



MOUNT VERNON PRESBYTERIAN CHURCH

FOURTEENTH SUNDAY AFTER PENTECOST

SEPTEMBER 14, 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

"Hold Me Jesus"

Asa Pedi

Words & Music: Rich Mullins

WELCOME & ANNOUNCEMENTS

Rev. Isaac Toney-Schmitt

MINUTE FOR MISSION

Mary Lea Woods, MVPC Foundation

OPENING PRAYER

Rev. Isaac Toney-Schmitt

† **CALL TO WORSHIP**

ONE: Let us celebrate the forgiving love of God,

ALL: **For once we were lost and felt so far away.**

ONE: Let us celebrate the reconciling love of God,

ALL: **For now we have been found and welcomed home.**

ONE: Let us celebrate the extravagant love of God,

ALL: **We praise the God of Love. Let us worship God!**

† **OPENING HYMN** (*see insert*) **"Softly and Tenderly Jesus is Calling"**

† PRAYER OF CONFESSION

Rev. Shari Freeman

God of All Grace and Mercy, you never move away from us, but sometimes we pull away from you. This agonizing expanse between us becomes too great to bear. We create this rift when we demand our share, instead of trusting in your gifts. We lose sight of you when we are distracted from your purposes and drown in our doubts and fears. We turn our backs on you when we ignore the suffering of our brothers and sisters, feeding ourselves in the face of the injustice that holds them captive.

Forgive our selfishness, our distractions, and our bitter thoughts. Lift us from sin, and help us to return to you in faith, humility, and brotherly and sisterly love ... *(silent confession)* ... Amen.

† ASSURANCE OF PARDON

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

ALL: Thanks be to God.

† RESPONSE

"O God, You Are My God"

O God, you are my God, and I will ever praise you.

O God, you are my God, and I will ever praise you.

I will seek you in the morning, and I will learn to walk in your ways.

And step by step you'll lead me, and I will follow you all of my days.

Words and Music: David Strasser. ©1991 Universal Music - Brentwood Benson Publishing.

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. Isaac Toney-Schmitt

SCRIPTURE

Luke 15:11-32

HOMILY

"Navigating Roads: The Return"

Today's scripture is the third of three consecutive parables about something (or someone) lost and found again. The prior two are: the shepherd who leaves ninety-nine sheep in the wilderness to search for one lost sheep, and the woman who upends her home to search for a lost silver coin.

RESPONSE

† AFFIRMATION OF FAITH (*from A Brief Statement of Faith, 11.3*)

We trust in God, whom Jesus called Abba, Father. In sovereign love God created the world good and makes everyone equally in God's image, male and female, of every race and people, to live as one community. But we rebel against God; we hide from our Creator. Ignoring God's commandments, we violate the image of God in others and ourselves, accept lies as truth, exploit neighbor and nature, and threaten death to the planet entrusted to our care. We deserve God's condemnation. Yet God acts with justice and mercy to redeem creation. In everlasting love, the God of Abraham and Sarah chose a covenant people to bless all families of the earth. Hearing their cry, God delivered the children of Israel from the house of bondage. Loving us still, God makes us heirs with Christ of the covenant. Like a mother who will not forsake her nursing child, like a father who runs to welcome the prodigal home, God is faithful still.

"In 1983 the two largest Presbyterian churches in the United States reunited. *The Plan for Reunion* called for the preparation of a brief statement of faith for inclusion in the *Book of Confessions*. This statement is not intended to stand alone, apart from the other confessions of our church. It is not a complete list of all our beliefs, nor does it explain any of them in detail. It is designed to be confessed by the whole congregation in public worship, and it may also serve as an aid to Christian instruction. It celebrates our rediscovery that we are bound together by a common faith and task."

PRAYERS OF THE PEOPLE & THE LORD'S PRAYER

Rev. 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

"We Walk by Faith"

Chancel Choir
Words & Music: Lloyd Larson

† DOXOLOGY

"Praise God, from Whom All Blessings Flow"

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.

Text: Thomas Ken. Music: OLD HUNDREDTH, Genevan Psalter.

† PRAYER OF THANKSGIVING

Sujay Galen

SENDING

† CLOSING HYMN (#361)

"How Firm a Foundation"

How firm a foundation, ye saints of the Lord, is laid for your faith in God's excellent Word!
What more can be said than to you God hath said, to you, who for refuge to Jesus have fled?

"Fear not, I am with thee, O be not dismayed, for I am thy God and will still give thee aid;
I'll strengthen thee, help thee, and cause thee to stand, upheld by My righteous, omnipotent hand.

"When through the deep waters I call thee to go, the rivers of sorrow shall not overflow;
For I will be near thee, thy troubles to bless, and sanctify to thee thy deepest distress.

"When through fiery trials thy pathway shall lie, my grace, all-sufficient, shall be thy supply;
The flame shall not hurt thee; I only design thy dross to consume, and thy gold to refine.

"The soul that on Jesus hath leaned for repose, I will not, I will not desert to its foes;
That soul, though all hell should endeavor to shake, I'll never, no never, no never forsake."

American Folk Melody. Ed. John Rippon

Rev. Isaac Toney-Schmitt

† BENEDICTION

† POSTLUDE

"Foundation"

arr. Wilbur Held

(The primary role of a postlude is to provide a musical transition, connecting the sacred worship experience to the secular world as people leave the church. Feel free to depart during the postlude, or hang around and hear the grand Mount Vernon organ!)

Navigating Roads

I remember several walks from different times in my life. My first independent walk was from my grandfather's farm to my aunt's home in Otsego, Michigan. The next time, my parents brought me hiking and camping on Mount Le Conte in the Great Smoky Mountains National Park. I remember a lonely walk in the French countryside to my baseball game after I had missed the bus. I have beautiful memories of a walk on the bank of the Skidaway River on the Isle of Hope. At present, my walks include using my walker and circling the dining area at our senior home.

The gift all these walks gave me was time to reflect with gratefulness on the passing nature of worries versus eternal truths, and the strengthening of my faith. -Scott Martin

Leading Today's Worship Service

Rev. Isaac Toney-Schmitt, Associate Pastor

Rev. Shari Freeman, Associate Pastor of Spiritual Care

Jill Hudson, Music Director & Organist

Chancel Choir



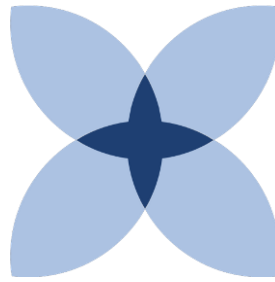
We are located at:
471 Mount Vernon Hwy., NE
Sandy Springs, GA 30328

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

Please join us
for the Mount
Vernon
Presbyterian
Foundation
luncheon
across the
courtyard in
the Fellowship
Hall!

MVPC Announcements....

Sunday School
9:30 - 10:15am



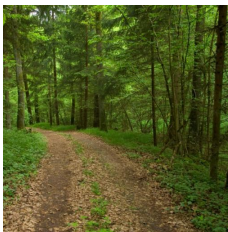
Connection
10-10:25am

Worship
10:30-11:30am

Welcome! We are glad to worship with you today!

Visitors & Membership: Please go to our website: mvpchurch.org, 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:



September 21 **"Navigating Roads: Path to Peace"**, Psalm 23 and Isaiah 43:16-21,
Rev. Isaac Toney-Schmitt

September 23 **Taizé**, 7pm in the Sanctuary

September 28 *Outdoor, "Navigating Roads: Balaam and the Donkey"*, Numbers 22:21-38
Blessing of the Animals, Rev. Isaac Toney-Schmitt



Mount Vernon Presbyterian Foundation invites you to lunch catered by Fox Brothers BBQ TODAY Sunday, Sept 14, in Fellowship Hall directly after church. We'll share information on the great work the Foundation is doing and how you can easily get involved.



Small Groups: Get ready for one of our Fall Small Group Sessions! Small Groups begin TODAY Sunday, Sept. 14. The group meeting at the church will discuss the book *"Appreciate These Things: Eight Ways of Cultivating Compassion"* by Jill Duffield. The group meeting at the Southards' house will discuss the *"Walking the Bible"* video series. The young adult small group usually meets the first Friday of the month, 6-9pm. Contact Rev. Isaac Toney-Schmitt for more information. Sign-up in the Narthex!



NEW! Little Blessings Room: The Little Blessings Room (located in the Session Room) is available for parents to go with their 0-3 year olds during the Worship Service. The worship service is live-streamed into the room and there are chairs for nursing and holding babies and toys for toddlers.

Book Sorting: Join us on Sunday, September 21 at 4pm in Gailey Hall.

In **September**, we are shopping 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.



September 14, 2025



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

Giving



Presbyterian Women: The **Day Circle** met on September 9. Beth Abernethy taught Lesson One: *Mary Magdalene, the Tower* in the 2025-2026 Bible study guide, *Finding Resilience, Joy, and our Identity in Jesus Christ*. The **Book Circle** met on September 12. Beth Abernethy led a review of *The Only Woman in the Room* (Historical fiction) By Marie Benedict. **Circle of Grace** met September 7. For more information contact Lisa Cumming at lisa.j.cumming@gmail.com



Presbyterian Disaster Assistance: This is an ongoing fund that helps with any disaster. To find out all that they support, go to their website at <https://pcusa.org/search?query=presbyterian%20disaster%20assistance&page=1>. You can also donate on this site.



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 Old Testament"*, Prof. Robert D. Miller, The Catholic University of America. Both classes meet at 9:30 a.m. Contact Rev. Shari Freeman for more information.



Stephen Ministry: Your church Stephen Ministry team is here to help you manage and master a difficult time in your life. Sometimes, all it takes is new perspective and clarity, offered by a non-judgmental person who calmly listens and helps you to see your own way forward. Please call on us by contacting Pat Bartee, Stephen Leader, or Shari.



Do you feel a need for prayer? Have our Prayer Vine pray for you! Email your requests to barbara@babrooks.com or call her at 404.422.5175.

Prayer Concerns: Bob Addison, Carolyn Bowen, Sarah Chalpan, Allison Eustis, Gerald Fudge, Lorry Clark, Malinda Holmes, Penny Kiel, Megan Kendall, Marion Satterfield, and the Interim Pastor Nominating Committee, Los Niños Primero, Clifton Sanctuary, Israel/Gaza, Ukraine, Myanmar, and Zambia.

Attendance 9/7: Sanctuary: 79 Online: 18

Dates for your calendar:

September 14 Foundation Lunch, Fox Bros. BBQ

September 28 Outdoor Service, Blessing of the Animals

October 19 Pumpkin Palooza

Financial Update

As of September 11	Actual YTD	2025 Budget
Pledge Member Giving	\$ 391,288	\$500,000
Member Giving Non-Pledge	\$ 52,252	\$ 60,000
Non-Member Giving & Loose Offering	\$ 5,422	\$ 26,000
Total	\$448,962	\$ 586,000

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



**Announcement for Called Congregational Meeting
September 28, 2025**

There will be a Congregational Meeting on Sunday, September 28, 2025, immediately following the worship service in the sanctuary for the purpose of conducting the following business:

- Receive the report of the Nominating Committee of new elders to be elected by the congregation to begin service on Session beginning with ordination and installation in January 2026, (requires a vote by the congregation)
- Receive changes to the Mount Vernon Presbyterian Church By-Laws recommended by the Session. The changes requested by the Session are:
 - ◇ Replace the old mission statement with the new mission statement
 - ◇ Change the number of Sundays required for notification of a called congregational meeting from four Sundays to two. (requires a vote by the congregation)

418 Softly and Tenderly Jesus Is Calling

1 Soft - ly and ten - der - ly Je - sus is call - ing, call - ing for
 2 Why should we tar - ry when Je - sus is plead - ing, plead - ing for
 3 O for the won - der - ful love he has prom - ised, prom - ised for

you and for me. See, on the por - tals he's wait - ing and watch - ing,
 you and for me? Why should we lin - ger and heed not his mer - cies,
 you and for me! Though we have sinned, he has mer - cy and par - don,

Refrain
 watch - ing for you and for me.
 mer - cies for you and for me? "Come home, come home!
 par - don for you and for me. "Come home, come home!

You who are wea - ry, come home." Ear - nest - ly, ten - der - ly,

Je - sus is call - ing, call - ing, "O sin - ner, come home!"

This 19th-century gospel hymn has often been used as a hymn of invitation at evangelistic services. Its imagery is primarily based on Jesus' parable in Luke 15:11-32, commonly called "The Prodigal Son." Each singer thus becomes a wandering child who is urged to return home.