

Mount Vernon First
United Methodist Church

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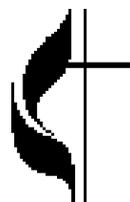


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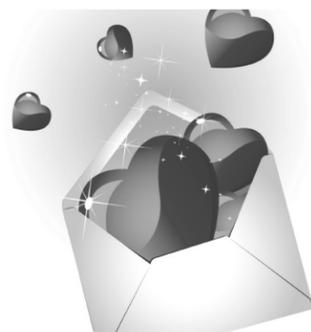
The Methodist Greeter

FEBRUARY 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



YOU ARE
SPECIAL
TO ME!

Pastor's Corner

Pastor Terry Hall

BIBLE READINGS FOR THE MONTH

February 5

Isaiah 58:1-9a, (9b-12)
Psalm 112:1-10
1 Corinthians 2:1-12 (13-16)
Matthew 5:13-20

February 12

Deuteronomy 30:15-20
Psalm 119:1-8
1 Corinthians 3:1-0
Matthew 5:21-37

February 19

Leviticus 19:1-2, 9-18
Psalm 119:33-40
1 Corinthians 3:10-11, 16-23
Matthew 5:38-48

February 26

Exodus 24:12-18
Psalm 99
2 Peter 1:16-21
Matthew 17:1-9

Exclusion or Embrace

We are complex beings, are we not? We share the same basic genetic structures and therefore have the same basic needs across all our varied representations. But, then again, we share 98.8% of our genes with chimpanzees, but oh, the difference that last 1.2% makes, right? We have developed many theories over our long history that make claims about how should view our similarities and differences. Interestingly, some of the efforts have focused on how and why we are different and therefore should separate ourselves by appearance groups (what we generally mean when we talk about 'races'), while others have focused on our similarities and connections, an approach that suggests we can, and should, look past those differences and construct our relationships on the foundation of being one species.

Both approaches tend to speak in head-languages, at least on the surface, but actually make heart-arguments. Those speaking on behalf of connection use terms that console, build up, and encourage, while the separators divide, demean, discourage, and place their own group above others. We have heard it before – separate-but-equal, they'll be happier with their own kind, savages versus civilized peoples, weaker versus stronger, and on and on. When we look back at our nation's formative process, most now see the practice of purchasing other human beings as immoral; even some who still see slavery as having been a 'necessary condition' for the development of our nation acknowledge that it was and is morally wrong. Sadly, there is still a significant number of people in our great country who have yet to arrive at this conclusion, holding fast to the justifications for 'racial separation' and the superiority of their own race/class over others who therefore **have to be defined as less than fully human.**

The notion of women being equal to men is a more recent concept, and perhaps can help us to understand that the claim being made is not that we are all the same, but rather that we all come from the same sacred origins and therefore have the same needs **and** inherent rights. It seems that we need, for some reason, to work our way through many of our distinctions, deciding in our hearts each time whether they are merely differences – which could be better suited in some circumstances and less well-suited in others, while having no influence at all in many situations – or are advantages for the species as a whole. Is it better to be tall or short? Well, that depends on whether we are trying to push a ball into a high hoop or trying to get under an obstacle or avoid being seen. Even left-handedness has been suspect, simply because it is a less-frequent human trait. It seems to me that God intends for us all to be allowed to bring our gifts and shortcomings to the table, and hopes we will be alert to how the Spirit seeks to guide us in our shared work.

We, as Christ-followers, are clearly called by both Christ and St. Paul to look past all these superficial differences to see our central, unifying likeness: we are all created in the image, or likeness, of God! Here, at least, we can surely agree that this promise does not
(continued next page)

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

(Pastor's Corner continued)

mean we are like God in our physical structure or appearance, but that we have the inherent potential to be like God internally – in how we think and interpret the world within and around us – as well as in our relationships, which is the arena within which our Selves are expressed and become incarnate/embodied/real.

A Serbian theologian named Miraslav Wolf wrote a book on the struggle humanity faces between excluding or embracing one another across our cultural lines and individual differences. He recognized that humans have always been most reliably brought together by fear of a shared enemy or danger, but actually remain together longer, more harmoniously and more productively when connected by common goals and aspirations. As a Christian, he also recognized that the Way of Christ is inherently, inseparably a path of unity, choosing to celebrate our differences rather than demonizing them and always, *always*, resisting any pressure to divide us by color, national identity, size, gender, or any other distinction in favor of accepting the God-likeness of every single human being, even when it is not readily evident. Being as human as anyone else, we will be most likely to rise up to meet this challenge in all the ways it presents itself day in and day out when we come together to practice, learn, and worship together, so we can strengthen one another, discover our differences and similarities, all the while monitoring our thoughts and actions and move them toward compassion and openness.

It is not easy work we are called to do, but then we've always known that, have we not? **Pastor Terry**

**FINANCIAL REPORT
December 2016**

	Income	Expense
Regular Account	\$35,794.20	\$18,882.60
Special Account	\$20,368.88	\$ 6,720.92
Memorials	\$ 130.00	-0-

As you can see, we had a very good month in December! We were able to pay all of our bills and our conference apportionments. In fact, we were able to once again pay 100% of our conference apportionments in 2016! With that said, we always need a good December so that some of our big bills that come up early in the year, like insurance, can be paid. Also, having a good giving month like this helps with those months that we might not take in as much as we spend. Thank you so much for your support of the ministries of our church!

Lent is coming

Ash Wednesday, which opens the season of Lent, falls on **March 1st** this year, and while that is over a month away, plans are already being made for that season of preparation for Easter. It is historically a season during which Christ-followers are called to “ponder in their hearts” where we are on our faith journey, much as Mary pondered in her heart the things she heard and witnessed from the visitation she received from the angelic messenger forward throughout the childhood of her first-born son. As I understand it, the Hebrew language is rich with metaphors, and while they understood that rational thinking was a function of the head, Mary was said to be using her heart to grasp what all those things meant. I believe this was an intentional, pointed reference to how God works within us, with an implied invitation for us to follow Mary's example.

On March 1st, we'll enter into the season with a simple soup supper in Sprague Hall, beginning at 6 p.m., followed by a short service with marking in ashes for those who wish to carry that sign. Then I will offer the first installation of a 6-part Lenten study on the Radical Compassion of Christ, which will also be the theme for our worship during the season. Both the study and worship will be based on the book, **Compassion in Practice: The Way of Jesus**, by Frank Rogers, which is available through Amazon but will not be required reading for this study. The study will be offered from 7 – 8:30 pm on Wednesdays and 10-11:30 am on Thursdays, finishing in the week prior to Holy Week.

All are invited to participate. We'll put out sign-up sheets in a couple weeks so I'll know how many copies of materials to make. I hope to see you there! **Pastor Terry**

Coming Soon – Pies for Easter

Buy a yummy pie (or 2 or 3) for Easter and your purchase price will make a donation to Skagit Habitat for Humanity. Skagit Habitat is partnering with S&W Pies in Burlington, a local non-profit, which sells delicious frozen, ready-to-bake pies. S&W Pies relies exclusively on volunteers meaning there is very little overhead involved. **100%** of the profit goes directly to Skagit Habitat for Humanity. The UMW ladies will be taking orders soon. More information to follow. If you have questions, contact Kay Martin (kay@mvfumc.org or 360-770-1701) or Sue Monty (sue1701A@sbcglobal.net or 360-419-9534).

Family Promise

We will again shelter and feed homeless children and their parents **Feb. 12-19**.

If you can help by:

- Sleeping overnight here at church in a separate room with comfortable beds,
- socializing any evening from 7 to 9 PM,
- providing dinner, Wed. Feb 15
- cooking breakfast on a weekend morning
- washing a load of linens

Please contact Carolyn Gregg in person here at church or: 360 424 7453; 360 391 02288; or cgregg@valleyint.com.

**Help Celebrate Lois Haley's
90th Birthday!**

Lois' daughters invite you to a very special birthday celebration during Coffee Hour on Sunday, February 19th, 11:40 a.m. to 1:00 p.m. They request that no gifts be given but cards will be welcomed.

New Book — UMW Library

One of the new 2017 Reading Program books is “Class Lives: stories from across our economic divide” edited by Chuck Collins, Jennifer Ladd, Maynard Seider, and Felice Yeskel. This anthology of forty original essays spans the class spectrum of poor, working class, middle class, owning class, mixed class. The authors of these essays “represented a range of classes, genders, races, ethnic groups, ages, and occupations across the United States. The authors described their class journeys in narrative form and recounted one or two key stories that illustrated their awareness of class and their place within the class system”. [from OCLC World Cat summary]

I found this book to be so relevant to social issues being discussed today. Working class was a term I heard mentioned time and again this past election year. Reading these stories made me pause and reflect on when I became aware of social class in my own life. It was a hard book to put down but easy to read. A number of the stories were only three to four pages in length.

Remember men and youth as well as women are welcome to read any of the books in the UMW Library. Just sign your name and the title of the book you are checking out on the clipboard prominently displayed on the top shelf of the Library bookcase.
Naomi Foote

Faith in Action

Sleeping Mat Team

Sleeping Mat Workshops for cutting bags and crocheting mats

Wednesday, 2/1/17 @ 6:30pm St. Charles Catholic Church

Tuesday, 2/14/17 @ 1pm First United Methodist Church

Wednesday, 2/15/17 @ 6:30pm St. Charles Catholic Church

Tuesday, 2/18/17 @ 1pm First United Methodist Church

Clean plastic grocery bags always welcome.

Yarn, knitters and crocheters wanted for hats and scarfs for the homeless are also welcome.

Thank you for all your love, donations and support.

More Diapers Needed!

We are almost **halfway** to our goal of 2,500 diapers collected!

According to Calista Scott at Diaper Need Awareness – Skagit, the need for diapers has reached crisis proportions. A diaper is a small thing, but it can impact big things:

Not having diapers means parents can't leave their children with a childcare provider, most of which require parents to provide disposable diapers for their children. So parents can't go to work to earn money.

Not having diapers means a longer time between changes which can lead to severe diaper rash and other health problems.

Not having diapers means that babies who cry because the diaper is dirty will cry that much longer increasing stress for parents struggling to make ends meet.

And not having diapers can adversely affect a mother's feeling of self-worth as a mother, negatively impacting the mother-child bond.

How you can help: 1) Buy disposable diapers of any size, bring them to the church and put them in the playpen in the narthex (they will also accept open packages of diapers, and diaper wipes are also suggested). 2) Make a donation to Dollars for Diapers by writing a check to MVFUMC and putting Dollars for Diapers in the memo line. As a non-profit, Diaper Need Awareness – Skagit can purchase diapers for a much lower price than retail. Contact Kay Martin (kay@mvfumc.org) if you have any questions.

Congregational Care Ministry Starting Soon

The aim of the Congregational Care Ministry will be to love and care for our members who are in need.

What does the Bible say about caring for one another?

Christians are commanded to love God and love people, and if we love, then we care (*Matt.22:36-40, Mark 12:29-31, Luke 10:25-28, Gal. 5:14, 1 Peter 4:8*).

We are to share in each other's troubles, look after the sick, and tend to the orphans and widows (*Matt. 25:36, Gal.6:2, James 1:27, 5:14*).

Caring is about actions and truth (*John 3:18*), not just talk and good intentions (*The book of Job*).

Caring reveals our love for God and sets us apart as His disciples (*John 13:34-35, 1 John 4:7-21*).

There are several ways that people can be a part of the MVFUMC Care Ministry Team, including, but not limited to:

- phoning members
- praying
- sending cards
- visiting those in a care facility, hospital, or who are homebound
- baking goodies for special occasions such as birthdays or anniversaries
- providing a meal for someone
- comforting those who are grieving
- and many other ways of reaching out to our members

We will provide training through our partnership with Care Ministry, which resources churches to provide care in ways that deepen personal relationships, foster spiritual growth, and build a true sense of community. There will be an initial training course for all who are interested in learning more about being a Care Ministry Team Member.

There will be a sign-up sheet on the table in the narthex, or you may talk to Mary Downing or Kay Martin if you have questions.

Lenten Devotional Materials

Be sure to check the table in the Narthex on Sunday, Feb. 26th for some devotional materials to use during the season of Lent. Often we hear of people giving up something during the Lenten season... how about adding something to your life? Add some extra time each day in prayer, Bible and devotional reading this year during Lent!

Senior Ministry

A big thank you to all who attended and participated in our January meeting. A special thank you to our speaker, Insight Pharmacist Consultant, Kim Gallagher. I also want to personally thank my husband for setting up and running the meeting when I couldn't be there due to illness (& boy, was I frustrated to have to miss this one!) I hope you all felt the meeting was worthwhile. Our next meeting will be a fun gathering on the third Sunday in March, with more details in the next newsletter.

---Barbara del Bosque

Thank You

I was so surprised to be presented with the UMW Special Mission Recognition award and pin. It is such a pleasure to serve in our church, where there are so many other wonderful servants. I was lucky to have such amazing parents, who set the example of church service and leadership. I am also so grateful to my husband, who as you can see above, always has my back & is my right-hand man. Thank you to the UMW for this treasured honor.

---Barbara del Bosque

Dinners for Eight

Here is an opportunity to get better acquainted with members of the congregation. The host family provides the main dish. Guests bring salad, vegetable or dessert. You do not need to be a host to participate. There is a sign-up sheet posted in the Narthex. The deadline for signing up to participate is Feb. 5th. We would like to get our dinner groups formed by mid-February so that they can start meeting. Call Barbara del Bosque at 360-424-6494, if you have any questions or requests.

Samaritan Fund

The Christmas Eve offering benefits the Samaritan Fund. This fund is the pastor's discretionary fund to help needy people with food, gas, sometimes housing, and other needs. The church usually has at least one person and often several come seeking help. This year \$795.00 was received for which we are grateful. However, the needs continue throughout the year. If you would like to contribute to the Samaritan fund, you can give online through our website - <http://www.mvfumc.org> or put a check in the offering plate designating "Samaritan's Fund" in the memo line.

Skagit Valley UMYouth

The combined Skagit Valley UMYouth group continues to meet on the 2nd and 4th Sunday of each month. We have members that come from Bayview UMC, Anacortes UMC as well as our own church. We usually start each meeting with a meal together and then we have some sort of discussion or activity around a certain topic. We are looking forward to our Feb. 12th meeting which will be "Love your Neighbor" night. We will participate in a "Pay it Forward" scavenger hunt where we will be doing good deeds around Mount Vernon.

FEBRUARY

BIRTHDAYS

- 2/1 Marlene Lang
Ben Steiner
- 2/2 Eugenia Hennessey
Kathy Lawliss
Kevin Turnbull
Joyce Sward
- 2/3 Mitchell Grant
Sue Kelder
Zulma Tifre
- 2/4 Bailey Hodges
- 2/5 Edie Diver
Karl Stout
Leila Wright
- 2/6 Clay Cook
Lynn Rabenstein
Kasey Thomas
- 2/8 Marti Wall
- 2/9 Tim Newall
- 2/10 Logan Eastman
- 2/11 Suzanne Eiceman
- 2/13 Madeline Stewart
- 2/14 Bettyjean Seabury
- 2/15 Carol Bratz
Margaret Semrau
- 2/18 Gene Wiggins
- 2/21 Dennis Cooley
Lois Haley
- 2/23 Doreen Nystrom
Jordan Romanelli
Blair Hoey

Sunday	Monday	Tuesday	Wednesday	Thursday	Friday	Saturday
			1 1:00 pm Staff Meeting 7:00 pm Chancel Choir	2 8:30 am Men's Morning Ministry 9:30 am Quilters 4:00 pm GS Troop 44345 6:30 pm Bell Choir	3 6:00 pm Women's AA meeeting	4
5 Communion Sunday 9:00 amHispanic Ministry 9:00 amSunday School 10:30 am Worship 11:40 am Coffee Hour	6 9:00 amHispanic Ministry Meeting	7 9:30 am MOPS 1:30 pm Bell Trio Re- hearsal	8 1:00 pm Staff Meeting 7:00 pm Chancel Choir	9 8:30 am Men's Morning Ministry 6:30 pm Bell Choir 6:30 pm GS Troop 44129	10 6:00 pm Women's AA meeeting	11
12 Family Promise 9:00 amHispanic Ministry 9:00 amSunday School 10:30 am Worship 11:40 am Coffee Hour 5:00 pm SVUM Youth Group	13 Family Promise 10:00 am UMW Executive Board Meeting 1:00 pm Hugo's Accordion Band	14 Family Promise 1:30 pm Bell Trio Re- hearsal 6:30 pm NAMI	15 Family Promise 12:00 pm UMW Luncheon and Meeting 1:00 pm Staff Meeting 6:00 pm GS Troop 42444 7:00 pm Chancel Choir	16 Family Promise 8:30 am Men's Morning Ministry 9:30 amQuilters 2:30 pm Trustees Meet- ing 4:00 pm GS Troop 44345 6:30 pm Bell Choir	17 Family Promise 6:00 pm Women's AA meeeting	18 Family Promise
19 Family Promise 9:00 amHispanic Ministry 9:00 amSunday School 10:30 am Worship 11:30 am Lois Haley Birthday Celebration 5:00 pm All-Church Pot- luck	20 1:30 pm Wesleyan Circle	21 9:30 am MOPS 1:30 pm Bell Trio Re- hearsal	22 10:00 am Worship Sup- port Team 1:00 pm Staff Meeting 7:00 pm Chancel Choir	23 8:30 am Men's Morning Ministry 6:30 pm Bell Choir 6:30 pm GS Troop 44129	24 6:00 pm Women's AA meeeting	25
26 9:00 amHispanic Ministry 9:00 amSunday School 10:30 am Worship 11:40 am Coffee Hour 5:00 pm SVUM Youth Group	27 9:00 amNewsletter Mailing Day 1:00 pm Hugo's Accordion Band 5:00 pm NAMI	28 1:30 pm Bell Trio Re- hearsal				

ANNIVERSARIES

HAPPY ANNIVERSARY!

- 2/7 Bob and Lois Yale
- 2/9 Jeff and Roxy Romanelli
- 2/12 Wylie and Kerry Keeler
- 2/14 Al and Joyce Sward
- 2/21 Jason and Brandy
Bloodgood
- 2/29 Emily and James Stewart

