - Staff Meeting @ 1:30pm - Staff Worship 7pm - AA-Women's Big 7pm - Taize, Isaac @ 8pm - AA @ Fellowship | 8am - School Chapel @ 1pm - PS weekly meet @ 7pm - Choir Rehearsal @ | 8pm - AA @ Kirk Center | 8pm - AA-Primary | |

Go to our website under "News & Events" for a live view of the calendar!

SESSION SUMMARY

Summary of the February 16, 2025, Stated Session Meeting

The Session met for its regular monthly meeting on February 6, 2024, and conducted the following business:

- The Worship Ministry Team (MT) has created a plan (called Loving Hands) for regular, on-going cleaning of the sanctuary to address cleaning that is not normally done by the custodial staff. Wood will be touched-up and polished, and cushions will be spot-cleaned and vacuumed. Two to three pews will be addressed each month.
- The Finance and Administration MT plans to set-up a committee to manage investment of bequeaths. Recently the church has received some large bequeaths.
- The Senior Adult MT is planning to open-up senior activities to all church members. Seniors take trips to cultural and historical sites, watch movies, visit local restaurants, and help sort books for our mission partner, Sandy Springs Education Force. All members will be able to participate in these activities.
- Two people were removed from the church rolls. Our denomination requires churches to keep rolls up-to-date, so when we can no longer contact people and have no information about them, Session votes to remove them from the rolls.
- The Session approved the nomination of a 2025 slate of officers for the Mount Vernon Foundation. This slate will be presented to the congregation for approval.
- The Session also approved two Session members to fill the two designated spots for Session members on the 2025 Nominating Committee. Elected were Htet Nyunt and Keith Bumgarner. The congregation will fill the remaining three spots at the Annual Meeting on February.
- There will be a Called Session Meeting on March 30 as part of the Suitability of Call process which is part of the installation and ordination process. Shari Freeman is nearing the point at which she can be ordained and installed as a pastor (teaching elder). The Suitability of Call process is designed to assure that a particular candidate is suitable for a particular church.

The next Stated Session Meeting will be on March 16.

CHURCH TRIUMPHANT



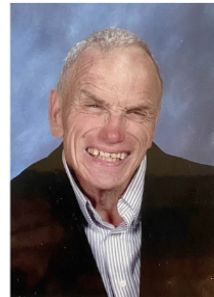
Barbara Hughes
7/5/1941 - 10/14/2024



George Henry
9/24/1925 - 1/17/2025



Walt Walker
4/11/1928 - 11/13/2024



Corny Laube
1/21/1934 - 2/15/2025



Hazel Cofield
9/4/1922 - 12/14/2024



DeDe Callahan
11/15/1925 - 2/25/2025



MVPC Columbarium

Have you worked on your Estate Planning? If you've thought about purchasing a niche in our Columbarium, now is the time! If you're interested or have questions, call the church office at 404.255.2211.

Prices:

One Niche \$2,500
Two Niches \$3,000

Bottom Two Rows:

One Niche: \$2,000
Two Niches \$2,400

PRAYER VINE



Christian Sympathy for the family of Corny Laube on his death February 15.

Christian Sympathy for the family of DeDe Callahan on her death February 25.

Bob Addison - pray for a good report after a surgical procedure

Diane Bumgarner - successful foot surgery and relief from pain

Jeannie Chettleburgh - sister-in-law of Shari Freeman, strength and healing as she starts the new treatment for her brain tumor

Mike Damron - wisdom and knowledge of the doctors at MD Anderson to determine a treatment plan, brother-in-law of Mary Lea Woods

Sharri Galloway - healing, strength and comfort who has chronic lung disease, sister-in-law of Debbie Galloway

Malinda Holmes - a steady heart and strong body as she goes through chemo

Karen Morine - thanks that she is currently stable which allows her to continue with chemo, sister-in-law of Bruce Morine

James Phillips - thankful for a successful heart catheterization and stent, Braegan Abernethy's father

Jim Wingate - continued recovery from treatment and prayers for his family as they surround him with love and support

Do you need prayer?

Have our Prayer Vine pray for you!

Email your requests to barbara@babrooks.com



**P.O. Box 76051
Sandy Springs, GA 30358**

Return Service Requested

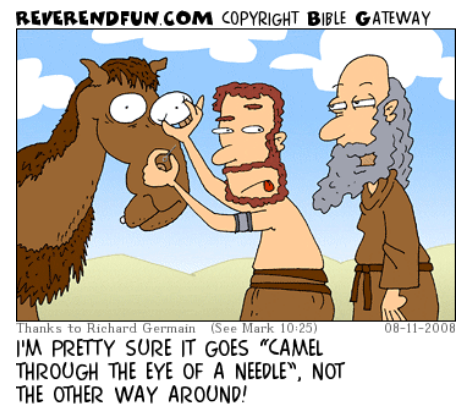
Got News? We'd love to hear from you! Send us your news so we can celebrate, laugh, and/or cry with you. After all, we are FAMILY. Deadline for news is the third Wednesday of each month for the *next month's* newsletter. Send your submissions to debbie@mvpchurch.org.

If you no longer wish to receive the Good News, please send an email to debbie@mvpchurch.org.

Good News!

Mount Vernon Presbyterian Church Staff

| | | |
|---------------------------------|--|--|
| 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 |
| Shari Freeman | <i>Director of Spiritual Care</i> | shari@mvpchurch.org |
| Steve Ray | <i>Church Finance and Operations</i> | steve@mvpchurch.org |
| Debbie Nysewander | <i>Administrative Assistant</i> | debbie@mvpchurch.org |
| Yvonne White | <i>Financial Assistant</i> | yvonne@mvpchurch.org |
| Jill Hudson | <i>Music Director</i> | jillh@mvpchurch.org |



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