



Missions at Mount Vernon Church

Our 2020 Advent offering was collected for Habitat for Humanity and the YMCA Scholarship Program. We are very pleased to report that \$4,285.00 has been collected so far for the offering and will be divided between the two projects. In addition, our children's Habitat note cards have raised \$405.00 so far for Habitat for Humanity! Our contributions will make a difference for people in our community who need safe, affordable housing and for those who will benefit from the Y's Scholarship Program. Thank you!

As we begin a new year, we are very hopeful that we will be able to continue the wonderful mission projects that we have planned, and we wanted to share an overview with you. Our objective is to provide a variety of opportunities for our church family to serve people in need so that all may participate in one or more ways. In addition, we seek to provide a balance of hands-on projects and financial contributions; local, regional, and international projects; and an emphasis on projects that are not simply a "handout" but a "hand up" – assisting people in transformation from poverty to a livable standard of living.

Because of the pandemic, we have had to adjust our plans and were unable to do some of our projects in the past year. However, we look forward with hope in the new year that we will be able to resume all of our mission projects.

Rise Against Hunger

Volunteers of all ages gather in our fellowship hall to pack dry, nutritious meals that are used in developing countries after natural disasters and in school feeding programs. We appreciate the help of the GW Football Team in the heavy lifting, and we enjoy getting to know the players.



Easter Offering

Our tradition is to pick an international missionary or mission. In 2020 our offering went to New Hope Hospital in Haiti, where Dr. Maklin Eugene and his staff are serving an underserved area of 250,000 people, many of whom cannot afford to pay.

Vacation Bible School Offering

We pick a project that appeals to children. Recent choices have been Heifer Project and Habitat for Humanity.



Appalachia Service Project

For the past 19 years, our youth and adult leaders have traveled to the Appalachian mountains to assist low-income homeowners with repairs. They were unable to take the trip in 2020 and hope to resume next summer.

Park Avenue School Partnership

At various times throughout the year, we provide snacks, meals, and other expressions of encouragement to teachers and staff.

Carpenter's Project

Mount Vernon volunteers provide materials and build handicapped ramps for low-income residents of Danville.

Sheetrock Team for Habitat for Humanity

Our Mount Vernon volunteers hang sheetrock in each new home, schedule permitting. We were unable to volunteer in 2020 on the latest house, but provided the funds to hire professionals to do the job during the pandemic.

Danville Area CROP Hunger Walk

Mount Vernon members serve as Planning Team members, corporate sponsors, donors, and walkers for this annual community event that provides resources to address hunger and extreme poverty in Danville and around the world. Mount Vernon Church raised \$6,245.00 this year, including donations by our corporate sponsors. Of that amount, \$1,345.00 was raised by our youth group.



Advent Offering

Our annual Advent offering is designated for local mission projects.



Mitten Tree

Donations of knitted hats and mittens as well as toys are delivered to the Henry Fork Center and to the Cherokee Indian mission.

God's Storehouse Food Collection

Food is left throughout the year in collection boxes at Mount Vernon and is delivered to our local food pantry.



Thank you, Mount Vernon, for your support of these projects with your prayers, your donations, and your service!

Mount Vernon UMC Foundation 2021/2022 Scholarship Applications Available

Mount Vernon United Methodist Church Foundation distributes all of its net income annually. A limited amount of scholarship funds for students in the Danville–Pittsylvania County –Caswell County area pursuing undergraduate degrees will be awarded. Awards will be made based on a combination of financial need, academic merit, and community involvement. Other distributions are made to worthy causes, some as directed by our donors, while others are approved requests for various ministries.

The deadline for completed applications is Friday, February 26, 2021. Download applications from the church website at mtvernonumc.org

Completed applications must be mailed to 107 W. Main St. Danville VA 20541 and postmarked by the due date (no emailed applications). All applications for scholarships and other requests for grant funds are due by Friday, February 26, 2021.

Please contact Ken Larking for further information. (ken.larking@gmail.com or 434.713-0952).



As we begin a new fiscal year for Mount Vernon, I want – on behalf of the Finance Committee – to thank everyone once again for their faithful giving during 2020. During the most uncertain of years, the steadiness of your contributions allowed our congregation to remain financially healthy. So many organizations across our community and country were not so fortunate.

In the coming weeks, the Finance Committee expects to present a balanced budget for this new year to Church Council. If you have not yet submitted your pledge, there is still time to do so. At last check, if those who pledged in 2020 but not for this year continued their giving at the same amount, we would increase our revenue by roughly \$40,000.

On a personal note, I conclude my tenure as chair of the Finance Committee this month, turning over the reins to the very capable Melissa Herke. I want to thank the members of our Committee, our counterparts on SPR (especially outgoing chairman David Parrish), and our congregation for the support that you have provided during this time. I have learned a great deal and grown in my faith, and for both of those I will remain grateful.

– Steven Gould



John and Beth Ranson's grandchildren in New Jersey participated in Mount Vernon's Christmas Eve online service.



The Advent Offering: Half goes to the YMCA scholarship program, half to Habitat for Humanity.

YMCA PHOTO

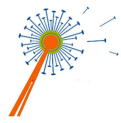


Great News: Our **Advent Offering** goal was \$3,500. As of December 31 we had raised \$4,285. This is wonderful. Mount Vernon's congregation is great.

We will continue to collect Advent donations through the end of January. Send donations to Mount Vernon UMC, 107 West Main Street, Danville, VA 24541. On the memo line of your check, please put Advent Offering.

On December 17, the Missions Committee delivered treats to staff and teachers at **Park Avenue Elementary School**, spreading holiday cheer.

The **Rise Against Hunger Event**, scheduled for February 21, had to be postponed. We will be back as soon as we can safely schedule it.



Christmas Art Workshop

Our children enjoyed gathering in the fellowship hall before Christmas to learn about Christmas symbols of the Christian faith. And they recorded their parts for the Christmas anthems.

Many thanks to those who assisted with this project: Kathryn Waters, Skylar Payne, Braelynn Adams, and Katie Blachura.



Exciting news! So far, our children have raised \$405.00 for Habitat for Humanity with the note cards they made!



The cards are still available for \$10 per pack of 10 cards, and may be picked up in the glass enclosure outside the fellowship hall.



Godly Play Classes Now on Zoom

Beginning Sunday, January 10, our children are meeting on Zoom on Sunday mornings at 11:00 to share the Godly Play story and stay connected with one another.

Christopher Waters Works on UVa Wastewater Surveillance Program

Wastewater surveillance is now being used in the Charlottesville area to help forecast surges in COVID-19 cases. Samples, combined with other data, are part of an epidemiologic model project at the University of Virginia, where Christopher is a doctoral student.

“The current plan,” Christopher said, “is to distribute the results online, and to work towards providing a notification for those in the affected areas. We have several sample sites set up throughout the city, and have identified the catchment area for each of those sites.

“If we detect increases in the viral load at a particular site, we will step upstream to divergent points in the sewage system to get a more specific location, which would let us notify potentially-exposed people with greater confidence.”

Ultimately, the data will be shared with public health officials, hospitals, the Virginia Department of Health, and the Centers for Disease Control and Prevention’s National Wastewater Surveillance System.

The long-term goal is to use the data to more accurately predict what will happen in coming weeks. This would be a good way to detect an unanticipated resurgence and even to zero in on where in the city that resurgence is occurring.



ERIN EDGERTON, THE DAILY PROGRESS

Wastewater is tested at Quarry Park in Charlottesville in late November. UVa is working with the city and other jurisdictions on the surveillance program.

Christopher Waters is currently pursuing a Ph.D. in Biomedical Engineering. Prior to working on a COVID Wastewater Sampling strategy, his work was focused on outcomes after heart attacks, specifically on cardiac remodeling and limiting scar formation in the post-MI (myocardial infarction) heart to reduce risk of subsequent heart attacks after an initial infarction.



Thank you to our handbell ringers, choirs, and other musicians for providing our wonderful Christmas music!

And thank you to Newton and Martha Ray of Raywood Landscape Center for providing poinsettias.

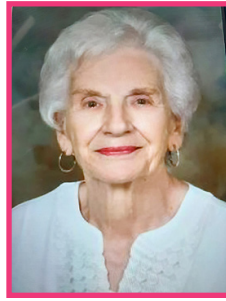


Several of our youth families enjoyed caroling before Christmas. They were careful to maintain social distancing and wore face coverings.



**HAPPY
BIRTHDAY**

*To Joanne Bucklew, who is
turning 90 on January 16!*



January Birthdays

- | | |
|--|-------------------------------------|
| 1 Bernard Thomas | 25 Jeff Ashby
Beth Bauman |
| 2 Catherine Adkins | 26 Patrick Eller
Bill Gammon |
| 4 Paige Johnson | 27 Marlyn Sigmon
Carey Wilkes |
| 5 Lee Searcey | 28 Hugh Stoneburner |
| 6 Kathryn Baer
Remmus Milligan
Cheryl Sule
Amy Echols | 29 Brooks Powell, IV |
| 7 Bonnie Griffith
Andrew Long | 31 Martha Evans Ray
Peggy Wright |

February Birthdays



- | | |
|--|--|
| 8 Karen Miller | 2 Gayle Miller |
| 10 Ann Hurt | 3 Matt Charles
Kaleigh Longer
beam
John Southward |
| 11 Katherine Daniel | 6 Courtney Bailey |
| 13 Leah Cooter | 7 Jean Gaudin
Elizabeth Hylton
Pierce Turbiville
Susan Turner |
| 14 Patsi Compton
Joyce Fuquay
Stephanie Keck | 8 Barbara Brande |
| 15 Terry Deane Harris | 9 Cayla Barker
Jay Barker
Amanda Foster
Steve Huff
Jane McMillan
Nik Tiver Belanger
Lewis Williamson |
| 16 Anna Blackmon Baer
Joanne Bucklew
John Hiltzheimer
Brady Woodson | |
| 17 Cheryl Allen
Tom Grogan | |
| 20 Trae Meder | |
| 21 Robert McFarland, II | |
| 22 Sandra Keck | |
| 23 Kelly Long | |
| 24 Carolyn Kent
Darrell Williamson | |



*Some of
Mount Vernon's
knitters sort items
for the
Cherokee Indian
mission.*

*A gift in memory of
Sue Wickers and Martha Blair ("B") Hylton
has been received from Sid & India Causey.*

*A gift in honor of **Catherine Bendall**
has been received from Ellen Beville.*

*Gifts in memory of **Jean Read**
have been received from Dan & Tammy Waters,
Donald & Beverly Turner, and
Gayle & John Morris.*

*Gifts in memory of **Andy Farley**
have been received from Dan & Tammy Waters
and Gayle & John Morris.*

*A gift in memory of **Bill Stephens**
has been received from Howard & Jan Lester.*

*Gifts in memory of **John Stoneburner**
have been received from Dan & Tammy Waters,
Lucy B. Cornett, Joe & Cindy Cornett,
Jimmy & Vickie Clark, and
Gayle & John Morris.*

At home:
**Dorothy Stephens,
Frances Stoneburner,**



**Rev. Joyce Johnson, Bill Hardy,
Berkeley & Van Keck**

At Blue Ridge Rehab: **Betty Jennings**

At Roman Eagle:
Marian Adkins, Tom Darkis

At Commonwealth/Stratford House:
Ruth Waggoner

Scan with cell phone
for online giving





PHOTO BY KURT LINDQUIST

Pray for Our Nation and One Another

January 7, 2021

Dear Virginia Annual Conference:

At this extremely difficult and painful time in our nation's history, let us turn to Almighty God with fervent prayer.

We thank God Almighty that our democracy was preserved yesterday, with Congress able to return to business. We pray for all our leaders that they have wisdom, strength, and composure to address our country's problems. We pray for sustained peace and healing to embrace our land.

Early this morning, U.S. Senate Chaplain Rev. Barry Black delivered an exemplary and inspiring prayer in his benediction. I urge everyone to listen and reflect upon it. A video of his remarks is here: <https://www.facebook.com/watch/?v=1293668617655874>

May God Bless America and every one of you.

Peace and Blessings,
Bishop Sharma D. Lewis

From District Superintendent Denise Bates

Being a faithful follower of our Lord Jesus hasn't ever been easy. Especially in these days of COVID, societal change, economic hardship, technological advances, and polarizing tribalism, knowing how to live and relate after the example of Christ can be constantly challenging. When we see many aspects of life as we have known it slipping away, and where it is all heading not quite clear, it can be frightening. For us humans, fear can lead us to dangerous places.

So what do we do in such moments? What I try to do (and it always takes intentional effort) is to still my heart, mind, and soul and listen for God. We can get so embroiled in trying to sustain and maintain that we fill up the space meant to be occupied by the Holy Spirit. We can be so certain we know what is right, that we ignore the Voice of God calling us Beloved and pointing us to new directions and deeper relationships, both with God and with others.

When I find myself confused, scared, indecisive, in the midst of tumult or hurt, these words of Jesus center and direct me: "He [Jesus] said to him, "'You shall love the Lord your God with all your heart, and with all your soul, and with all your mind.' This is the greatest and first commandment. And a second is like it: 'You shall love your

neighbor as yourself.' On these two commandments hang all the law and the prophets" (Matthew 22:36-40). Jesus says here that it all boils down to this.

I wonder if, in these tumultuous, challenging times, including the recent events in Washington D.C., it might be helpful for us to still our hearts, minds, and souls and pray on this scripture. If we could stop and turn off the devices and quiet our opinions and fears for a few minutes, what might we hear God telling us? If we adopt a posture of reverence and openness to the Holy Spirit, might we feel the refreshment of peace? If we pray centered on loving God and loving neighbor as Jesus tells us, what might be God's response and our response to God?

I invite you to pray for peace and deeper understanding of Jesus' commandment for us to "love one another, as I have loved you," and what that means in our everyday lives, both as individuals, brothers and sisters in and of Christ, as community, and as citizens. I invite you to pray, both in supplication to God, but also in quiet as you listen for and to God. Psalm 46:10 says, "Be still, and know that I am God!" Let's be faithful in our stillness, in our listening, our speaking, and our living. Thanks be to God for each one of you. Thanks be to God!