

The Methodist Greeter

March 2021



United Methodist Church
Open Hearts. Open Minds. Open Doors

Our mission is to develop and strengthen disciples of Jesus Christ, building a community that transforms the world."

Pastor's Corner

Pastor Terry B. Hall

BIBLE READINGS FOR THE MONTH

March 7
Matthew 9:27-33

March 14
Matthew 9: 18-26

March 21
Matthew 8:18-27

March 28
Palm Sunday
Matthew 9:1-8

Holy Week
Multiple readings for
Maundy Thursday and
Good Friday



God is in the Silence

In I Kings 19, a story is shared about the great prophet (Divine spokesperson) Elijah's encounter with God in the 'wilder – ness.' The prophet had been in flight, taking with him his frustration with the leaders of Israel and what strikes me as a heavy dose of guilt and embarrassment for having gone WAY past God's plans when he murdered the prophets of Ba'al. After hunkering down to die, he found himself in the presence of a Divine Messenger, who restored him with food, hydration and rest, then sent him further into the desert. After a night in a mountain cave, God asked Elijah why he was there, implying he had *not* been called to leave the city. He offered what started out as a confession, but quickly turned into an extended version of Adam's finger-pointing after his 'bite' into awareness to justify his actions and seek God's protection. His restoration shifted from the physical to a spiritual plane when he both heard and heeded God's instruction to "stand on the mountain before the LORD," where "...the LORD [was] about to pass by."

Three demonstrations of power ensued, but after each the Divine Voice made clear the LORD was not part of the display. Finally, a steep, thinly veiled Silence took over, and there – yes **there** – was where God was encountered in the form of a still, small Voice that once again invited Elijah to consider why he was where he was, perhaps emotionally and spiritually as well as physically.

Chapters 18 & 19 of I Kings have always captured my attention with their vivid imagery, spiritual depth and clear implications for my life. Elijah had been SO faithful, speaking hard truth to power again and again at great personal risk, and yet the ruler continued to 'hear' only news that praised him and assured him he was doing everything right. The mainstream religious leaders offered no correction or honest guidance to the king, seeming to be guided more by fear than either trust or righteousness. And when the Divine set up a large-scale demonstration of just who deserved the title God, it was not enough for Elijah that God had acted. No, he took the spotlight and leadership back from God in an instant (as I am also prone to do) and resorted to physical violence, smearing his own name on the Divine Work in human blood. YIKES!

So how does God respond? With a smiting? Anger and threats? A thorough scolding? Surely at least a rejection of Elijah for his deadly failures? None of the above!! Instead, he moves right past the whole business, including the prophet's claim to be the last true believer to give him his next round of assignments. Elijah was heard, and there was more work to be done, especially with Elijah's approaching retirement. The Divine Plan remained intact, and another generation of leaders needed to move into expanded roles that would involve training their replacements without knowing when their terms would end.

(continued on next page)

(Pastor's Corner Continued)

It strikes me that even a Prophet with the stature of Elijah could not hear, or at least *was not* hearing God's New Thing while he was still more focused on Divine Power than Divine Love or Divine Care, much less the Divine Plan. He had to listen to the Silence and experience the Stillness to get himself out of the way so the Spirit could work most effectively and thoroughly through him. And he was clearly going to leave before all the work was done, much as Moses saw but did not enter the Promised Land, yet the Story continued, adapting to whatever happened by calling and empowering whoever's needs line up with what is needed.

We have faced a tremendous number of changes and challenges in the past couple of years, including losses of good friends who chose to leave and others who passed into a very different sort of congregation. With Lori and Chris Flores now both retired from their long involvements here – Teacher and Treasurer, Janitor and de facto Trustee, Worship Leader and UMW member/leader, Carrier of Institutional Memory and Support Person Extraordinary, among others – we are called to intentionally engage times of Silence and Stillness, the better to tune into the next page of opportunities and leadership development. The Spirit is rustling around and within this congregation, and even a pandemic has not dimmed the growing, glowing light of acceptance, support, trust, hope and community here. It was noted during one of our Zoom meetings when Lori's and Chris' retirements came up that with our Sesquicentennial (150 yr. anniversary) coming up in 2022, MVFUMC and its predecessor congregations have certainly gone through many great challenges already, so there is every reason to trust God is not done with us yet. As with all losses, we are faced not with a decision about whether to grieve or trust, to worry or expect great things, but to trust while grieving and expect great things even when we can't yet see what lies around the bend. Change is at the heart of life, and the Good News tells us Life is often found in Change. In this way, we are blessed to be a blessing! May it be so!

Pastor Terry

FINANCIAL REPORT

January 2021

	Income	Expense
Regular Account	\$16,801.66	\$25,348.03
Special Account	\$ 3,186.00	\$ 7,702.88

We have paid all of our bills and apportionments to date.

We thank you all so much for your continued support of the ministries of the church. If you have any questions about your 2020 giving statements or any general questions for our treasurer, please contact Harlan in the church office 360-424-3628 (generally on Tuesdays) or treasurer@mvfumc.org.

FROM THE FINANCE COMMITTEE

The new year is off to a good start with all treasurer bookkeeping now complexly transitioned to QuickBooks. We are still working out what kind of standard reporting we will be able to provide for staff and ministry teams. The basic program offers a very robust set of reporting tools.

As with many years, we are starting out with expenditures exceeding income and thankfully we came into the year with enough cash surplus to keep us in the black. Just a reminder that even though the building is closed there are several ways that you can continue to support the work of our church ... you can mail in a check for your regular offering or any special offering (just note on the memo line where you want your money to go), you can go on our website and click on our "Online Giving" button and you will be taken to a secure giving site hosted by Vanco, or you can set up to have a check from your bank sent to the church on a regular basis. We once again wish to thank you all for your support for the work of our church. Your Finance Team: Beth Replier (chair), Doreen Nystrom, Janice Lisherness, Pastor Terry, Mary Downing, Lori Flores & Harlan Mayer (treasurer)

Saying Goodbye to Lori

After serving our congregation for many years as both member and staff, Lori Flores is preparing to retire with husband, Chris, to their newly built log home in the mountains of Arizona. As we say goodbye, we want to remember the many ways that Lori has been a part of us for so long.

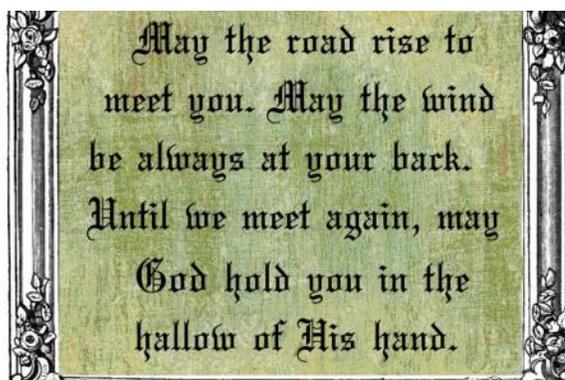
Lori has been a member of this church since birth. She attended Sunday School here as a child and later she and Chris were married here. Their children, Adriana, Amy, and Shauna, were active in First UMC as they grew up, participating in Sunday school, children's choirs, VBS, and later youth group and confirmation classes. As a busy mom, Lori found time to teach Sunday school and help with VBS and youth activities.

Lori first joined the church staff as custodian January 1, 2003. Then, in 2007, she began her work in Christian Education and Family ministries where she has continued ever since. In 2012, she assumed the duties of church treasurer, as well. During these years, every child touching our church has known Lori's special care through her work in the Sunday school, VBS, church nursery, youth groups, children's moments and confirmation classes. Adults have benefited from her attention to the organizational details that make the many programs of the church run smoothly. She produced newsletters, located and ordered devotional materials and class curriculum for adults and children, worked the sound system during worship, and helped plan celebrations and events. Some of the things that seemed to just magically happen were Lori at work. Unlocked doors on Sunday morning, that early morning coffee, church safety programs, and heated worship and meeting space all have been happening due to Lori.

Lori has been active beyond our local church as well. She has been the connection with other local churches for cooperative activities such as vacation Bible School, the annual Easter egg hunt, and combined youth group. She has served as our lay member to Annual Conference a number of times. For several years, Lori was a District Lay leader, working with other churches in the Puget Sound District.

We could continue listing all the things Lori does for a long time. We will miss all these wonderful activities and services. But -- more than that, we will miss the person that is Lori. We will miss her calm caring welcome. When someone comes to her office door, she is always busy at work, but when asked, "Do you have a few minutes?" she always turns with her full attention and says "Sure, I have time". Someone recently said, "When I goof something up and go to Lori, she doesn't make me feel bad. She just says, "Don't worry, we can just do this. . ." and the problem is solved. Another person noted, "Lori has the ability to distill out of any situation what is really important and act on that, letting the unimportant things go." Her welcoming "Hello, Friends," has touched children and adults alike. Her calm, caring presence has kept the whole office focused on our mission of making disciples of Christ for the betterment of the world. What a legacy!

We are all beyond sad to think of these good friends going far away. We do know, however, that in Christ we remain united in love wherever we are. We wish Lori and Chris and their family all blessings as they go in God's good grace to their new adventure.



Faith in Action Page



Sweet treats for sweet folks!

Thanks to everyone who baked and provided Valentine treats! We ended up with enough baked goods to prepare over 20 plates and had enough left over for staff treats to Alpine Ridge, Mira Vista, and Mountain Glen!

The Valentine's deliveries included a hand-made card from our Sunday school kids, a plate of love-filled treats and a Valentine helium balloon. Special thanks also to Sue E., Lori F., Donna F., and Pastor Terry for their help delivering all the Valentine AND the Birthday treats!



Carol Bratz



Bettyjean Seabury



Lois Haley

Birthday Gals Carol Bratz, Bettyjeann Seabury, and Lois Haley each received a special birthday hat, a planter of tulips, and a team of Birthday helpers outside their door/window with pom poms and a Happy Birthday banners to celebrate the occasion! Ladies – you are a truly a blessing!

DRIVE-BY PARADE TO CELEBRATE LORI'S LAST DAY AND CHRIS & LORI'S NEW ADVENTURE IN ARIZONA!



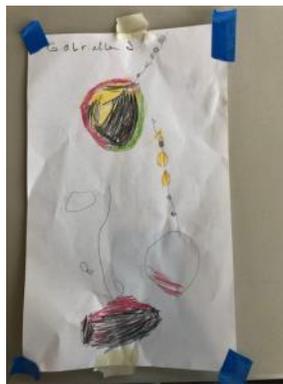
Thanks to everyone who came out to celebrate Lori's last day of work and first day of she and Chris' new adventure!

To absolutely no one's surprise, we had a record turnout of 41 cars making a joyous noise as we circled the parking lot several times (including at least one family from the Presbyterian church).

Lori and Adriana (with Chris and Shauna by FaceTime!) gave their best parade waves as they were showered with love from all who attended. Cars were decorated with signs, balloons, and window messages. Kids of all ages (young and young-at-heart) blew bubbles, laid on the horns and used hand-held noise-makers to make their love known to all who could hear us! Our neighbors know the drill by now :)

Lori—you know we love you. We'll miss you, of course, but we are so excited for your new adventure. Your log home is beautiful. We can just imagine you and Chris watching sunrises and sunsets from your wrap around porch. We expect pictures—and a lot of them!

May God Bless You, always!



March—April Upper Rooms Are Here

The March—April Upper Rooms are here and will be in the church-shaped mailbox for you to pick up at your convenience in the next two weeks. If you prefer we mail one to you, contact the office.

“Learning How to See” Lenten Study Continues

Our unusual Lenten Study continues on Monday nights from **6:30-7:30 pm** and Wednesdays from **3-4 pm**. Follow this link: <https://cac.org/podcast/learning-how-to-see/> to either listen to the audio (about 35 minutes per week) or read/print out the transcript for that week, then use this Zoom invitation to join the discussion:

<https://greaternw.zoom.us/j/92604117100?pwd=cjdxajA0RUd2VDRHVmMxalpySIFiUT09>

Meeting ID: 926 0411 7100

The final session for each day will occur during Holy Week.

COVID and No Home to Shelter in?

Family Promise has not disappeared during the pandemic. Children without a secure place to live have been sheltering with their parents at Bethlehem Lutheran Church for almost a year now. They have abided by all the pandemic protocols and none of them has contracted COVID19. The staff has continued to work with the families and several have been placed in more permanent housing despite the pandemic. Currently there are 11 adults and 10 children, some of whom are sleeping at neighboring Central United Methodist Church. The kids are attending school on line or now in person along with the rest of their peers. Adults are working, attending classes, or seeking employment.

Our church has been asked to be responsible for the weeks of May 9-16, Aug. 1-8, and Oct. 24-31. We will arrange to deliver the dinner to Bethlehem Lutheran in May. We pray that perhaps by August or hopefully by October we may again be hosting the guests in our building. Please pray for the continued success of this wonderful program and sustaining energy for its hardworking staff. If you have any questions, contact Carolyn Gregg at cgregg@valleyint.com, 360-414-7453.

Notes of Thanks

Dear members of MVUMC,

Thank you to all who organized and participated in the special "birthday bash" for our Mother, Lois Haley, last Sunday. Although it's hard for us to believe she is really 94 I imagine she is aware of each of those years - and celebrating that is so important!

Your wonderful and creative idea to take the party to her in these times of isolation was so appreciated! When Deb told me what you were going to do I was so grateful! And from the photos - creative was the word of the day. Thank you all so much for remembering and honoring Mother with your time and thoughtfulness.

Finding new ways to enable, uplift and uphold through this past year has been a challenge, particularly when people are literally locked away in isolation - for their own well-being. It has been a hard year.

I am so grateful to this MVUMC community for their ongoing love and support for Mother. Thank you all so much.

Sincerely, Carolann Haley

Thank you to all the ladies for the thoughtful cards and phone calls all this year. The lovely plate of cookies and the balloon made our Valentine Day delicious and festive.

Bless you all for your kindnesses.

Love, Arvita

GET TO KNOW..... ★ **BOB HALLBERG** ★

Several years ago, the newsletter included an interview each month of one of our church family members. Lori Flores and Sue Erickson, editor of the newsletter, decided it would be a good time to include this feature once again. This is particularly timely with the Council's desire to form small groups so we can get to know each other better. Our first person to be interviewed is Bob Hallberg. Bob has been faithfully working on building maintenance throughout this pandemic and we are most grateful for his service.



When Bob and his wife, Diane Southworth, first walked through the doors of the Mount Vernon United Methodist Church back in 2010, they must have been greeted with MVFUMC friendliness and went on to appreciate the worship service. They subsequently became much-loved members of our church a short time later. Bob's career took him on a circuitous route, geographically, before he and Diane called Mount Vernon their home. Because of Diane's worsening MS, they moved to Mount Vernon to be closer to her daughter and family, who live and work in Mount Vernon. Diane bravely fought her MS and was rarely seen without a smile on her face. Sadly, Diane passed away May 31, 2020, and her radiant spirit and grace are remembered and missed by those in our congregation.

Bob's journey in life began in Boston, Massachusetts, where he was born and raised, along with two sisters. One sister still lives in Massachusetts, and the other sister lives in Pennsylvania. Both sisters are now widows. Bob has a son, who lives in Monroe, WA, and, sadly, another son passed away in 2017.

Regarding Bob's work experience, he has had an interesting and varied life. Bob enlisted in the U. S. Coast Guard out of high school and served in the aviation arm of the Coast Guard. He was an Aviation Electronic Technician and maintained aircraft and was a crewman. Based on that experience, IBM hired him as a Field Engineer at McChord AFB and later transferred to the Seattle IBM office as a Customer Engineer and Manager. He later worked for IBM in San Jose, CA, Moline, IL and Raleigh, NC. When he retired after 36 years, he opened a MailBoxes Etc. store in Everett, later sold that, and then worked for Group Health Cooperative as an IT Consultant. Looking back on his career, Bob remarks, "I had a good time." Bob's diagnosis and subsequent treatments for pancreatic cancer led to his decision to finally retire.

Bob has been a longtime and valued member of our church Trustees group. He has overseen the installation of the exterior security cameras as well as the smoke detectors inside the church. He has been working lately to find the source of a water leak, which was causing the church's water bills to increase, and the leak was finally discovered about three feet down in the ground. Bob will also work on overseeing removal of some trees on the church property in March. Thank you, Bob, and the Trustee team for the good work you do in maintaining our church property.

In Bob's leisure time, he loves to read, walk, ride a bike, and tend to some flowers in his yard.

When asked about his faith journey, Bob says that he has been associated with the Methodist church from an early time in his life. He always tried to go to church wherever he lived. The church has always been a calming force and helped him navigate some stressful times in his life. He has faced several serious health issues, and each time he has let the Lord and doctors handle it. As Bob says, "The Lord is in charge."

Over the course of Bob's life and mostly because of IBM, he has been in all 50 states and Europe at one time or another. He has driven across the USA seven times, mostly before the interstate system was implemented. It is a great blessing for our church that after all of Bob's travels, he made the decision to retire in Mount Vernon, Washington!

(Contributed by Linda Cook)





March 3 Donna Perez

March 5 Jean Bintliff
Kathleen Wilkes-Pierce

March 6 Linda Allen
Carol Turnbull

March 7 Shirley Mayer

March 14 Susan Edwards

March 18 Adriana Flores

March 20 Deene Almvig

March 25 Jackie Aldrich
Shirley Yengich

March 30 Bret Turner

March 21 Jess & Barbara del Bosque
Clark & Kathleen Pierce

March 27 Raymond & Mary Ellen Slater



Contribute to MVFUMC by Shopping on Amazon

Mount Vernon First United Methodist Church is now a registered charity on the Amazon Smile program. Here is a link to get you registered <https://smile.amazon.com/ch/91-6049039>. Once you choose our church as one of the charities you want to donate to, you enter Amazon through the Smile portal. On the front page of the church website there is a link to the portal. It is on the bottom left corner under 'affiliates'. You can also save and use the link above in the article or use the URL smile.Amazon.com. 0.5% of the price of eligible smile.amazon.com purchases will be donated to selected charities by Amazon. If you need help getting set-up or have questions, please contact the church office. This is a great way to help the church while shopping!



Don't forget to "friend" us on Facebook! Visit our page at Mount Vernon First United Methodist Church and find out what's happening in our church and in our community. We're also using Facebook to introduce our church to our greater community via events, photos, news articles, and advertising. Invite your friends—pass the word!

Let's Be Friends



Subscribe to Our YouTube Channel

Why? Because if you click the subscribe button on our YouTube channel, you will receive notification whenever a new video is uploaded. This is the easiest way to know that the worship video is ready to watch. Type MVFUMC WA into the YouTube search box.

MARCH 2021

SUN	MON	TUE	WED	THU	FRI	SAT
	01	02	03	04	05	06
	1:30 pm Bible Study at Mountain Glen 7pm Learning to See Study on Zoom	10 am Zoom Sisters of the Heart 1pm Staff Meeting	3 pm Learning to See Study on Zoom 7pm Zoom Choir	8:30 am Zoom Men's Morning Ministry 1:30pm Zoom Coffee Hour		
07	08	09	10	11	12	13
On-line Worship with Communion 11:15 Zoom Coffee Hour	10:00 am SPRT 1:30 pm Bible Study at Mountain Glen 6:30 pm Learning to See Study on Zoom	10 am Zoom Sisters of the Heart 1pm Staff Meeting	3 pm Learning to See Study on Zoom 7pm Zoom Choir	8:30 am Zoom Men's Morning Ministry 1:00 pm Zoom Worship Planning 1:30pm Zoom Coffee Hour		
14	15	16	17	18	19	20
Daylight Savings Time Begins On-Line Worship 11:15 Zoom Coffee Hour	1:30 pm Bible Study at Mountain Glen 6:30 pm Learning to See Study on Zoom	10 am Zoom Sisters of the Heart 1pm Staff Meeting	 3 pm Learning to See Study on Zoom 7pm Zoom Choir	8:30 am Zoom Men's Morning Ministry 1:30pm Zoom Coffee Hour		Virtual Cub Scout Pinewood Derby
21	22	23	24	25	26	27
On-Line Worship 11:15 Zoom Coffee Hour	1:30 pm Bible Study at Mountain Glen 6:30 pm Learning to See Study on Zoom	10 am Zoom Sisters of the Heart 1pm Staff Meeting	3 pm Learning to See Study on Zoom 7pm Zoom Choir	8:30 am Zoom Men's Morning Ministry 1:30pm Zoom Coffee Hour		
28	29	30	31			
 On-Line Worship 11:15 Zoom Coffee Hour	1:30 pm Bible Study at Mountain Glen 6:30 pm Learning to See Study on Zoom	10 am Zoom Sisters of the Heart 1pm Staff Meeting	3 pm Learning to See Study on Zoom 7pm Zoom Choir			