

N O V E M B E R 2 0 1 9

Vashon Presbyterian Church

Vashon Island, Washington 98070

Listening to God, embracing all, living in joy

November 2019 Newsletter

Harvest Dinner Well Attended

Our annual Harvest Dinner was on November 2nd. The tables were beautifully set. All the seats but one were filled as congregation members and friends enjoyed a wonderful turkey dinner with all the trimmings! A fun game that allowed us all to know one another better was played after dessert.



Faith Formation Class on Enneagrams

Pastor Leigh will lead a four-week Faith Formation class on the Enneagram. This typology test can be traced back, at least in part, to a desert monk, Evagrius Ponticus in the year 399 and was fleshed out in greater detail by a Franciscan monk, Ramon Lull (1236-1315). It is said of the Enneagram that it is a mirror of the soul, a tool for deepening self-discovery and understanding of others. Join in, Sundays 9 am in the VPC library.

Save the Date!

Adult Education Class
“Enneagrams”
November 3, 10, 17, 24

VPC Book Club
November 15

Interfaith Thanksgiving
Service – Church of the
Holy Spirit
November 23

Eagles Thanksgiving Meal
November 28

First Sunday of Advent
December 1



Dear Ones of VPC,

As I was walking back from Café Luna this afternoon, I noticed teenagers taking selfie pictures by our church sign. It reads, “Your Past is Not Your Future.” I chose this text for the sign this week for a variety of reasons. The first is because we believe in, love and are loved by a God who makes all things new, every day. Ours is a God of forgiveness, of second, third, fourth and many more opportunities to move forward, renewed in the promise of our baptism.

The second reason I chose this text is because not only does our past not have to determine our future, but our past also cannot be our future. The things of the past cannot be the things that move us into the future. I suspect this is, universally, one of the hardest things for those of us in the church to grasp.

When I was little, Sunday School was just something we all did. My classes were always filled with kids but now most churches look at empty classrooms wondering why what worked in the past no longer applies. The list is long of what used to be and no longer is and I am confident we are not the first generation to lament such things.

It’s so easy to focus on what isn’t like it once was that we lose sight of the truth about God, that we serve a God of new things. The prophet Isaiah records this truth, “I am about to do a new thing; now it springs forth, do you not perceive it?” Isaiah 43:19

For me, this text begs questions about perception and what it is that I/we are looking for. If God is doing a new thing, do I perceive it? Am I paying attention? Or am I missing it because I am lost in lamenting the way it once was and how think it should be again?

My prayer for us is that we believe in scripture, that God IS doing a new thing and then that we set about the business of paying attention and perceiving it around us. Lately, I’ve seen a few new things where God was very present. I’ve seen God at work by the campfire in the front yard, talking late at night. I’ve seen God at work in parents who slow down their evenings and make space to enjoy a smore with their little one with us, strengthening their family relationship. I’ve seen God at work in worship, in tears shed as we light candles for the saints in our lives. I’ve seen God at work in a reception for the little ones at Carpe Diem, who hear that they matter to us, just as they are.

I am confident of one thing...God IS at work. The question is “Do we always pay attention?” Our past does is not our future. So, let’s try this, trusting the unknown future to our known God and pay attention and be astonished by grace together.

Grace and Peace,
Leigh



Faith Exploration Team News

Area of Responsibility

Bible study, Christian formation (all ages)

1. **The Sunday Morning Adult Faith Exploration Class** will begin a four week study in November on the Enneagram. Participants will learn about their personality types and what they need for survival and wholeness. It will be led by Pastor Leigh. Future classes planned include Isaiah and the Prophets.
2. **Theology Pub** will address Immigration and will be led by Carol and Bob Spangler. It will meet on November 21 at 5:30pm at Camp Colvos. Future topics will be Community, the Trinity, Hell and Baptism. If you have additional ideas let Al know.
3. **Book Club** will discuss A Gentleman in Moscow by Amor Towles on Friday the 15th at Liz' house. 6pm and potluck. Future books include Faith by Jimmy Carter, Madame Fourcade's Secret War by Lynne Olson, When Breath Becomes Air by Paul Kalanithi and A Pilgrimage to Eternity by Timothy Egan.
4. **A four week Lectio Divina** will be held in December on Tuesdays at 7pm. Advent readings from Isaiah will be used.

Al Ross Weston, Faith Exploration Elder

Worship Team News

Area of Responsibility

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

Lay Leader Training On November 17th, Pastor Leigh will lead a training session for lay leaders following the worship service. Anyone who is interested in participating in our worship services is invited to come.

Advent begins on December 1st. We are planning music for the Advent season and would like to have a men's chorus. Please contact Brownie and we will make arrangements.

Next worship team meeting is November 24th following the worship service.

Brownie Carver, Worship Elder

Inter-faith Evening of Gratitude This month there will be an Interfaith Evening of Gratitude at The Episcopal Church of the Holy Spirit. This event is not a worship service, but a mutual sharing of our gratitude as people of faith. It will be November 23rd (the Saturday before Thanksgiving). Children are especially welcome. Refreshments will be provided following the celebration. EVERYONE is invited. If anyone in the congregation would like to share a poem, a story, or a piece of artwork on the theme of *gratitude*, please let Pastor Leigh know.



Invitation and Outreach Team News

Area of Responsibility
New Members and Discipleship,
Evangelism and Invitation



Bicycle Recycle From our very successful Bicycle Recycling event to hosting the friendly fireside **S'Mores Nights** on First Fridays the Outreach Team has been really busy.

135 Bikes Recycled!

Barb Huff, Outreach Elder



S'Mores Night There's nothing more relaxing and inviting than a warm fire . Thanks to Paul Blake for making this outreach event possible.



Mission Resource Team News

Area of Responsibility Financials, Building and Grounds

VPC Financial Report

I'm pleased to report that we are on budget for 2019 and will likely end up with a slight surplus even without counting the one-time windfall from sale of the OMAX stock earlier in the year. The rest of this report will be devoted to looking forward to 2020.

Budget Session has been working on next year's budget since September. We hope to come up with a detailed spending plan at the November Session meeting and vote on the budget at the December meeting. We are anticipating a General Fund income about equal to this year. One thing that has become clear is that the spending emphasis will be very different from recent years.

We will be able to use a much larger percentage of the general fund income to support missions than we have recently. This is because of reductions in "operating" expenses compared to previous years. The biggest cost reduction is the elimination of a mortgage payment of over \$3000 per month. Some, but not all, of this payment has already been allocated to upgrade our Pastor to full time. This, in itself an increase, should be considered an increase in "mission spending" but this still leaves a surplus available for other mission spending. The other big reduction in operating costs comes from the installation of solar panels. We anticipate that in 2020 our electrical bill will be 50% or less on an annual basis and could go to zero in subsequent years.

Solar Panels Last month we signed a contract with Artisan Electric, Inc. for Solar Panel installation. The equipment should be in place at the end of this month or early in December. That means we will be generating at least some of our own electricity by the end of December.

The panels will go on the roof of the social hall and the south facing portion of the roof over the hallway in the new addition. Although the panels will be visible from some parts of the parking lot, the visual impact from the street should be zero.

In Washington State we use a "net metering" program for solar installations. When the installation generates more electricity than the building is using, the excess power is put onto the grid and Puget Power credits us at the retail rate. When we need more power than the panels can generate, such as at night or on cloudy days, we buy electricity from Puget Power. At the end of each month Puget Power sends us bill. If we used more electricity than we generated, we pay for the electricity from Puget Power. If we generated more electricity than we used, we pay only a connection fee of less than \$10 dollars and we get credit for the generated power which can be applied to future bills. The whole system resets to zero on April 1 of each year. Puget Power will never write us a check for electricity we generate.

Most systems will generate a surplus in late spring, summer and early fall. They will have a shortfall in late fall, winter and early spring. If the system is large enough, the credits earned in the sunny months will be enough to offset the shortfall in the "dark" months. In that case, the electrical bill will consist of only the connection fees.

Continued next page...

The system that we are installing this month will cover about 80% of our annual electrical bill. We would like to have installed a system large enough to cover 100% of our electrical needs but there was only enough money in the building fund to cover the smaller installation and we didn't want to go back into debt.

We have applied for a grant from Presbytery to cover the cost of the additional panels needed for the larger system but that won't be voted on until the end of December. Artisan Electric, Inc. has commitments for a large commercial project starting January. If they couldn't install our panels before the end of the year, we would have to wait until as late as July.

Session voted to go ahead with the smaller installation now. If and when we have the grant from Presbytery and Artisan is available to do the work, we will upgrade to the 100% system. Artisan has agreed to this and will install the smaller system anticipating an upgrade in 2020.

Jim Lilje, Financial Elder



Aerial View of Solar Installation

Mission Resource Team News

Area of Responsibility
Financials, Building and Grounds

Buildings and Grounds

What great fun we had at the Halloween celebration. Candy for the kids and a roaring fire to warm up by. It was surprising to hear how many people were EXPECTING S'MORES! The good news was we were able to invite them back the following night, 1st Friday, for yet another bonfire with s'mores. Next month's 1st Friday bonfire will include the annual Chamber of Commerce Christmas Tree Lighting, caroling and of course S'MORES!

We have finished installing the new chain link fence along the west side of the south parking lot. It has already cut down on the foot traffic, trash and vandalism that we've experienced in the parking lot. The business owners along the highway are also thrilled with the reduction of foot traffic through their yards.

The toolbelts group will next work on reopening the doorway from the nursery to the courtyard playground leading to the Creative Preschool. We hope this will allow more interaction with the families of preschoolers who might like to stay nearby after dropping children off or who arrive a little early to pick them up.

The Mission Resources Facilities Team will meet again at the Colvos Creek Campground at 6:30 Tuesday, November 5th. Please join us to discuss future needs and activities.

Blessings and Grace,

Jacq Skeffington, Mission Resource Elder

Purposeful Service Team News

Area of Responsibility
Scholarship, Mary Magdalene weekend,
IFCH dinners, mission partner relations

IFCH Thanksgiving Dinners A Thanksgiving meal will be served at the Eagles. All who are interested in a community meal are invited. There will be more information about the time and other details of the Eagles Thanksgiving in the weekly enews.

Mary's Place Giving Tree Again this year we will hang gift tags to take home and fulfill a gift wish from Mary's Place. Each tag is a personalized wish from a child for a toy or a gift a child would love to give his mom this holiday season. There will also be multiple tags asking for a \$20 donation for a pair of new shoes for a woman or child. The tree will be placed in the reception area on November 24th and tags/gifts will be collected December 8th.

Purposeful Service Meeting Purposeful Service Team will meet Tuesday, November 12, 6:00 pm in the library. We will be discussing 2020 Budget Items, the Mary's Place giving tree and donations from the Christmas Eve offering. Traditionally the Christmas Eve offering is designated as a one time gift to an area of greatest need.

IFCH Emergency Shelter Representations from various churches, fire department and IFCH met at VPC to discuss setting up a shelter for those in need during extreme weather conditions. VPC has volunteered to host the emergency center. First step in the set up process is training potential supervisors. See Brownie Carver if you are interested in being a part of this worthwhile undertaking.

Elizabeth Loveness, Purposeful Service Elder

Clerk’s Corner November 2019

Session held its monthly meeting October 8 with all elders present. Jim Lilje explained that the contract with Artisan Electric has been signed and that the installation of the solar panels will probably begin in late November. Discussion was held on the state of the front door to the church. Jacq Skeffington moved that we repaint the door and elicit comments from the congregation as to what color would be best. Review and updating of the mission areas was discussed with final results expected in November. Work continued on the 2020 budget. Members submitted written reports for their teams’ activities.

Diana Lilje, Clerk of Session



Deacon’s News

Emotional intelligence is the ability to be sensitive to the feelings and view points of others. It helps us to better transmit God’s love through us to other people. By learning to better avoid hurting other’s feelings and being more open to others people we can become better conduits to God’s love.

But that takes practice, daily practice. Each morning, part of my prayer for the day, is that I remain open to others feeling and needs. And at the end of the day it is important for me to reflect on when I pushed myself away from others and when I reached out emotionally toward them.

Every sincere smile touches someone. Today, it might be the lift they need to feel better about themselves and the world around them. Every complement or the ten minutes you take to listen to someone non-judgmentally is God, though you, showing his love for all mankind.

Reaching out lovingly to others takes daily practice. We must never stop striving to share God’s love with others. Remember, God is unceasing in his reaching out to us with his love. Even when we push him away, he never stops caring for us. So resolve to demonstrate God’s love for others by daily practicing emotional intelligence.

Deacon Sue Weston

Upcoming VPC Hospitality Events

November 17
 December 7
 December 7
 December 15

Tailgate Coffee Hour
 Decorate the Church
 Community Tree Lighting
 Christmas Luncheon and Cookie Exchange

We are all a little busier during the holidays. Look ahead on your calendar and see if there’s a time free to host coffee hour or bring flowers for the altar. The hospitality committee will host one of the coffee hours each month to help ease the pressure of individuals having to do it all the time. With this and the special coffee hours (above) we have planned, it leave just a few spaces to fill.

Elizabeth Loveness, Hospitality Elder



Calendar for November 2019

Nov

- 3 Prayer Service 8:30 AM
- 3 Adult Education Class 9 AM
- 3 Sunday Worship Service 10 AM
- 10 Prayer Service 8:30 AM
- 10 Adult Education Class 9 AM
- 10 Sunday Worship Service 10 AM
- 15 Book Club at Loveness's 6 PM
- 16 Dana Hoffman Celebration of Life 1 PM
- 17 Prayer Service 8:30 AM
- 17 Adult Education Class 9 AM
- 17 Sunday Worship Service 10 AM
- 19 Session 4:30 PM
- 21 Theology Pub 5:30 PM
- 23 Interfaith Gratitude Gathering at Church of the Holy Spirit
- 24 Prayer Service 8:30 AM
- 24 Adult Education Class 9 AM
- 24 Sunday Worship Service 10 AM
- 28 Thanksgiving Community Meal at the Eagles

ONGOING ACTIVITIES

TEXT STUDY meets at noon on Mondays

Fellowship Breakfast 9 am on Tuesdays.

Tool Belts 10 – Noon Tuesdays.

Leigh at Luna 2 pm Tuesdays.

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