

Vashon Presbyterian Church

News and Concerns

September 2021

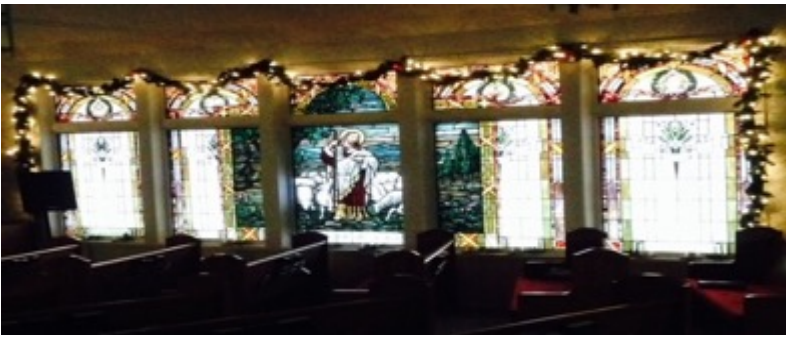


Zoom Link: <https://zoom.us/j/442169680>

Sermons Posted on Church Website
vashonpreschurch.org

Love One Another

Whoever you are and wherever your life's journey has taken you, you are welcome here. We hope that you will find VPC to be a people of warmth, acceptance, and commitment to the calling of Jesus Christ. We are honored to have you worship with us.



September: Reflection, Preparation

As we begin our hybrid in-person/Zoom worship services and make the sanctuary accessible to all according to their own comfort levels, we are pausing certain other activities for various reasons.

The Sunday Morning prayer meeting at 8:30 is suspended until October. We're still in the learning curve of setting up the technology for the hybrid 10:00 worship service.

First Friday S'mores and other Outreach and Hospitality activities are on hold due to the emerging Delta variant.

Faith Formation will resume on September 14th after a time of planning and reflection.

Coffee Fellowship at Sporty's, Theology Pub, Game Night, and Book Club are still on, so please join in the fun!

In-Person Worship Resumes!

Sunday, September 5th, marks the first time we as a congregation have met in person since Ash Wednesday 2020. All are welcome!

September 5th is Communion Sunday. Please contact Al Ross-Weston if you would like to usher or to serve.

Meeting guidelines detailed on Page 3

A Message from Pastor Leigh

Dear Ones of VPC,

Eighteen months ago, on Ash Wednesday, we were together for the last time in our sanctuary for worship. I remember thinking we'd be back for Easter, then Pentecost, then surely by the end of summer, then Christmas. It's been two Easters and two seasons of Pentecost since that evening and while we haven't been together in the sanctuary we have definitely worshipped.

In the last eighteen months, we proclaimed The Lord is Risen on two Easter Sundays, we lit candles each week of Advent and held our Christmas Eve candles up together in worship. We have prayed together, received new members together, studied together, laughed together, played games together and been the church together for all these months. When everything in the world seemed to change, GOD DID NOT, and we came together in worship.

On the first Sunday in September, September 5th, anyone who is comfortable and ready to come to sanctuary for worship is welcome, and anyone who wants to continue on Zoom can do so. One thing the pandemic has taught us is that adaptability and accessibility are critical to a healthy and welcoming congregation. Creating a welcoming and safe space for all to come together in worship is vital to our mission and I'm excited to see where this next chapter takes us.

We are pilgrims journeying together. As we are learning in the Psalms of Ascent, sometimes the road is easy and sometimes it is less so, but we continue the journey toward the Holy. We move through this life together because we know the One who is our help. And the One who is our help is a God of radical hospitality where all are welcome, and space is made for each one.

I am so grateful for you. You encourage me. You give me energy and you make me want to be at my very best. God is at work in our midst. Do you feel it? Do you believe it? I do. I see God already and work and I am confident God has great plans for our future in this community.

We aren't returning to church. We never left. But in these last eighteen months, I believe that with God's guidance we have learned to how to be a better church.

So, tighten up those shoelaces my friends, the journey continues!

Grace and Peace,
Leigh



In-Person Worship Guidelines

The last time our congregation gathered for worship in person in our sanctuary was Ash Wednesday of 2020. And yet we have continued to worship, continued to be the church, and continued to care for the community around us. Still, we recognize that the ability to gather in-person is a vital part of being the church together. Your Session met in August and prayerfully concluded that in person worship will resume on **Sunday, September 5th**. If you are ready to join us in person, you are welcome to come starting that Sunday. If you are not yet comfortable, you will continue to be able to worship with us live on Zoom. We are committed to continuing both ways of engaging worship together.

Due to the current guidelines from the King County Health Department, the concern over the delta variant and our need to create the safest possible space for everyone, we will follow these guidelines::

- We strongly recommend vaccination for Covid-19 .
- Everyone attending in-person worship must wear a mask, in keeping with Washington State (<https://www.doh.wa.gov/Newsroom/Articles/ID/2901/Updated-statewide-masking-order>)
- We will be singing together.
- Pews will be clearly marked to allow safe distancing.
- Offering will continue to be received online and by mail, but we will also have an offering plate up front for those who wish to contribute in person.
- We will share in communion. Bread will be placed on trays in individual paper holders and juice will be in little cups. We will not pass plates but come forward to receive the elements. If you prefer to bring your own elements you are welcome to do so.
- For now, there will be no coffee hour.
- Bathrooms will be cleaned before and after worship by custodial staff.
- There will be a screen in the sanctuary to allow those in person to see who is worshipping with us on Zoom and to hear their prayer requests when possible.
- We will use the pew hymnals..
- Bulletins will be placed on the table outside the sanctuary doors. We will continue to email them on Saturdays.

These are challenging days as a nation and world, sadly divided in too many ways. The guidelines we have agreed upon as a Session are not meant to further divide or challenge anyone. They are simply our collective prayerful discernment about what is best for now. We will continue to strive to make the safest possible place for all to worship, in our sanctuary or in your home. And we look forward, with you and the whole world, to the end of this pandemic.

We are delighted to be able to worship together in person again as you are ready. Feel free to reach out to us, via the church's or Pastor Leigh's email if you have any questions or concerns.

Elders Barb Huff, Jim Lilje, Liz Loveness, Al Ross-Weston, Kate Smith, Bob Spangler

Leigh Weber, Moderator

Jacq Skeffington, Clerk

Clerk's Corner

Session held its regular monthly meeting August 17th at Elizabeth Loveness's home. All Elders were present, and Pastor Leigh opened the meeting with prayer for Afghanistan and Haiti.

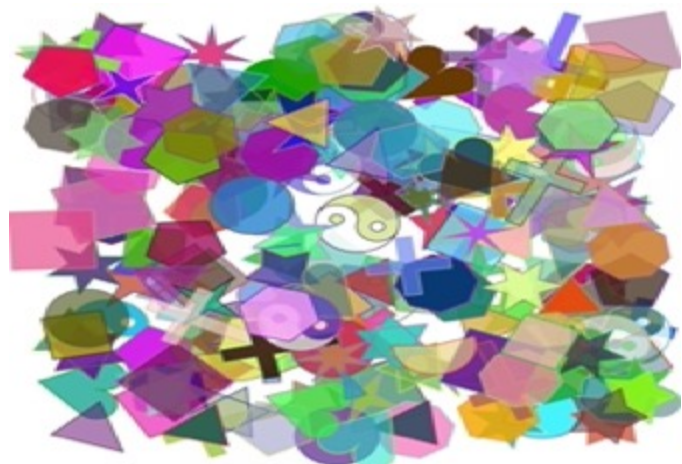
Re-entry discussion centered around setting up guidelines for, and inviting those who feel comfortable, to attend worship in the sanctuary starting September 5th while continuing to link up with all who are more comfortable attending virtually via Zoom. Following lengthy discussions, Pastor Leigh drafted a letter which Session reviewed and revised, and was emailed to all on our mailing list and will be available in the newsletter. All persons entering the building will continue to be required to sanitize their hands, remain masked, and maintain social distancing while in the building.

Mission Resources Elder, Jim Lilje, presented the Income and Expense report through July 2021 and cash on hand as of then. Donations continue to exceed budgeted estimate and expenses remain less than budgeted. Year to date we have about a \$9,600 surplus. Session received and accepted the Audit Committee's report of financial activity of 2019 and 2020.

Creative Preschool teacher Sara Bennet had a serious accident August 3rd while working at home and will not be able to teach this year. The Board of Creative Preschool could not find a replacement teacher and has decided to close the school permanently. They will pay rent until assets are liquidated. Session approved a motion to advertise the basement as available to any non-profit organization in line with our missions. Session also approved a motion to enter into agreement with Zellerhoff construction to remove silt from the south containment pond of the parking lot as required by King County Surface Water Management. After 21 years, the silt retained has exceeded the county guidelines. Session also authorized the Purposeful Service Committee to solicit furniture and/or funds to partially furnish a residence for a family exiting homelessness in partnership with Mary's Place.

The next regularly scheduled Session meeting will be September 21st, 4:30 pm.

Jacq Skeffington, Clerk of Session



Purposeful Service Team News Areas of Responsibility

Scholarships, Mary's Place partnership, IFCH, Mission Partner Relations

Session has approved our participation in the Mary's Place Make-A-Home program. Groups are matched with families moving from shelters to permanent housing, and provide furnishings needed for a room. More specific information will be in the e-news, but the primary need for us now is to identify a source for a queen size bed and/or dining room table in very good condition.

The news media have highlighted the arrival in the US of refugees from Afghanistan. One of the national agencies coordinating resettlement of these refugees is Lutheran Immigration and Refugee Service (www.lirs.org). LIRS is resettling refugees in the Seattle-Tacoma area, and has invited volunteers to help – either as individuals or groups. We are not aware of any coordinated Vashon effort in this regard, but individuals can obtain more information and volunteer at <https://www.tfaforms.com/4922177>.

Purposeful Service Committee members will collect Styrofoam and plastic bags in the VPC parking lot on Saturday, October 2 and then take them to the monthly event on October 3. We will provide more specific information about what is needed and how to separate items in the e-news.

Mission Partner Update

One of VPC's Mission Partners is Advocates for Immigrants in Detention Northwest (AIDNW), a Tacoma-based nonprofit with one staff member and over 200 volunteers. AIDNW's mission is to provide support for immigrants housed in and released from the federal Northwest Processing (previously "Detention") Center. For those in detention, AIDNW provides phone cards, craft material and books, and volunteers offer one-on-one visiting subject to COVID restrictions. Every day, detainees who are released are met by volunteers at the AIDNW RV parked by the center's exit, and are offered season-appropriate clothing, backpacks, snacks and assistance in making travel arrangements. Other volunteers provide rides to the airport and bus station. Short term housing will soon be available in a rental house. In July, volunteers assisted 295 released detainees. More information is available at www.aidnw.org. VPC recently donated \$1,000 to AIDNW.

*Bob Spangler
Purposeful Service Elder*



Mission Resource Team News

Building and Grounds

Second Saturday work parties will need to get busy September 11th! We'll cut back blackberries and low limbs of trees around the south parking lot where the Carpe Diem students love to build forts between the shrubbery during recess. Students will return right after Labor Day and will get busy on the forts as soon as possible. The south end parking lot containment pond was scraped clean of silt and cattails and the perimeter around it cleared of brush and blackberries in August. September 11th will be a great time to sit with the opened area and plan what we would rather grow there. Debbie Finch will also coordinate any volunteers who are willing to work indoors, dusting windowsills, vacuuming pew cushions and generally sprucing up the sanctuary as we resume in person worship there.

Sadly, Creative Preschool teacher, Sara Bennet, had a serious accident August 3rd while painting her house and will not be able to teach this year. The Board of Creative Preschool could not find a replacement teacher and has decided to close the school permanently. Session approved a motion to advertise the basement as available to any non-profit organization in line with our missions.

Two video cameras and other pieces of IT equipment were purchased by Session to enable in-person as well as online participation in worship and other VPC events. A "Millennial" IT tech installed the equipment and held a brief training session for our "Boomers" to operate it. Elder Jim Lilje has spent hours learning the system and is willing to train others who might be interested. Please call the church if interested and we'll set up a training session.

Jacq Skeffington
Building Use Coordinator



Before



After

Outreach Update

The yard sale was welcomed and very well attended by the Vashon community. It was a beautiful day, which helped attract lots of foot traffic. We brought in over \$1500, which we donated to Vashon Youth and Family Services.

Many thanks to all our volunteers who make it happen, those who made donations, those who worked the week leading up to the sale, and those who worked the sale day itself. It takes a village!!

There are no upcoming events for September. Outreach activities are on hold due to Covid and the emerging Delta variant.

Friday Game nights continue via Zoom at 7:00 PM. Please join us!

Barb Huff
Outreach Elder



Hospitality News

On September 10, I am planning to attend the “Monet at Étretat” exhibit at the Seattle Art Museum. If you would like to view this exhibit with me, tickets are available at the museum’s website: <https://secure.seattleartmuseum.org/events>. Contact me and we can coordinate a time to go. At this point, I’m planning to utilize public transportation.

Blueberry picking has been postponed until next year. The location has not been finalized; all suggestions are welcome.

Kate Smith
Hospitality Elder

Faith Formation A Time for Planning

This is a time of planning for the faith formation team. I had intended to have surgery early last month and be gone only the last three weeks of August. That seemed like a natural break between summer and fall so I didn't arrange to fill in the time. Now with a delayed surgery, it looks like I won't be very active until the end of September. So I'm planning to get some things going with the help of people willing to lead classes or discussion groups.

I've had several suggestions for new classes as well as continuing a second series of our interviews with young adults.

We will resume the interviews in mid-September. We have five interesting young people lined up to talk with us. At the end of that series I would like to pause, meet, and draw some conclusions about what we've heard and seen. We will be using the book The Reason for God by Timothy Keller to address some of the trends we see among young people.

Another topic that is suggested is a class devoted to methods of talking and discussing subjects in a group setting where people disagree on issues. In the words of the person who made the suggestion "how to talk to someone you like and want to honor as a person but definitely disagree with some steps they've taken or ideas they're putting forth." I think this would best be addressed with workshops or real opportunities for people to actually practice the communication methods we embrace. This should make for a lively and useful class time. Maybe we will call the class "Civil Discourse" or something like that. I welcome your ideas as well resources.

I would like to continue something on racial justice. I think we have opportunities to meet and interact with people from many ethnic backgrounds through projects our church members can join like the furniture and home goods collection for Mary's Place. I will be coordinating with Purposeful Service and Outreach teams to develop these possibilities. Also, we will add to our bibliography of recommended articles and books on this subject. This updated bibliography will be printed in the October issue of the newsletter.

We also have had a suggestion for a group that is willing to follow a guided reading of the Bible, day by day throughout the 365 days in a year. The two books being considered for this are The One Year Walk With God Devotional and The One Year Through the Bible Devotional. We will have copies of these for your approval mid-September.

So help us plan a winter of meaningful faith formation activities. Contact me with any ideas or comments by email or text after September 10th. I'll try to have a Faith Formation committee (Zoom) meeting around that date.

*Elizabeth Loveness
Faith Formation Elder*

Deacon's Message

Better Together

"O magnify the Lord with me, and let us exalt his name together."

Psalm 34:3

"...not neglecting to meet together, as is the habit of some, but encouraging one another, and all the more as you see the Day approaching."

Hebrews 10:25

The day is at last upon us when we can worship together in the sanctuary. This is exciting news for many of us who have longed not only but for the fellowship of our church friends, but also for power of that comes from singing, praising, and praying together. When we gather as a body of believers, we draw strength from one another.

Zoom technology has been (mostly) a blessing to us and has allowed us to stay in touch as a church community. Not everyone is comfortable with Zoom, however, and some view it as an unacceptable substitute for personal interaction. For these, meeting in person will be especially meaningful. The flip side is that there are also people who prefer to maintain their physical distance and will avoid in-person worship, perhaps forever. The great news is that our worship services are now totally inclusive, and we each get to decide for ourselves how best to attend.

The best news is that as we all gather in worship, we will be refreshed, restored, and reinvigorated. According to Joel Osteen, "When we come together to magnify God, it's like the intensity is turned up. Your faith mixed with everybody else's faith creates something powerful. When we come together in faith, an ordinary building becomes a house of God." I believe that applies to virtual buildings as well. And I eagerly look forward to all of us being able to connect with all of us, happy in the realization that no longer is anyone left behind.

Deacon Nancy Tucker

Reminder: Deacons are here for you!

The Deacons' main mission is to provide care and comfort for the church community. Whether this be through dedicated prayers, meals for the grieving or ailing, rides to doctors' appointments, and more, the Deacons are here to serve. Feel free to contact any of the Deacons if you find yourself needing assistance with your basic day-to-day needs.



VPC Book Club

The VPC Book Club will meet September 24th at 7:00 PM, at the home of Lindsay Hofman, 21107 Westside Highway. Weather depending, the meeting will be held outdoors. There is plenty of parking. This is an in-person meeting, without Zoom. All are welcome!

September's book selection is The Mountains Sing by Nguyen Phan Que Mai. According to Amazon, "*The Mountains Sing* tells an enveloping, multigenerational tale of the Trần family, set against the backdrop of the Việt Nam War.

Vivid, gripping, and steeped in the language and traditions of Việt Nam, *The Mountains Sing* brings to life the human costs of this conflict from the point of view of the Vietnamese people themselves, while showing us the true power of kindness and hope."

In October we will discuss the book, Braiding Sweetgrass by Robin Wall Kimmerer.

Subsequent books include The Boy, the Mole, the Fox and the Horse by Charlie Mackesy, and Between Two Kingdoms by Suleika Jaouad.

Check the Thoroughly Thursday e-news for updates on this meeting as the month progresses.



September Birthdays

Join us in wishing a happy birthday to:

8th Diana Lilje
18th Mary Jacobs
27th Laura Jean Fisher



Calendar

September 2021

- 3 Game Night 7:00 PM
- 5 Sunday Worship Service 10:00 AM **Communion Sunday**
- 9 Theology Pub at Camp Colvos 5:30 PM
- 10 Game Night 7:00 PM
- 12 Sunday Worship Service 10:00 AM
- 14 Faith Formation 7:00 PM
- 17 Game Night 7:00 PM
- 19 Sunday Worship Service 10:00 AM
- 21 Deacons' Meeting 10:00 AM Session Meeting 4:30 PM
- 23 Theology Pub at Camp Colvos 5:30 PM
- 24 VPC Book Club 7:00 PM
- 26 Sunday Worship Service 10:00 AM
- 28 Faith Formation 7:00 PM

Ongoing Activities

- Mondays** Sermon After Talk Noon – 1 PM
Free for All discussion 6:30 PM
- Tuesdays** Sporty's In-Person Coffee Hour 9:00 AM
Text Study Noon
- Wednesdays** Body Prayer 8:00 AM
- First Thursdays** Mental Health Advocates 7:00 PM
- Fridays** Grief Group 11:00 AM (Call Leigh for details)
Game Night 7:00 PM

Please Note:

Dates, times, and events might change after the time of this publication. Refer to the church bulletin and the weekly e-news for up-to-date information.

Church Leadership

- Pastor** Leigh Weber
- Clerk of Session** Jacq Skeffington
- Session Members** Barb Huff, Jim Lilje, Elizabeth Loveness, Al Ross-Weston, Kate Smith, Bob Spangler
- Deacons** Claudia Ross-Weston (Moderator), Susan Commeree, Nancy Johnson, Sheryl Lehman, Nancy Tucker, Sue Weston