

# Vashon Presbyterian Church

Vashon Island, Washington

**“Love One Another”**



## January 2021 Newsletter

### Christmas Pageant – A Christmas Miracle!

The Sunday before Christmas we held the traditional Christmas pageant at the end of our worship service. Except it was not traditional as we were not in person at the church. Who knew you could do a play on zoom? It surprised us all and many said it was the best one ever! We were able to include cast members from across the US - California, North Carolina, and New York and "across the pond" locals; while grandparents could join from afar; costumes and backgrounds added to the delight. The bonus was having a live baby Jesus - a precious addition. Thanks to everyone who participated and helped coordinate the event! See p 3.

### Church Officers for 2021

#### **Session**

Pastor Leigh Weber Moderator  
Jacq Skeffington Clerk of Session  
Barb Huff Outreach and Invitation  
Jim Lilje Mission Resource Finance  
Elizabeth Loveness Faith Exploration  
Al Ross Weston Worship  
Kate Smith Hospitality and Fellowship  
Bob Spangler Purposeful Service

#### **Deacons**

Claudia Ross Weston - Moderator  
Susan Commeree  
Sheryl Lehman  
Nancy Tucker  
Sue Weston

### **Important Dates!**

**January 22**  
**VPC Book Club**

**January 8, 15, 29**  
**Game Night!**

**January 24**  
**VPC Annual meeting**  
**After Worship**

**January 4 – 29**  
**Happy Hours MWF 5 pm**

**January 19, 26, Feb 2, 9**  
**Faith Exploration Class 7 pm**

**January 6, 11, 20, 27**  
**Movement Prayer 8 am**



Dear Ones of VPC,

Recently in a conversation with my son, he and I reflected on how we were living through history. Future generations will talk about this pandemic and you and I will be recorded as having lived during this time. But for the daily living of this time, it doesn't always feel like history as much as just work. We mask up to go everywhere. We keep social distance, and we wash our hands more than ever before. And I suspect all of us are more than ready for it to end.

I've been thinking a lot lately about the people of Israel during the Babylonian exile. Jewish and Christian history record this time as life changing. Scripture devotes a good amount of text to telling that story. It DID get better, they DID return home, but they were changed and the home to which they returned was equally changed. Day to day life for the Israelites during that time was hard. They lived in a foreign land and had to work to keep their practices alive in new and creative ways. That's the part of their story that encourages me in these days.

Human beings find a way. People of God find ways to be creative and keep their faith alive even when circumstances around them change. The draw to gather together, the thirst to worship, to be in community as God's people is a strong one on our spirits. And times of exile remind and record for us that truth.

These are definitely hard days, but you and I remain close. We haven't worshipped in our sanctuary in months, but we do worship. We study together and pray together and do the work of the church together in new and creative ways.

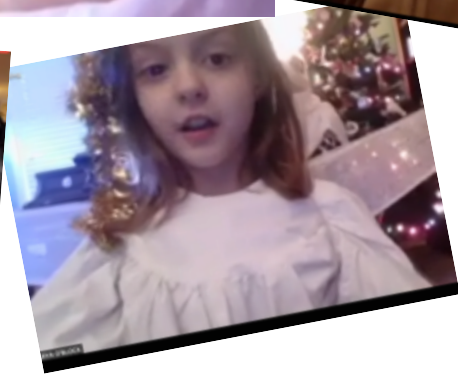
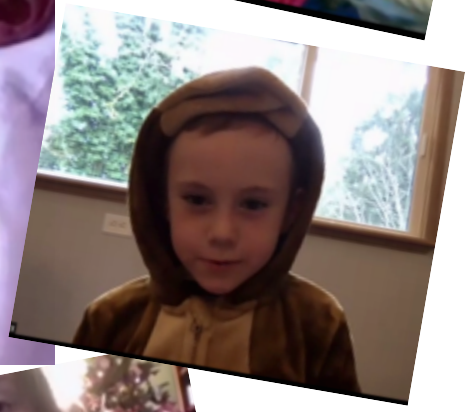
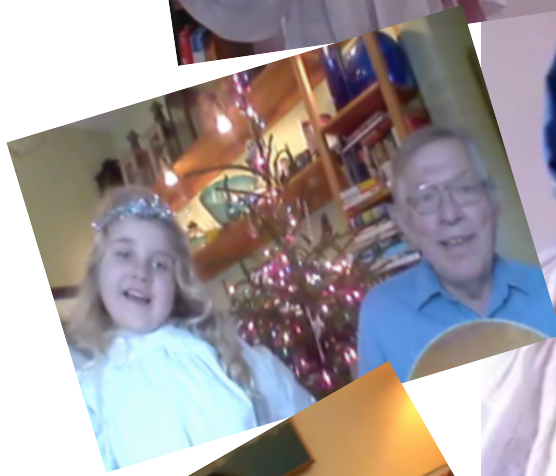
Yes, we are living through history, but the history of our faith teaches us that we belong to God and to one another and that we will find our way through this time while still being the church. That is why we study scripture together, to remember who we are and Whose we are, claimed and named. And it is God that tethers us to one another.

I thank God for you, your creativity, your spirits, and your grace. You encourage me.

In Christ,  
Leigh

The VPC Christmas Pageant – one of the highlights of this unusual 2020 Christmas season.

Participants from New York, California, North Carolina and around the "Sound" Some said it was our best one yet!



# From the Deacons

## Everything For a Season

*“For everything there is a season, and a time for every matter under heaven: a time to be born, and a time to die; ...a time to weep, and a time to laugh; a time to mourn, and a time to dance; a time to embrace, and a time to refrain from embracing...”*

Ecclesiastes 3:1-2, 4-5

*“Come to me, all you that are weary and are carrying heavy burdens, and I will give you rest.”*

Matthew 11:28

In the entire chronicling of history, there has never been a Father Time more eager to turn over his hourglass to Baby New Year than Father Time 2020. And we're happy for him to; “Good riddance!” we say. But unfortunately for us, even though Father Time is no longer on the clock with the burdens of 2020, we are left with them and must somehow navigate our way into this new year.

In 2020 we saw too much dying, weeping, mourning, and refraining from embracing. But the Bible reminds us that there is a season for everything. Could 2021 be the year of birth, laughter, dance and embracing? We hope so. We pray so. And, we wait.

Waiting is so passive, so singularly unsatisfying, so we look for proactive measures we can take to stay (or become) positive, maintain our equanimity, and keep our peace. A technique I picked up on the Internet looks promising. The “Five by Five” rule states: If it won't matter in five years, don't spend more than five minutes being upset by it. How much anxiety have we poured into 2020 over trivia such as social media commentaries and other people's political views, to name only two. Maybe we can lighten our own burdens in 2021 if we commit to holding on to our joy, our peace, and if we refuse to give power to those who would take it away.

While seasons change, God's promises endure. He has pledged to relieve us of our heavy burdens. Through acts of self-kindness, self-forgiveness, and, self-forgetfulness in ministering to others, we can lighten the weight of that burden and make 2021 a season of healing.

*Deacon Nancy Tucker*

P.S. In the African savannah, the changing seasons are critical to giving and sustaining life. Enjoy this beautifully recorded and narrated video of life in the veldt.

<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=pPP6ha8VXSs>

## Mission Resource Team News

### Area of Responsibility

Financials, Building and Grounds

**Buildings and Grounds** We had another very productive, socially distanced, **work party Saturday December 12<sup>th</sup>** while the Bizarre Holiday Bazaar cookie and jigsaw puzzle exchange were taking place. We ended up taking another 2 pickup truck loads of clippings to the transfer station and left a large pile of holly clippings for people to take home for Christmas decorations. Let's continue work parties on the second Saturday of each month, weather permitting. Bring hedge trimmers and lopping shears if you have them **Saturday, Jan 9<sup>th</sup> from 10-noon.**

**Carpe Diem** has arranged spaces to allow indoor classes possibly by the end of February and we have heard that **Creative Preschool** is planning to resume classes next fall.

Another volunteer and I cleaned the **rain gutters and changed the furnace filters** in December. Thursdays seem to be the best days to do that maintenance work since Carpe Diem students and teachers work remotely those days. **Please let me know if you are interested in helping with minor repair projects any Thursday.** Call me at 206-354-8917 and we can plan ahead.

Blessings and Grace,

*Jacq Skeffington*



Swag made from greens and holly from our yard clean up. Bow by our in-house expert Myrtle Walls.

## Hospitality/Fellowship Team News

### Areas of Responsibility

Hospitality, Fellowship

### **A Big Thank You**

What a strange - sometimes frightening and sometimes even wonderful - year it has been. No coffee hours to prepare but this year - Happy Hours - you bring your own refreshments. Our committee did meet several times on Zoom to organize small outdoor gatherings and several outdoor activities over the summer months. The main objective was to stay connected. Zoom filled the void of not being able to meet at the church. Games nights, happy hours, coffee at Sporty's, classes and Sunday worship provided many opportunities during the week to be with (at least digitally) our church family. Thanks to our committee members for their year long support and a great finale in the "Bizarre Holiday Bazaar". Everyone jumped in and either made available fun crafts and delicious treats or bought them or taught us all how to make them at our Monday evening demos! It certainly will be a year to be remembered for better or worse - but as far as being connected - I feel really good about staying in touch. **Many thanks to Pastor Leigh who fearlessly lead us into the age of digital church.** In many ways we have even thrived!

Kate Smith will be taking the role of Hospitality Elder in 2021. I'll be right there to support you Kate!

*Elizabeth Loveness, Hospitality Elder 2020*

## Faith Exploration Team News

### Area of Responsibility

Bible study, Christian formation (all ages)

**VPC Book Club** Book club will meet on the 22<sup>nd</sup>. We will be discussing Ho Chi Minh by William J. Duiker.

*Elizabeth Loveness, Faith Exploration Elder*

## Worship Team News

### Area of Responsibility

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

I would like to thank the congregation for their support while I served as worship elder. I feel very fortunate to be a part of a group so willing to serve. This has been a challenging year for all of us, but we have been able to move forward. I am looking forward to our continued journey in worship.

*Brownie Carver, Worship Elder 2020*

## Invitation and Outreach Team News

### Area of Responsibility

New Members and Discipleship,  
Evangelism and Invitation

**Outreach 2021** As we begin the new year, we not only plan for the future, but reflect on the past. We realize the need during this pandemic and hope to reach out to people. If you are feeling called to make a difference come join us - we're the fun group!! Make new friends, come up with ideas and spread the love of Jesus Christ. Contact me if you are interested - Barb Huff [barb.huff@comcast.net](mailto:barb.huff@comcast.net) or 206-713-6232.

*Barb Huff, Outreach Elder*

## Purposeful Service Team News

### Area of Responsibility

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

Purposeful Service publicized three offerings in December, albeit in a manner different from past years. Rather than VPC receiving a Christmas Eve service collection, the committee recommended, and session agreed, that people would be asked to donate to a charity of their choice. Also, the traditional Mary's Place tree with gift tags was replaced with a request that the congregation either send a gift directly to Mary's Place from its online list, or order an item from the online wish list at Amazon or Target. Finally, we publicized the Presbyterian Mission Agency Giving Catalog by providing a link, because we were unable to distribute copies of the printed catalog.

The December Styrofoam recycling event was cancelled, but people were encouraged to take items on January 3.

Please continue to support the Food Bank, and put IGA and Thriftway receipts in the outside prayer box.

We are committed to continuing and hopefully expanding the Purposeful Service programs in 2021, adjusting to the restrictions that exist at the time.

*Bob Spangler, Purposeful Service Elder*

## IFCH Report

**The clothing collection was very successful and appreciated. Thank you for the excellent donations! The Seattle Presbytery donated \$2500 to the IFCH and our congregation more than matched it. Your generosity is making a difference to many of our islanders in need!**

*Brownie Carver, VPC IFCH Representative*

## Clerk's Corner

There will be a short Congregational Meeting before the worship service Sunday January 3<sup>rd</sup> to re-elect Elder Elizabeth Loveness. Then there will be the Installation of Deacons and Elders during the worship service.

Session held its monthly meeting December 15<sup>th</sup> via ZOOM with all Elders present. Pastor Leigh opened the meeting with a meditation and prayer. Claudia Ross-Weston, the incoming moderator of deacons, joined briefly to report on Deacons activities and concerns. We received letter of thanks from IFCH for \$500.00 donation in November. Pastor Leigh reported that she has continued socially distant pastoral care, coming to Vashon frequently and increasing phone and zoom visits from home. Grief and NAMI support groups still have strong attendance. She welcomes input on how to keep Worship fresh. How we can improve? Leigh also led a 4-week discussion of Advent on Tuesday nights. Treasurer Jim Lilje reported that VPC is still in good financial condition. Donations exceed projections and nearly offset lost revenue from other building users. Pending Congregational approval of the Pastor's compensation package, which will be voted on at the Annual Meeting of the Congregation and Corporation January 24<sup>th</sup>, the budget for 2021 was adopted. Elizabeth Loveness reported Happy Holiday Hour was quite successful and included some participants that formerly had not been very involved. Tech support benefitted two members and succeeded just in time for several zoom events they were fully engaged in. Hospitality is looking at the possibility of purchasing two Chrome books to have as "loaners" for those who are having difficulty zooming with us. Session approved a motion that all money received during Bizarre Holiday Bazaar be donated to the IFCH Rent Relief Fund. Purposeful service elder Bob Spangler reported on the Mary's Place virtual Christmas Tree tag offering and publicizing the PCUSA Mission Giving Catalog for gifts made to mission causes. In lieu of the traditional Christmas Eve offering, it was suggested that during the services people be urged to donate individually to the causes they feel most worthy. The December styrofoam recycling event was cancelled due to COVID concerns. We will continue to publicize this program. Outreach elder Barb Huff volunteered to coordinate a first ever Christmas pageant via zoom. The book club held their annual book exchange also by zoom and discussed the book Wishin' and Hopin' by Wally Lamb. Brownie Carver reported the warm clothing drive went very well and items have distributed. Our matching funds challenge has also gone well with collections of almost at \$2500 at the time of the meeting. A thank you letter is being sent to the Seattle Presbytery for the \$2500 grant to the IFCH through an application initiated by VPC. Following an exchange of affirmations of Brownie Carver's service as Elder over the last 6 years the moderator closed with prayer. Session's next scheduled meeting will be Jan 19<sup>th</sup> at 4:30 pm via zoom.

Blessings and Grace, *Jacq Skeffington, Clerk of Session*

### Christmas Eve Candlelight Service



# Calendar

## January 2021

(all events on Zoom unless otherwise stated)



### Jan

- 3 Prayer Service 8:30 am**
- 3 Worship Service (Communion Service) 10 am**
- 10 Prayer Service 8:30 am**
- 10 Sunday Worship Service 10 am**
- 17 Prayer Service 8:30**
- 17 Sunday Worship Service 10 am**
- 22 VPC Book Club at 7**
- 24 Prayer Service 8:30 am**
- 24 Sunday Worship Service 10 am**
- 24 VPC Annual Meeting after the worship service**
- 31 Prayer Service 8;30 am**
- 31 Sunday Worship Service 10 am**

## ONGOING ACTIVITIES

**Sermon Reflection Mondays Noon**

**ZOOM Coffee at Sporty's Tuesday 9 am**

**Text Study Tuesdays Noon**

**Faith Exploration Class Tuesdays 7 pm (Beginning the 19<sup>th</sup>)**

**Movement Prayer Wednesdays 8 am**

**Happy Hours Mon Wed Fri 5 pm**

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