



This newsletter comes to you from the editor's home, as all of us shelter in place and try to adjust to life during the coronavirus pandemic. Although the church office is closed and no one may gather at Mount Vernon Church, Jae and the church staff are at work from their homes. Please contact us if you:

- Need assistance with getting groceries (for instance, if you are in an at-risk group and unable to shop)
- Would like to volunteer to assist someone with getting groceries or medicines
- Need to share a prayer concern with us

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Online Worship Services from Mount Vernon

For Sunday, March 22, and Sunday, March 29, worship services were recorded at Mount Vernon and available to anyone by visiting the church website (mtvernonumc.org). We hope to continue offering an online worship service each Sunday while we are unable to gather at the church.

If you have not received emails from the church with information about these services, please send your current email address to mtvernonumc@comcast.net.



Jae Cho, Beth Bauman, Megan Gould, Juliet Cho, and Alex Larking produced these services, and they are exploring ways to involve more people in more ways. Please join us on Sundays if you can.

COVID-19: A Letter from Bishop Lewis and the Virginia Conference Cabinet

If the foundations are destroyed, what can the righteous do? — Psalm 11:3

Ours is a faith that is built to shine in hard times. We recognize that these are hard times and share with you what we believe.

We believe that God does some of God's best work when the going gets tough. At the center of our faith is a Messiah, crucified yet raised from the dead to show how God's love and power work. So, when our world is facing pandemic...when our congregations are refraining from in-person worship...when people are retreating into isolation for the common good...when we are overwhelmed by fear and foreboding...what is Christ's Church to do?

We believe that now is the time for us to be the Church, for the sake of the world. Now is the time to bear witness to the God who is able to make all things new, who redeems even the most desperate of situations, and whose grace is always sufficient. Now is the time to let our light shine in the midst of the world's despair, to bring healing in the midst of brokenness.

Because we believe this, we want to ask you to join us in acts of living faith. We encourage every congregation, every pastor, every church member to:

- Draw near to God for the strength that God alone supplies, through daily prayer and Scripture reading, taking time to let God's love fill us, reassure us, replenish us.
- Reach out into the world as agents of good news. Practicing social distancing does not mean we are relationally distant, even if our touch comes via the phone or supplies and notes dropped at the door. People need to know that they are not alone.

- Be creative in worship by exploring digital media, home-based devotions, and other means.

- Finally, this is a great opportunity for us to give. Our ministries have not shut down; they are simply taking new forms to meet the needs of this crisis. In such a time, we are reminded why we are the church and why we give. Of course, we are sensitive to those whose incomes are imperiled by the crisis, and we value all that they give through their prayers and acts of love for God and others. We can challenge ourselves to deepen our generosity for this season, giving more so that the church will be strong to meet these challenges and opportunities.

In hard times there are usually three responses: there are those who run toward the trouble, those who hunker down to wait it out, and those who run away. As your Virginia Conference Cabinet, we believe it is time to run toward the crisis because that is where we believe Jesus is. It will take all the gifts that God has given us, spiritual, physical, and financial. And it will take all of us.

There are very real structural and financial challenges in front of us but, as the Church of Jesus Christ in hard times, we discern even more very real spiritual opportunities. We give thanks for your generosity, for your willingness to try new and uncomfortable things, and for your perseverance in enabling the church to move with God into a new chapter in ministry in these unprecedented times.

In Christ,
Bishop Sharma D. Lewis and the Cabinet

For Sunday, March 15, our children were prepared and excited to lead the Children's Sabbath worship service. We were especially excited that Dr. Maklin Eugene was going to share the story of his hospital in Haiti. But we were unable to have worship that day, and so I met with Dr. Maklin and taped the remarks he would have made. When we gather again, we will share his story in that form. I wish you could hear the enthusiasm and passion in his voice when he shares the story of New Hope Hospital! In the meantime, here are some of the highlights from his remarks.

– Beth Bauman

DR. MAKLIN: I am a medical doctor. I am the founder of New Hope Hospital. Haiti is a poor country... about 12 million people live in Haiti with half of the population younger than age 20. The problems in Haiti are real: high infant and maternal mortality, and high rates of HIV/AIDS, including 19,000 children. The main causes of death in Haiti are diarrhea (because of lack of access to clean water), respiratory infection, malaria, and tuberculosis.



Charlottesville team comes four times a year. When they were there, if I needed to refer a patient to the hospital in Cap Haitien (45 minutes away), I could use their truck. But when they were not in Haiti, things were very difficult for us. Very sick patients had to go to Cap Haitien on a motorbike. We needed a truck or an ambulance.

We chose to build New Hope Hospital in an area where there is no health care. At New Hope, 60 percent of the patients cannot pay. We never turn anyone away. We count on our donors for operating expenses.

We started the Just Water Project to build wells and to provide education about sanitation.

We also work with midwives in the area. They did not have any knowledge of delivery, but many women depended upon the midwives. We work with 200 midwives now.

“At New Hope, 60 percent of the patients cannot pay. We never turn anyone away.”

We provide birthing kits and training. Now they know the danger signs and can bring the lady to the hospital so we can finish the delivery. It has

worked perfectly! We already delivered more than 1500 babies at New Hope in the three years since we opened.

We need your support very badly, especially for the hospital. It is a fight every month to buy the medications and the medical supplies. We serve a region of 250,000 people. People can come any time, any day, and we make sure we serve them. We have 115 employees at the hospital. Each month our donors supplement what the patients are able to contribute.

Medical teams from Charlottesville and Charlotte frequently come to New Hope. They bring doctors, nurses, and other professionals. When teams come, we get a chance to see many more patients. *(Note: We plan to take a medical team from Mount Vernon sometime in the future, God willing.)*

“We already delivered more than 1500 babies at New Hope in ... three years.”

BETH: How did you get land and money for New Hope Hospital?

DR. MAKLIN: I love this question! I had been working in a clinic for 16 years for a team from Charlottesville. The

I remember a patient who came to the clinic: I gave her an IV and she had to wait about 7 hours in the clinic before she could find transportation. She had to ride on the back of the motorbike holding the IV fluid above her head to go to the hospital (1 1/2 hours by motorbike). I kept thinking, “We need a hospital to serve all the people here so we won’t have to refer them to Cap Haitien which is a long distance. I don’t have the money; but I have the vision.”

“We serve a region of 250,000 people. People can come any time, any day.”

When I finished my work in the clinic, I would drive to different communities, looking for some land for the hospital in case we ever had the money. The Health Ministry called for a meeting with all the small clinics around. The Director, Dr. Jasmine, said, “We need a hospital in this area very badly. There are 250,000 people living here and we don’t have care for them.” After the meeting I approached the Director and said, “It’s as if you are reading my mind! Yes! We need a hospital very badly in this area.” He said, “Dr. Eugene, if you are interested in this project, I can connect you with the Mayor who has been to my office several times saying, ‘There is a piece of land for a project like that.’”

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“It is a fight every month to buy the medications and the medical supplies.”

Contributions for our **Easter Offering** will be sent to the nonprofit that supports Dr. Maklin Eugene’s mission, New Hope Hospital.

Please mail your check to the church (107 West Main St., Danville VA 24541), and be sure to put “Easter Offering” in the memo line.



Interview with Dr. Maklin Eugene, Founder of New Hope Hospital (Continued from previous page)

While I was looking for a piece of land, there was a piece of land available for the project!

I called the Mayor and he took me to the land. It was exactly where we needed, in the middle of the region. When I called Dr. Jasmine he said, "This is exactly where we need the hospital!"

We didn't have money to build the hospital. We prayed. I let my friends in the United States know about it. One of my friends came and made a video about my work in Haiti. (To watch the video, google "Dr. Eugene Maklin, ESPWA). She started spreading the word in the US and created a GoFundMe account. They linked the account to a 501c3 in Charlottesville that was supporting an orphanage there. The architect told us we need \$500,000.00 US to build the building. I said, "No! We don't have that kind of money! Where are we going to find that?"

"It has been 3 1/2 years and we have seen more than 50,000 patients. It is a miracle!"

We started construction in June 2014 and by October 2016, the funds were raised and the building completed. We started providing care to the communities there. It has been 3 1/2 years and we have seen more than 50,000 patients. It is a miracle! It is a blessing.

I trust God! First comes the vision; set your goal and do your best to make it happen.



Dr. Maklin, his son and daughter, and wife, Lidwine.



It's so unfortunate that we couldn't finish our spring schedule of Wednesday Night Dinners (the food, fellowship, programs, birthday and anniversary wishes)! And all the other things we treasure that take place in church during the spring.

Remember that our theme last year was **Reach Out and Touch Somebody's Hand**. Well, as we are all quarantined, let's all make a point of reaching out on the phone to keep in touch with our church family or writing notes. It means a lot to be remembered and to be checked on!

Stay safe and look forward to the day when we are all reunited.
– Beth Ranson

Dear Mount Vernon Friends,

On March 31, I retired from working at the church – but not from being part of Mount Vernon UMC! I will continue producing this newsletter and handling the church website, and of course, I'll go right on singing in the choir and ringing handbells.

I started working in the church office twelve years ago, and what a joy it turned out to be – working every day with a team of dedicated, inspiring people: Barry Foster, Beth Bauman, Tim Navis, and Shirley Gammon, in the beginning, and up until the present with Beth, Jae Cho, Juliet Cho, and Evie Jackson. Best of all, with the people of our church. Without exception, you have been unfailingly gracious and appreciative.

This is not goodbye – it's just my heartfelt thank you!
Lin Benefield

Note: Plans for a retirement gathering were interrupted by coronavirus; it has been postponed until happier times return.

April Birthdays

- 2 Von Cannon
- John Gibbs, III
- 3 Kathryn Blachura
- Sarah Hawkins
- Harry Lea
- 5 Ken Larking
- 6 Lee Shreve
- Jack Spainhour
- Morgan Wall
- 7 Rebecca Daniel
- Beth Payne
- 9 Mary Ellen Dean
- 11 Stuart Bray
- 12 Tom Underwood
- 15 Ellen Joyce
- Suzanne Miller
- Anne Powell
- Judie Turbiville
- 16 Leslie Shreve
- Kathryn Waters
- Brian Cuthrell
- 17 Frank Davis
- Verla Wall
- 18 Betty Turner
- 19 Cameron Booker
- Townes Lea
- 22 Susan Davis
- Marshall White
- 24 David Fuquay
- Betty Jennings
- Alex Womack
- 25 Dennis Porter
- 27 Frank Wickers
- 28 Kevin Miller
- 29 Lude Labieville
- 30 Max Glass, Jr.
- Vicki Meder



May Birthdays

- 2 Harper Mitchell
- Meredith Ashby
- Ramsden
- 3 Jessica Austin
- 4 Phillip Wright
- 5 Tom Darkis
- 6 Frances McMillan
- Anne Thomas
- 7 Rita Doggett
- Bill Fuller
- Beth Ranson
- 9 Shirley Bray
- 11 Fran Ramsay
- 12 Emily Runyon
- 13 Ann Jeffries
- Tommy Stephens
- 14 Jennifer Parker
- Liz Pyszka
- 15 Margaret Milam
- Lynn Slayton



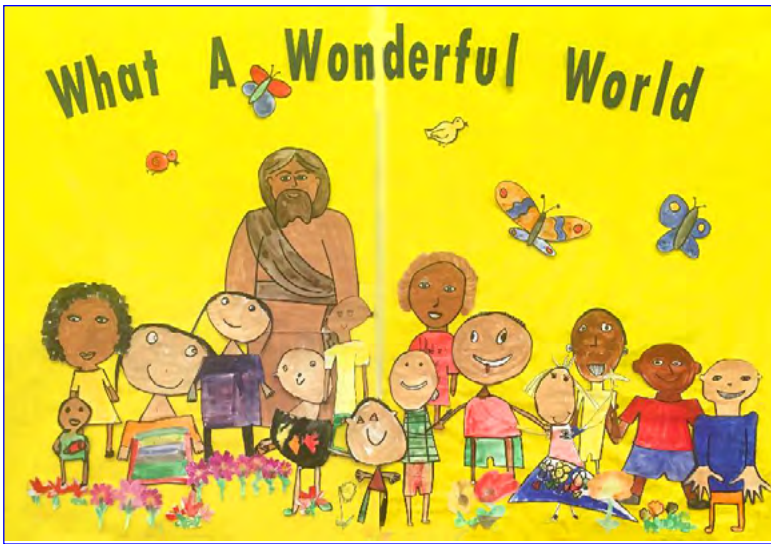
At Blue Ridge Rehab: **Betty Jennings**

At Brookdale: **Jean Beach**

At Roman Eagle: **Betty Adkins, Tom Darkis**

At Commonwealth/Stratford House: **Ruth Waggoner, Rev. Joyce Johnson, Rev. Billy Johnson**

At home: **Frances Stoneburner, Mary Ellen Dean, Bill Hardy, Dorothy Stephens, Berkeley & Van Keck**



Mount Vernon's children created this backdrop for the March 15 **Children's Sabbath** service – which had to be canceled at the last minute. We hope to reschedule it when our regular services resume.



Before the coronavirus, our younger youth enjoyed bowling together.



Weekly Godly Play Lessons Now Online



On March 29, Beth Bauman posted a Godly Play lesson online. These children (at left) are working on the lesson at home. We hope to continue posting weekly lessons, so our children will not miss the wonderful stories of Lent and Easter. The online lessons are available any time by visiting the church website.



We look forward to the day when our Godly Play classes will meet again at the church. Above, the older group with Beth deAristizabel. At right, the younger group, with Kathryn Waters.

