

D E C E M B E R 2 0 1 5

# Vashon Presbyterian Church

Vashon Island, Washington 98070



To Worship God in all we do, centered in Jesus  
Christ, moved by the Holy Spirit

## December 2015

### Advent and Christmas

#### **Hanging of the Greens**

Our Traditional Decorating Party  
Plus Potluck!

Sunday, December 6<sup>th</sup>, After Worship  
(Hospitality/Fellowship News)

#### **Mary Magdalene Giving Tree**

Give gifts and shoes (via gift tags)  
Deadline is Sunday, December 13  
(Purposeful Service News)

#### **Book Club Christmas Gathering**

Supper, Gift Book Exchange  
Friday, December 18  
(Hospitality/Fellowship News)

#### **“Come Home for Christmas”**

Special Buffet Coffee Hour  
Sunday, December 20<sup>th</sup>  
(Hospitality/Fellowship News)

#### **Christmas Eve Service**

A Christmas Eve Celebration  
7 PM-Vashon Presbyterian Church  
(Worship News)

### Advent Calendar

*Presbyterians Today* published a beautiful calendar for advent. Copies sold out immediately. We are sending a PDF version of this calendar in a separate attachment to each of our newsletter readers. The calendar is a wonderful day-by-day journey through this advent season. Although the order of pages is a little difficult to follow in the PDF version, it is definitely worth the effort. You could also print out the calendar to use as your daily devotional text. We promise it will add beauty and joy to this season of anticipation.

#### **Want to keep Christ in Christmas?**

**Feed the hungry,  
clothe the naked,  
forgive the guilty,  
welcome the stranger and the  
unwanted child,  
care for the ill,  
love your enemies.**

## Anticipating Christ's Arrival

The literal meaning of the word *advent* is “coming” or “arrival”.

Parents looking forward to the birth of a child or friends anticipating a reunion after a long period of absence must prepare ahead of time for the big day. Prepare the room, clean the house, stock the refrigerator, invite others to share your joy in the arrival of the one anticipated!

As a Christian community, our time of waiting is also a time of preparing. We prepare our hearts, we prepare our minds, we prepare our souls for the wonder of God's message anew. We ask important questions like, “How can we help create a world in which a baby will not have to be born in a stable or hunted down by soldiers?” “How can we help create a world where people will seek peace rather than violence?” “How can we provide hospitality to the most vulnerable in God's world?” We ask these questions because to welcome the hungry, the imprisoned and the stranger is to welcome Christ himself. Historically, the primary sanctuary color of Advent is purple or blue, the colors of repentance, penitence and fasting, as well as the colors of royalty.

Advent is a time not only for remembering the coming of Christ in Bethlehem, but also for seeking to recognize God in our everyday lives, as God comes to us in our joys, sorrows, struggles and successes. As we remember the birth of Jesus, and become more aware of Christ's presence with us, we also live into hope in the One who brings eternal peace. Plan to attend worship each Sunday of Advent, as one avenue of becoming fully ready to celebrate the fullness of Christmas and the birth of *God with us*.

### Finding a New Rhythm

There is something about habit, about following a well-worn path that provides a measure of comfort and stability to our lives. Even though I tell myself I am a flexible person and just fine with change, I do tend to “settle in” all too easily to a rhythm of predictability and familiarity.

Weekdays I get up at 5:30am, read and pray, go for a walk, spend an hour practicing yoga every other day, review the day's schedule, tackle e-mails, study and write, go for a more extended walk after lunch, tackle scheduled activities of the afternoon, go for a walk after dinner (a 15 minute walk after each meal does wonders to increase your body's health and efficiency they say), make a phone call or two, watch some TV, read some more, go to bed around 10pm. Weekends, of course, are for adventure, friends, family and worship.

But now everything is up in the air! Days I visit my mom are in flux. There is no time for my usual routine on Sunday's and Wednesday's. Time for sermon writing at home has not yet found a predictable slot. Ferry schedules demand notice. Friends seem to always have gatherings on Wednesday, my Vashon day.

Just as I was bemoaning all this, I came across this wonderful quote from the astounding 13<sup>th</sup> century Persian poet, Rumi:

*Try not to resist the changes that come your way. Instead let life live through you. And do not worry that your life is turning upside down. How do you know that the side you are used to is better than the one to come?"*

Indeed! Thanks be to God for change in our lives and in our church. How do we know that the side we are used to is better than the one to come? We don't. I can't wait to see what the future holds!

Blessings,  
Lynn

## Purposeful Service

### Team News

#### Area of Responsibility:

Scholarship, Mary Magdalene weekend/partnership, IFCH dinners, mission partner relations.

VPC hosted the **IFCH Thanksgiving Celebration** on Thanksgiving Day. The event included games and snacks from 2 PM to 5:30 followed by a multi course meal and a ton of desserts from 5:30 to 7 PM. Sooze Grossman, who coordinated the event, reported that 88 meals were provided and 205 take home boxes of leftovers were distributed. Many people attending the celebration commented favorably about the "new life" brought to the Social Hall by the Carpe Diem teaching displays as well as the children's artwork. It filled my heart with joy to share the meal with friends and to see that we can still hold large community wide events in the Social Hall.

You cannot help noticing the "**Giving Tree**" in the reception room adjacent to the nursery. The "tree" is adorned with **Gift Tags** and **Shoe Tags** provided by **Mary's Place**, the Seattle based organization "Empowering Homeless Women, Children And Families To Reclaim Their Lives". **Shoe Tags** request a \$20.00 donation toward purchasing shoes on your behalf. **Toy Tags** have the name of a toy that a child at Mary's Place has asked for Christmas. Gifts will be given to homeless parents and grandparents so they in turn can give them to their children and share in the joy of giving. **Tags for Mom & Dad Gifts** will provide gifts to be placed in their Santa Store where children will shop for presents for their parents. **Unwrapped gifts and donations** should be returned to the **VPC Office by December 13th** so that we can transport them to Mary's Place by December 16th. If you would like to contribute but cannot stop by the church, please mail donations to Vashon Presbyterian Church, P.O. Box 435, Vashon, Wa. 98070. Checks should be made out to Mary's Place and earmarked Christmas Giving Tree.

**December IFCH Dinner** Note that the VPC IFCH dinner falls on December 24<sup>th</sup>, Christmas Eve. If you would like to create a special time for our IFCH friends on this special day, please sign up in the social hall. The dinner lasts from 4:30-6:30 PM. *Elder Jacq Skeffington*

## Worship

### Team News

#### Area of Responsibility:

Sacraments celebration, music program, readers, bulletin, ecumenical worship, church décor.

**Advent Services** Church family and friends please join us for our **Advent services** during morning worship at 10:00 on **December 6th, 13th, and 20th**. There will be more information in our enews each week to prepare you for the upcoming Sunday service. Look for your weekly enews! Our **Christmas Eve service will be on December 24th at 7:00 PM**. We want to invite all who have ever been, or ever thought about being, connected to our congregation to "Come Home for Christmas". It seems like the perfect time of year to invite friends and neighbors and to encourage returnees. What better gift can we give them? Let me know if you would like to contribute music to one of our services. *Brownie Carver - 463-5399*

## Hospitality/Fellowship

### Team News

#### Area of Responsibility:

Hospitality, Fellowship

On **December 5<sup>th</sup>** at 10 am we will gather at the church to go and cut down the **VPC Christmas Tree** and a small one for the children. **Sunday the 6th** after church we will enjoy a Soup/Sandwich potluck. Once our tummies are full we will **hang the greens** in the church and **decorate the tree**. Please join us as we make VPC ready, inside & out, for the Christmas season.

**A Christmas Surprise** awaits us during **Coffee Hour on the 13<sup>th</sup>**, as well as a festive "**Come Home for Christmas**" **Buffet lunch after worship the 20<sup>th</sup>**.

**December Book** Book Club meets on Friday December 18<sup>th</sup> at Ross-Weston's. We will discuss **A Still and Clear Conscience** by John A. McCoy. There will be a festive potluck at 6:30 and a white elephant book exchange to follow. We will also be deciding on books for the new year.

## Mission Resource

### Team News

#### Area of Responsibility:

Financials, Building and Grounds

#### Building and Grounds Maintenance

A small group gathered on veteran's day to trim shrubbery and clear blackberries. There were no Carpe Diem volunteers but a few VPC members trimmed around the ramp and playfield. There is still plenty more to do so we'll try to coordinate another combined work party with Carpe Diem students' parents after Christmas.

Our "Toolbelts" group continues to meet on Tuesday mornings 10:00am-noon. Chris Coldeen and I managed to caulk the south facing windows of the Social Hall when we had a break in the rains. We still have some interior painting, window and carpet cleaning projects in mind. We will NOT be gathering the first 2 Tuesdays in December as Beverly and I are going on a short vacation. Call me at 354-8917 after December 10th if interested.

Beverly, Myrtle, Laura Jean, and Here gave the library a thorough sorting and cleaning last week. If anyone is interested in taking on the task of keeping the library organized, please call the church office.

The annual fire protection and alarm systems were inspected on Veteran's Day and all are in good working condition.

We are still seeking another "Office Volunteer" to answer phones and direct concerns to appropriate Mission Team Leaders. Volunteers staff the church office Monday through Thursday from 10-2. If you are interested in helping, drop by the church during office hours and talk to the volunteer on duty. It's a great way to find out about the life of VPC beyond Sunday mornings.

#### Financials

Stewardship pledges - a reminder to turn pledges in to the office if you haven't already.

Church Audit We are currently doing the church audit for 2014.

2016 Budget We are working on the 2016 budget to present at the December session meeting. The congregation will view the new budget at the Congregational Meeting, January 17<sup>th</sup>.

The OMAX Corporation offered stockholders the opportunity to sell 1500 shares of their stock back to the company. Session decided to sell 1500 shares out of the 10,000 VPC holds. This sale of stock should net the church approximately \$10,950.

## Journey/Invitation

### Team News

#### Area of Responsibility:

Bible study, Christian formation (all ages), new members and discipleship, evangelism and invitation.

#### The Meaning of the Advent Wreath

In the ancient world, people of many different cultures lit fires to mark the turning of the light into winter's dark season and to pray for the return of the light. The church, beginning we think in the ancient Celtic Christian communities, Christianized that practice by lighting the Advent wreath. To us, these candles are signs of the growing light of Christ who is coming again, bringing light into the darkness of our world. As the weeks progress through the Sundays of December, the color of the candle lightens from deep purple to light pink. On the Sunday we celebrate Christmas the pure white Christ candle is finally lit.

The Advent wreath both celebrates Christ's coming over 2,000 years ago, and also reminds us we must actively watch and wait for Christ's return. The candles are traditionally designated as the candle of hope, the candle of peace, the candle of joy and the candle of love -- because these are the things Christ offers the world.

As we enter into the season of Advent, we enter into a time of waiting -- waiting to remember again, to hear again, to know again the joy of Jesus' birth.



## Deacon's News

Recent surveys on Vashon have confirmed that there is a very substantial number of senior citizen residents. We all know this stage of life brings some difficult situations - and that's one area our deacons have chosen to focus on currently. This month we want to share with you one of the newest resources that is available for caretakers of those affected especially by dementia and Alzheimer's disease.

A new weekly program this fall is "Music Mends Minds" which provides stimulating and fun experiences with instruments and singing. Patients affected by dementia, Parkinson's and Alzheimer's, along with their caregivers, can benefit from these creative gatherings. The group meets at Vashon Lutheran Church on Tuesdays from 1:30 to 3:30 p.m. If you have more specific questions about this supportive opportunity, contact Amy Huggins at (206) 851-7159. Thanks also to Vashon Rotary for their role in making this Community Service Project possible.

Watch for further details next month about other programs that provide helpful resources and guidance for all of us in our interactions with our senior island residents. As always, any of the deacons would be happy to help answer your questions about services for our seniors and their family and friends.

*Deacons: Susan Commeree, Lindsay Hofman, Sue Weston and Nancy van Roessel*

## Clerk's Corner

Session met on November 18, with all but the clerk in attendance. Barb Huff was named acting clerk. It was announced that Michele Houston resigned as deacon, effective September 6. Session discussed a request for baptism by a family that is not associated with VPC. Session approved, subject to the pastor meeting with the family and determining that baptism is consistent with Presbyterian polity. Committee reports were received. Two financial matters were acted upon: the pastor's reimbursement for medical expenses will be on an as billed basis, rather than a fixed sum, and the Christmas Eve offering will be deposited in the general fund. Session also accepted an offer from OMAX Corp., in which we hold 10,000 shares of stock, to sell back to the company 1,500 shares. Session will later decide how to use the proceeds. Finally, session set January 17, 2016 as the date for the Annual Congregational Meeting, and decided to have a session retreat on January 23<sup>rd</sup>.

*Bob Spangler, Clerk of Session*

### *Mahatma Gandhi*

Although we sing, "All glory to God on High and on the earth be peace," there seems to be today neither glory to God nor peace on earth. As long as it remains a hunger still unsatisfied, as long as Christ is not yet born, we have to look forward to him. When real peace is established, we will not need demonstrations, but it will be echoed in our life, not only in individual life, but in corporate life. Then we shall say Christ is born. Then we will not think of a particular day in the year as that of the birth of the Christ, but as an ever-recurring event which can be enacted in every life.

Source: from a talk given on Christmas Day, 1931

# Calendar

## December 2015

(all events at VPC unless otherwise stated)



- Dec**
- 5 Bible Study**
  - 6 Sunday Worship Service 10 am (Communion Service)**
  - 6 Hanging of the Greens after worship**
  - 9 Session Meeting 7 pm**
  - 13 Sunday Worship Service 10 am**
  - 13 Deacon's Meeting after worship at noon**
  - 18 VPC Book Club Christmas Supper at Ross-Wesston's**
  - 19 Bible Study 9 am**
  - 20 Sunday Worship Service 10 am**
  - 20 "Come Home for Christmas" Buffet after worship**
  - 24 Christmas Eve Service 7 pm**
  - 27 Sunday Worship Service 10 am**

### ONGOING ACTIVITIES

*Life Changing Prayer* group meets on the second and fourth Wednesdays at 10:00 am at VPC, and on the first, third and fifth Wednesdays at 10:00 am at the Vashon Community Care Center

*Women's informal breakfast* meets at Sporty's at 8:00 am on Wednesdays.

*Bible Study* meets the 1<sup>st</sup> and 3<sup>rd</sup> Saturdays.

Please note: Dates, times and events may change after publication. Refer to the weekly e-News or Sunday bulletin for confirmation of details.