



# Vashon Presbyterian Church

## News and Concerns

### December 2023

Sermons and service posted on church website: [vashonpreschurch.org](http://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.



#### I Heard the Bells on Christmas Day

By Henry Wadsworth Longfellow

I heard the bells on Christmas Day  
Their old, familiar carols play,  
and mild and sweet  
The words repeat  
Of peace on earth, good-will to men!

And thought how, as the day had come,  
The belfries of all Christendom  
Had rolled along  
The unbroken song  
Of peace on earth, good-will to men!

And in despair I bowed my head;  
"There is no peace on earth," I said;  
"For hate is strong,  
And mocks the song  
Of peace on earth, good-will to men!"

Then pealed the bells more loud and deep:  
"God is not dead, nor doth He sleep;  
The Wrong shall fail,  
The Right prevail,  
With peace on earth, good-will to men."



#### Key December Dates

- 2 WinterFest Parade, concluding at VPC with the tree lighting 4:30 – 6:30
- 3 Vashon Chorale performing during worship service 10:00
- 10 Congregational Meeting following worship
- 15 Book Club meeting at Spanglers' 6:00
- 19 Session meeting, Liz Loveness's home 5:00
- 20 Deacon luncheon at Ross-Westons' Noon
- 24 Christmas Pageant 10:00  
Christmas Eve Service 4:00
- 25 Merry Christmas! (No church service)
- 29 Theology Pub 5:00 Camp Colvos

## A Message from Pastor Leigh



This year I chose to take a study leave after Thanksgiving to prepare for Advent. What I have most discovered is that this leave time has helped me to begin to prepare my own heart for this season. So, I offer you what's most on my heart this Advent and what is important for me to practice as I lean into the liminal space of holy waiting.

**Cultivate Expectation:** One walk into Target and you know exactly how many days you have left to find the perfect things to "make it Christmas" for your family, as if it was ours to make. So, during the busyness that often accompanies this time of year, we must create moments of stillness to anticipate the coming of our Savior. What are the promises of God and the hope found in Christ for you? I invite you to join me in spending as much time thinking about those questions as we do about what to buy or what to cook.

**Engage in Advent Practices:** Consider incorporating Advent traditions and practices into your daily life. This can be as simple as lighting candles on your own Advent wreath or spending dedicated time in Scripture each day. It could be bundling up for a winter walk each day and just asking God to prepare your heart for what's coming.

**Seek the Light in Darkness:** Advent reminds us that even in the darkest moments, the light of Christ shines. The news around us is especially hard these days and turning it off does not make you a bad world citizen. Seeking the presence of Christ during challenges, uncertainties and the complexity of this world is important. Do you trust his light dispels all darkness?

**Extend Acts of Kindness:** Embrace the spirit of giving, not just your physical gifts but the gift of your time. Who needs to be heard? Who needs a visit? Kindness and generosity of heart are at the heart of the gospel story. If you aren't "feeling the season" yet, practicing that kind of grace just might be what your heart needs.

You and I are four weeks away from the holiest of nights, the night we remember once again that God is with us, that Jesus came in person to show us what love really looks like and how we can really and truly love. I pray we each drink deeply from this time, preparing our hearts for the One who really is the Prince of Peace.

Grace, Peace, and Advent blessings!

Leigh



## Worship and Advent

### Schedule for the Holidays

**First Sunday of Advent – Worship Service 10:00 AM December 3**

**Fourth Sunday of Advent – Worship Service 10:00 AM December 24**

**Christmas Eve – Candlelight Service 4:00 PM December 24**

**Christmas Day – No Service December 25**

The first Sunday in Advent is December 3. We will celebrate Communion this Sunday as well as the three following Sundays of Advent. On the 3<sup>rd</sup> there will also be special music provided by the members of the Vashon Chorale.

**Christmas Eve falls on Sunday this year. We are planning to have the Sunday morning worship service feature the youth Christmas pageant. The Christmas Eve Candlelight service will begin at 4:00 that afternoon. This service will be widely publicized and is for the whole community. We hope kids, adults, singles, and families can enjoy Christmas at VPC!**



### New Media Desk

Have you seen the new media desk? You'll find it in the northwest corner of the Sanctuary. It is locking and has enough room to store most of our equipment and provides enough outlets to plug in the many cords needed to power and connect this equipment for sharing our weekly service on Zoom. Before the arrival of the desk, we had to store the equipment in a secure but far-away part of the building. Almost 20 cords had to find the right connection each week, with some probability of a mismatch and disruption to programming. Now everything stays in place, and starting is as simple as turning on the power. This is a wonderful gift to our dedicated tech crew: Jim and Diana Lilje, Jacq Skeffington, Claudia Ross-Weston, and Jim Hyde; and consequently, to our whole congregation. The purchase of the desk was made possible by the memorial gift from Kate Smith.

*Elizabeth Loveness, Worship Elder*

## Clerk's Corner

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

Session will present revised Terms of Call for Pastor Leigh in a Congregational meeting to be held December 10 following worship. Once the Congregation approves the pastor's Terms of Call, Session will finalize the 2024 budget. The congregation will also elect church officers whose terms will commence Jan 1, 2024.

The Annual Meeting of the Congregation and Corporation will be held January 28, 2024 following worship. During this meeting we will review the 2023 Annual Report and elect the 2024 Nominating Committee.

The Planning Committee is prioritizing security recommendations prepared by Matt Lilje of the Seattle Police Department. Much of the remodeling of the Narthex bathroom is completed.

*Jacq Skeffington, Clerk of Session*

## Faith Formation

After having covered selections from The Good Ancestor by Roman Zrznaric, we will take a break and discuss lessons prepared specifically for Advent by Pastor Leigh, who explains, "I've created this year's Advent Faith Formation Study to look at and unpack Jesus as Messiah. Each of the four weeks will have a slightly different lens.

- Week One (**Thursday**, November 30) at 7pm on Zoom) is *Anticipating the Messiah*.
- Week Two (**Tuesday**, December 5 at 7pm on Zoom) is *The Birth of the Messiah and Messianic Fulfillment*.
- Week Three (**Tuesday**, December 12 at 7pm on Zoom) is *Ministry of Jesus and Messianic Identity*.
- Week Four (**Thursday**, December 21 at 7pm on Zoom will look at *Jesus as Risen Messiah*.

Please note that two of the sessions are on Tuesday and two are on Thursday, because of scheduling issues.

I will email you a study guide two days before each session and encourage you to read through it and the scriptures in each one. We will then discuss them together in the hour we have each time.

"I'm looking forward to being with you as we lean into Advent together."

Please join us in these faith-filled discussions. Everyone is welcome.

*Al Ross-Weston, Faith Formation Elder*

## Purposeful Service Team Areas of Responsibility

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

December 3 is Food Bank Sunday. There is always a need for staples such as spaghetti and other pastas, canned tuna fish, peanut butter, broth and personal hygiene items such as toothbrushes and toothpaste. We have also been alerted to special needs for the holidays. Please consider making a donation that includes items such as condiments, baking staples, boxed potatoes, cooking oil, cranberry and pumpkin sauce and "meals in a can" such as beef stew. 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. You can bring items to the Sunday service, take them directly to the Food Bank or deliver them to the VPC office and we will follow up.

The 2023 Presbyterian Giving Catalog is available in the east room, and online at <https://presbyteriangifts.pcusa.org>. If you are thinking of an unusual Christmas gift for that special friend or relative, this is your opportunity. Donate an animal, fishing supplies, water purification system, refugee food basket etc. to be sent where our parent denomination has identified a need. Those who make gifts can request either e-cards or hard copy certificates to send to the person being gifted.

In January the Purposeful Service committee will request notebooks prepared by Vashon High School seniors for the Vashon Community Scholarship Foundation awards. If you would like to be on the review team which will recommend the VPC scholarship recipient, please contact me ([rwspang@centurytel.net](mailto:rwspang@centurytel.net)).

*Bob Spangler, Purposeful Service Elder*

## Outreach

WinterFest celebration will be held Saturday, December 2. Lights have been installed in the spruce tree in front of the church. The parade begins at 5:00 at the Chamber of Commerce office, and ends in front of VPC around 5:30 for the tree lighting, overseen by Santa Claus and accompanied by the VHS band.

After the tree lighting, Santa will invite everyone to join him in singing carols at the Vashon Theatre backlot. Santa will be accompanied by the Vashon Chorale, led by John DeGroen and the Chautauqua Elementary students led by Erin Kealy. A movie begins inside the theater around 6:15.

Hot cocoa, cider and cookies will be served in front of the church.

**Note: The parade route will be closed from 4:30 – 6:30, but a portion of the VPC parking lot will be reserved for VPC volunteers.**

There will be no first Friday activities on December 1, but we hope to help ring in 2024 with a fire and s'mores on January 5.

*Lindsay Hofman, Outreach Elder*

## Building and Grounds

We still need to install baseboards in the kitchen and hallways. We'll attempt starting it during December's Second Saturday work party on December 9. I'll set up stations inside or outside depending on the weather, and we'll cut and paint the boards before installing them. Please plan to join us at 10:00.

Pastor Leigh's office door still 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 still 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 for you to work at your leisure.

The worklist provided by King County Surface Water Management inspectors of our ground water containment systems was completed and submitted November 26. Compliance greatly reduces our land taxes.

All fire extinguishers, emergency exit lights, the sprinkler system and back-flow preventor were inspected in November and deemed satisfactory.

A new water fountain and bottle filling station will be installed in the Great Hall during Carpe Diem's Christmas break.

*Jacq Skeffington*



## VPC Book Club

The Book Club will meet on Friday, December 15 at 6:00 PM at the home of Bob and Carol Spangler for a potluck dinner.

The book selection this month is Remarkably Bright Creatures by Shelby Van Pelt.

From Amazon:

*"For fans of A Man Called Ove, a charming, witty and compulsively enjoyable exploration of friendship, reckoning, and hope that traces a widow's unlikely connection with a giant Pacific octopus."*

All are welcome!

*Al and Claudia Ross-Weston*



## Hospitality

### WinterFest: Saturday, December 2, 4:30 – 6:30

During the Vashon WinterFest, we'll set up a serving tent on the front lawn. From there we'll offer hot cider and cocoa along with Christmas cookies and other holiday treats. If you have some capacity to help, we need a few people to serve in 45-minute shifts, starting at 4:30.

We also need people to donate apple cider and to bake cookies/Christmas treats. Please drop off your goodies at the church by 4:00 on Saturday the 2<sup>nd</sup>.

Regardless of whether you can supply treats or dispense hot drinks, please come and bring friends and family. We'd love to see you!

### Christmas Eve Service, 4:00 PM

Following our Christmas Eve service, we'll serve refreshments in the Narthex (immediately outside the Sanctuary). If you have homemade treats or could help with setup or cleanup, please let me know.

### Highlights from Harvest Dinner, November 11

Almost 60 people attended this popular annual event, a gratitude-themed elaborate potluck dinner featuring a freshly grilled turkey as the headliner. The Social Hall was festively decorated for the season, and those who contributed food and drinks outdid themselves.

As the dinner was held on Veteran's Day, we paid tribute to those who have served in the military. Bob Spangler and Larry Commeree shared snippets of their experiences in active duty; Susan Commeree spoke of the sacrifices made by military spouses, and Diana Lilje recounted some of her childhood as a "military brat" whose family was frequently on the move. All of these stories reminded us that service is not an isolated activity, but that sacrifice includes those left at home.

The evening was filled with great food and drink, laughter, and friendship. If you missed it, please join us next year!

*Nancy Tucker, Hospitality Elder*



## Deacon's Message

"As we express our gratitude, we must never forget that the highest appreciation is not to utter words, but to live by them."

- John F Kennedy

As we move from Thanksgiving to the season of Advent, I would like to thank all of the wonderful people who have served as Deacons this year. Special thanks to Susan Commeree and Sheryl Lehman who have served for six years each. Additionally, thank you to Larry Commeree and Chris Coldeen who will continue to serve this next year.

I also would like to acknowledge all the members of our congregation who call to check on our friends, take food to people in need, or help with transporting family members to appointments. All of you are truly appreciated and live up to the above quote.

We are so fortunate to have our church family. Even when we are stretched, we rise to the occasion, and I am very grateful to be part of this wonderful community.

Wishing each one of you a blessed and joy-filled holiday season.

*Claudia Ross-Weston, Deacon Moderator*

## December Birthdays



Join us in wishing a happy December birthday to:

3<sup>rd</sup> Susan Commeree  
6<sup>th</sup> Nancy Johnson  
25<sup>th</sup> Leslie Hauck  
31<sup>st</sup> Bob Spangler

## Church Leadership

<b>Pastor</b>	Leigh Weber
<b>Clerk of Session</b>	Jacq Skeffington
<b>Session Members</b>	Lindsay Hofman, Jim Lilje, Elizabeth Loveness, Bob Spangler, Al Ross-Weston, Nancy Tucker
<b>Deacons</b>	Claudia Ross-Weston (Moderator), Chris Coldeen, Susan Commeree, Larry Commeree, Sheryl Lehman, Caran-Marie Weston Dunbar



## Calendar

### December 2023

- 2 Vashon WinterFest Parade 4:30 – 6:30, tree lighting 5:30 at VPC
- 3 Sunday Worship Service 10:00 AM Communion Special music from Vashon Chorale
- 5 Advent Faith Formation 7:00 PM Zoom *Anticipating the Messiah*
- 8 Game Night 7:00 PM
- 9 Second Saturday Work Party 10:00 – Noon VPC
- 10 Sunday Worship Service 10:00 AM  
Congregational Meeting Immediately Following Worship
- 12 Advent Faith Formation 7:00 PM Zoom *The Birth of the Messiah and Messianic Fulfillment*
- 15 VPC Book Club 6:00 PM Potluck dinner at the Spanglers'
- 17 Sunday Worship 10:00 AM
- 19 Session Meeting 10:00 AM on Zoom  
Session Dinner 5:00 PM Home of Elizabeth Loveness
- 20 Deacon Luncheon Al and Claudia Ross-Weston's home
- 21 Advent Faith Formation 7:00 PM Zoom *Ministry of Jesus and Messianic Identity*
- 22 Game Night 7:00 PM Zoom
- 24 Sunday Worship Service **10:00 AM** Christmas Pageant  
Christmas Eve Service **4:00 PM**
- 27 Advent Faith Formation 7:00 PM Zoom *Jesus as Risen Messiah*
- 29 Theology Pub 5:00 PM Camp Colvos
- 31 Sunday Worship Service 10:00 AM

#### Please Note:

Dates, times, and events might change after the time of this publication. Refer to the church bulletin and the weekly E-News for up-to-date information.

### Ongoing Activities

- |                        |   |
|------------------------|---|
| <b>Mondays</b>         | Sermon After Talk Noon – 1 PM   |
| <b>Tuesdays</b>        | Sporty's In-Person Coffee Hour 9:00 AM<br>Text Study Noon                           |
| <b>Wednesdays</b>      | Body Prayer 8:00 AM   |
| <b>First Thursdays</b> | Mental Health Advocates 7:00 PM   |
| <b>Fridays</b>         | Anything Goes (Grief Group) 11:00 AM (Call Leigh for details)<br>Game Night 7:00 PM |