

J U L 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

JULY 2015 Newsletter



VPC Summer Event Schedule

July 18th Strawberry Festival
Parking/Chairs Fundraiser

August 1st VPC Yard Sale

August 3rd - 7th Annual
Vacation Bible School

August 3rd - 7th Annual Youth
Week

August 16th Mary's Place
Picnic

Transition Team Begins Process

With the resignation of Pastor Dan this September (see Pastor Dan's letter dated June 15 p.6), the Session is committed to ensuring a smooth transition. A first step is to select an interim pastor. A transition team has been chosen to develop a job description for this position and the Session will approve the description and contract terms. The transition team will work to develop a description that will honor our commitment to VPC's history as well as relate a vision for the future. The discernment process that has been ongoing and the recent appreciative enquiry will be invaluable to inform this process. This team will work closely with the Kevin Nollette and the Presbytery Committee on Ministry who, based on our expressed needs and uniqueness, will provide several candidates for interview. We hope to have selected an interim by October. If you have questions about the ongoing transition process please talk to Brownie Carver, who is the Elder leading the transition team or any of the Session members. (see Clerk's Corner p 7 for more details).

Strawberry Festival Parking

Our Festival fundraiser will support ongoing relief efforts from recent earthquake in Nepal. If you want to reserve parking/chairs, please contact beverlyskeffington@gmail.com or call 206/354-8921. See **article in Purposeful Service for more**

Register Now for VBS Aug 3th-7th

Registration forms are now available at area churches or online at www.vacationbibleschool.com/vashonisland. See details in the Journey/Invitation Team News.

Dan's Message....

Thriving in Exile



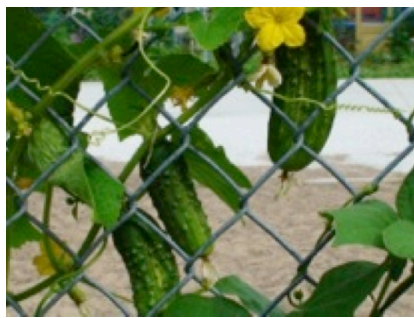
Eccremocarpus "Lopsided Chile Trumpet Vine"

Early this spring I picked up a flowering vine at a local nursery and I parked it in the ground next to our porch/deck. As you can see from the photo, it is doing its thing pretty well. *Pretty* well, but I bet that outside of its native Chilean habitat, my plant would like nothing better than a rasty old chain-link fence between two warehouses in SoDo.

To us, nothing says "you are not home" as bluntly as chain-link fence. But plants don't see it that way. Tomatoes, berries, grapes, peas, beans, squash, and even fruit trees embrace a chain-link lifestyle. It makes a wonderful trellis! To illustrate:



and



While nothing says "welcome home" to us more than white picket fencing or a lovely deck with railings, plants don't care. My wood deck railings don't have enough nooks and crannies to please my vine, so I am making "genuine imitation chain link" out of twine to help it out.

Mark Labberton in his book "Called" describes two competing senses of place that the people of God have felt from the time of Abraham to the present: Exile and Promised Land. Put another way, they are the contrasting feelings of being a people at home or not at home.

When you are at home, you get to structure your world. When you are in exile, you have to adapt. For its first 300 years, Christianity was an adaptive underground movement. They had to work out their worship and teaching and fellowship within the nooks and crannies of urban life in a stratified pagan society under intense government scrutiny, if not persecution. And they thrived.

Up against the chain-link fence of the dominant culture early Christians were creatively living the attributes of Jesus which St. Paul calls “the fruits of the Spirit”: “love, joy, peace, patience, kindness, generosity, faithfulness, gentleness and self-control, against such things there is no law.” (Galatians 5:22-23). Technically, they were outlaws, but their lifestyle won hearts and minds and souls to Jesus Christ. The thriving of our persecuted Christian brothers and sisters in Vietnam follows that same pattern. Where we see barriers, they see new angles for being Christ-like. That includes experiences of outright persecution. Much great ministry happens in jails there.

There was a brief time in our nation’s history, peaking about 60 years ago, when people respected Judeo-Christianity as foundational for society. Denominations like ours were busily advising presidents and senators on moral policy, and establishing movements and programs in every community, from Sunday Schools to food banks to counseling and recovery services, while building new buildings to house all these activities. We built and they came. It was the normal many of us grew up with, but historically speaking it was an anomaly.

Our time as structure-makers has more or less passed us by. Others have taken on many of the needs and programs that were the domain of the churches (the Vashon Food Bank for example). And as for moral and spiritual guidance a host of competing voices are happy to provide their own compass points. We find we are not at home anymore. Our backs are up against the chain-link of secularity. Where to turn? What if we were to turn around, face the fence, and embrace a niche where we can serve, bear fruit and witness to the glory of God? That would be very like the mission God gave to the Israelites exiled in Babylon through the prophet Jeremiah: “Build houses and live in them; plant gardens and eat what they produce. Take wives for your sons and give your daughters in marriage, that they may bear sons and daughters; multiply there, and do not decrease but seek the welfare of the city where I have sent you into exile, and pray for the Lord on its behalf, for in its *Shalom* you will find your *Shalom*.” (29:5-7).

One can be both saddened and excited by our recent agreement to lease the new building to the secular Carpe Diem Primary School. The original dream was that the space would be filled with new VPC programs Sundays and mid-week. Some may grieve that it did not come about the way we planned. I sure do. But I am also excited by the opportunities I believe God has presented for VPC. To be relieved of some mortgage and maintenance overhead, for sure. But more importantly, to become more engaged in relationships with those ordinarily outside our walls.

I invite you to embrace the opportunity of *mission*, of being in this relationship as more than landlords, but as servants. Make it a focus. Intentionally seek *their* highest welfare that they be an *excellent* secular school—pray for them and seek their *Shalom*, that in their thriving you may find your thriving as an *excellent* Christian witness on Vashon. May you bear the fruit of Christ’s love to your new neighbors as you have to me in my time with you, and may our Lord grant you deep joy.

Yours in Christ,
Dan

Purposeful Service News

Area of Responsibility

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

Heindsmann Scholarship Deadline Turn in deadline for the Heindsmann Scholarship is July 9th. The selection for this year's recipient will take place soon after.

Festival Parking and Chairs It's getting to be that time of year again. We are taking reservations for parking spaces and chairs to view the parade during festival. We need help bringing the chairs up from the basement and marking the chairs with tape (Friday afternoon 7/17).. We can always use help with the parking of the cars, setting up the chairs and watching over them on Saturday morning. Our Festival fundraiser will support ongoing relief efforts from recent earthquake in Nepal. Two organizations with a local connection will benefit from the fundraiser: Shelter Nepal, which presently is providing prefabricated homes of corrugated metal to families in outlying areas, costing \$150/house. Nana's House will be the other recipient of the fundraiser and is currently working to restore 5 families living in a remote area to pre-quake-life, providing shelter, food, clothing etc. If you want to reserve parking/chairs, or to help with the opportunities mentioned above, please contact beverlyskeffington@gmail.com or call 206/354-8921. **Reserved spaces will only be held until 10:45am on the day of the parade.**

Picnic and Worship with the women of Mary's Place On Sunday, August 16th at Ober Park, we will be hosting (along with the Methodist and Lutheran churches) a group of women from Mary's Place (a women's center/shelter in Seattle). We will need many hands to help with this event: drivers to pick up and drop off the ladies at the North end Ferry Dock, potluck dishes to share, financial contributions for ferry tickets and fried chicken, people to transport dishes, silverware, other kitchen equipment, tables, chairs, sound system, etc Please indicate to Jacq or Beverly Skeffington or other members of the Purposeful Service Committee (Sue Weston, Dave Rogers, Kathy O'Laughlin, and Susan Commeree) where you can help.

We have Ober Park reserved from 9am until 2pm with worship being at 10am. This time of worshiping with other faiths on the island and these precious women is always the highlight of the summer.

Mission Resource Team News

Area of Responsibility

Financial Stewardship
Building and Grounds

Harbor School Agreement Change is coming! We have signed a lease with The Harbor School to relocate Carpe Diem Primary School into our new building. I hope you catch the excitement as parents and volunteers start painting the classrooms and moving their supplies in. It may get a little crowded at the beginning and there might be a few more young children and parents to dodge around....Won't that be a joy! If you have any concerns please call Jacq at 206-354-8917. We've worked hard to create a lasting partnership and value your concerns and suggestions.

Weed and Feed Barbeques We'd really like to make the building and grounds look their best with summer visitors abounding and the Strawberry Festival approaching. 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.

Yard Sale The annual yard sale will be held Saturday, August 1st from 9-3. Hope you have been saving up kitchen items, household goods, collectibles, arts & crafts, books, toys, puzzles, games, sports equipment, holiday items, linens, tools, building supplies, & furniture. We request no clothing or computers. We need help picking up items from homes if needed; for sorting & pricing; help carrying out tables & boxes Saturday morning; cashiers day of sale; persons to oversee tables on Saturday; trucks & help to take remaining items to Granny's; help at end of day to carry tables back in. Barb Huff will be coordinating the yard sale – please contact her with questions or availability to help – 206-713-6232.

Journey/Invitation Team News

Area of Responsibility

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

Our Adult education class on the series “The Reason for God” by Pastor Tim Keller concluded in June. We will be taking the rest of the summer off and begin a new class in September or October. During the summer months we would highly recommend reading any of the Reverend Keller’s books. They are enlightening and compelling reads with much food for thought and discussion.

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 area churches or online 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.

Worship Team News

Area of Responsibility

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

Communion will be served on July 5th. In August, communion will be served on the 9th. Kevin Nollette will be our guest pastor.

Prayers of guidance and wisdom are needed for our transition team. The team will be forming a job description and interviewing for an interim pastor during July and August. We hope to have an interim in place by October 1st. Members of the team are Brownie Carver, Kathy Olsen, Elizabeth Loveness, Claudia Ross-Weston, and Larry Commeree.

Help Needed for VBS!

The first week of August is quickly coming upon us, bringing with it a church full of quick little preschoolers! VBS for preschoolers runs at VPC Monday Aug 3- Friday Aug 7, 9:45am-11:45am. Here’s how you can be part of the most fun week of the year. **We need three or four people to help with registration for one hour on the first two days; and two to prepare and serve snacks each day.** One does not need to sign up for every day, but any you can help with would be great. The food for snacks will be provided. To sign up for the fun, look and listen for the sign up starting this Sunday or call Carol Potter 463-6749. Thank you!

June 15, 2015

Dear VPC Church Family,

I am writing to tell you of my plan to resign as VPC's pastor as of the end of worship services on September 6, 2015. I am profoundly grateful for the ministry we have shared in these last nine years – so the prospect of leaving brings some feeling of regret. Please know that no feelings of disappointment drive my decision. Quite to the contrary. Recently I have come to a clear (and surprising) awareness of God calling me to step away from solo pastoring and into a different kind of ministry. I really don't know more than that, except that the call is strong and not occasioned by any misgivings about a congregation that has dearly loved us in our time here.

Vashon will continue to be our home as we discern next steps. Michele continues to love her local job, James looks forward to being a VHS Pirate this fall, and we feel privileged to be your neighbors as I work and network in the region. We are excited to discover what our Lord is calling us to next, in His time.

I am also excited about the next stage in your life as a congregation. Our time in discernment this last two years has demonstrated your willingness to innovate and create new ways of being a missional church. Your strong gifting in hospitality and your desire to share the good news with those outside these walls are from God. You are currently exploring some rich opportunities for partnership and outreach into the community which I find hopeful both for VPC and for Vashon Town. The second-century author of *Letter to Diognetus* famously remarked, "as the soul is to the body, so Christians are to their city." The "soul" you bring to this island is the love of Jesus Christ-which we have experienced abundantly among you. So as you seek new ways to share that love beyond Sunday mornings, I am confident for your future as I am confident of Christ's love in you.

Your Session has already begun the process of ensuring a smooth transition. They will be keeping you informed of their progress. At the same time, they will be relying on you to bring your gifts to assure the continuation of our ministries to the community and to one another. I am grateful for their willingness to allow us time to say a good goodbye this summer. I look forward to more conversation with you all in the next couple of months that I get to be your pastor.

One thing I clearly know God intends to teach me in this adventure is the primary importance of our baptismal identity. It is found in God's assurance in Christ that "You are my beloved child, with you I am well pleased." Whatever I am doing a year from now, be it be pastoring or manually laboring, I'll be doing as God's beloved child and Jesus' devoted follower. No title or role can supersede the joy of being a new creation in Christ with you and your brother in his service. Beloved children of God, I encourage you to remember that your connection to God is in him, and not dependent on your pastor. You are part of his community of believers and that's where your faith is strengthened and where you worship, study, serve and pray. God will continue your spiritual growth, regardless of who sits in the pastor's study.

I am grateful for the life of faith we have shared and I rejoice in what God has in store for you in the future.

In Christ,



Hospitality/Fellowship Team News

Elder: Kate Smith
Areas of Responsibility
Hospitality, Fellowship

Book Club The book club will meet on July 10th (this is a week early because we don't want to conflict with festival weekend) at Elizabeth Loveness's. It is a potluck beginning at 6:30. The book selection is All the Light You Cannot See by Anthony Doerr.

August A Trip to the Stars Nicholas Christopher

September Violins of Hope James A. Grymes



Thank You

A big thank you to all who contributed to Jacq and Beverly Skeffington's fundraiser/half marathon. The Skeffington family, (Charlotte, Mia and Mason also ran) raised \$3020 (60 people in Africa will now have clean/accessible water for life!). Team World Vision for Seattle (of whom our group was a part) made it possible for 2590 people to clean accessible water for life. \$129,519 was raised by all the Seattle teams. Well done good and faithful servants. It's amazing how much can be done when there is Spirit and determination.

Clerk's Corner

The VPC session held its scheduled meeting on June 8, with all members attending. After preliminary matters and the treasurer's report, Dan introduced Rev. Kevin Nollette, Associate Executive Presbyter. Dan then announced his intention to conclude his pastoral relationship with VPC at the end of summer. Rev. Nollette explained the process for the transition to an interim pastor and session agreed to form a transition team to begin that process. Session set another meeting date for further transition planning. Session also approved a letter of intent to provide building space to the Harbor School, with details to follow in a formal document. At the request of the building use coordinator, session approved outside group use of the library and chapel, which was redesignated as a meeting room. Finally, session discussed whether a fall retreat was possible given the limited interest.

A special session meeting was held on June 22, at which Rev. Nollette provided further information and advice on the transition steps to a new pastor. Session reviewed with Dan a timeline for his departure. He will continue full duties until the end of July and then take study leave and vacation through the month of August. He will lead worship and preach Sunday, September 6th, at which time he will end his ministry at VPC. Prior to that, there will be a congregational meeting to concur in dissolution of the pastoral relationship. Session will then report the action to presbytery. No date for the meeting was set. Brownie Carver will moderate the transition team; Kate Smith and her team will organize the farewell activities. At the special meeting session also approved the building use agreement with the Harbor School for the 2015-2016 academic year.

Bob Spangler, Clerk of Session



Calendar for July 2015

(all events at VPC unless otherwise stated)

July

- 5 Sunday Worship Service 10 AM (communion service)
- 10 VPC Book Club at Elizabeth Loveness's
- 12 Sunday Worship Service
- 12 Deacon's Meeting at Noon
- 13 Session Meeting 7:15 PM
- 18 Strawberry Festival Fundraiser
- 19 Sunday Worship Service 10 AM
- 26 Sunday Worship Service 10 AM

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.

Choir practices will resume next fall

Weed and Feed Barbecues Wednesday evenings 5:30-7:30

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