

J A N U A R Y 2 0 1 7

Vashon Presbyterian Church

Vashon Island, Washington 98070

Listening to God, embracing all, living in joy

January 2017



CELEBRATE EPIPHANY ON JANUARY 6TH

Read Isaiah 60: 1-6; Psalm 72: 1-7, 10-14; Ephesians 3: 1-12 and Matthew 2: 1-12.

Then read the following essay -- a beautiful take on the meaning of Epiphany. **How might you set out a “welcome mat” for spiritual travelers and those in need?**

The Flickering Light of Epiphany

As the winter yellow grass holds up gray-black branches, silently testifying to the annual season of death, we make our way with the flickering light of Epiphany. We still hold one arm around inconsolable Rachel, whose arms are empty and whose tear-filled eyes are looking back over her shoulder. Another arm is wrapped around Mary, whose arms are filled with the fragile promise of new life, and whose hopeful eyes are looking ahead. This journey into Epiphany is made slowly, for neither Sister Grief nor Sister Promise can walk quickly.

Christmas proclaimed the presence of the light. Epiphany calls us to spread the light on the journey. Epiphany means "manifestation." We see the light of Christ as it is manifest from the crib of Jesus in Bethlehem to all the nations. "A light for revelation to the Gentiles" (Luke 2:32) is the Bible's shorthand way of saying that Christ's mission is to the whole world. Epiphany stories reach out to the world through the coming of the Magi, Jesus' baptism by John, the call of the first disciples, and the beginning of Jesus' ministry.

The welcome mat is set out. The front porch light is left on to welcome foreigners, local fishermen, city priests, Roman soldiers, and Greek tourists. There are no limits placed on this love born at Christmas.

Nancy Hastings Sehested was pastor of Prescott Memorial Baptist Church in Memphis, Tenn., when this article appeared.

SAVE the DATE: Annual Congregational Meeting January 29th.

Entering the New Year with Confidence



Well over a year ago, you as a congregation learned that your pastor was leaving. So began your journey of transition and change. As your interim pastor, I came to walk with you through the first major step of transition – that of letting go of your past and preparing for what the future would bring. That included affirming the gifts of the past, deciding what faith foundations and core values you are committed to living out, and acknowledging the losses you have experienced as a congregation. Although you will return to that work again as time goes by, you have moved through your first transition steps very well. So now you get to move straight to new beginnings, right?

Now you can get your new pastor in place and move full steam ahead! Not so fast. There is a critical phase of transition that you must go through first in order to navigate change and land on your feet: the neutral zone



The neutral zone, as defined by William Bridges in his seminal book “Transitions”, is **an in-between time**, when the old is gone but the new hasn’t become fully operational. It’s a state of limbo, where it may feel that there is nothing really to hold onto. The old ways don’t work anymore, yet the new ones themselves are in transition as your interim pastor’s time with you enters its final phase. For a while you will be feeling your way in the dark because you have shed one identity and have yet to fully take on a new one. Like a trapeze artist you have let go of one trapeze and are now flying through the empty space before you can grab hold of the next one.

The neutral zone is not a very comfortable place, which is why most of us try to rush through this phase of transition. Once we know we can’t stay with the familiar, **we just want to get on with things**. However, says Shana Montesol Johnson, the neutral zone is the heart of transition. “Like when a seed is underground, waiting to germinate, **there doesn’t seem to be much going on, but it’s a very fertile and important time. This is where the questioning, growth, and learning take place.**” It is a time of allowing the work of the last many months to take hold. Fewer changes will take place as we “breathe” together and lean into the future with quiet anticipation.

Most importantly, **the neutral zone is a time for prayer**, especially as waiting can bring forth feelings like fear, confusion, and even despair if things do not move forward as anticipated. Remember, God is with us, close at hand, guiding the Pastor Nominating Committee. The Spirit is working in the minds and hearts of candidates as well.

All this is not to say that we will be doing nothing for the next few months. Your Session will continue to lead, set goals, and encourage active ministry as we wait with anticipation of what God will do.

Christ’s Peace to you,

Lynn

Update on the PNC

The Pastor Nominating Committee has completed the Ministry Information Form (MIF) and forwarded it to Rev. Eliana Maxim, our liaison to Seattle Presbytery's Committee on Ministry. The MIF is used by congregations searching for a new Pastor to describe to potential candidates who they are and who they are looking for.

In preparing the MIF, the committee drew heavily on the congregation's feedback received in last year's Mission Resource Task Force's Appreciative Inquiry as well as the work session did with Renewal Ministries discerning a vision for VPC. We invite you to stop by the church office and take a look at the completed MIF.

The next steps are well underway. Eliana has already shared our MIF with potential candidates. Due to our limited financial resources, VPC's next pastor will be a part-time position and for the same reason, our search will be local (within the Synod) since we cannot afford large moving expenses.

Please seek out any one of us if you have questions or concerns. We welcome your input.

The committee recognizes the trust the congregation has in us. We ask you to keep us in your prayers as we move forward.

Jordan Browning 360 301 1109 Brownie Carver 206 463 539 Larry Commeree 206 579 1122
 Diana Lilje 206 276 1797 Elizabeth Loveness 206 409 574 Claudia Ross-Weston 206 369 9750
 Bob Spangler 206 567 5302

Purposeful Service

Team News

Area of Responsibility

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

IFCH Dinner VPC will be responsible for the IFCH meal on January 26th. Sign up sheet at coffee hour. Start the New Year by helping our neighbors in need.

Al Ross Weston

Hospitality/Fellowship

Team News

Area of Responsibility

VPC Book Club Book club will meet on January 27th. The book selection is Desperate Voyage by John Caldwell. Potluck at 6:30. Location TBD.

Al Ross Weston

Journey/Invitation

Team News

Area of Responsibility

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

Bible Study Members of the Bible study group will meet January 7th and 21st at 10 AM at VPC.

Diana Lilje

Deacon's News

Deacons - next meeting will be on Wednesday, January 11 starting at 4:00 PM.

The VCC Wednesday prayer gatherings start at 1:30 each week (1:30 - 2:30).

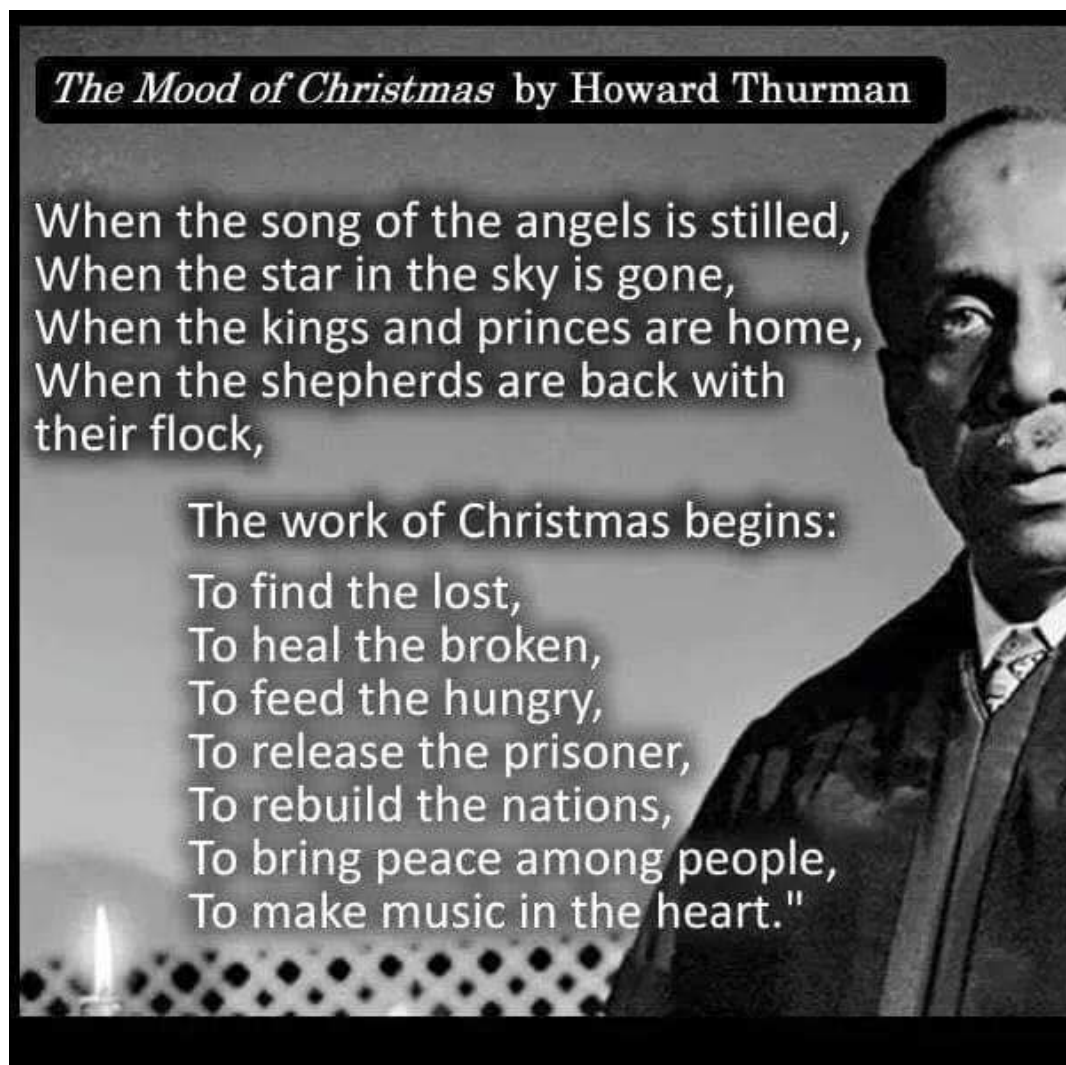
Nancy van Roessel for the Deacons

Interfaith Brainstormers Meeting

On Tuesday, January 10th at noon, there will be a meeting of the Interfaith Brainstormers in our library. (We will move this to a larger space if needed).

This group, made up of people from a variety of faith groups on the island, meets to discuss ways to work together on projects, services, studies, as well as to pray for each congregation, and to share ideas on what is going well (or not so well) in our congregations. We discover through these meetings how we truly are one in the spirit. We welcome all to these gatherings. They generally last about one hour and you are welcome to bring your lunch. Hope to see you.

Beverly Skeffington



Mission Resource

Team News

Area of Responsibility

Financials

Building and Grounds

Buildings and Grounds

The church looks really beautiful this Christmas season thanks to those who hung greens in the sanctuary and decorated our Christmas Trees. Thanks also to the **Vashon Chamber of Commerce** who donated the lights for the outside tree **and Matt Mathews' Tree Service** who donated the time and equipment to string the lights. The Chamber plans to leave their lights in the tree for use again next year but we will disconnect them and remove our star in January.

Exterior painting is on hold until the weather warms up but have you noticed progress on the **French Doors leading to the Great Hall?** Trim was installed during the school's break and we plan to finish painting them this month. We've also been talking with Carpe Diem staff and parents about replacing the fence along the western side of the rear parking lot and some improvements to the landscaping in that area.

We are now **partnering with the United Methodist Church on recycling.** There's a collection can with compostable trash bags for our food waste in the kitchen. So far, the only compostable material we separate is coffee grounds and food scraps from coffee hour but we're encouraging providers of the IFCH meals to separate their food waste also. Carpe Diem teachers plan to make a serious effort with their students in the next semester. The Methodists have a collection area and transport the collected waste to the transfer station weekly.

Blessings,

Jacq Skeffington

Clerk's Corner

VPC session held its monthly meeting on December 14, with all in attendance. PNC chair Larry Commeree presented the Ministry Information Form that the PNC had completed, and stated that it would be sent to Presbytery for circulation to prospective pastors. He also provided an update on the search process, and answered questions about the form and process. Barb Huff presented the draft 2017 budget, which was passed after several minor changes.

Session also considered how to apply the proceeds of the OMAX stock buyback, and decided That \$5,120 will be applied to reduce the mortgage and \$4,000 will be used to create an innovation fund. Other end-of-year financial transactions, including transfers to the building fund and increasing the Seattle Presbytery mission donation, were approved in light of the availability of funds. Three members were removed from the membership roll, two at their request. Carpe Diem School was granted permission to erect a fence along the western boundary, with VPC agreeing to pay an amount to be determined. Other reports were submitted by e-mail and generated little discussion.

A congregational meeting was held on December 18 to elect deacons and elders, and to provide an update to the congregation as to the search for a new pastor. Al Ross-Weston, Jacq Skeffington and Larry Commeree were elected ruling elders, Class of 2019 and Lindsay Hofman was elected deacon, Class of 2018.

Bob Spangler, Clerk of Session

What's on Your Mind

So Grateful (and surprised by) Your Generosity!



I have three small stashes of cash I feed with little amounts of extra money left over at the end of each month. One is for the purchase of *Little Luxuries* that I do not need, strictly speaking, but which I think would significantly improve my well-being. One is my *Travel Fund* for when I go to NYC to visit my kids. And one is a Hospitality Fund. Over the holidays, as you can imagine, all three were at a seriously low ebb. Then Brownie waltzed into my office at VPC with a very fat looking envelope, a smile on her face, and a lilt in her voice as she wished me Merry Christmas. “Well, open it!” she said. I did, and to tell you the truth I was astounded at your generosity. I was speechless. I now have a winter coat with a hood! I can treat my son and his family to something fun when I go to Brooklyn. And there is even money left over to add some special touches when some friends and I throw an “Inaugural Bawl” on January 20th.

So you see, your gift of cash was really a gift of warmth, love, and the joy of hospitality. I will never forget such generosity ---- or you all! Thank you. You have been a gift of God to me.



Blessings, *Lynn*



“Angels, Shepherds, a beautiful Mary and Baby Jesus”
The children with help from Barb Huff and her daughter Stephany presented a lovely Christmas pageant during the Worship Service on the 18th. The congregation joined the children to sing “Away in the Manger”.

Calendar

January 2017

(all events at VPC unless otherwise stated)



Jan

- 1 Sunday Worship Service 10 am (Communion Service)
- 7 Bible Study 10 am
- 8 Sunday Worship Service 10 am
- 11 Deacon's Meeting 4:00 pm
- 11 Session Meeting 6:30 pm
- 15 Sunday Worship Service 10 am
- 21 Bible Study 10 am
- 22 Sunday Worship Service 10 am
- 27 VPC Book Club, 6:30 PM location TBD
- 29 Sunday Worship Service 10 am
- 29 Annual Congregational Meeting after worship

ONGOING ACTIVITIES

Life Changing Prayer group meets Wednesdays at 1:30 pm 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.