

The Methodist Greeter

SEPTEMBER 2020



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

September 6
Matthew 18:10-20

September 13
Matthew 18:21-35

September 20
Philippians 1:21-30

September 27
Philippians 2:1-13

Living in Phases

Phase may turn out to be one of the most commonly used words of 2020. There we were, back in the first couple months of this year, living in a manner that now strikes me as rather cavalier – casually deciding on a whim to leave the house to see a movie in a room filled with people, many of them sitting right next to one another without fear or even concern. Then, **BAM!** It seemed to come out of nowhere, although we later learned some had been concerned in a general way such an event was likely coming for years, and others had specific, alarming information months earlier. In what feels like ‘overnight,’ every aspect of our individual and communal lives changed and ‘normal’ became a word spoken with a tone of nostalgia. People were getting sick, and lots more were likely to, as a potentially deadly virus seemed to be leaping from one person to another with frightening impunity, like something out of a sci-fi horror show. The little bugger was given a name – COVID-19 – and we all felt most of the ease and peace of mind we’d been living with in that earlier *phase* being drained from our lives.

It’s not as if we knew nothing of *phases*; we just tended to think of them as being slower to rise up and quicker to fade away, like Pop Rocks and Chia Elvis. We even understood that no *phase* disappears completely, because some among of us will hold onto it, others will be held captive by it, while still others will ignore or even deny the idea there is anything significant going on. And the *phases* we were used to tended to happen in such predictable fashion that we settled on titles for them, like The Terrible Twos, puberty, and mid-life, offering us a sense of control even in the face of powerful but invisible forces. Now the word *phase* brings to mind a degree of danger versus safety, actual if limited control vs the power being exerted over us, and an outline of how we can best care for ourselves and our neighbors vs an unrestricted claim of freedom and rights to live as if the dangers are just fake news. Right now, we’re feeling rather anxious about how long each step toward recovery is going take, with lots of uncertainty about the edges and space between *phases*, and in the background the scariest question lurks darkly: will things ever return to what we meant by ‘normal’ just 6 months ago?

So far, I have been using just one of several possible meanings of the word *phase*: as a noun referring to “a stage in a process of change or development” (Dictionary.com). But it can remain a noun while signifying either “a side, aspect or point of view” or “a state of synchronous operation,” either of which are also fitting in these times. There are at least two very different *phases*/points of view in play that produce radically differing understandings of leadership and paths forward, each prioritizing different aspects of our communal responsibilities. And we are certainly seeing a state of synchronous

(continued on next page)

(Pastor's Corner Continued)

operation as the new virus operates within the well-established influences of systemic racism, a rejection of science whenever it limits the movement of wealth and resources to the very small group at the top of the economic pyramid, and a fear-based approach to political control, pushing the greatest harm onto marginalized people who tend to be darker skinned, poorer and accorded fewer privileges and rights.

But of the 10 meanings I find in Dictionary.com for *phase*, I am especially drawn to the 9th: as a verb, “to schedule or order so as to be available when or as needed.” While we are working diligently keep up with the ever-changing status of what *phase* of risk and caution we are on locally, nationally, globally and in regard to our congregational restrictions, we have also been trying to discern a future we want to be *phasing* toward. As we’ve delineated how we will meet the required safety requirements for gradually expanding the use of our building when allowed to do so, we have been trying to define our true goals with an eye to building the next version of pathways to accomplish them. Understanding our building and grounds as a magnificent set of tools, we have been pondering how to most effectively use them when they become more fully available to us again. Such work requires clarity about what we want to accomplish and why.

Having survived the initial, difficult transition from in-person worship to new forms of ‘virtual’ worship, we fully expect that even when we *phase* back into our sanctuary and ‘live’ communal worship, we will continue an online presence now that we have confirmed that we can reach over 1,000 weekly with a minimal budget through that medium. Now we get to really consider what worship might look like if we offer it to a more exclusively and intentionally online ‘congregation,’ understanding we will never meet most of the people we are reaching. If we discard any preconceived notions of how worship is done, along with inhibitions that naturally arise out of our desire to avoid offending or failing to meet the expectations of those who have supported this church for years, how might we experiment with other forms of intercourse? Working in a medium that allows for more control and therefore raises the standard for perfection in a largely visual model, how can we develop our own media to illustrate and illuminate our messages? Are there ways to facilitate direct, spontaneous engagement between recipients and providers so all can truly participate in the process? If so, what technologies are required, who will manage them, and how do we develop our skills quickly enough in ways that generate enough connection to get us through the initial trial and error period without wearing out our audience? Can we free the pastor from concerns about keeping donors happy and filling seats, the better to prepare for and deliver messages that more boldly proclaim the Good News? Will current members discover they prefer having worship available on their schedule, with no need to get dressed up (or even dressed, for that matter) or leave their homes, making in-person worship seem like more effort than it might be worth? Can we really use all the space inside and outside our building for ministry, or will we discover that less is truly more and the resources we expend in keeping up the property are becoming an obstacle to ministry instead of enabling it?

I sure wish we had more people engaged with these discussions, and while the restrictions of living in the most restrictive *phases* of response to the pandemic make such engagement more challenging, I fear it is not the main obstacle. The larger challenge seems to be what we were already seeing more and more clearly long before any of us had heard of COVID 19: uneasiness about any discussion that might expose fundamental differences in what we want from ‘church,’ combined with a growing sense that we may have already passed the tipping point between vibrancy and apathy to become a retiring congregation, hoping new workers will show up in time to take over the work without demanding we turn over control. Even so, there is no reason to think God has gotten bored or frustrated enough to give up and leave us to the consequences of our action or inaction. I find, in both the Bible and life, a God who rarely commands or demands, choosing instead to invite, encourage and open doors while allowing us to decide which ones to walk through. As such, I trust we have opportunities even now to boldly begin to ‘fail forward’ during this time of transitions. Perhaps we can, in this unexpected, unplanned time of uncertainty, release the grip our past has on us, freeing ourselves up for a future we feared might come one day but is now here.

Please hold our congregation in prayer for guidance and a willingness to follow it when it comes, even if it means loving God and one another in new ways. And while you are at it, pray for our leaders, including yourself in that category!

Pastor Terry

FINANCIAL REPORT

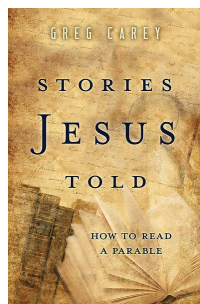
July 2020

	Income	Expense
Regular Account	\$15,964.11	\$22,702.52
Special Account	\$ 3,100.00	\$ 286.50
Memorials	\$ 100.00	\$ -0-

We were able to pay all of our bills and our apportionments for the month of July.

Thank you for your support!

A New Bible Study



Start the fall off with studying the parables of Jesus. There will be a class offered via the Zoom platform on the book Stories Jesus Told by Greg Carey. There will be two times that the class is offered during the week: Tuesday evenings at 7 pm and Thursday mornings at 10 am. Please contact Lori to let her know which class you would like to be a part of so that she can get you the Zoom links. The books are in the church office—just email or call Lori to get your copy. lori@mvfumc.org or 360-424-3628

Church Garden Angels

Special thank you and appreciation to Larry and Donna Freiman and Dianne Ramsey for caring for our church gardens this summer. Did you know that all year long Doug and Susan Rindal care for the front drive way garden (out by the street); Jess and Barbara del Bosque care for the planters as you enter our church; Mary Downing cares for the choir and tree gardens; Kent Turner and Ellen Anderson keep the playground area safe for the children; and Mary and Donna keep our Memorial Garden peaceful. There also lawn angels around our church – Clay Cook, Dennis Jones, Jess del Bosque, Janice Lisherness and Phil Smoots, Roger and Kay Martin and Doug Rindal. All these Church Angels are a blessing from our Lord and we are so very thankful for each of you. Thank you!

Church Council – Looking Around

We invite you to be prayerful about the rest of 2020 and 2021 and share your suggestions, ideas, plans, wishes, dreams about our church with your council members: Carolyn Gregg, Chris Satterlund, Lynnette Gerhard, Shauna Flores, Scott Thomas, Clay Cook, Pastor Terry Hall and Mary Downing.

Many of our church people (staff paid and unpaid) are working on many things – Reimagining Life Together, Family Promise, Care Calling, Hispanic Ministry, Sunday Worship, Bible and Book Studies, Leadership Training, Community and Congregational Outreach, maintaining our church building and grounds, Monthly Newsletters, Thursday Morning Men's Group, Choir, UMW, Sisters of the Heart, Youth Group are all Zooming. Finance, Trustees, SPRT and Council are supporting us. God is good and we are so very blessed. Thank you all for sharing your gifts with our church.

Faith in Action Page



Ballot Drop-Boxes

Our Skagit County Auditor Elections Supervisor has asked that we disseminate the following information as widely as we can.: All ballots left in drop-boxes are then picked up and delivered to the Auditor's office by the staff of Skagit County Auditor's Office. They do not go through the mail. Vote early, and encourage your friends and family to vote!

CUB SCOUT PEN PAL PROGRAM

We've been contacted by the local Cub Scouts troop looking for individuals who are willing to be part of a Scout Buddy Pen Pal program. This is a great opportunity for everyone who is stuck at home – kids and adults – to make new connections. Your buddy would be somewhere in K-5th grade, and you would exchange cards/notes/small pkgs (optional). The scouts have a small information sheet they would start with to get information on their "buddy" - a get-to-know-you introduction, and then they would be communicating directly with you.

If this something you think you would be interested in, please contact Debbie at Debbie@mvfumc.org or 360/770-9298.

Reach Out And Touch Someone

It just amazes me that we're entering our 6th month of this crazy pandemic. It is so important that we continue to reach out and continue make connections with each other. With the crisp temperatures, apple pies baked with freshly-harvested apples and pumpkin-spice everything, this fall will also bring shorter, darker days and longer nights, families being pressured by economic stress and stress for everyone involved with education (students & families, educators, all school employees). Everyone is dealing with something. *We are asking each of you to reach out and connect with others in our church family by phone or mail.* Please take this opportunity to get to know someone better! Directories have been updated and we'd be happy to provide copies – just give a call to Sue in the office (360) 424-3628 or email office@mvfumc.org and we'll arrange to mail you a copy. Let's specifically reach out to our church family in care communities to let them know they haven't been forgotten, that we are praying for them, and that they are loved.

Virginia Skaggs, 401 N. 17th St. #132, Mount Vernon, WA 98273

Chris Cooper, 1810 E. Division #242, Mount Vernon, WA 98274

Lois Haley, 1810 E. Division, Mount Vernon, WA 98274

Jackie Buchholz, 1810 E. Division #537, Mount Vernon, WA 98274

Anne Lundquist, 1810 E. Division #420, Mount Vernon, WA 98274

John McGee, 300 S. 18th St. #211, Mount Vernon, WA 98274

Bettyjean Seabury, 300 S. 18th St #201, Mount Vernon, WA 98274

Arvita Bonner, 400 Gilkey Rd, Rm. 122, Burlington, WA 98233

Daniel & Barbara Christensen, 400 Gilkey Rd, Rm 126, Burlington, WA 98233

Ben Dunlap, 400 Gilkey Rd, Rm. 556, Burlington, WA 98233

Sue Kelder, P. O. Box 1087, La Conner, WA 98257

Bonnie Spitler, P. O. Box 1087, Room 206, La Conner, WA 98257

We continue to help Family Promise despite the pandemic!

Four homeless families, comprising four adults and their seven children, are sheltering in place at Bethlehem Lutheran Church in Sedro-Woolley under the care of Family Promise. They have been staying there since March. We cannot host them in our church building as we have done for more than five years but we are helping to feed them. Every Saturday night since August 8th members of our congregation have provided and delivered dinner for them and we have folks signed up to carry on through October 10. If you would like to provide a simple meal, for one of the remaining Saturday nights in October, please contact Carolyn Gregg at: cgregg@valleyint.com, (360) 424 7453 or (360) 391 0288. You can have your dinner delivered by someone else or take it to Sedro-Woolley and leave it without any contact with the FP guests. It is very safe and much appreciated.

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Staff Contact List

We've had a request to provide an updated Staff Contact List, with days/hours of availability. Please note, most of us work part of the time from home and part in the office, and the times can be fluid as we limit our exposure to each other to keep everyone as safe as possible. If you have any questions, please don't hesitate to contact any of us!

Pastor Terry: HOURS: M-TH & Sat 9:00a-6:00p, and Sunday afternoons

Preferred Method of Contact: 1) Cell phone: 360/255-1779 - preference is text, then phone call, 2) Personal email: terrybhall59@gmail.com. **For emergencies, please call cell 360/255-1779 anytime.**

Lori Flores, Treasurer: HOURS IN OFFICE: MON, WED-FRI 12:30p-4:30p and TUES 10a-4:30p. DAY OFF: SATURDAY, AND PART OF SUNDAY.

Preferred Method of Contact: 1) Church email: lori@mvfumc.org or 2) church phone 360/424-3628 or 3) personal cell phone: 360/941-3488.

Debbie Grant, Faith In Action Coordinator: HOURS: M-W 9:00a.-4:00p, DAYS OFF THUR-FRI. In office Mon & Wed afternoons, and all day Tuesdays.

Preferred Method of Contact: 1) church email: debbie@mvfumc.org, 2) personal cell phone: 360/770-9298.

Sue Erickson, Secretary: HOURS: MON-FRI 9:30a-1:30p. In office Mon & Thursday mornings 9:30a-12:00.

Preferred Method of Contact: 1) church email: office@mvfumc.org 2) cell phone: 907/401-0192 text, or call.

Jung Jang, Choir Director: HOURS VARY.

Preferred Method of Contact: 1) cell phone 206/437-4762 (preference is text, then phone call)

Chris Flores, Custodian: HOURS VARY.

Preferred Method of Contact: 1) cell phone 360/202-7221 2) church email: chris@mvfumc.org

Mary Downing, Council Chair: AVAILABLE MON-SAT, 8:00a-6pm.

Preferred Method of Contact 1) cell phone: 360/770-1113 (call or text) 2) email: mt.downing@comcast.net



Sunday School and Youth Group for Fall

Sunday School will look a bit different this fall as we are all having to be a bit creative as to how we do things now. Lori will be making videos for the Sunday school classes for Preschool through 5th grade and they will be on our YouTube channel (MVFUMC WA) or if you have difficulties with internet access— she will be putting the videos on DVDs that can be watched on your DVD players or computers. The plan is to put at least one month of lessons (maybe 2 months) on each DVD that is sent out. We will also be putting together activity bags for each student with the supplies that are needed for activities and crafts for each lesson. The first official day for Sunday School is September 6th so watch your email/mail this week for updates on when to pick up your bags!

Lori is still working on the best way to start up our Confirmation Class again and there will be more news soon! In the meantime 6th graders through 12th graders are invited to join us for Zoom Youth Group with the Presbyterian Youth on the 1st and 3rd Sundays of the month from 7pm to 8 pm. We have been having a lot of fun in these online meetings! Contact Lori for Zoom invite if you haven't been receiving the emails. Hope to see you there!

Prayer Corner and Updates...

- ~ Prayers for the staff and residents at local care facilities and retirement homes.
- ~ Prayers for all the teachers and administrators that are working so hard to figure out what this school year will look like and how best to help their students.
- ~ Prayers for students and parents as they work together to do school on-line.
- ~ Prayers for all who were affected by Hurricane Laura.
- ~ Prayers for all who are facing medical tests, procedures and surgeries.
- ~ Prayers for all who are feeling alone at this time, please know that your church family is praying for you

An update from the Steiners... It has been a year since we started learning about heart failure in a very personal way. We have been blessed with a community of believers, doctors, and modern technology to arrive today at a place where we wait on the heart transplant list but enjoy a robust life. Medical research doesn't include much about 69 year old men making a comeback from where we were a year ago so the doctors really don't have a game plan except to keep doing what we've been doing; they identify him as a unicorn. We think we know what is going on here so keep up your prayers for us. It is the only explanation we can think of for how well our spring and summer have turned out and we continue to look forward to even better times ahead. Pandemic is just a little detour for us in the scheme of life. It is like GOD is hitting the PAUSE button for all of us. Thanks for keeping us in your prayers. ~Al and Linda

Upper Room Devotionals

There are still Upper Room devotional booklets available for September/October. If you would like one to use for your daily devotions, please contact the church office and we will arrange to get a copy to you. There are regular-print and large-print copies available.





September 2 Matthew Repplier

September 5 Nina Spitler

September 6 Tami Cass

September 12 Bruce Coghill

September 17 Sue Quick

September 21 Jung Jang

September 22 Nancy Seymour

September 26 Terry Thurston



September 4 Don & Janet Boston
Damond & Laura Morris

September 10 Hollis & Nina Spitler

September 18 Kent Turner & Ellen
Anderson

Let's Be Friends



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!

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.

SEP 2020

SUN	MON	TUE	WED	THU	FRI	SAT
		01	02	03	04	05
		10 am Zoom Sisters of the Heart 1:30 pm Outward Mindset 7 pm Zoom Bible Study	1pm Staff Meeting 7pm Zoom Choir	8:30 pm Zoom Men's Morning Ministry 10am Zoom Bible Study 1:30pm Zoom Coffee Hour		
06	07	08	09	10	11	12
On-line Worship with Communion 11:15 Zoom Coffee Hour 7pm Zoom Youth Group	Labor Day	10 am Zoom Sisters of the Heart 1:30 pm Outward Mindset 7pm Zoom Bible Study	1pm Staff Meeting 7pm Zoom Choir	8:30 pm Zoom Men's Morning Ministry 10am Zoom Bible Study 1:30pm Zoom Coffee Hour		
13	14	15	16	17	18	19
On-Line Worship 11:15 Zoom Coffee Hour		10 am Zoom Sisters of the Heart	1pm Staff Meeting 7pm Zoom Choir	8:30 pm Zoom Men's Morning Ministry 1:30pm Zoom Coffee Hour		
20	21	22	23	24	25	26
On-Line Worship 11:15 Zoom Coffee Hour 7pm Zoom Youth Group		10 am Zoom Sisters of the Heart	1pm Staff Meeting 7pm Zoom Choir	8:30 pm Zoom Men's Morning Ministry 1:30pm Zoom Coffee Hour		
27	28	29	30			
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