

MARCH 2015

Vashon Presbyterian Church

Vashon Island, Washington 98070



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

March 2015 Newsletter

Safe Conduct Policy Update

As required by VPC's Safe Conduct Policy, criminal background checks have been conducted successfully on all newly installed as well as returning elders and deacons.

The next step in Policy implementation will be the training of these leaders, as well as all other volunteers working with children or vulnerable adults. Training will be conducted following a curriculum of online courses developed and administered by Praesidium, a resource recommended to VPC by the Insurance Board, our liability insurance carrier.

VPC's Moderators of session and deacons as well as appropriate Mission Team Leaders are responsible for the completion of the training requirements by elders, deacons and volunteers respectively. Kathy Olsen, VPC's Safe Conduct Policy Administrator will coordinate course enrollment. Training will begin in earnest in April.

While all of this is new for VPC, we have learned other congregations commonly follow these steps and we are adapting our processes accordingly, based on the best practices of others.

In all of this effort, the broad Statement of Purpose of our Safe Conduct Policy guides us:

As a community of Christian faith, VPC is committed to creating and maintaining programs, facilities and a community in which members, friends, staff and volunteers can worship, learn and work together in an atmosphere free from all forms of discrimination, harassment, exploitation or intimidation.

Your patience and understanding is appreciated as we move forward. Further updates will appear in this Newsletter as other aspects of our Safe Conduct Policy are implemented. Please seek out a lay leader if you have questions or suggestions.

Appreciative Enquiry

Carol Potter and Kathy Olson reported on the results of their collation of the Appreciative Enquiry interviews. Of the 88 persons who were identified as congregants, 68 agreed to be interviewed. The six questions of the Appreciative Enquiry were general in nature and designed to elicit responses without prompting so the answers were quite broad in their scope, but the collation had some clear threads: that our church provides fellowship, friendship and a Christian community was by far the most frequent positive response. There were issues and concerns revealed by the survey that will need to be addressed by the Session and session committees. Some immediate issues are being processed by specific mission-team elders and Session at upcoming meetings. A broader vision and addressing long term concerns will be discussed at a special Session workshop on leadership set for April 11th. The recommendations of our leaders from this workshop and their review of the Appreciative Enquiry will be the subject of our next Congregational Conversation set for April 19th.

If you have questions in the meantime, feel free to ask one of the elders.

Rev. Dan's Message...

Giving Up Fear- A Mediation for Lent

"'Peace! Be Still!' he said, Then the wind ceased, and there was a great calm" – Mark 4:39

Recently one of our congregation shared with me her choice of what she'd give up for Lent this winter. "Fear!" I am both captivated and intrigued.

Isn't the purpose of fasting to put aside things that distract from focus on God? Wouldn't focusing on our fears as the object of fasting possibly distract from focus on God? Or is there a healthy way to address our fears that might lead us closer to God?

The story of Jesus calming the storm (Mark 4:35-41) has become instructive. Jesus was asleep on a cushion in the stern of the boat as it was being wracked by a storm. The disciples woke him terrified. "Teacher, don't you care that we are perishing?" And he responded to their fearful, angry question, with a miracle of "great calm."

I'm indebted to my friend and colleague Doug Bunnell at First Presbyterian Bellingham for pointing out that Jesus didn't stop with that storm, but went on to address the storm of fear within his disciples. He did this via two questions:

"Why are you afraid? Have you no faith?"

I believe these questions are not rhetorical, but are serious invitations to reflection and freedom. Notice how they follow a natural progression; for connected to any fear is a "why" of belief, an article of faith. A perfectionist, for example, fears doing something wrong, and usually expresses his or her fear in impatience with himself or with others who could "mess it all up."

If someone dared ask **"Why are you afraid?"** and the perfectionist actually reflected a bit and answered, it might go something like, "Well, if I don't do this just right, then *(insert most horrible and shameful consequences imaginable here)*..." Imbalanced as the belief may be, it is what he is putting his weight upon, and that's what's rocking his boat, and rarely just his boat alone.

Lent's de-cluttering can get us alone in the boat with our true fears, to face them without hiding behind our favorite tranquilizers. Now why would a sane person choose to do that, except perhaps to find to find a greater tranquility? Even so, what could induce anyone to sail into such storms alone? Wild horses wouldn't drag me to the ramp; though with a good friend I might just climb aboard. One heck of a good friend.

"And they were filled with great awe and said to one another, **who then is this, that even the wind and the sea obey him?"**

Who indeed, but the one who has already climbed in our boat: Jesus Christ. In the teeth of the storm he is found to be more than just a teacher, more than a guru of feel-good platitudes, more than just a good friend.

This one alone— "conquered fear, captured it and led it away in a victory parade, nailed it to the cross and banished it to nothingness. He alone is Lord of fear, it knows him and yields to him alone. Therefore, look to him in your fear. Think about him, place him before your eyes and call him. Pray to him and believe his is now with you and helps you. The fear will yield and fade, and you will become free through faith in the strong and living Jesus Christ" - Dietrich Bonhoeffer.

What a friend we have in Jesus. All our sins and griefs to bear. And fears. Truly. As you carry these things to him, may he carry you into the great calm of his peace, now and always. Dan



Worship Team News

Area of Responsibility:

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

Choir Practice will be held on March 12th and 26th. Sectional practice will be on the 19th. The choir will sing at the Easter Worship Service, April 5th.

Maundy Thursday Maundy Thursday is on April 2nd. The soup dinner with the IFCH will be at 5:30 pm and a Tenebrae service will be held at 7:00 pm. This is a very meaningful and moving service. RSVP to the church office for the soup dinner would be appreciated, but not required.

The congregation is invited to bring spring plants to the Easter service. Please no baby breath.

The Saturday Bible study group will meet again on April 4th at 10:00.

Elder Brownie Carver

Hospitality/Fellowship Team News

Area of Responsibility:

Hospitality, Fellowship

Easter Sunday is April 5th this year. We will have our traditional hot cross buns coffee hour and Easter egg hunt for the kids. We would like donations of candy to put in the plastic eggs. Talk to Kate Smith if you want to help or have questions.

Book Club meets on Friday March 20st 6:30 PM at Barb and Jim Huff's. The "assignment" is to read any thing by or about Anne Morrow Lindbergh. There will be a potluck dinner before the discussion.

Elder Kate Smith

Journey/Invitation Team News

Area of Responsibility:

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

Small Groups started again for the Lenten season. We are reading Called by Mark Labberton, president of Fuller Theological Seminary. This is a six-week study delving into how our lives relate to the world and how we can live as followers of Jesus. It's not too late to consider being a part of this exciting study. Let Barb Huff, Michelle Houston, or Diana Lilje know if you are interested.

Our nursery has suffered the loss of some toys for the youngsters to play with during the worship service. If you have any toys that are clean and serviceable, please consider donating them to VPC.

Are you interested in learning more about Christianity or enhancing your Christian walk?

The Journey Team is seeking members to investigate and plan educational opportunities for both adults and children. We'd like to start up another adult education class before worship on Sundays. This would probably start after Lent. All who are interested in developing our plans are invited to drop by our next meeting, Sunday, March 15 after coffee hour.

Elder Diana Lilje



Mission Resource Team News

Area of Responsibility:

Financial stewardship,
Building and Grounds.

Purposeful Service News

Area of Responsibility:

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

Financial Stewardship - The mission resource task force was commissioned by Session to make a recommendation on the feasibility and likelihood of success of a capital campaign to reduce the mortgage. Upon reviewing the Appreciative Enquiry, the task force concluded that Session currently lacks a plan and focus that would be needed for a financial campaign to be successful. The task force voted unanimously to recommend that Session table the idea of a fund drive at this time. With this recommendation given, the work of the task force is complete. The final decision about a financial campaign will be made by the Session.

Building and Grounds Maintenance Have you noticed the new signboards in front of the church? They display beautiful welcoming artwork by Gaelen Hammond. We hope to more easily list sermon topics and special events there inviting passersby to join us. The toolbelts have been busily cleaning out rain gutters and pencil holders in the pews. We've also started a work list of tasks needing a little (or a lot) of TLC. This group meets every Tuesday from 10:00 until noon and all are invited to join us. Many thanks to all who helped out during the work party Saturday, Feb 28th (See photos on page 6). We managed to burn most of the burn pile and filled most of the parking lot potholes and weeded many of the flowerbeds around the church. We'll have to do it again sometime real soon. There are still many opportunities to help the Mission Resource Team. We meet on the 4th Sunday of each month after Worship in classroom "B" and would love to have you join us.

*Elder Barb Huff
Elder Jacq Skeffington*

At the Deacons' request, Purposeful Service Team will take over **collection and distribution of food to the foodbank**. We will continue to collect donations of food on Communion Sunday, the First Sunday of each month and deliver them to the foodbank on the following Monday.

Once again we will distribute "**One Great Hour of Sharing Fish Banks**" and will collect them on Palm Sunday, March 29th. Children (and parents) can deposit their change in these banks throughout Lent. Parents can then demonstrate to their children the difference their giving can make in changing the world through God's love. Additionally we will distribute literature about the Presbyterian Mission Agency and Special Offerings available through the Presbyterian Giving Catalog.

We are also preparing packages of applications for the **Heidsman Scholarship**. This scholarship for continuing education is supported through an endowment established by Ted and Virginia Heidsman. Applications will be available in late March.

Members committed to the Purposeful Service Team for 2015 are Beverly and Jacq Skeffington, Elizabeth Loveness, Sue Weston, Susan Commeree, Dave Rodgers, and Al and Claudia Ross-Weston. We are happy to invite newer younger members to join this missional outreach of VPC. We will continue to meet on the third Sunday of each month following Worship.

Elder Jacq Skeffington

**Email Etiquette Policy for
Vashon Presbyterian Church
Adopted by the VPC Session
February 16, 2015**

Email can be a powerful tool for communication and is generally a time saving practice. However, we place a great value on maintaining close and positive relationships within our church family. Most of us have heard of the horror stories of email communications going awry and we would like to prevent this from happening at VPC.

Although there is a list of “dos and don’ts” below, these will usually be unnecessary if a few principles are kept in mind:

- The email author should reflect an attitude of humility and gentleness toward others who may differ in their views and understanding. (Rom 14:19)
- Do not violate any confidences, be circumspect at all times, avoid any hint of gossip or slander. (Proverbs 11:13)
- The best practice when deciding whether or not to send an email is: “When in doubt, talk it out.”

Inappropriate Use of Emails Includes:

- Any action or intention to harm others, gossip or threaten the unity of the Body of Christ.
- Emotionally charged issues.
- Conflicts or complaints against others or programming.
- Sharing of ‘concerns’ that may reflect poorly on others whether intentionally or unintentionally.
- Forwarding emails with the intent (or result) of building a case against someone or trying to make them look bad.
- Forwarding is often damaging because it separates the email from the context of the broader discussion and thereby changes how the message will come across or be understood.
- Forwarding often violates the principle of allowing others to speak for themselves.
- Attempting to speak for others.
- Blind Carbon Copying (BCC).

Appropriate Use of Emails Includes:

Rather than trying to list all of the appropriate uses of email (there are many!), we ask you to keep in mind the guidelines listed above and if you find yourself writing an email that falls into one of these categories, please pray about it and pick up the phone instead!

Clerk’s Corner

The VPC session held its February meeting on the Monday, the 16th, with all members attending. Session received reports from the various teams and committees. Among the actions taken were the decision to participate in the 2015 One Great Hour of Sharing collection, and the adoption of best practices for using e-mail in correspondence among members. Session discussed the need to respond to a member’s inquiry about the worship service, and the need to provide child care by adults who have undergone security clearances. A group of session members will address each of these matters. Session scheduled a special meeting in March to consider the large amount of information submitted by members in the appreciative enquiry and the pastor’s evaluation. A congregational conversation will be held following that meeting to share that information. Another possible event which was discussed was a congregational retreat near the end of summer. Finally, Jacq explained Seattle Presbytery’s recent vote to approve proposed revisions to the Book of Order that would allow PCUSA ministers to conduct same sex marriages.

Bob Spangler, Clerk of Session

**Prayer Walk for Vashon Youth and Schools
12:30 pm @ Chautauqua/McMurray
Parking Area, Last Sunday of Each Month**

For nearly a year now, rain or shine, a growing number of youth and adults from multiple congregations have been gathering each last Sunday at 12:30pm to pray for youth and families, teachers and schools, and for outreach to island kids and un-churched families by the greater body of Christ. The prayer walk goes about 45 minutes. If God has put youth and family outreach on your heart, then these are the youth and adults you’ll want to connect with. Call Pastor Dan (458-8127) if you have any questions.

Spring Work Party
February 28, 2015

“Follow me.”

This is the primary call of God that creates and defines the church. We bear authentic witness to God’s love when we demonstrate Jesus-following lives. But too often, we don’t. The gift we are meant to be is neither available nor received. Meanwhile the world needs a church that actually lives its call. Urgently.

We will not resolve the crisis from inside the church by devising improved techniques to address denominational disharmony, declining brand loyalty, physical and financial decay, and other alarming trends. That would be like offering swimming lessons in an empty pool. We will not resolve the crisis by personal renewal alone, by asking “What is God’s call on *my* life?”. The question is earnest but individualistic, often neglecting the shared vocation for the people of God.

We can recenter our lives on Jesus Christ, whose call is to “live differently.” Whatever our context, our work, our relationships—that is the primary thing we are to be about every day: following Jesus.

Mark Labberton, *Called*



Calendar for March 2015

(all events at VPC unless otherwise stated)



March

- 1 Sunday Worship Service 10 AM (communion service)
- 8 Sunday Worship Service 10 A
- 8 Deacon's Meeting
- 9 Session Meeting 7 PM
- 15 Sunday Worship Service 10 AM
- 15 Journey Team Meeting after coffee hour
- 20 Book Club 6:30 PM at the Huff's
- 22 Sunday Worship Service 10 AM
- 22 Worship Forum after worship
- 22 Purposeful Service Team Meeting after worship
- 29 Palm Sunday Worship Service 10 AM
- 29 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 – will resume April 4th

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