

April 2015

Vashon Presbyterian Church

Vashon Island, Washington 98070

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

April 2015 Newsletter

HOLY WEEK WORSHIP SCHEDULE AT VPC

Maundy Thursday April 2nd

Soup/Chili potluck 5:30 (Serving our IFCH neighbors for the Thursday meal)

Tenebrae Service 7:00 - 7:45 PM

(A dramatic community reading of Jesus' Passion by candlelight)

Easter Sunday April 5th

Worship at 10 AM with Communion, Hot Cross Buns and Kid's Egg Hunt



Save the Date!

April 22 - Alzheimer's Presentation
See Details in Deacons News

Shame Crucified, Grace Received.

Most people agree that we should have compassion on the needy, but few want to be them.

This makes sense. Given the choice of being hungry or having enough to feed the hungry, most of us would choose the opportunity to be generous.

Generosity is blessed in God's eyes - "It is more blessed to give than receive." (Acts 20:35)

And yet if we search our hearts, are we not "more blessed to give than receive" *in the eyes of society?*

Society values productivity. A giver demonstrates that they are a productive member of society. A receiver, not so much.

Givers of course have needs and problems, but people in a food line? Society generally considers them as the ones with *Problems*.

The line between having problems and having *Problems* is the line between the experience of guilt and shame. Guilt is our sense of rightness/wrongness around what we do. Guilt as a feeling can be useful to alert us to something we could do differently.

Shame, on the other hand, is an intense sense of wrongness about who we *are*. We are the problem. We think, "If only they knew..."

Jr. Highers are expert shameologists. One once told me, "It feels like I am the one person in the school who doesn't belong or who *couldn't ever* belong".

In recent years digital media and celebrity culture seem to be reducing the world into a giant middle-school. Every day the secret shames of famous people get exposed as page leaders at reputable news sites. According to a recent article in *Christianity Today*, many sociologists believe westerners are evolving from a morality/guilt-based culture to a shame based culture. But instead of the traditional Eastern and equatorial model of "honor/shame", our emerging version is "celebrity/shame". Different carrot, same stick.

Our social-media culture might not be so alien from the culture that invented the cross. The cross was a mixed-media billboard, a form of social media designed to publically expose, mock and isolate a human being to total destruction. You might think of it as the ultimate thumbs-down posting, "You are a problem".

In my experience as a pastor of people who wrestle with it and also as someone who has nearly been

destroyed by it, I believe that shame is perhaps the most destructive force in the world of powers that are not of God.

It is the evil twin of guilt. Paul distinguishes them thusly, "Godly sorrow brings repentance that leads to salvation and leaves no regret; worldly sorrow leads to death". (2 Corinthians 7:10) Shame among Christians is rooted in the dread that we in our particular brokenness are uniquely unacceptable to God or others. It has indeed led to death.

Shame management drives many behaviors, but the ones I see most in the church are ones that involve giving of time and effort; not from joy but to prove something – to prove oneself adequate, or to at least improve upon or atone for one's inadequacies.

I have witnessed, suffered, and personally employed a variety of shame-management strategies, and the results are uniformly counterproductive in regards to sinning.

Jesus Christ didn't negotiate with shame. He gave a war cry.

"Look upon Jesus... for the joy set before him he endured the cross, **despising** its shame, and sat down at the right hand of the throne of God." Hebrews 12:2

On the cross, God in Christ chose to absorb into his being not only our guilt of sin but our personal hell of shame. Despised and crucified, shame was condemned upon its own billboard, and its doom sealed in the joyous news of Jesus' rising.

Now, at the foot of his empty cross, we can be our real selves - people with *Problems*, and with God, and thus with real help! "So let us approach God's throne of grace with confidence, so that we may receive mercy and find grace to help us in our time of need." (Hebrews 4:16).

Here is the one place where to **receive** is most blessed.

At the foot of this cross and the throne of this grace may you receive God's fierce and unwavering love that is yours in our Lord Jesus Christ. And trust it. May your joy in receiving drown any shame and overflow your heart with love for God, your neighbor, and even yourself!

Dan

Worship Team News

Area of Responsibility:

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

Purposeful Service Team News

Area of Responsibility:

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

HOLY WEEK WORSHIP SCHEDULE AT VPC

Maundy Thursday April 2nd

Soup/Chili potluck 5:30 - 7:00 (Serving our IFCH neighbors for the Thursday meal)

Tenebrae Service 7:00 - 7:45 PM

(A dramatic community reading of Jesus' Passion by candlelight)

Easter Sunday April 5th

Worship at 10 AM with Communion
Hot Cross Buns and Kid's Egg Hunt

The Tenebrae Service will be held on April 2nd at 7:00. Everyone is invited to this meaningful event in Holy Week. You are also invited to the IFCH soup dinner at 5:30. These are two separate events.

The congregation may bring spring flowers to the Easter morning service. The Easter service will include music by the choir and communion with harp music.

Choir Practice Dates:

April 16th, 23rd, and Sunday morning on the 26th.

The Saturday Bible study group will meet in the church library at 9:00. Everyone is welcome to attend. Thanks

Elder Brownie Carver

Thank you all for your generosity in our **One Great Hour of Sharing**. If you missed the opportunity to bring back your "fish bank" or make a contribution to the Presbyterian Mission Agency bring it on Easter Sunday and note One Great Hour of Sharing on any checks.

Easter Sunday will also be the first Sunday of April. Please remember to bring food to donate to the food bank and place it in the baskets in the sanctuary before worship.

Applications for the Heindsman Family

Scholarship are available in the church office. This scholarship is not for graduating seniors but available for continuing education. Applications must be returned to the church office by April 27th. Interviews of applicants will be conducted in early May. If you have any questions please contact Jacq Skeffington at 354-8917.

We have started contacting other island churches and the women of **Mary's Place (Church of Mary Magdalene)** to plan another combined worship service this summer. If you are interested in helping with planning please contact Beverly Skeffington at 354-8921.

Purposeful Service Team meets every 3rd Sunday after worship. Please join us.

Elder Jacq Skeffington

Mission Resource Team News

Area of Responsibility:

Financial stewardship,
Building and Grounds.

Building and Grounds Thank you to all who took part in the work-parties in March. The grounds are again looking lovely with new life springing forth in every flowerbed. We're planning on starting up our **Wednesday evening "weed and feed"** parties in Late April or May this year to take advantage of the soft moist earth for pulling weeds. Instead of a BBQ we'll share a simple meal of soups and salads. Watch the weekly eNews for a startup date.

The "Toolbelts" group has started pressure washing the entrances and some of the siding around the church. Weather permitting we hope to start sectionally painting some of the exterior surfaces this month. We are also investigating upgrading the sound system in the sanctuary and providing Dan a wireless microphone. "Toolbelts" meet every Tuesday from 10:00 til noon and all are welcome.

We are seeking bids to finish re-roofing the section of the roof over the classrooms and offices. That section was deferred last year last year due to budgetary concerns.

Financial Stewardship The Mission Resources Team is continuing to investigate a partnership agreement with other non-profit organizations to share the unused spaces within the building. Revenue from such a partnership would allow our small congregation to focus our giving more on our missional concerns than on maintaining the building. Session will gather again with staff of Renewal Ministries Northwest for a workshop on April 11th to review the results of our Appreciative Enquiry and continue discernment of God's calling for us as Vashon Presbyterian Church.

We are planning on having our annual yard sale in early August prior to Vacation Bible School and welcoming the Vintage Motorcycle Enthusiasts again this summer, whenever they hold their annual rally. The Mission Resources Team meets every 4th Sunday after worship and would love to have you join us with your ideas and support.

Elder Jacq Skeffington

Journey/Invitation Team News

Area of Responsibility:

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

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

The Journey team is working on plans for an adult education class to start in late April or early May. This class would be at 9 AM Sundays.

Several people have agreed to help with **nursery care** during the worship service, but we could still use a few more. The goal is to have enough people that no one would have to miss the sermon more than once per month. Please let Diana Lilje know if you are interested in helping out. All people who help will children will need to complete a background check.

The Journey Team is seeking members to **investigate and plan educational opportunities** for both adults and children. This will include discussion on encouraging more people to join home groups. All who are interested in developing our plans are invited to drop by our next meeting, Sunday, April 19 after coffee hour.

Elder Diana Lilje



Hospitality/Fellowship Team News

Area of Responsibility:
Hospitality, Fellowship

This Sunday is Easter and after church we will have an **Easter Egg Hunt** for the children. You may drop off donated wrapped candy for the Egg Hunt at the church office by Friday April 3. For Coffee Hour please bring Hot Cross Buns or other yummy treats. Thank you for your help.

Book Club meets on Friday April 17th at the Ross Weston's at 6:30 for a potluck and discussion of Sewing Circles of Herat by Christina Lamb.

Elder Kate Smith

PRESBYFEST 2015

Dear friends,
I want to give you a heads up on the upcoming Seattle Presbytery Presbyfest coming up Saturday May 16, 8:30-4:00 pm.

Great presentation and workshops, always. But I think this particular speaker and theme is quite relevant to our journey right now. Here's a link to the blurb on the Presbytery website, and another link to Mike Breen's blog where you can gather a bit more about what he is saying.

Event is free, includes lots of coffee and snacks as well as lunch. You can rsvp on the website and we usually carpool to these things.

Presbyfest link:
<http://seattlepresbytery.org/events/presbyfest>

Mike Breen homepage. Check out "popular posts" link:

<http://www.disciplingculture.com/>

Christ's peace be with you,
Dan

Clerk's Corner

The VPC session held its scheduled monthly meeting on March 9. Members submitted committee and team reports. Jacq stated that the Mission Resource task force considering the possibility of a mortgage reduction campaign recommends that session not organize such a project at this time. Session discussed the planned congregational conversation during which the results of the appreciative enquiry will be presented. On recommendation of the Personnel Committee, session agreed to meet on March 21 with the deacons and office volunteers to discuss Dan's performance review. A session workshop will then be held on April 11 to consider the results of the appreciative enquiry; session members will have read all the submitted comments by that time and will prepare a presentation to the congregation. Also at that meeting, session will adopt its 2015 work plan. In response to comments from several members, session agreed to reconsider and discuss in April the e-mail etiquette policy adopted at the February meeting. Finally, session declined a request to send the VPC directory to the PCUSA Presbyterian Panel, but instructed the clerk to let members know how they can be participants on the panel if desired. Session held a special meeting on March 21 to consider whether to seek facilitation of the April 11 workshop by Renewal Ministries Northwest, whose staff facilitated the session's January retreat. Session voted to retain the RMNW staff, and to submit a grant application to Seattle Presbytery for reimbursement of the cost.

Bob Spangler, Clerk of Session

Deacons Team News

The deacons have details of two exciting new projects to share with the church family.

The first is a map of the island showing the home locations of all who are part of our church community. From the distribution of residences, we have created several groups based on neighborhoods. We're scattered all over Vashon and Maury Island, but can be found in geographical clusters too!

The deacons hope to use this information to guide their efforts in supporting all our members, and the Journey and Hospitality Teams can also make use of this information for more programs. Please be patient with us for a bit though - the map is currently only pins on paper. We hope to transfer it to a more attractive format very soon.

The second new project involves a great collaboration with the Senior Center and Vashon Community Care. We three will be the sponsors of a special program for our community - **a presentation by the staff from the Alzheimer's Association** office in Seattle. The video program will provide techniques for improving communication and interactions with those affected by Alzheimer's disease. It's a terrific support opportunity for care-givers and a good learning experience any of us who interact with Alzheimer's individuals.

The program on Wednesday afternoon, April 22nd will be free to the public so please share this news with all those you feel could benefit from the information. The video lasts about a hour; there will be plenty of time for questions and answers and sharing. Deacons will provide refreshments afterwards too. An RSVP to the church is requested in order to help plan for an adequate number of handouts - and chairs and cookies! Thanks to the generosity of our church family, we are able to use some of our deacon funds for the honorarium for this program, however an optional donation basket will be available to help defray the publicity costs.

The program is especially designed to provide helpful techniques for the care-givers and friends of those receiving care. Vashon Community Care has offered to have trained staff in attendance too, so there will be extra help if a care-giver needs to bring along their care recipient.

Watch for our colorful posters around town right after Easter, and encourage all your friends and neighbors who could benefit to attend this program. More information will be in the church office, and all of the deacons can help with any other questions.

Can you help with rides to church?

There are several members of our church family who could really benefit from help with a ride to church worship services and other events. If you could offer to help with these transportation requests - especially on Sunday mornings - please talk to one of the deacons, or leave a message in the church office. There's a special need for drivers who are available in the Maury Island area.

Report from the Personnel Committee

The Personnel Committee is just finishing Pastor Dan's annual performance review. As in the past, active elders and deacons provided input for the review. Office volunteers also were invited to participate this year. This group was seen as those who worked most closely with Pastor Dan and in the best position to comment on his performance.

In pulling together the review, the Personnel Committee and participants were guided by VPC's Personnel Committee Statement of Purpose. Several participants felt re-publicizing the Statement to all congregants would be beneficial, hopefully broadening awareness of the steps followed to maintain healthy Pastor/Congregation relations. The full text is included in this newsletter.

Please contact a member of the Committee if you have questions or comments. We would welcome hearing from you.

VASHON PRESBYTERIAN CHURCH PERSONNEL COMMITTEE STATEMENT OF PURPOSE

The VPC Personnel Committee is a committee of the Session, elected annually, with at least one active elder and three members at large. Members at large serve two years, with the option of re-election for a maximum of 4 years total. The Personnel committee serves on behalf of the session and reports back to them.

Covenant support and accountability is the primary function of this committee. When a Pastor is installed, both the Pastor and the congregation make public promises. The Personnel Committee has the responsibility to serve as "covenant caretakers", cultivating the support and accountability necessary for all of us to keep the promises that have been made to one another. The goal is unity, mutual affection, and shared ministry among the entire fellowship.

In loving support to our Pastor, the congregation recognizes our promises to provide for the welfare and security of the Pastor's personal and professional needs. We have also promised to follow this Pastor's leadership. Committee members help fulfill these promises by providing advocacy and encouragement for the Pastor, maintaining strict confidentiality; and prayerfully working to nurture an environment at VPC that promotes the Pastor's spiritual growth, physical and emotional well being, healthy relationships and vocational development. The Personnel Committee meets frequently with the Pastor to share in a friendly, private and nurturing manner.

Working through the Session, the Personnel Committee works as an advocate for the Pastor and the congregation calling them to accountability to their promises. This advocacy includes annual performance and compensation reviews as well as oversight of vacation, continuing education and other personnel policies. This advocacy role may also include conflict resolution, as the Personnel Committee is the initial group involved in any issues of formal church discipline regarding the Pastor, following the process outlined in the Book of Order.

In loving accountability with our Pastor, the Session recognizes the vital role the Pastor plays in the congregation's faithfulness to their calling and mission. The Personnel Committee, on behalf of the Session, advocates for the congregation, and is entrusted with the responsibility of exhorting the Pastor to faithfulness in the promises the Pastor has made as servant leader of this congregation.

Presbyterian Church USA Constitutional Amendment

Dear VPC family,

Earlier this month the necessary majority of Presbyterian Church USA (PCUSA) ratified an amendment to our constitution changing language in our directory of worship, specifically the definition of marriage as exclusively between a man and a woman. To say that there are strong feelings on both sides of this topic would be an understatement. That is true not only regionally and also in our congregation.

I did not have time to do it this month, but I will be writing a pastoral letter on the topic in May's newsletter. In the mean time I very much encourage you to share with me your thoughts and feelings about this decision or any questions or concerns or thoughts you may have.

And I encourage you to read the following remarks from Seattle Presbytery's executive presbyter and clerk, below. In Christ, who is our peace - Dan

Brothers and Sisters of Seattle Presbytery,

I'm sure you have read by now that the PCUSA is predicting that the marriage amendment will be approved and become part of our Book of Order this June. It's hard to find another topic that causes so many mixed emotions among us as Presbyterians.

These words from Romans come to mind as we head into what is next for us in Seattle Presbytery: "Love must be genuine. Hate what is evil, cling to what is good. Be devoted to one another in love. Honor one another above yourselves. Never be lacking in zeal, but keep your spiritual fervor, serving the Lord. Be joyful in hope, patient in affliction, faithful in prayer. Share with the Lord's people who are in need. Practice hospitality. Bless those who persecute you; bless and do not curse. Rejoice with those who rejoice; mourn with those who mourn. Live in harmony with one another." (12:9-16)

This is Paul at his missional, called to be Christ-in-community best. It may be hard to embrace at this moment, but I've seen our presbytery live this authentically and honestly--and I trust we will continue to do so. My prayer is that we live ever more deeply into what this means for us and this world as we seek to witness to the One who gave his life out of his immeasurable love for our world.

I'm grateful for our Stated Clerk, Rev. Karen Breckenridge, who supports all of us by providing more details below.

In Christ,

Rev. Scott Lumsden
Executive Presbyter

Dear Sisters and Brothers in Christ,

By now you've probably seen reports of the passage of amendment 14F that makes changes to the section on marriage in the Directory for Worship of the Book of Order. The effect of the action is to allow broader discretion to teaching elders and sessions in the weddings they will conduct and host. In states such as ours, this discretion could include same gender marriages. As stated in the amendment itself, this change to the Book of Order cannot be used to compel a teaching elder to perform a marriage service nor can it be used to compel a session to authorize the use of church property for a marriage service that is contrary to their discernment of the Holy Spirit and their understanding of the Word of God.

The Office of the General Assembly has a variety of resources to help us understand and interpret the action that has been taken. Among the available resources are:

- [an advisory opinion that answers several questions about the change](#)
- [a letter from the General Assembly Moderator and Vice-moderator](#)
- [a statement from the General Assembly Stated Clerk](#)

Please visit pcusa.org/marriage to view these and other resources.

Many Presbyterians are experiencing strong feelings about the changes that are happening in our denomination – from joy to sorrow, from grief to celebration. Please join me in continuing to pray for our communities of faith and for the guidance of the Holy Spirit as we seek to be faithful to Christ's call in our lives.

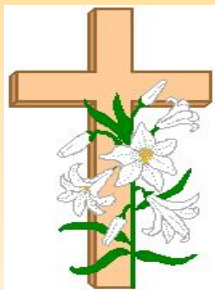
Grace and peace,

Rev. Karen Breckenridge
Stated Clerk



Calendar for April 2015

(all events at VPC unless otherwise stated)



April

- 2 Maundy Thursday Supper 5:30 PM
- 2 Maundy Thursday Tenebrae Service 7-7:45 PM
- 4 Bible Study 9 AM
- 5 EASTER Sunday Worship Service 10 AM (communion service)
- 5 Easter Egg Hunt after worship
- 12 Sunday Worship Service 10 AM
- 12 Deacon's Meeting at noon
- 13 Session Meeting 7:15 PM
- 17 Book Club at Ross Weston's 6:30 PM
- 19 Bible Study 9 AM
- 19 Sunday Worship Service 10 AM
- 19 Journey Team Meeting after worship
- 19 Purposeful Service Team Meeting after worship
- 22 Alzheimer's Presentation 1-3 PM
- 26 Sunday Worship Service 10 AM
- 26 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..

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.