

Vashon Presbyterian Church News and Concerns November 2023



Sermons and service 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.



November Key Dates:

- Food Bank Sunday, November 5
- Harvest Dinner Saturday, November 11
- VPC Book Club November 17

December Key Dates:

- December 2
Winter Fest celebration and tree lighting
- Sunday, December 10, Following Worship
Annual congregational meeting
- December 24
Christmas Pageant 10:00 AM
Christmas Eve service 4:00 PM

Come, Ye Thankful People, Come

By Henry Alford

Come, ye thankful people, come.
Raise the song of harvest home!
All is safely gathered in,
Ere the winter storms begin;
God, our Maker, doth provide
For our wants to be supplied;
Come to God's own temple, come,
Raise the song of harvest home!

We ourselves are God's own field,
Fruit unto his praise to yield;
Wheat and tares together sown
Unto joy or sorrow grown;
First the blade and then the ear,
Then the full corn shall appear;
Grant O harvest Lord, that we
Wholesome grain and pure may be.

A Message from Pastor Leigh



Dear Ones of VPC:

A few months before Olde John Croan died, he invited me to his house to watch a recording of him talking about his time in WWII. We sat downstairs, eating ice cream on tv snack trays and watching the video together. Periodically I would look over at him and he would be nodding his head in agreement about the words he was saying on the video. He was beginning to struggle to find his words in life, but he could follow everything he was saying on the television.

After the video finished, he and I both were crying and I asked him if what we had just watched was what he had been trying to share with me, something he couldn't ever forget. He had once jumped from an airplane with several of his friends on a training mission in Alaska during the war. The plane was having problems and they each agreed that the good news was they would be allowed to keep the parachute. They would each send it home to their moms with a letter saying they were okay. This was something these still-teenagers had been told in basic training.

After they jumped from the plane, Olde John landed, began to gather up his parachute and look for his friends. None of their shoots had deployed quickly enough and they had each hit the ground too hard for survival. Olde John took his parachute, sent a letter to his mom and continued serving in the war, never receiving any follow-up therapy or conversation.

Now, all those years later, he sat in his living room with his pastor, both in tears. I dried my eyes and put my hand on his arm and said, "Olde John, I can't imagine how hard that was; you were so young. I am so very sorry you had to go through that." He nodded in agreement. "You must think about them every day." He nodded again. We sat together for a long time afterwards. He'd been carrying that story for so long, only telling it a few times.

Human beings go through life carrying stories. Some we share, some we keep close to us, but many stay with us all our lives.

As I reflect on what it must have been like to be with Jesus during his days on earth, I wonder if folks didn't share those deep stories with him, because it was safe, because someone could make the space for them. It's never lost on me that Jesus simply listened.

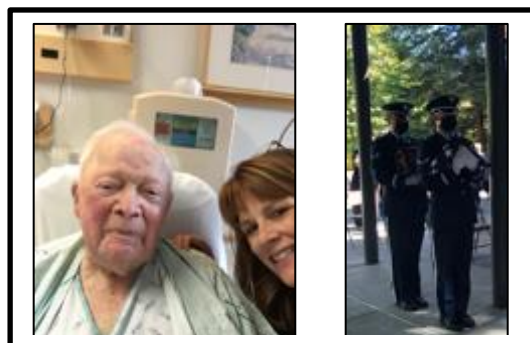
That's what I see in God's beloved community: safe space, to be heard, to have someone say, "I'm sorry; that must have been so hard." And friends, it's part of our call.

I pray that we continue to make that space for one another and for others. Walking through the door of any church is hard for many folks for so many reasons. Creating the safest possible welcome and acceptance is the work of being disciples. We can never know the story someone else carries with them, but we can welcome, and we can listen without judgment, and we can just be with them.

Because where two or more are gathered, God is in their midst.

In Gratitude,

Leigh



Clerk's Corner

Minutes of the monthly Session meetings are available upon request. Highlights from the August meeting include:

- Pastor Leigh was elected by the Presbytery to attend the 226th General Assembly in June 2024.
- Regular offerings and building users donations are exceeding 2023 budget expectations. Session continues working on the 2024 budget.
- The Planning Committee has received a security review prepared by Matt Lilje of the Seattle Police Department following his October 8 premises inspection and presentation.
- Sunday, December 24 worship will center around a Christmas pageant at 10:00 AM. A candlelit "Lessons and Carols" service will be held at 4:00 PM.
- A congregational meeting will be held December 10 following worship to approve revised Terms of Call for Pastor Leigh and elect church officers whose terms will commence Jan 1, 2024.

Jacq Skeffington, Clerk of Session

Building and Grounds

New flooring and an upgraded toilet and sink have been installed in the Narthex bathroom. Painting will be the next step in this remodeling project. We also still need to install baseboards in the kitchen and hallways. Both projects will be available during November's Second Saturday work party on November 11.

If the weather is nice there will also be a few leaves to rake and maybe some trash to pick up around the parking lot for those who prefer outdoor activities. Please plan to join us at 9:00 AM in preparation for the Harvest Dinner that evening.

If you cannot attend the work party, there are also opportunities for carpentry repairs and painting that can be done at your convenience. Pastor Leigh's office door needs to be stained. The front door, library table, and communion table still need to be sanded and stained, and the wooden fence separating VPC's front lawn from Zamorano's dining area needs to be replaced. If you are experienced in carpentry or in sanding and staining, please contact me and we will work out a plan.

All parking lot catch basins and the North retention pond were cleaned out on October 6 in response to a worklist provided by King County Surface Water Management inspectors. There are additional items on the worklist which will need to be accomplished by the end of November. See me for details if interested.

A new water fountain and bottle filling station has been purchased and will be installed during the Christmas break in Carpe Diem classes. We will leave that one up to a plumber.

Jacq Skeffington, Building Use Coordinator

Worship

I've been reading and thinking about outdoor church this summer, perhaps to the detriment of promoting our Sunday morning service. When I look at the Sunday service, however, it has been received so positively, both on Zoom and in person, that I feel that it speaks for itself.....or God is speaking to us through Pastor Leigh and the service inspiringly, especially to our traditional congregation.....But I just keep coming back to the question, "Who's not here?"

I think of the many friends and associates who don't want to participate in the church as they remember it from childhood. They have been released and actually protested the institutional, corporate world to the extent that they don't want the "institutional" God presented in the church. This image exists, despite God's efforts to be personal and relational, and gets even more defined by committees, egos, and personal achievements or problems. It's these non-churched community members whom I find going to the mountains for a hike or simply a beach walk on Sunday morning. This allows the escape from others' expectations and gives a spiritual high of sorts but then a feeling of isolation. People are relational. They want to share these good God-given feelings.

So I'm back reading about how to bring together these people grounded in the beauty of God's natural world. There are many groups assembled around their love of the outdoors but there is one I've discovered in my reading who has faith in God and Christ's message but has been exploring worship from a different view. The first article I read was entitled "Wild Churches; Returning to Nature as a Spiritual Practice" You can read extensively about the "movement" and growth of these loosely-connected churches at www.wildchurchnetwork.com.

While diverse in expression, style, and particulars of theology, they share a united sense of calling, purpose and rootedness in the earth as sacred and alive.

A supper meeting was held to explore ideas of outdoor church. Al and Claudia Ross Weston, John and Nancy Williams, Thomas Abraham and Liz Loveness were present.

1. We discussed the loosely connected member churches of the Wild Church Network.
2. We agreed to acquire the books recommended on their bibliography, especially Braiding Sweetgrass, for our church library.
3. We will download the Wild Church Lectionary and Communion Liturgy for further evaluation.
4. It was noted that the Lutheran Church has already prescribed a "wild" liturgy and the Presbyterian Church will be doing the same next summer. These are different than the ones put forth by the Wild Church Network. It will be interesting to compare.
5. Articles provided by Pastor Leigh and John Williams are listed below:
<https://www.wildchurchnetwork.com/Sys/PublicProfile/64751725>
<https://www.plough.com/en/topics/justice/environment/wild-church>
6. Next steps: the group will gather the above information, meet again to discuss, and make information available to the congregation through the November and December Newsletters.

Elizabeth Loveness, Worship Elder

Purposeful Service Team

Areas of Responsibility

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

November 5 is Food Bank Sunday. Bring your items to the worship service or to the church office. Canned tuna, peanut butter, any type of pasta, and chicken or vegetable broth are always appreciated. Also needed are donations of cooking oil and condiments such as ketchup, salsa, A-1 or other "steak" sauce, mustards, etc., and people may bring personal hygiene items such as toothbrushes and toothpaste. There is also a need for pet food. For donations of bulk pet food, volunteers from VIPP will break down and repackage for individual distribution.

One of the VPC Mission Partners is Presbyterian Disaster Assistance. As the name implies, this is the national Presbyterian program that aids in responding to natural disasters and human caused situations resulting from conflict and migration.

In 2022 PDA issued 85 grants associated with natural disasters and 20 grants for refugee/migrant causes in the United States, totaling nearly \$1.5 million. Internationally, PDA responded to disasters in 35 other countries, with expenditures of \$1.6 million. PDA also sends volunteers to assist with recovery in areas affected by disasters. Part of the annual One Great Hour of Sharing collection during Lent, which VPC supports, goes to PDA. Recognizing the need to support PDA beyond that contribution, the VPC Session this year approved two donations to PDA of \$1,000 each, with one of those directed specifically to relief efforts in Gaza.

We are awaiting information as to expanded recycling opportunities at the county landfill, but for now plastic bags and Styrofoam, along with other goods, are being collected on Vashon for a charge by a private company. Contact Bev Skeffington or Bob Spangler for further information.

Bob Spangler, Purposeful Service Elder

Hospitality

Harvest Dinner Saturday, November 11, 6:00 PM

This is always a fun evening, made extra special by the homemade dishes VPCers prepare and share with the congregation. Considered a warmup for Thanksgiving, the Harvest Dinner will feature plenty of turkey and all the fixin's. Our annual Harvest Dinner falls this year on Veteran's Day. In a very brief program, we will honor the sacrifices of those who served personally, as well as the sacrifices made by military spouses and children.

Appetizers will be served in the Great Hall (just outside the Social Hall) a few minutes before the Social Hall doors open and dinner is ready.

Bring your family and friends to this gratitude-themed event!

Nancy Tucker, Hospitality Elder



Deacons' Message

Count Your Blessings

If you woke up this morning with more health than illness...you are more blessed than the million who will not survive this week.

If you have never experienced the danger of battle, the loneliness of imprisonment, the agony of torture, or the pangs of starvation...you are ahead of 500 million people in the world.

If you can attend a church without fear of harassment, arrest, torture, or death...you are more blessed than three million people in the world.

If you have food in the refrigerator, clothes on your back, a roof overhead, and a place to sleep...you are richer than 75% of the world.

If you have money in the bank, in your wallet, and spare change in a dish someplace...you are among the top 8% of the world's wealthy.

If you hold up your head with a smile on your face and are truly thankful...you are blessed, because the majority can, but many do not.

If you can hold someone's hand, hug them or even pat them on the shoulder...you are blessed because you offer a healing touch.

If you can read this message...you are more blessed than over two billion people in the world who cannot read at all.

HAVE A GOOD DAY. COUNT YOUR BLESSINGS, and help to remind everyone else just how blessed we are.

Chris Coldeen, Deacon

VPC Book Club

The Book Club meets this month with a potluck dinner on Friday, November 17, at 6:00, at the home of Jacq and Beverly Skeffington.

We're discussing [Dead in the Water](#) by Matthew Campbell. According to Amazon, "*Dead in the Water* is a shocking expose of the criminal inner workings of international shipping, told through the lens of the *Brillante* hijacking and its aftermath. Through first-hand accounts of those who lived it—from members of the ship's crew and witnesses to the attacks, to the ex-London detectives turned private investigators seeking to solve Mockett's murder and bring justice to his family—award-winning Bloomberg reporters Matthew Campbell and Kit Chellel piece together the astounding truth behind one of the most brazen financial frauds in history."



Faith Formation

Faith formation classes will continue on Zoom on Tuesdays at 7:00. We are studying the book The Good Ancestor by Roman Krznaric. We read and discuss individual chapters, so you don't need to attend each class to benefit from the teachings of this book. Come as you can!

On November 28 we will begin our Advent study, which is being written and led by Pastor Leigh. It will continue throughout December.

Al Ross-Weston, Faith Formation Elder

Outreach

October's First Friday presented the perfect weather for a fire and s'mores. Although we didn't have many Children visit, as the street was not closed, a number of adults made s'mores and played corn hole.

Our Halloween celebration was again well attended, with hundreds of trick-or-treaters and their parents showing up for candy, crayons, and cider. With our scary cat-a-pult and our witch's cauldron, VPC got into the spirit of the holiday. Over 1,200 pieces of candy were given out, and everyone had a blast.

Winter Fest will be held on Saturday, December 2. The parade will end in front of our church with the lighting of our tree. The ceremony with Santa for lighting the tree will be on the front steps. We will serve cocoa and hot cider.

Lindsay Hofman, Outreach Elder



November Birthdays

Please wish a happy November birthday to:

8 Caran-Marie Weston Dunbar
17 Chris Lee



Calendar

November 2023

3	First Friday on the Lawn 6:00 PM
5	Sunday Worship 10:00 AM; Communion Sunday; Food Bank Sunday
7	Faith Formation 7:00 PM Zoom
10	Game Night 7:00 PM Zoom
11	Second Saturday Work Party 9:00 VPC Harvest Dinner 6:00 VPC
12	Sunday Worship Service 10:00 AM
14	Faith Formation 7:00 PM Zoom
16	Theology Pub 5:00 Camp Colvos
17	VPC Book Club 6:00 PM Potluck at Skeffingtons' home
19	Sunday Worship 10:00 AM
21	Session Meeting 3:30 PM VPC Faith Formation 7:00 Zoom
22	Deacon Meeting 10:00 AM VPC
23	Thanksgiving Day
24	Game Night 7:00 PM Zoom
26	Sunday Worship 10:00
28	Faith Formation 7:00 PM Zoom

Ongoing Activities

Mondays	Sermon After Talk 5:00 – 6:00 Zoom
Tuesdays	Sporty's In-Person Coffee Hour 9:00 AM Text Study Noon
Wednesdays	Body Prayer 8:30 AM
First Thursdays	Mental Health Advocates 7:00 PM
Last Thursdays	Theology Pub 5:00 Camp Colvos
Fridays	<i>Anything Goes!</i> 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	Lindsay Hofman (Outreach), Jim Lilje (Finance), Elizabeth Loveness (Worship), Bob Spangler (Purposeful Service), Nancy Tucker (Hospitality), Al Ross-Weston (Faith Formation)
Deacons	Claudia Ross-Weston (Moderator), Chris Coldeen, Larry Commeree, Susan Commeree, Caran-marie Weston Dunbar, Sheryl Lehman