

J A N U A R Y 2 0 1 5

Vashon Presbyterian Church

Vashon Island, Washington 98070

To Worship God in all we do, centered in Jesus Christ,
moved by the Holy Spirit



January 2015

Annual Congregational Meeting

January 18th is the date of the **Annual Congregational Meeting**. We will be receiving a report from each mission team, reviewing the proposed budget, and voting on the pastor's terms of call for 2015. We will also elect the 2015 nominating committee.

Appreciative Enquiry in January

The Mission Resource Task Force is planning an appreciative enquiry or congregational survey to obtain feedback from the congregants about our collective vision of the future of the church. This process will involve personal interviews beginning this January. See page 5 for more details.

Elders and Deacons will Be Installed

Diana Lilje, Barb Huff and Brownie Carver were elected ruling elders, Class of 2017, and Michele Houston, Sue Weston and Lindsay Hofman were elected deacons, Class of 2016. They will join continuing elders Kate Smith and Jacq Skeffington and continuing deacons Susan Commeree and Nancy VanRoessel.

Session Retreat

Session will be convening on-island January 17th for a mission discernment retreat facilitated by Renewal Ministries Northwest, a validated ministry of Puget Sound Presbytery. RMNW facilitated a retreat with VPC elders in February of 2014.

Guest Preacher January 18th

Rev. George Elliot, formerly of Liberia, now pastor of Transnational Christian Fellowship (TCF) in Kent will be our guest preacher January 18th. TCF has been partnering with Presbyterian churches and others in obtaining and directing relief supplies to hospitals and families battling the Ebola virus in Liberia.

Save the Date!

January 11th

"Unhanging of the Greens"

January 18th

Annual Congregational Meeting

January 25th

Installation of Elders and Deacons

Dan's Message

The Double Embrace of Grace

“He came to what was his own, and his own people did not accept him. But to all who received him, who believed in his name, he gave power to become children of God, who were born, not of blood, or the will of the flesh or of the will of man, but of God.”

John 1:11-13



Recently I saw this photo and its accompanying story: Devonte Hart, a 12-year-old young man pictured on the right, was at a rally in Portland Oregon protesting the recent Ferguson verdict. He was holding a sign – ‘Free Hugs’. Police officer Bret Barnum, left, took him up on his offer. He opened his arms and surrendered himself. Devonte, as you can see, grabbed him and pulled him tight. (I invite you to read more about their hug and their conversation online: www.huffingtonpost.com/tag/devonte-hart/)

There's a double movement in a hug. Drawing near to the other, and drawing the other near. At Christmas time we celebrate the living mystery that God in Christ has drawn near in the Incarnation, becoming one with us in our humanity. This is only half of the wonderful gift we have in Jesus Christ. The other half of the gift is that God empowers our response. By grace God also imbues in us the love that draws us towards him in trust, as children. John tells us that this is not by our own flesh-and-blood merits or effort, but by God's power and grace.

It is a double-movement hug. God comes to us as the Christ child, startlingly vulnerable, arms wide open. We merely open our arms and receive. It is he who both approaches us and helps us to approach him.

As we move into a new year confronting the steps we need to take to draw closer to God, to one another, and to our community as the servants we are capable of being, let us keep this image of Devonte hugging Bret in mind; the double embrace. Let us remember that any next steps worth taking are empowered solely by doubly - embracing love as Christ's part, and vulnerable surrender as ours.

*“So work out your salvation with fear and trembling, for it is God who is in you, enabling you both to will and to work for his good pleasure” –
Philippians 2:13*

With you in Love's embrace,
Dan

Purposeful Service

Team News

Elder: Diana Lilje

Area of Responsibility:

Scholarship, Mary Magdalene weekend/partnership, IFCH dinners, mission partner relations.

Christmas Eve Offering Our Christmas Eve offering this year was directed to Doctors Without Borders (Médecins Sans Frontières) for help in serving those battling the Ebola epidemic in West Africa. The total offering collected was \$547.

There was also a collection of medical grade gloves that will be sent to Liberia along with supplies collected by Mercer Island Presbyterian Church.

Meeting There will be a very short meeting of Purposeful Service after worship on January 11th.

Run for Water. Run for Life.

Team World Vision runs/walks so that children in Africa can have clean water & fullness of life.

The Need:

In Africa they say, "Water is Life." About 768 million people in the world lack access to safe drinking water.

The Hope:

If Americans take on the miles that children in Africa walk, we both have healthier futures.

World Vision is the largest non-government provider of clean water in the developing world—reaching one new person with clean water every 30 seconds.

You Can Do It:

- On June 13, 2015, Seattle Rock N' Roll Half Marathon and Marathon
- Our training is aimed at a 50-60 couch potato
- Training Begins 2/8 20 minutes of run-walking.

Find out more: Vashon Library, Monday, Jan 26th at 7pm. Or contact Beverly Skeffington at 354-8921

Martin Luther King Day

This year marks the 50th anniversary of a major milestone in the struggle for civil rights in the United States. On July 2, 1964 President Lyndon Johnson signed the Civil Rights Act. It is also the 24th anniversary of Vashon Island's commemorative event honoring Dr. Martin Luther King. Emma Amiad has organized and hosted this event every year to honor Dr. King and continue the discussion of the struggle for equal rights for all.

We are honored this year to have Rabbi James Mirel as our guest speaker for the January 15th event. Rabbi Mirel will speak about the rabbis who marched with Dr. King and were heroes during the civil rights era. In 1961 Dr. King came to Seattle and spoke at Temple De Hirsh before a standing room only crowd.

Rabbi Mirel has been a community leader for over 40 years and is Rabbi Emeritus at Temple B'nai Torah in Bellevue and currently serves the Wood River Jewish Congregation in Sun Valley, Idaho. He will be joined by his wife, Julie Mirel, renowned singer and catorial soloist, to share music of the civil rights era. This year's event will be held at Havurat Ee Shalom, Thursday, January 15th at 7:00 p.m. everyone is welcome to attend. As always, cake and coffee will be served and **a donation to the Interfaith Council to Prevent Homelessness is appreciated.**

Journey/Invitation

Team News

Area of Responsibility:

Bible study, Christian formation (all ages), new members and discipleship, evangelism and invitation.

The Advent study based on Diedrich's Bonhoeffer's God is in the Manger was a meaningful way to approach the Christmas season. Copies are available in the office if you missed this opportunity and still would like to read the book.

Hospitality/Fellowship

Team News

Elder: Kate Smith

Area of Responsibility:

Hospitality, Fellowship

Thank You I would like to thank everyone who helped in 2014 with the Hospitality and Fellowship events. I could not have done it without your help. It was a great year and everyone had a fun time. I look forward to a wonderful 2015 full of joy and laughter. If you would like to join the team please talk with me, Kate Smith. I have some new ideas and look forward to great events. Happy 2015!

Unhanging of the Greens We are taking down the greens on January 11th. Wear casual clothing and help out. Many hands make light work!

January Book Club The VPC book club will have its meeting January 16th at the Skeffington's. It will begin at 6:30 with a potluck. The book selection is The Big House by George Howe Colt.

Worship

Team News

Elder: Barry Cooper

Areas of Responsibility:

Sacraments celebration, music program, readers, bulletin, ecumenical worship, church décor.

A HUGE Thank You!

I would like to thank the entire congregation for their participation in the month of December. From volunteering time to hanging the greens, to participating in Sunday Worship and Christmas Eve. Thank you to all who participated as Readers on Christmas Eve as well. And a special thanks to Rebekah Kuzma and Michael Whitmore for providing the music that night. Worship Team is looking forward to many special things this coming year and would like for the congregation to also think of ways to enhance and contribute to our ever evolving worship experience. The changes we have committed to are rolling or in progress. Some have worked and some haven't. Please remember to come to us with any concerns and suggestions at Worship Round Table or Worship Committee Meetings. All are welcome to attend. Looking forward to a wonderful year to come.
Barry Cooper

Mission Resource

Team News

Elder: Barbara Huff

Area of Responsibility:

Financials

Elder: Jacq Skeffington

Area of Responsibility:

Building and Grounds

Financial Stewardship: Mission Resource elder Barb Huff oversees a committee to develop the **2015 budget**. If you have questions or comments about the upcoming budget, contact Barb. The final budget will be presented at the Annual Congregational Meeting the 18th.

Task Force /Mortgage Reduction Due to a generous one time donation, the mortgage has been reduced to \$119,000 and the payments reduced from \$1685 to \$1335, a savings of \$350/month, with the same length of loan. We're also hoping that come March when the loan is reviewed we'll receive a lower interest rate. The interest is currently at 5%. The loan is scheduled to be paid in full in August of 2023.



Task Force/Appreciative Enquiry The task force commissioned by Session to investigate methods to reduce debt and to create a vision for the church to respond to changing demographics is planning an appreciative enquiry or congregational survey to obtain feedback from the congregants about our collective vision of the future of the church. This process will involve personal interviews beginning this January. See page 5 for complete details.

VPC Appreciative Enquiry

The Island is changing demographically (an older population) and societal norms regarding people's view of church are evolving. VPC is moving forward on a journey that began with the Congregational Conversations that led to the realization that we need a fresh new vision. A task force was commissioned by Session to investigate methods to reduce debt and to create a vision for the church to respond to changing demographics. Change is coming to VPC, change that we will make in order to thrive. Change is not always easy and the input of each of our church family is necessary to make any transition a positive process.

In January each of our congregants will be interviewed individually. Their anonymous answers to our Appreciative Enquiry will be compiled by the Mission Resource Task Force that will then seek common threads in our collective wisdom to guide them as they plan for the future of VPC. Please pray for guidance for each member of our church family and, especially, for the elders who will be making important decisions in the forthcoming year.

Enquiry Questions:

Why do you come to church?

What in the life of VPC do you hold most dear?

What is missing?

Picture yourself in 10 years. What role will VPC have played in making your life better? How did VPC do that?

What role do you think VPC could play in the life of the Island?

Do you know about any volunteer opportunities that VPC could participate in to expand our role in the community?

By reviewing the enquiry questions in advance we can give prayerful thought to our answers. A member of the task force will be contacting you in January to conduct your interview.

Deacons' Transportation Activities

The deacons would like to invite others in the church family to share in one of our very rewarding activities. We can all act as helpers for our members in need, and this responsibility brings many delightful moments. Specifically the deacons are asking for others to help with driving and transportation requests off the island; these requests usually involve important medical visits in Seattle for our church friends.

The deacons would welcome assistance and do not anticipate it being a frequent need for any one volunteer driver. The driver is expected to provide a ride from the rider's home and back which involves time and gas. A ferry ticket for the driver will be provided either by the rider or reimbursement from the deacons' funds. To comply with our recently required safe conduct guidelines, a background/driving record check is part of the requirement. We welcome the opportunity to provide this type of really helpful service to our members. It's a great way to become more familiar with members of the church family. Consider too that there is no other similar transportation service for those needing special medical care off island.

In turn those needing a ride will be expected to share their schedule/destination and any special requests (lunch is often necessary if fasting was required) with the driver. They will also cover the cost of their ferry ticket and any parking fees in the city. Our passengers have been very gracious and thoughtful with little gestures of appreciation but it certainly isn't expected or necessary! Deacons' funds will discretely cover any needed financial support for these trips when the situation occurs.

If you feel you could consider joining the deacons' "transportation pool," even only on a very limited basis, please talk to one of the current deacons and get more information. Contact Susan Commeree, Chris Coldeen, Sue Weston or Nancy van Roessel. We'd be grateful for your consideration and quick to share the great experiences that this service involves.

If you need a ride into the Seattle/Tacoma area for an appointment, we deacons certainly welcome your call too. Contact any one of those listed above (or ask the church office to relay your request) and share your schedule as soon as you know it. Many of the details are worked out just between the driver and the passenger(s). It's truly our calling and great pleasure to support you when helpful!

Your VPC deacons - Chris Coldeen, Susan Commeree, Sue Weston and Nancy van Roessel

Clerk's Corner

The VPC session held its regular monthly meeting on December 16 with all members in attendance. Session set January 18 as the date for the annual congregational meeting, and discussed the need for a session retreat, tentatively set for January 17, to identify further steps in implementing the decisions determined in the discernment process. In light of these dates, it was found to be necessary to move the January session meeting date to January 14. Elders and deacons will be installed on January 25. Finally, session agreed with the Personnel Committee's recommended terms of call for the pastor for 2015; those terms will be voted on at the annual meeting.

Session also held a special meeting on December 4 to adopt procedures to ensure timely response to, and action on, correspondence that is directed to the session. A special congregational meeting was held on December 14 to elect ruling elders and deacons for terms starting January 2015. Diana Lilje, Barb Huff and Brownie Carver were elected ruling elders, Class of 2017, and Michele Houston, Sue Weston and Lindsay Hofman were elected deacons, Class of 2016.

Bob Spangler, Clerk of Session

Thank-you

To the VPC congregation.

We are deeply grateful for your numerous and generous expressions of love and kindness to us this Christmas season. You are amazing, and we are humbled to serve among you. Thank-you. Joyfully yours in Christ,

Dan, Michele, Lydia, Lauren and James Houston

Calendar

January 2015

(all events at VPC unless otherwise stated)



Jan

- 3 Bible Study 10 am**
- 4 Sunday Worship Service 10 am (Communion Service)**
- 11 Sunday Worship Service 10 am**
- 11 Deacon's Meeting after worship at noon**
- 11 Purposeful Service Team Meeting after worship**
- 14 Session Meeting 6:30 pm**
- 16 VPC Book Club, 6:30 PM at Skeffington's**
- 17 Bible Study 10 am**
- 17 Session Retreat**
- 18 Sunday Worship Service 10 am**
- 18 Annual Congregational Meeting after worship**
- 25 Sunday Worship Service 10 am**
- 25 Installation of Elders and Deacons**
- 25 Mission Resource Team meeting after worship**

ONGOING ACTIVITIES

Life Changing Prayer group meets on the second and fourth Wednesdays at 10:00 am at VPC, and on the first, third and fifth Wednesdays at 10:00 am at the Vashon Community Care Center.

Men's Breakfast and Bible Study meets on Thursday mornings at 7:45 am.

Women's informal breakfast meets at Sporty's at 8:00 am on Wednesdays.

Bible Study meets the 1st and 3rd Saturdays.

Please note: Dates, times and events may change after publication.
Refer to the weekly e-News or Sunday bulletin for confirmation of details.