

J U N E 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

June 2015 Newsletter

Summer Events

“Sundae” Sunday 6/7

Women’s Luncheon 6/13

Strawberry Parking 7/18

VPC Yard Sale 8/01

VBS/Youth Week 8/3-7

Mary’s Place Picnic 8/16



Don’t Miss the Fun!
Sundae Sunday!

Vacation Bible School and Youth Week August 3rd-7th

Island churches are collaborating to make the first week in August very special for children 3 years of age through 6th grade. **Bible - Blast To The Past** is the theme. Each day kids will: **know** what’s so great about God, **Explore** the nature of God, and **Serve** God in practical ways. Add in live music and crazy fun games and you have a recipe for great memories. Suggested donation is \$20 for one and \$30 for a family. 3year olds through kindergartners meet at VPC 9:45 -11:45 daily. 1st – 6th graders meet at VUMC from 9:30 – noon daily. Registration forms are now available at

www.vacationbibleschool.com/vashonisland.

This is also the week for **Vashon Island Community Youth Week**. 6th graders through high school age youths will meet every evening at Vashon Island Community Church 7-8:30 PM. Church affiliation is not required! Each evening there will be games, live music, and fantastic fun for all island young people. Call VICC 206 463-3940 or VPC 206 463-2010 for details.

Connection (Not Church) Is What They Seek

Until the Sunday I went with my grandma Betty to her church in Hamilton, Montana, I had never been in a regular worship service. I was 13. The liturgy was alien and I was unsure of what I believed, but the Presbyterians' friendliness-and donuts-opened me up to risk connecting with Christians again. But not through a worship service. I connected through a friend's invitation to his youth group (also Presbyterian). Only as a follower of Jesus Christ did the importance of weekly worship with a bunch of people different than me begin to be important.

Recent Pew Research Foundation numbers on church attendance and religious affiliation indicate a steepening of a downward trend going on since my time in Hamilton. Fewer and fewer Americans who drive by church buildings, mosques or temples have any idea of what goes on in those places during worship hours. If ever they do go inside, more often than not it is for a community group (AA, Scouts, Quilters) or event.

Truth be told, few young people are looking for church, i.e., a worship service. Especially in the Pacific Northwest. That's bad news if our primary focus is to get people to come to Sunday morning worship. But there's good news to be shared around what young people increasingly *are* looking for. Connection.

A significant body of research is indicating that Americans born after 1985, the so-called "millennial" generation, is reaching for an American dream based far more on meaningful connections, conversation and collaboration than on weekly affiliations. Many millennials are eschewing the suburbs in which most of them grew up, and are gravitating towards cities (New Urbanism) and small towns with a missionary desire to foster connections between neighbors.

Block parties, community gardens and the nurture of "third spaces"- meeting places outside of the work and home sphere-are topics of passionate interest to millennials. A culture devoted to the chasing of stuff and self has disenchanted them and left them hungry for a sense of authentic connection with nature, extended intergenerational family, neighborhood, and a sense of the sacred. Millennials want reconnection, maybe with a community of faith that lives Christ's values, but not with a weekly worship service. Not at first, anyway. And herein lies our challenge and our opportunity.

May I suggest a model for making connections with younger people that I'm absolutely sure would succeed? Truly? *Disclaimer: it will totally disrupt your lifestyle should you try it. You are hereby forewarned.*

Okay. First thing, be a follower Jesus Christ. Our summer

worship preaching text, the Sermon on the Mount, (Matt. 5-7), is Jesus' own primer for discipleship. Find time to pray and read Scripture daily (www.youversion.com has reading plans), find a group that encourages you to grow in love, service, stewardship, Sabbath, forgiving, and being forgiven. If you are already doing this and know the joy of what I'm talking about, great! If you are unsure, or would like to experience this more deeply, talk to me or to Diana Lilje our Spiritual Journey Team elder, and we can help you find a group that will support you in taking next steps.

Next, invite young people to dinner, starting with those who have already taken the risk to join us in worship. Have they not come in a little while? Then by all means, invite them to dinner soon. But **don't** recruit them for anything! In fact, avoid church talk as much as possible. *Learn* about them! Ask them about their dreams. Ask them about their faith experience. Ask them what they long for in a neighborhood, in a faith community, in their own calling. Offer to pray for them. Maybe invite them to your prayer group. I can guarantee you that most will be blown away by elders who wish to be, above all, friends.

Next, as you practice this friendship, be prepared to be invited into *their* homes, their world, to listen to their ideas and vision for connecting with an unchurched generation. Take what you are hearing to the Lord in prayerful discernment and be prepared that He might call you to throw them the car keys, and to be led by down some different paths, to meet new disciples who are not necessarily your type, and to be challenged to "be willing to submit to one another in love in reverence for Christ" (Eph. 5:21).

Oh, and be prepared for worship style to change in ways that may baffle. Or delight. (No one ever likes *all* the changes!). But Jesus Christ, who is "the same yesterday, today and forever" (Hebrews 13:8), will be in the center of it. It's His worship, after all, right? And if our center is in Him, we'll be right at home. Together. In Him,
Dan

PS: The first week of August VPC has a unique opportunity to connect with millennials who'll be bringing their pre-K children to VPC in the mornings as part of the community-wide Vacation Bible School program. What an amazing opportunity to serve and connect, don't you think? Last year we had two families that came to worship through the connection they made with us at VBS. I'd love to hear your thoughts on how we can more intentionally love and connect with these parents and their kids while they are with us this summer. D.

Hospitality/Fellowship Team News

Area of Responsibility: Hospitality, Fellowship

“Sundae Sunday” June 7th is the date of a special treat for all the kids and their friends. To celebrate the beginning of summer and the end of the school year we are re-establishing the tradition of Sundae Sunday! A 30’ long extravaganza of ice cream, toppings, gummy worms, and other delights awaits the young after worship. Bring your friends and neighbors!



Summer Sunday Coffee Service Hosts Needed!

For the summer months of June, July and August VPC is going to do Sunday fellowship with friends around coffee. No food is being requested. Those signing up to host the event will be asked to smile, greet folks and give them the coffee or tea of their choice. As things wind down, gathering the coffee cups, putting them into the residential dishwasher & turning it on will be needed. Lastly, emptying & cleaning the 2 coffee pots will complete the host's duties. Coffee will already be made by our wonderful Sara and locking the kitchen and the building will be done by Pastor Dan. Call or see Carol Potter to sign up for your Sunday. 463-6749

All Church Retreat Session is thinking of having a church retreat if there is sufficient interest. The dates will be the weekend of October 23, 24, and 25 at Camp Burton. You should have received a survey that will give congregation members a chance to indicate whether you would prefer a one-day retreat or staying over night as well as meal preferences and ideas for classes. Be sure and fill out your survey and turn it in so we can begin planning in earnest.

Ladies Luncheon Ladies from the congregation are invited to bring their friends and neighbors to the annual Ladies Luncheon June 13th from 11:30 to 1:30 here at VPC. This potluck gathering has proved to be a favorite in the past. This year's speakers, Boyd and Sue Stockdale, will share their experiences working at Child Academy in South Africa. This is a mission project through Mercer Island Presbyterian Church. It's sure to be a wonderful opportunity for good food and fun fellowship. Make your plans to attend! RSVP to the church with the number in your party and what you plan to bring.

Upcoming Book Club Selections

The book club will not meet in June.

The selection for upcoming months are as follows:

June *The Signature of All Things* Elizabeth Gilbert

July *All the Light We Cannot See* Anthony Doerr

August *A Trip to the Stars* Nicholas Christopher

September *Violins of Hope* James A. Grymes

Mission Resource Team News

Area of Responsibility:

Financials, Building and Grounds.

Financials The budget figure for weekly offering is \$2637. Through May 24th the offering is averaging \$2285, or a shortfall of \$350 per week. To date we are behind budget by \$7350. If this trend continues there will be a shortfall of \$18,200 by year end. Expenses are tracking closely to budget. Please continue to pray for our congregations financial health. If anyone has any questions or suggestions please talk to one of the elders. Session wants to make sure the congregation is aware of our financial situation.

Elder Barb Huff

Building and Grounds Maintenance: Members of the Mission Resource Taskforce to Reduce Mortgage Debt are very excited about a potential partnership with a non-profit organization that has shown real interest in sharing our building. Realizing our financial situation we simply cannot go on operating as we have, but feel confident a mutual agreement for sharing our space can be worked out with the right partner. The financial reality of maintaining our building, as a major mission resource, weighs heavily on all our hearts. The enthusiasm displayed by the potential partner is like a breath of fresh air bringing a vision of new life for those spaces.

We are very grateful once again to the **Quilter's Guild** for providing black out curtains for the Social Hall windows during the fundraising for Nepal event. The flower beds have sprung to life and rhodies are in full bloom. If you'd like to spend more time getting up close to the flowers, join us on Wednesday evenings from 5:00 - 7:00 pm to trim and tend the flowerbeds (and pull a few weeds!). Bring along something to BBQ, or a salad or desert to share and we'll provide the grill.

The "**Toolbelts Group**" continues to make improvements every Tuesday morning from 10:00 til noon. We've been trimming around, scrubbing down and painting curbs in the parking area. We're planning to start repainting the wall by the parking

lot on the next sunny Tuesday. Feel free to join us any Tuesday as there is always need for an extra hand or foot to brace a ladder.

During your spring cleaning, don't forget we plan to have our **annual yard sale in early August!**

The Mission Resource Team meets on the 4th Sunday of each month after Worship in classroom "B" and would love to have you join us.

Elder Jacq Skeffington

Purposeful Service News

Area of Responsibility:

Scholarship, Mary Magdalene weekend/partnership, IFCH dinners, mission

Donations of food for the **Vashon Maury Community Food Bank** will be received the First Sunday of the month 6/7. Their need is great.

The Heindsman Scholarship Committee has extended the deadline for application until July 9th. Applications may still be picked up in the church office.

We will have two opportunities to provide **IFCH meals** this month. Thursday, June 26th and Tuesday June 30th This usually requires 4 people to prepare the meal and clean up afterwards. Funding for ingredients is available through VPC. Why not get a group of friends together and try something new? There are sign up sheets in the Social Hall if you wish to participate.

We are getting excited about worshiping with our sisters from **Mary's Place** (the Church of Mary Magdalene) again soon. Our combined service with the United Methodists Church and others in mid August is something we all look forward to all year.. If you are interested in helping or planning please contact Beverly Skeffington at 354-8921.

It's also time to start planning for our **Strawberry Festival Fundraising** event. Each year we provide parking and chairs for viewing the Parade. The proceeds go to Mission Partners.

The Purposeful Service Team meets the Third Sunday of each month after Worship. Please join us.

Elder Jacq Skeffington

Worship Team News

Area of Responsibility:

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

Thank you to our wonderful choir and to Barry

Cooper. Your music has made our worship services more meaningful. We hope you will have a restful summer, and we look forward to your music in the fall.

Ushering: In the fall, we will be starting a new ushering program that will include training. We hope that you will be a part of this greeting/welcoming opportunity. If you are interested in this program or in ushering this summer, please call Brownie Carver at 463-5399 or the church office at 463-2010. Also, remember to visit the sign up sheet in the Social Hall.

Elder Brownie Carver



Journey/Invitation Team News

Area of Responsibility:

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

The Adult Education class that meets on Sunday mornings at 9 AM is halfway through our current series. There are 3 sessions left –

June 7: “Why Does God Allow Suffering?” and “Why Is There So Much Evil in the World?”

June 14: “Why is the Church Responsible for So Much Injustice?” and “Why are Christians Such Hypocrites?”

June 21: “How Can God Be Full of Love and Wrath at the Same Time?” and “How Can God Send Good People to Hell?”

All are welcome to attend even if you have missed the first 3 classes. This is an excellent series that encourages debate.

Elder Diana Lilje

The end of the school year will be celebrated and students will be honored on June 7th.

Rock ‘n Roll Marathon

Beverly and Jacq Skeffington are running in the Seattle Rock ‘n Roll Half Marathon. They are running for World Vision and hope with their fundraising to bring water to our brothers and sisters around the world.

In many places in the world, women and children must put their lives in danger getting their water. In addition, the long distances it takes to get the water prevents children from attending school.

If you would like to contribute to this fundraising effort by Bev and Jacq, you can go online to teamworldvision.org and click on donate. There will be a place to type in Bev or Jacq's name. It will take you to a page where you can donate. It costs \$50 to bring water to one person. If you scroll down the page, you will see a place where you can put a different amount. Anything you can do is a step closer to a healthier life for someone.

You may also give your donations directly to Jacq/Bev and make the check out to World Vision. In the memo line, you can put their names.

Your donations will help World Vision bring water systems to small communities. The people of the village learn to maintain the system.

World Vision is a local nonprofit and your donations are tax deductible.

Please be praying for us on June 13th as we run the race after 4+ months of training.

Clerk's Corner

Session held its scheduled monthly meeting on May 11, with all members attending. Reports were received from the teams and committees, including a report from the treasurer that the revenue shortfall should be communicated to the congregation. Session also discussed preliminary information regarding the time and cost of a fall congregational retreat. Session voted to ask assistance from the Presbytery to foster improved communication and relationships. Members shared their views on Dan's newsletter article concerning same sex marriage, and decided to hold a separate meeting to address the issue and determine what response, if any, session should take concerning the amendments to the Book of Order allowing such marriages in Presbyterian churches. Finally, session discussed an e-mail from the county sheriff's office concerning increased loitering on VPC property and took steps to ensure that our policies are enforced. The special meeting referenced above was held on May 19. After discussion and reflection, session took the action described in the separate article in this newsletter. (Page 7 of this newsletter)

Bob Spangler, Clerk of Session



Safe Conduct Policy Update

As required by VPC's Safe Conduct Policy, background checks have been completed for all Ministers to the Congregation that are our active elders and deacons, Mission Team Leaders and volunteers who work with children and/or vulnerable adults.

The second step for qualification under the Policy is for each Minister to the Congregation to complete on-line training in the detection, awareness and prevention of sexual abuse in their roles at VPC. The courses are from a curriculum offered by Armatus, a training developer and provider recommend by our liability insurance carrier, the Insurance Board.

Session and the Personnel Committee have asked Ministers to the Congregation to complete your course work by June 15. We also request each of you to let your Moderator, Mission Team Leader and/or the Personnel Committee know your opinion of the suitability of the course material so that we may provide appropriate feedback to Armatus.

The Personnel Committee asks all congregants to join us thanking all Ministers to the Congregation for their willingness to serve.

Barb Huff, co-chair
Larry Commeree, co-chair
Nancy van Roessel

A Message from the VPC Session to Members and Friends

In the past two newsletters you have read about the changes to the Presbyterian Church (USA) Book of Order that will allow (but not require) our teaching elders (pastors) to officiate at weddings of same sex couples. The changes also will allow PCUSA churches to be the venue for such weddings, upon approval of sessions. In the May newsletter Dan explained why he will not officiate at such weddings, should he be asked. Session also has given this issue considerable thought, both at the May business meeting and at a special meeting called for this purpose on May 19. We listened to each other, shared personal views and prayed for guidance as to how session should respond, if at all. We now want to share our thoughts and actions with you.

Before reporting on our deliberations, it is helpful to keep in mind the responsibilities of both the pastor and session in our denomination. The pastor is not an employee or member of the congregation, but rather is called to preach, teach, provide pastoral care and administer the sacraments. The pastor does not establish the policy of a PCUSA church, except to the extent that he or she participates in session meetings. Thus Dan's position is a personal position, not a VPC policy – a distinction that he made clear in his article – and session respects his decision. The session, however, "...shall have responsibility for governing the congregation and guiding its witness to the sovereign activity of God in the world, so that the congregation is and becomes a community of faith, hope, love, and witness." (Book of Order, G-3.0201) In carrying out that responsibility, VPC's session decided that it would address the admittedly difficult issue of same sex marriage even though no such marriage at VPC has been requested.

We frankly are not of one opinion on this issue, but we are committed to a safe and healthy dialog where we listen to each other and pray for guidance as to how to carry out our leadership responsibility. On one matter we are unanimous: we do not want to see this issue cause unhealthy dissention within the congregation – or within session itself. Moreover, we are all committed to discussing this matter with the congregation, either individually at your request or in a larger group, because we are sure that the congregation (like us) has differing views. We want to offer you educational resources to guide your personal discernment. For those members who want to read a theological discussion in favor of same sex marriage, Dan recommends The Bible's Yes to Same-Sex Marriage, by Mark Achtemeier. Another resource Dan recommends is a sermon given at University Presbyterian Church, which can be found at <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=0Y8T23V4laU>. Session also is unanimously committed to extending participation and membership and leadership in VPC to all Christians regardless of their sexual orientation, and to take no action counter to our duty to be a "community of faith, hope, love, and witness." We do not want our actions or Dan's position to be misinterpreted or to be seen by the congregation or community as unwelcoming.

Although session is of one mind in those matters above, we are not in agreement regarding what position to take as to authorizing a same sex marriage ceremony in the VPC sanctuary. This is a matter for session, not the pastor, to decide, because our long-standing policy is that session must approve any use of the sanctuary on a case-by-case basis. After considerable discussion at the special meeting, session on a divided vote adopted the following statement: "**Session will not deny use of the VPC premises for a Christian marriage service solely because the couple is of the same sex.**" As noted, such a service would have to be approved by session, as is any marriage at VPC, and session would need to authorize a pastor other than Dan to perform a Christian service.

We understand that some members may question whether session needed to address this issue now, and more significantly whether our policy is in compliance with scripture. Please know that we wish to keep communication with you open as to this action, and that we will both listen to you and provide our response in a non-judgmental way should you want to discuss this issue further.

In Christ's service.

Brownie Carver, Barb Huff, Diana Lilje, Kate Smith and Jacq Skeffington



Calendar for June 2015

(all events at VPC unless otherwise stated)

June

- 6 Bible Study 9 AM
- 7 Sunday Worship Service 10 AM (Communion Service)
- 8 Session Meeting 7:15 PM
- 13 Women's Luncheon 11:30-1:30
- 14 Sunday Worship Service 10 AM
- 14 Deacon's Meeting at noon
- 20 Bible Study 9 AM
- 21 Sunday Worship Service 10 AM
- 21 Purposeful Service Team Meeting after worship
- 21 Journey Team Meeting after worship
- 28 Sunday Worship Service 10 AM
- 28 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.

Tool Belts meet/work Tuesdays 10-noon

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