

Mount Vernon First
United Methodist Church

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The Methodist Greeter

December 2017



“Our mission as a congregation is to strengthen our personal and group relationship with Christ and to reach out to all people through faith in action.”

RETURN SERVICE REQUESTED

Pastor's Corner

Pastor Terry Hall

BIBLE READINGS FOR THE MONTH

Dec. 3
Luke 1:5-25, 57-80

Dec. 10
Luke 1:26-56

Dec. 17
Matthew 1:18-25

Dec. 24
Luke 2:1-20

Dec. 31
Matthew 2:1-23

We'll be using *The Voice* translation during worship throughout December

Blessing upon blessing

A blessing that doesn't lead to hope isn't a blessing at all—it is a curse. There is no such thing as a blessing that doesn't lead to change or renewed affirmation. It is in the very nature of blessing to announce a worldview. Without connection blessings cannot happen. One cannot bless oneself. Blessings are received from others or given to others.

Gunderson, Gary and Pray, Larry. **Leading Causes of Life: Five Fundamentals to Change the Way You Live Your Life**, p. 119

I'm writing this just a couple days before Thanksgiving, so I am not surprised to find myself captured by thanks-giving ... appreciation ... enjoyment ... blessing. It is so very appropriate that our national celebration of the unmerited and, as it turned out, unreciprocated, generosity, cooperation and compassion of the native peoples of this continent to a bunch of hopeful but woefully unprepared European interlopers should act as a sort of herald to the final Sunday of the church year, on which we name and celebrate Christ as the King of our lives, only to return to deep yearning and hope for that traveling star to return to the night sky as we enter Advent the following Sunday. For a few short breaths, we are more open to seeing our neighbors as “us” instead of “them” and awakening to our shared humanity. OK, I know that not everyone feels thankful on the last Thursday of November, or any other day for that matter, nor hopeful about God's nearness or love, and that, of course, breaks both my heart and God's. Still, after spending several days in a row listening to rushing winds making grave threats from within familiar, comfortable buildings in which I am warmly known, I cannot but 'loose' any tie to uncertainty, fear and alone-ness, the better to more firmly bind myself to joy and thanks-giving.

I really appreciate Gunderson's and Pray's clarification of the inherent power of blessing, which acknowledges the essential relational nature of the very concept of “blessing.” As a verb, there must be at least two parties – giver and receiver – for any action or movement, and as a noun, no blessing can be contained within a single being; blessings require the space between us and some opening in our protective boundaries. Could this be another expression of a God Who is Three-in/as-One? We remember that when God called Abram to leave his kin, let God be his King, and go wherever the Divine sends him, he received his first blessing, as found in Genesis 12:2-3, in the form of a promise with several parts:

I will make you a great nation; I will bless you and make your name great; and you shall be a blessing. I will bless those who bless you, and I will curse those who curse you; and in you all the families of the earth shall be blessed.

(continued on next page)



You can find this edition of our newsletter on-line at www.mvfumc.org

(Pastor's Corner Continued)

So, I think I am going to introduce an additional question to the Thanksgiving gathering at my home this year, maybe just as we are about to enjoy a first helping of pie: "How has the world been blessed by you since we last gathered around this table?" I may even follow up with one about the sorts of blessings we hope to have move through us in 2018. And during the season of Advent, as we tune in to the "Angels Among Us" through both our congregation-created devotional readings and our worship services, I invite you to join me in praying each day, perhaps in those first moments between awakening and getting out of bed, or as you lay down at night: "Lord, let's review the blessings I perceived today and the people You placed within the system/pathway of those blessings. If I missed some, please try me again tomorrow, because I really love playing this part in Your plans!"

Look to the night sky, my friends, and be awake to the blessings being granted you as both gift and sacred opportunity! Won't it be exciting to see how the Savior comes to us this time, and what gifts of caring, accompaniment, and awakening we'll have the pleasure of shepherding? May your Christmas be not only merry, but also richly meaningful!

Pastor Terry

Giving Tree 2017



The Giving Tree is set up in the Narthex. We will be receiving information for 4 families from the Skagit Valley Herald and one of our own church ministries. Also this year we are excited to have the MOPS mothers join us in this ministry by adopting a family. The cards on the tree will have information about the age and sex of the person and a couple of ideas for gifts they would like to receive. We need to have the gifts delivered by December 12th so we have two Sundays to get all the presents in to the church. Please take one or more cards, purchase and wrap the present(s) and return to the church **with the tag from the tree firmly attached to the present.**

We would also like to provide a gift certificate for each family to purchase enough food for a full holiday meal. If you would be willing to donate funds toward these gift certificates, please write

"Giving Tree" on the memo line on your check. Thank you in advance for your generosity.

Also, this season we will be collecting toiletries for LOVE, Inc. to provide to families who are not able to purchase these items themselves. If you have any questions or would like to help with sorting and/or delivering the presents, please contact Kay Martin at kay@mvfumc.org or 360-770-1701.

Advent Devotional Materials

Advent Devotional materials are out on the table in the Narthex. These materials include our very own Advent booklet. A huge "Thank You" to all who wrote devotions for our booklet and to our Sunday School children for their illustrations! Feel free to pick up some materials for yourself and maybe for your friends and neighbors too!

Skagit Valley UMYouth

Hey all you 6th through 12th graders... we will be gathering here at the church for our annual Skagit UM Youth Group Christmas party on Wednesday, Dec. 13th at 5:30 pm. Watch your e-mail and Facebook for more party info. If you know someone that might like to be a part of this group, please let Lori Flores know lori@mvfumc.org.

Joseph Martin's
**CEREMONY
OF CANDLES**

Presented by

FIRST UNITED METHODIST CHURCH

SUNDAY, DECEMBER 17, 2017

at

5:00 PM

1607 East Division Street

Mount Vernon

Reception following

Childcare provided

A GIFT OF MUSIC AND CANDLELIGHT

From the Secretary's Desk

I have a few notes for you:

- With the passing of Betty Jean Currington to a better life, we are looking for someone to carry on her job of securing **Greeters** for each Sunday. This is an easy job as all you have to do is call people to schedule them and then let the secretary know. If you are willing to assume this responsibility, let Sue Erickson know.
- Bev Collins who has served many, many years as the person responsible for recruiting **Liturgists** for each Sunday has finally retired from this position. Again, this job does not take a lot of time. If you are willing to do this, please let Sue Erickson know.
- Have you heard and seen the hustle and bustle in the church on any given day? We have increased the number of groups using the church building. NAMI now holds all their meetings at the church, the Girl Scout leaders of Western Washington and an additional girl scout troop are meeting here, we have the FAE Cooperative Bilingual preschool meeting three mornings a week in our building, and the church has just signed on to being the chartering organization for the Boy Scout Troop #1 who is meeting every Tuesday night. This troop involves upwards of 60 boys plus adult leaders and utilizes almost all the classrooms and Sprague Hall. As you can see, the space has filled up with activities. **This makes it imperative that you plan events ahead and fill out Facility Use Request Forms at least two weeks before you want to use space in the church.**

Thanks and blessings,
Sue Erickson

Annual Cookie Extravaganza!!

It's that time of year... The United Methodist Women are holding their annual Cookie Extravaganza Dec 2 from 10:00 a.m. to noon (or until we run out of cookies!). We are asking all of you folks that love to bake Christmas Cookies to consider making a few dozen for our cookie sale. This is our one big fundraiser for the year that funds our mission pledges. Thanks for your support! The quilters have been hard at work making potholders and other quilted items and will be selling them at the Cookie Extravaganza as well.

Wesleyan Circle

The ladies from Wesleyan will be meeting on Monday, December 18 at 1:00 p.m. They will gather together at the Curious Chef in the Burlington Outlet Mall. For more information contact Donna Perez at 428-5903.

United Methodist Women's Annual Christmas Tea

All women of the church are invited to join together on Wednesday, Dec. 13 at 1:30 pm in the Fireside Room for our annual Christmas Tea. We will have a short program, some carol singing, and of course delicious cookies and tea! We hope that you will join us!

Holiday Worship Schedule

Looking ahead to our worship schedule for the Christmas season...

Sunday, Dec. 24th—One worship service at 10:30 am, No Early service or Sunday School

Family Friendly Christmas worship & candlelight service at 5:00 pm

Sunday, Dec. 31st—One worship service at 10:30 am, No Early service or Sunday School

We hope that you will join us in worship on these special Sundays!

FINANCIAL REPORT

October 2017

	Income	Expense
Regular Account	\$18,945.76	\$23,385.85
Special Account	\$ 4,352.58	\$ 2,453.79

We have paid all of our bills and our Conference Apportionments to date. Thank you again for your continued support of the ministries of our church.

Pledge Cards for 2018

If you did not get to turn in your pledge card, there is still time. If you have misplaced your card there are additional cards on the table in the narthex. By turning in your pledge card you help us to set the budget for our church. Thank you so much!

From the Finance Team

The Finance team would like to thank Wylie Keeler for his leadership the past few years. As of October, Wylie asked to be allowed to step down as leader. Fortunately, he will stay on the team, and continue to serve as the Finance team's representative to the Church Council. Barbara del Bosque was asked to be the leader. Other team members are Terry Hall (Pastor), Lori Flores (Treasurer), and Doreen Nystrom (lead counter). Please feel free to talk to any of us if you have questions or concerns. We represent **YOU**.

The Finance team would also like to thank those who volunteer to count the church offerings each week. This includes the Sunday morning offering, any monetary gifts that have been received through the mail that week, and any special collections, such as the Gleaners Table or the Upper Room. The checks and money are counted, entered into the computer (so that donors can receive a yearly statement reflecting their giving for the year), and make the necessary deposits to the bank. Counters include Doreen Nystrom (lead), Barbara del Bosque, Jennifer McCoy, Beth Replier, Irene Williams, Sue Kelder, Nancy McKeown, and Bruce Coghill. If you get a chance, please take time to thank these folks for their service. The biggest thing you can do to make the counters job easier is to be very clear **where** you want your money to go. Make checks out to the First United Methodist Church (we cannot deposit checks made out to other entities), and then mark on the Memo line what the check is for (like "poinsettia" or "UMCOR"). Anytime there is nothing on the Memo line, we assume the money is for the general budget.

Speaking of the general budget, did you realize that the church actually has five different accounts? In addition to the general budget, we have the special accounts (through which much of our outreach work is done), the endowment fund, the memorial fund, and the United Methodist Women's account. In subsequent newsletters, I hope to provide more information on these different accounts, and how each of them helps us fund the work and ministry of our church.

Finally, the Finance team would like to extend a huge thank you to Lori Flores for all of the work she does for us as our church treasurer. From providing monthly reports on our financial status, to paying bills, to helping us plan the yearly financial campaign, she is an invaluable asset for our church. Please take a minute to let her know how much she is appreciated!

Again, please feel free to contact me with any questions.

Blessings,

Barbara del Bosque

DECEMBER

BIRTHDAYS

- 12/1 Nadine Bushong
- 12/3 Maria Breznau
Jake Drayer
Georgia Taylor-Owen
- 12/4 Sue Monty
- 12/6 Cheri Nieshe
Deb Haley
- 12/8 Laurene McCullough
Kelly O'Donnell
Sue Rindal
- 12/9 Gordon Hodges
- 12/10 Diane Almvig
- 12/13 Alyssa Romanelli
- 12/14 Jackie Buchholz
Diane Southworth
- 12/16 Stacey Ladwig
- 12/18 Sharon Waldschmidt
- 12/19 Jeff Romanelli
- 12/20 Emily Eastman
Leonard Eliason
Alex Pirkle
- 12/21 Judy Jerman
Z Morris
- 12/22 Raechel Almvig
- 12/23 Annette Mentzer
- 12/25 John McGee
- 12/27 Nate Minor
Tyler Satterlund
Jim Finkbeiner
Elizabeth Neidzwski
- 12/31 Andrew Hansen

Sunday	Monday	Tuesday	Wednesday	Thursday	Friday	Saturday
					1 6:00 pm Women's AA meeeting	2 10 am- 12 pm UMW Cookie Extravaganza Worship Support Team decorating sanctuary 1:00 pm Girl Scouts
3 8:30 am Service with Com- munion 9:00 am Children's Choir & Sunday School 10:30 am Worship 11:40 am Coffee Hour	4 5:30 pm Overeaters Anony- mous	5 9:30 am MOPS 6:00 pm Boy Scouts 6:00 pm NAMI Board Meet- ing	6 1:00 pm Staff Meeting 2:15 pm Worship Design Team 6:30 pm Chancel Choir 7:00 pm Finance Meeting	7 8:30 am Men's Morning Min- istry 9:30 am Quilters 7:00 pm Bell Choir	8 6:00 pm GS Troop #45063 6:00 pm Women's AA meeeting	9 8:00 am Girl Scouts
10 8:30 am Service with Com- munion 9:00 am Children's Choir & Sunday School 10:30 am Worship 11:40 am Coffee Hour	11 1:00 pm Hugo's Accordion Band 1:30 pm Care Team Meeting 5:30 pm Overeaters Anony- mous	12 1:00 pm Sleeping Mat Team 6:00 pm Boy Scouts 6:30 pm NAMI Education	13 1:00 pm Staff Meeting 1:30 pm UMW Christmas Tea 5:30 pm Skagit Valley Youth Christmas Party (here) 6:30 pm Chancel Choir	14 8:30 am Men's Morning Min- istry 3:30 pm G S Troop 44345 6:30 pm G S Troop 44129 7:00 pm Bell Choir	15 6:00 pm Women's AA meeeting	16 5:00 pm Hispanic Ministry
17 8:30 am Service with Com- munion 9:00 am Sunday School 10:30 am Worship 11:40 am Coffee Hour 5:00 pm Ceremony of	18 1:00 pm Wesleyan Circle Christmas Luncheon 5:30 pm Overeaters Anony- mous	19 9:30 am MOPS 6:00 pm Boy Scouts 6:30 pm Girl Scouts of WW (leaders)	20 1:00 pm Staff Meeting 2:15 pm Worship Design Team 6:30 pm Chancel Choir	21 8:30 am Men's Morning Min- istry 9:30 am Quilters 2:30 pm Trustees Meeting 7:00 pm Bell Choir	22 6:00 pm Women's AA meeeting	23 Bradford Family Party
24 Christmas Eve No Sunday School 10:30 am Worship 11:40 am Coffee Hour 5:00 pm Christmas Eve Worship	25 <i>Merry Christmas!</i> 	26 1:00 pm Sleeping Mat Team 6:00 pm Boy Scouts 7:00 pm NAMI Support Group	27 10:00 am Worship Support Team 1:00 pm Staff Meeting 6:30 pm GS Troop #45063	28 8:30 am Men's Morning Min- istry 3:30 pm G S Troop 42444 6:30 pm G S Troop 44129 7:00 pm Bell Choir	29 6:00 pm Women's AA meeeting	30
31 New Year's Eve No Sunday School 10:30 am Worship 11:40 am Coffee Hour						

ANNIVERSARIES

HAPPY ANNIVERSARY!

- 12/5 Bill and Bridget Perez
- 12/17 Loren and Sara Pirkle
- 12/18 Michael and Eugenia
Hennessey
- 12/19 Dave and Nancy Edwards
- 12/20 Don and Suzanne Morgan
- 12/22 Mike and Sharon Minor
- 12/23 Lester and Winnie
Bradford
- 12/27 Mario and Donna Perez
- 12/31 Jim and Bev Collins

