



Vashon Presbyterian Church

News and Concerns

December 2021



Sermons Posted on Church Website

Vashonpreschurch.org

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

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.



December: A Holy Time, A Festive Time

This month at VPC offers each of us the opportunity to observe and celebrate the Advent season as Christians, as friends, and as members of a connected community. These opportunities include:

- 📍 Communion each Sunday during Advent
- 📍 Weekly Advent series on Zoom
- 📍 Christmas Pageant
- 📍 Christmas Eve Service
- 📍 Christmas dessert on Zoom with Leigh
- 📍 Craft workshops
- 📍 Vashon WinterFest
- 📍 Christmas Market at VPC
- 📍 Theology Pub
- 📍 Cookie and puzzle exchange
- 📍 Christmas-themed Game Nights
- 📍 New Year's Eve Game Night

See inside for details and check our weekly E-News for the most current info.



A Message from Pastor Leigh

Dear Ones of VPC,

One of the holiday traditions we've always kept in our house is the lighting of the Advent candles on our wreath. I remember having to help them hold the long match when my kids were young. So, when I pulled the wreath out last week, I was flooded with those memories. I am also flooded with the awareness that this time of waiting is quite special.

As I watched Al light the first candle in worship last Sunday, I felt a sense of "Yes...this is what we do together." We wait together. Last year's Covid restrictions didn't stop Advent and Christmas, we still lit candles and waited together and yet there was something wonderful about watching that in person this year.

Rituals and traditions give us a framework, they create memories and connection and it's good to share those with one another. We find our way to honor those despite our circumstances because they point to something more. They point to the collective waiting that we do in this season. They slow us down. They make us ponder.

The rituals themselves are not what binds us but our collective understanding that we live in expectation not only of Christmas but of a new way. Theologian Dominic Crossan once said, "If you had been following Jesus' life day to day and how he lived you would probably have been thinking that someone is going to kill this man." The One for which we wait invites us to a way of living contrary to much of what the world values. He invites us to love without condition, to treat every human as a sacred person, to care for the sick and feed the hungry, to stand up and alongside those on the margins. He invites us to the work of it being done on earth as it is in heaven.

While I am filled with nostalgia and delight that we are lighting candles together once again, I am also aware that these candles which we light are signs of a birth that not only changed the world but invites us to be the change today.

So let us light candles and let us sing and let us pray and let us wait together but let us also remember that the One for whom we wait is also waiting for us.

Your sister in Emmanuel,

Leigh



In-Person Worship Guidelines

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 requirements (<https://www.doh.wa.gov/Newsroom/Articles/ID/2901/Updated-statewide-masking-order>).
- We will sing together.
- Pews will be clearly marked to allow safe distancing.
- Offerings 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.
- 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.

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, Bob Spangler

Leigh Weber, Moderator

Jacq Skeffington, Clerk



Clerk's Corner

Session held its regular monthly meeting November 21st at Elizabeth Loveness' home. Pastor Leigh opened the meeting with prayer. Finance Elder Jim Lilje reported on the present financial status and expressed confidence that the church will end the year with slightly higher income than expenses. The foci (plural of focus) of the meeting were Advent and Christmas planning, activity of the nominating committee, revising Pastor Leigh's terms of call for 2022, and finalizing a budget for 2022.

A hybrid Christmas Eve candlelight service will be celebrated in person and via zoom at 5pm. We'll share desserts from home via zoom Christmas Day at 6pm and Sunday worship December 26th will be via zoom ONLY.

The nominating committee reported progress in filling both Elder and Deacon vacancies which will occur at the end of the year and the personnel committee proposed an increase in the pastor's terms of call.

Church Officers must be elected by vote of the congregation and their terms will begin January 1, 2022. Changes to a pastor's terms of call must be approved by vote of the congregation and reviewed by the Presbytery's commission on ministry before becoming effective. Therefore, a congregational meeting will be held on December 12th for election of church officers and approval of the proposed terms of call.

Session then adopted a budget which will be presented to the congregation at the Annual Meeting of the congregation and corporation in January.

Details of other committee activities discussed and approved will be listed in each committee's section of this newsletter

The next meeting of Session will be December 21st at 4pm at Elizabeth Loveness' home.

Building and Grounds

We've been busy this month having potholes in the parking lot filled, repairing leaking plumbing in the restrooms, having technicians perform the annual inspection of our fire alarms, equipment, and fresh water back-flow preventer, having the rain gutters cleaned and decorating the church for Christmas.

Hopefully during our Second Saturday work party on December 12th we can do a little more winterizing of the grounds and put final touches on Christmas decorations. Weather permitting, we'll gather at the church from 10-noon. I'm sure there will be work both indoors and outdoors. We can especially use any pickup trucks that can carry away some of the clippings we've been piling around the perimeter of the parking lot. Watch the eNews for updates.

Planning is still in the works to convert the "Joyful Noise" (crying) room to an audio/visual control room with A/V equipment set up permanently and secured in that space. If you have any ideas, please contact me.

Blessings and Grace,

Jacq Skeffington, Clerk of Session

Purposeful Service Team News Areas of Responsibility

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

We are again participating in the Mary's Place Christmas gifts program. Again, however, they have decided that during this pandemic, **the easiest and safest gift is gift cards!** And they allow families the flexibility to shop for their specific wants and needs. Send a \$25 gift card from a retail store (Target, Walmart, Fred Meyer, Amazon, etc.) so that families can purchase their own holiday gifts, or from a grocery store so that families can have a holiday meal. Links are provided on the Mary's Place Holly Jolly Wish Lists! Please purchase in \$25 increments and write the value of the gift card on the card. Send to Mary's Place, PO Box 1711, Seattle, WA 98111. You may prefer to shop for physical toys and presents for families from the holiday wish lists at Target or Amazon to purchase a gift for Mary's Place kids, teens, or parents, and ship them directly to Mary's Place. Visit the Giving Tree page at www.marysplaceseattle.org/givingtreetags to shop for gifts, or simply make a cash donation that will allow Mary's Place to directly purchase the toys or gift cards that are most wanted by the families.

Once you've made a gift to Mary's Place, you may want to consider something special for that hard to please relative or friend. How about a piglet (\$40) or a rainwater catchment system (\$75)? No, you don't actually send these gifts; rather you use the Presbyterian Giving Catalog (which has 20 pages of suggestions) and have the items sent to a needy recipient identified by our parent denomination. The catalogs are located near the church office window, or a copy can be viewed at www.presbyteriangifts.org. After ordering, you will be offered e-cards or gift cards to send to the person in whose name you are making the gift.

As the cold weather approaches it is time to start collecting items for our homeless. Hand warmers, socks, and blankets are popular. All items should be clean and lightly used. Donations can be delivered to the church during office hours. If you have questions, contact Brownie at 206-795-6488.

Bob Spangler, Purposeful Service Elder



Faith Formation Report

About 14 members have started a daily devotional using the guide, The One Year Through the Bible Devotional. One can read a verse(s) each day and read in the guide a short passage for thought or prayer. We will have a time every two weeks for comment or questions. Our first gathering was November 16 on Zoom.

In addition, Presbytery is offering a special Advent devotional. Leigh suggests that we put The One Year Devotional on hold until the first of the year, and look at the Presbytery one during this season.

We also are starting a four-part Advent series, which is unusual and is a reminder of Christ's coming and mission here on earth. Using excerpts from a Presbyterian Relief Agency film, class members discuss disruptions to our lives and keeping the hope of Jesus' s coming. This Advent series will be shared on Zoom four Tuesdays beginning November 30 at 7 pm.

We finished our listening interviews with the 25-30ish-year-olds. Some conclusions are given below. I was hoping class members would conclude from this that they should look for opportunities to reach out when and where they can - one on one. Conclusions about younger generation are:

1. Most do not attend a church service although most did when they were growing up.
2. Many retreat to nature for inspiration.
3. They find their social connections through groups other than church, such as nonprofits, work associates, family, or community service organizations.
4. Many have been disillusioned with the liturgical language, structure and exclusivity of the mainline churches.
5. Some have been hurt deeply by the rigidity of conservative churches.
6. Most want to find a meaningful way to express their faith or values regarding the world that is "bigger than themselves."
7. They are searching to some extent for spiritual practices such as yoga or meditation to give their lives more meaning and wholeness.
8. They are not seeking through organized churches.
9. Most discuss these topics with only their closest friends. One described his journey as a "solo Christian."
10. They are busy, perhaps too busy, to slow down enough to consider faith, God, religion, good/evil in the hyped-up media-driven world.
11. Most know history well enough to know Christian churches have been complicit in racism, wars, and social injustice.
12. Most seek secular help for their problems via doctors, medications, therapists, counselors, friends rather than from religion or Christian faith.

We had planned as a last class a reunion of all the interviewees so they could meet each other and comment on our conclusions, but it got too close to the holidays and we couldn't get a date that all or even several could be present at once, so I'm sending some of our conclusions to them to get their thoughts and comments.

Elizabeth Loveness, Faith Formation Elder

Deacon's Message **"Put on Your Own Oxygen Mask Before Helping Others"**

Even though it might have been a while since you have boarded an airplane, no doubt you remember as part of the pre-flight safety instructions, the admonition to secure your own oxygen mask before assisting others with theirs. This rule is grounded in practicality. A dad who decides to strap a mask on his frightened and unruly toddler before securing his own could pass out before doing so, jeopardizing the safety of both.

This wisdom extends well beyond the confines of an aircraft, and is particularly applicable during the weeks leading up to Christmas. Just look at this month's busy church calendar to see that we have at least double the events and activities in December than just about any other time of the year. While this is a fun and festive time, it can also be a trap for those of us who want everything to be "just right." A perfectly trimmed Christmas tree; the home decked out with lights and decorations; gifts purchased, wrapped and shipped in time; cards printed, written and mailed; elaborate meals planned and prepared—you know how it goes.. The pressure to create the perfect Christmas experience can be overwhelming, particularly this year when many of us will reunite with our family. If we aren't mindful, we can easily find ourselves exhausted and counting the days until Christmas is **over!** And what a shame that would be.

Leigh mentioned in a recent sermon that we need to be gentler with ourselves during Advent. We need to remember the reason for the season. We don't honor God when we wear ourselves out in the name of Christmas.

If you are feeling the pressure to overextend your personal resources, remember that this pressure is not imposed by the Lord. We have permission to scale back, step back, and ask others for help. When we do that, we are in fact putting on our own oxygen mask first, ensuring that we have the strength and willingness to help others as God's hands and feet.

Deacon Nancy Tucker

Coffee Hour is Back! **Hosting Volunteers Needed**

On November 28 we set up a coffee hour immediately following the worship service. This was well received and well attended, so we will make this a weekly event going forward. Volunteers are needed to host this short get-together and to help with refreshments and cleanup. If you are interested, please contact Nancy Tucker.



December Birthdays

Please wish a happy December birthday to:

- 3** Susan Commeree
- 6** Nancy Johnson
- 25** Leslie Hauck
- 31** Bob Spangler

Vashon WinterFest 2021: December 4, 5:00 – 7:00

Join the Fun!

The island's annual WinterFest celebration is back! Complete with a street parade, a visit from Santa Claus and concluding with the lighting of the Christmas tree, WinterFest offers us an opportunity to reconnect with our island friends and participate in an enjoyable community event.

VPC is supporting WinterFest and the community with an active presence on the parade route. We have transformed our Halloween 'cat'apult into a reindeer chute dispensing candy canes to the children. We will hand out cookies and other treats to adults as they gather at the Vashon Theater and follow Santa to the tree lighting at Vashon Village. We're setting up the fire pit to encourage camaraderie (and to warm us up!), and as a final touch, we're adding festive luminaries to light the path. What a great way to get into the Christmas spirit!

We will set up the reindeer chute, outside cookie table(s), and fire pit before WinterFest kicks off at 5:00.

Can you help? We could use a hand in the following areas:

- 📍 Baking/creating cookies and treats
- 📍 Placing the cookies and treats in muffin liners for dispensing
- 📍 Setting up/taking down the outdoor treat table(s)
- 📍 Building/extinguishing the fire in the fire pit
- 📍 Dispensing candy canes

We will begin setup at 4:30 to be ready for the 5:00 parade kickoff.

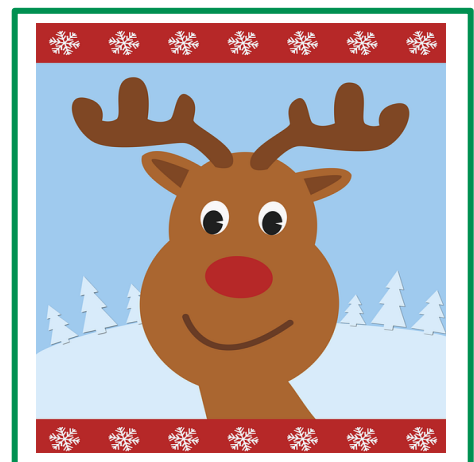
We will take down the table(s) and reindeer chute by 6:30. The parade concludes at Vashon Village, so there should be very few revelers near the church after 6:00.

If you are interested and willing to help, either by providing treats or your personal presence at the event, please contact Barb Huff at 206-713-6232 or barb.huff@comcast.net.

Please join us, and bring your little ones!



Bring the
entire family!
Fun for all!



Calling all Angels! (And Shepherds, Wise Men, and Animals) Christmas Pageant on Zoom December 19 at Noon

Last year's Christmas Pageant was such fun that we are repeating it this year. The blessing of Zoom technology makes it possible for families local and distant to participate. All are welcome—young and old, near and far—please join us! We'll provide the costume if you are local; if you live off island, here's your chance to exercise your creativity. (We are not looking to garner a Costume Design Oscar, so no pressure to create an elegant one). Our pageant takes the form of a reading, with a small bit of acting and singing. It is not about perfection – this is about telling and remembering the Christmas story and including our church community families. To sign up for a part, contact me, at 206-713-6232; or email me at barb.huff@comcast.net. I'll organize and send out the script for the pageant, and lead us that day. This is a great opportunity to engage your geographically distant children, grandchildren, relatives and friends.

Barb Huff, Outreach Elder

Angel Mirabai Reeves, accompanied by her grandfather Chris Coldeen, performs in last year's pageant.



VPC Book Club

This month, we are going to something a little different. We are reading a selection of children's books, all of which are available from the library.

Suggested titles:

- 📖 **The Boy, the Mole, the Fox and the Horse** by Charlie Mackesy
- 📖 **Three Questions** by John J. Muth (All of this author/illustrator's works are wonderful!)
- 📖 **Stellaluna** by Janell Cannon
- 📖 **The Christmas Miracle of Jonathan Toomey** by Susan Wojciechowski
- 📖 **Gifts of the Heart** by Patricia Polacco (It is hard to choose just one from this author, so if you enjoy this book, read more illustrated and written by her.)

If these books inspire you to remember one of your family stories you would like to share, please bring that to share too!

We will be meeting on December 17 at the Spangler home at 6:00. They plan to supply two kinds of soup and are requesting others bring a side dish. There will be limited space, so please notify the Spanglers if you plan to attend. We will also have our annual book exchange, so remember to bring a wrapped book.



Christmas Market Comes to VPC December 11 and 12, 10:00 – 4:00



VPC is sponsoring a festive 2-day Christmas market, featuring various local artists displaying and selling their creations. The artists' booths will be located inside the Great Hall. Look for paintings, knitted items, spices, wind chimes, pottery, jewelry, soaps, and much more!

Bring the entire family—there's something to offer for everyone. Take the kids to visit Santa at the Kids' Christmas Shopping Corner, and feel free to snap your own photos.

The artists will donate 10% of their proceeds to the Vashon Food Bank. VPC will have its own table and will donate **100%** of our collections to the Food Bank.

Here's how you can help:

Be a Santa! We're looking for Santas to work 2-hour shifts both days, from 10:00-12:00, 12:00 – 2:00, and 2:00 – 4:00. We'll provide the costume; you bring a hearty "Ho, ho, ho!"

Create crafts at our craft parties to donate, or contribute your own handiwork. Our highly talented congregation will contribute their handmade items to the market. We have scheduled two working craft parties. The first is Thursday, December 2, from 1:00 – 4:00 at Barb Huff's home. The second is Saturday, December 4, from 2:00 – 4:00 at the church. At these working craft parties we'll create edible and non-edible delights such as wooden Santas, table runners, gnome wine toppers, potholders, chocolate peppermint bark, and fudge. Come to one or both, and join in the fun while you help support the Vashon Food Bank.

Donate materials. We especially need holiday fabrics and holiday cups.

Interested/willing to help? Contact Barb Huff at barb.huff@comcast.net for more details.



Christmas Cookie and Jigsaw Puzzle Exchange December 18

Last year's cookie and puzzle exchange, spearheaded by Kate Smith, was a great success and represented one of our first steps in reconnecting in person with our church family. In Kate's honor we are reprising this event, with the hope it will become a treasured Christmas tradition at VPC.

Here's How it Works:

- 🕒 Bring your treats to the church on December 18 **between 9:30 – 10:30. NO LATER, PLEASE!**
- 🕒 Bring your jigsaw puzzles to the church between 9:30 and Noon.
- 🕒 **Return between Noon and 12:30** to pick up your plate of goodies and a puzzle.
- 🕒 We will set up tables inside for cookie and puzzle drop off and pickup

Cookie Bakers and Treat Makers Needed!

Our goal is to provide each church household with a plateful of Christmas goodies. We're looking for volunteers to make two dozen cookies or other Christmas treats to be shared with the congregation.

Can You Offer On-Site Assistance ?

- 🕒 Plating the Christmas goodies
- 🕒 Dispensing the plates of treats
- 🕒 Hosting the jigsaw puzzle table
- 🕒 Cleanup

Do you enjoy jigsaw puzzles but don't have one to contribute? Take one anyway! There will be plenty to go 'round.

If you cannot make it to the church that day, a Deacon will deliver your cookie plate to your home. We want everyone to have a taste of Christmas cheer!

To sign up for cookie baking or to help on-site, please contact Nancy Tucker.



Calendar

December 2021

- 2 Craft Party, Huff's home, 1:00 – 4:00
- 3 Game Night, 7:00 PM – Christmas Theme
- 4 Craft Party, VPC, 2:00 – 4:00
Vashon Winter Fest 4:30 -6:30 PM
- 5 Sunday Worship Service 10:00 AM
- 10 Game Night 7:00 PM – Christmas Theme
- 11/12 Christmas Market 10:00 – 4:00
- 12 Sunday Worship Service 10:00 AM
- 16 Deacons' Meeting 10:00 AM
- 16 Faith Formation 7:00 PM
Theology Pub at Camp Colvos 5:00
- 17 VPC Book Club, 6:00 PM
- 18 Cookie/puzzle Exchange Drop off: 9:30-10:30 Pick up: 12:00 – 12:30
- 21 Sunday Worship Service 10:00 AM
- 21 Deacon Meeting 10:00 AM Session Meeting 4:30 PM
- 24 Christmas Eve Service 5:00
- 25 Merry Christmas! Dessert with Leigh 6:00
- 26 Sunday Worship Service 10:00 AM **Zoom only**
- 31 Special New Year's Eve Game Night 7:00

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

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

Church Leadership

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

