



MOUNT VERNON PRESBYTERIAN CHURCH

# GOOD NEWS

MAY 2025



## ***A Note From the Pastor***

Rev. Barrett Abernethy

12 Years, 12 Lessons

*Learn Their Story*

When people find out I studied history in college, they often ask, "Why did you choose history?" My pithy, nearly full-truth response is always the same, "It's the only class I woke up for in high school."

I have always been fascinated with names, dates, and places. I remember long car rides where I would stare at a road map for hours, imagining what the towns would be like and the people who lived there. I took pride in school when the other students would ask me prior to the test to regurgitate the dates and the people we had studied.

This passion has served me well in the parish. Instead of learning about

Churchill, Roosevelt, or imagining what the people are like who live in Hercules, CA, I try to learn about the people who take the time to come to this church or even those who don't come as often but as a part of their identity claim Mount Vernon as their church home. One of the first things I did when I arrived was to ask Pat Davis to walk me through the then most recent (2012) church directory. Who was who, who did I need to talk with first, who had not been here in a while. It was from those beginnings that I learned your story. You see as a pastor the church directory is like a compass. It gives you directions so you can find the story.

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Learning your story – both individually and collectively – has been one of the overarching themes of my tenure. The collective story was told during Covid as the church sat and patiently waited. We had to look to the past to find hope during a present filled with uncertainty. Once we returned to the sanctuary, we retold this story to one another and it helped us define and redefine our mission statement and how our call to be a church *Reaching Out To... Welcome. Worship. Share. Serve.* connects us with who we have been and whom we are called to be. We relived it as we chronicled our story of faith turning 70 this past year. Learning the collective story inspires hope because not only does it celebrate all the ways God has moved through a church it also celebrates how God can still move through a church. When you know your story, you do not have to reinvent the wheel, because the story invites you to see what is possible through the gifts present within the body of Christ at that particular time. It leads us to orient the wheel toward resurrectional hope!

The more pastoral side is learning the individual story. This truth moves like the Holy Spirit in the form of visits to one's home, Session retreats, coffee dates, and walking with you in times when mortality and vulnerability are present. These

moments, no matter how light or serious, reveal who you are and how your story weaves itself into the larger church story. This is critical for a pastor to learn as we are like people who start reading a book in the middle of the story. We come into a church's life and learning your story prior to our arrival helps us understand how to guide, preach, and lead the church with grace and hope while living out our theological convictions. It also helps us know who is related to who!

As we continue this journey, I look forward to learning more of that story. You may think after nearly six full years what is there left for me to learn, but that is just it, the story of a church, like the story of our faith, is always unfolding. I look forward to further lessons from you that will collectively inspire us to live out our mission and to share the love of Christ both within and beyond the church walls. For so often what I have found is where God is in the past can inspire us to see where God will be in the future.

Grace and Peace,

*Barrett*

March 31, 2025	Actual YTD	2025 Budget
Member Giving Pledge	\$188,859	\$500,000
Member Giving Non-Pledge	\$13,860	\$60,000
Loose Offerings	\$1,686	\$26,000
<b>Total YTD</b>	<b>\$204,405</b>	<b>\$586,000</b>

## 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

### ***Outreach***

Braegan Abernethy  
Mike Havey

### ***Senior Adults***

Mary Lea Woods

### ***Witness***

Lois Johnson

### ***Worship***

Penny Kiel  
Malinda Holmes



# EASTER





# OUTREACH

Our March Communion Offering was for the Columbia Theological Seminary Student Food Pantry. Shari and Beppie delivered the offering and worked with students and faculty/staff to unload and restock the pantry.



We received a thank you from Dr. Kathryn Threadgill, VP and Dean of Student Formation and Campus Culture: *Greetings and good morning to you. I pray you are doing well as you prepare for Holy Week upon us. I am grateful to Mt. Vernon Presbyterian Church for your generosity and care for the Columbia Seminary community. Your efforts to embrace and help students in this important season of their lives means more than you all will know. I am so grateful for my time together with you all in worship the other month, and look forward to our ongoing partnership and ministry together. Please know that we stand ready to greet you next Tuesday and help in whatever ways we can. I am grateful for your ministry among us, and look forward to celebrating your installment into your role there. I continue to pray for you and all of the wonderful people of Mt. Vernon Presbyterian Church. Please give them all our deepest gratitude and thanks for this incredible gift they are sharing with our CTS students. It means more than you all will ever know, and we are delighted to meet you next week.*



Three families (four adults and seven children) were served March 9-16 for our final hosting of Family Promise. Carol and Christy organized and sorted supplies and identified outreach partners for acceptance (Clifton, CAC, Stirred Up, International Women's House, and Georgia Foster Care). Items to be donated include bedding, kitchen & home supplies. Leftover gift cards will be given to Family Promise. Christy and Carol delivered IWH donations on April 14. Carol reported they had two SUV loads and the staff at IWH was thrilled beyond words. Specific items donated to IWH included sheets, comforters, blankets, towels, kitchen supplies, lamps, a microwave, toaster, ironing board and iron.

# 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.*

**Tim and Carrie Southard**  
**Stirred Up Ministries**

Carrie and I have been involved in Stirred Up Ministries for nearly as long as we’ve been members of MVPC (we joined in 1993). What started as a weekend church volunteering opportunity helping build a home in south Atlanta (now Stirred Up’s home office) turned into a lifelong friendship with Darrell Jones, the founder of Stirred Up. Carrie and I started to support Stirred Up as part of our annual giving, and then I convinced my mother to help support the organization as well. Before long, Darrell met my parents, and now they are life-long friends as well. To say that Darrell has an infectious personality is an understatement!

Darrell is first and foremost a believer in God and a disciple of Jesus Christ. He has translated his love of Christ into a spirit-filled purpose to help underprivileged children, primarily those living in the East Lake area, but truly anywhere he sees a need. He is fearless in the Lord on behalf of “his” children. Whether those children need food or shelter, or whether their parents or the school system is failing them, Darrell and Stirred Up Ministries find a way to help.

A basketball player and all-around athlete growing up, Darrell has incorporated sports into many of Stirred Up’s ministries, including a summer camp that MVPC helps to support. He also provides Thanksgiving meals to dozens of families that MVPC also supports with a “Stuff the Bus” food drive. Darrell understands that education is one of the keys to escaping poverty, and he strives to provide area children with educational opportunities, including college counseling. He has many success stories that he is happy to share.

My family is blessed to know Darrell. He is an inspiration to all of us fortunate enough to know him.





# GIFT OF WISDOM



## Perfection in Peace

You fly thru the clouds,  
on a wing and a prayer,  
the symbol of faith,  
each feather precisely piercing the air.

Each color of the rainbow  
Bow below your climb,  
with reverence to your appearance at the most  
significant of times,

In search of land for creation to survive.

Attending your son's baptism, the joy found in His  
choice, stating your pride.

To His freeing the captured doves from the cruelty and  
greed of cages.

You now represent peace thru the ages.

The promise of the resurrection has fulfilled the wing  
and the prayer, as you  
glide thru the floral Spring, piercing the air.

*Poem: Dee Bradford-Smith*

*Artwork: Donna Martin*



# PRESBYTERIANS FOR A BETTER GA



## Presbyterians for a Better Georgia 2025 Lobby Day on March 11, 2025

Please speak up today to oppose HB 61 which proposes summary ejectment of people living in extended stay hotels utilizing law enforcement, with no notice or due process, and removes the protections provided in the Georgia Supreme Court Neason v. Efficiency Lodge case. The new version also seeks to change the carefully negotiated squatters bill from 2024, that became law in July, and eliminates any due process to a person who is a victim of a squatting scam and has been paying rent to someone who has defrauded them.

David Hill, Penny Kiel, Mary Lea Woods, and Pat Bartee went to downtown Atlanta to participate.

On April 28, MVPC members joined with Los Ninos Primero Executive Director, Maritza Morelli and State Representative, District 52, Shea Roberts (front row, second from right) to discuss ways to support the Latino community in Sandy Springs.







# C E L E B R A T I O N S



Palm  
Sunday



Easter is the only holiday  
where putting all your eggs  
in one basket is  
encouraged.



Egg Hunt



Senior Adults  
at Arabia Mountain

Columbia Seminary Food Pantry  
Before & After  
Thank you!



Mount Vernon  
School, MV  
Presbyterian, and  
Leadership Perimeter  
supporting  
beautification at  
Dunwoody High  
School!





Mailing Address:

MVPC

P.O. Box 76051

Sandy Springs, GA 30358

404.255.2211

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

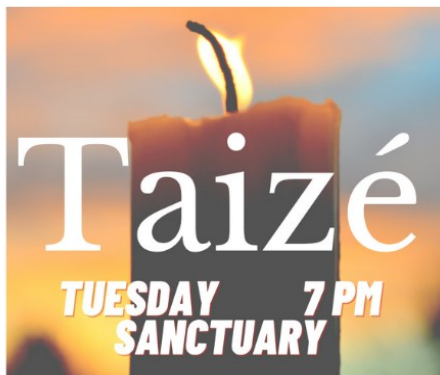


## CHURCH OFFICE HOURS

MONDAY-THURSDAY

8AM-4PM

FRIDAY 8AM - 2PM



# This & That

## MAY EVENTS

Outdoor Service

5/11

Men's Breakfast

5/18

Lunch Bunch

5/4 & 5/25

Taize

5/27

7pm

CHURCH OFFICE CLOSED

5/26

*Photos courtesy of: Barrett Abernethy, Braegan Abernethy, Beppie Lever,  
Shari Freeman, Dee Bradford-Smith, Christie Hill, Donna Martin  
(Please send any pictures of your events to [debbie@mvpchurch.org](mailto:debbie@mvpchurch.org))*

What do you call ten rabbits  
marching backwards?  
A receding hare-line



# FROM THE CORNER OFFICE ...

*"Every generous act of giving, with every perfect gift, is from above, coming down from the Father of lights, with whom there is no variation or shadow due to change."*

James 1:17

On April 25, I attended a performance of the Alpharetta Symphony with Dick and my nephew William, who plays violin in a local community orchestra. The concert featured a friend, Barbaraann Bongiovanni, playing Rossini's Themes and Variations for Clarinet and Orchestra. Barbaraann is a professional clarinetist. The Rossini piece is a favorite among clarinetists for its lively and challenging nature. Barbaraann rocked the house with her amazing performance.

Her sister told me afterward that Barbaraann had spent many months learning and practicing the piece. And I started to wonder about the significant commitment of time and effort Barbaraann gave to mastering that music, given that it resulted in a single live performance. I mentioned this to William. He pointed out to me that the joy in music is not in performing it but in learning it. Barbaraann did not take on all that effort for the pleasure of performing the piece but for the joy of learning and mastering it.

This same dynamic is also true for our own talents and giftedness. All of our gifts are from God. And while we are certainly called to share these gifts with others, the gifts are also meant for us to enjoy ourselves. What are your gifts and talents? And in what ways do they bring joy to your life?

Shari Freeman





# GETTING TO KNOW ...

## MIKE HAVEY

**What was the last movie you went to?**

*Anora*. Couldn't believe it won Best Picture.

**Would you rather ride a bike, ride a horse, or drive a car?**

Ride a bike

**If you could share a meal with any 4 individuals, living or dead, who would they be?**

Jesus, Lincoln, FDR, Eisenhower

**What was the last book you read?**

*Why We Love Baseball* by Joe Posnanski

**What's your favorite movie?**

*Young Frankenstein*



*"I believe nothing builds trust as deeply as truly listening to another person and trying to understand what they are saying and feeling from their perspective."*

Author, Stephen Covey

Stephen Covey captures the essence of Stephen Ministry with these words. The power created within the person who feels finally "heard" allows them to see issues more clearly and move forward again. The trust created within the relationship allows sharing and a chance for God to begin his work. It is a remarkable process available to members of our church and our community. Please connect with us by contacting Pat Bartee, Stephen Leader, or by contacting a pastor.



# SESSION SUMMARY

## **Summary of the April 27, 2025, Stated Session Meeting**

The Session met for its regular monthly meeting of the Session on April 27 and conducted the following business:

- Conducted an examination of Samantha Fifield who has just completed her Confirmation Class. Samantha will be presented to the congregation on May 4.
- Approved the baptism of Mackenzie Hagenau, daughter of Kyle and Caroline Hagenau, and granddaughter of Bruce and Wendy Hagenau. The baptism is planned for Mother's Day.
- Received a Financial Review from the Financial Review Committee. The committee finds the church's finances are good and appropriate procedures are in place. The committee recommended the church develop a finance policy and procedures handbook.
- The Finance and Administration Ministry Team presented a draft Church Investment Policy that will be up for a vote at the May Session Meeting.
- Commissioners to represent MVPC at the May 13 Presbytery Meeting were elected. Those attending will be Mike Havey, David Hill, Beppie Lever, and Mary Lea Woods.

The next Stated Session Meeting will be held  
on May 18 in the Kirk Center.



# MAY CALENDAR

May 2025 (Eastern Time - New York)						
Sun	Mon	Tue	Wed	Thu	Fri	Sat
27	28	29	30	1	2	3
9:30am - Crossroads 9:30am - Discovery Class, 10:30am - Worship @ 12pm - Lunch Bunch @ 3:30pm - New South 6:30pm - YMSL @ FH 7pm - AA @ Kirk Center	12:30pm - Busy 1pm - Senior Adult 2pm - Vernon Springs 5:30pm - AFHC @ Church 5:30pm - Busy 6:30pm - AI Anon @ 7pm - Scouts @ Galley 8pm - AA @ Kirk Center	9:30am - Summer projects 10:30am - Staff Meeting 1:30pm - Staff Worship 5pm - Elevate bb @ gym 5pm - William Baker 5:30pm - CE Meeting 7pm - AA-Women's Big 7pm - NABB @ gym	8am - School Chapel @ 1pm - PS weekly meet @ 2pm - General Ledger 2:30pm - Stephen Ministry 5pm - LNP @ GH 5:30pm - Mission and 7pm - AA @ Kirk 7pm - Choir Rehearsal @	7:45am - MVAA @ 5pm - Elevate bb @ gym 5pm - LNP 11am - Vernon Springs 5pm - Elevate bb @ gym 5pm - LNP 6pm - MVPS SL @ GH 7pm - NABB @ Gym 8pm - AA @ Kirk Center	5:30pm - LNP @ field 8pm - Young Adult Small 8pm - AA-Primary Purpose 8am - Finance/Admin 10am - PW Book Circle @ 5:30pm - LNP @ field 8pm - AA-Primary Purpose	8am - LNP @ ED AB Gym 8:30am - AA bingo @ FH 8:45am - Bagpipes @ GH 8am - LNP @ ED AB Gym 8:45am - Bagpipes @ GH 1pm - Senior Adult Movie
4	5	6	7	8	9	10
9:30am - Crossroads 9:30am - Discovery Class, 10:30am - Outdoor 7pm - AA @ Kirk Center 7pm - Atlanta Concert	5:30pm - AFHC @ Church 5:30pm - Busy 5:30pm - Monthly FAMT 6:30pm - AI Anon @ 7pm - Scouts @ Galley 8pm - AA @ Kirk Center	7:30am - MV Parent 9am - Presbytery Meeting 10am - PW Coordinating 10:30am - PW Day Circle 5pm - Elevate bb @ gym 7pm - AA-Women's Big	8am - School Chapel @ 10am - Staff Meeting @ 10:30am - Worship 11am - Staff Worship 1pm - PS weekly meet @ 2pm - Worship Com. @	9:30am - BACC practice @ 5pm - Elevate bb @ gym 5pm - LNP 5:30pm - YMSL @ FH GH 7pm - NABB @ Gym 8pm - AA @ Kirk Center	3pm - BACC @ Sanctuary 5:30pm - LNP @ field 8pm - AA-Primary Purpose	7:30am - Graduation 1pm - LNP- Lit C @ kirk
18	19	20	21	22	23	24
9:30am - Crossroads 9:30am - Discovery Class, 10:30am - Worship @ 11:30am - Session Mtg @ 12pm - Children Prepare 4pm - Book Sorting and 7pm - AA @ Kirk Center	6pm - Magic Club @ 6:30pm - AI Anon @ 7pm - Scouts @ Galley 8pm - AA @ Kirk Center	10am - Staff Meeting @ 1:30pm - Staff Worship 4pm - Stephen Min. - 5pm - Elevate bb @ gym 7pm - AA-Women's Big 7pm - NABB @ gym 8pm - AA @ Fellowship	Maritza Morris 8am - School Chapel @ 1pm - PS weekly meet @ 5pm - LNP @ GH 6pm - magic club @ FH 7pm - AA @ Kirk 7pm - Choir Rehearsal @	5pm - Elevate bb @ gym 5pm - LNP 7pm - NABB @ Gym 8pm - AA @ Kirk Center	5:30pm - LNP @ field 8pm - AA-Primary Purpose	8:45am - Bagpipes @ GH
25	26	27	28	29	30	31
9:30am - Crossroads 9:30am - Discovery Class, 10:30am - Worship @ 7pm - AA @ Kirk Center 7pm - Atlanta Concert	<b>CHURCH OFFICE CLOSE</b> 6:30pm - AI Anon @ 7pm - Scouts @ Galley 8pm - AA @ Kirk Center	10am - Staff Meeting @ 1:30pm - Staff Worship 5pm - Elevate bb @ gym 7pm - AA-Women's Big 7pm - NABB @ gym 7pm - Taize @ Sanctuary	<b>Newsletters Deadline</b> 8am - School Chapel @ 1pm - PS weekly meet @ 5pm - LNP @ GH 7pm - AA @ Kirk 7pm - Choir Rehearsal @	12pm - LNP Youth 5pm - Elevate bb @ gym 5pm - LNP 7pm - NABB @ Gym 8pm - AA @ Kirk Center	5:30pm - LNP @ field 8pm - AA-Primary Purpose	8:45am - Bagpipes @ GH 5pm - AA @ FH

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



# MAY BIRTHDAYS

Shelly Ray	5/1
David Hill	5/2
Andrew Nelson	5/2
Sam Nelson	5/2
Brad Skidmore	5/4
Guy Lever	4/6
Kendra Boyer	5/7
Helen Johnson	5/13
Tim Southard	5/15
Anmadri Badenhorst	5/16
Catie O'Hare	5/20
Inez Cole	5/20
Nathan Abernethy	5/20
Helen Bigham	5/22
John Barber	5/22
Ed Spain	5/23
Laura Northrop	5/26
Spencer Ponsell	5/29
Wynn Sims	5/29



## 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

*If you have a birthday in May and don't see your name on the list, please contact [debbie@mvpchurch.org](mailto:debbie@mvpchurch.org) or call the office.*

# PRAYER VINE



*Christian Sympathy for the family of Carolina Kirby-Smith on her death April 27.*

**Jeannie Chettleburgh** - sister-in-law of Shari Freeman, courage, strength and healing as she receives an experimental medication for her brain tumor with hopes that this will improve her body's ability to fight the tumor.

**Lorry Clark** - comfort and healing from a fall

**Alma Dowdakin** - successful treatment of her recent diagnosis of breast cancer, thankful she won't need surgery or chemo

**Gene Elder** - wisdom and guidance for his medical team as they determine a treatment plan for his recent diagnosis of Merkle Cell Carcinoma.

**Sharri Galloway** - healing and comfort who has chronic lung disease, sister-in-law of Debbie Galloway. Additional prayers that other health issues which prevent her from being considered for a lung transplant are improved and controlled so she can be considered for a transplant.

**Malinda Holmes** - strength and stamina as she continues with chemo for breast cancer. The side effects are becoming more difficult to tolerate.

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

**David Wassermann** - pray for healing and recovery for Doug Sawyer's brother-in-law, who is in the hospital in Birmingham battling a severe case of pneumonia.

**Ann & Herb Young** - Herb was recently hospitalized for a fall and then both came down with Covid.

Do you need prayer?

Have our Prayer Vine pray for you!

Email your requests to [barbara@babrooks.com](mailto: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](mailto:debbie@mvpchurch.org).

*If you no longer wish to receive the Good News, please send an email to [debbie@mvpchurch.org](mailto:debbie@mvpchurch.org).*

## Mount Vernon Presbyterian Church Staff

<b>Rev. Barrett Abernethy</b>	<i>Senior Pastor/Head of Staff</i>	<a href="mailto:barrett@mvpchurch.org">barrett@mvpchurch.org</a>
<b>Rev. Isaac Toney-Schmitt</b>	<i>Associate Pastor of Faith Formation</i>	<a href="mailto:isaac@mvpchurch.org">isaac@mvpchurch.org</a>
<b>Shari Freeman</b>	<i>Director of Spiritual Care</i>	<a href="mailto:shari@mvpchurch.org">shari@mvpchurch.org</a>
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<b>Jill Hudson</b>	<i>Music Director</i>	<a href="mailto:jillh@mvpchurch.org">jillh@mvpchurch.org</a>

Good News!

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SAVED? ... CAUSE YOUR STANDING RIGHT  
THERE ... THIS ONE'S ACTUALLY PRETTY  
EASY FOR ME

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