

# MVLP Gather Round E-News - Issue #23

June 19, 2020

This is the twenty-third issue of our E-newsletter, “Gather ‘Round,” to call us together through the internet to share news and needs and stories with each other. If you have a tale to tell or a perspective to share, please send it on for the next issue!

## ***The Buildings Are Closed; The Church Is Open!***

*Back issues of “Gather ‘Round” E-news are available on the Moosup Valley Church website, thanks to our webmaster, Pat Safstrom. Go to [moosupvalley.church](http://moosupvalley.church) and click on the tab at the top of the page.*

### **NEW! Moosup Valley Sunday Services**

Moosup Valley Church will begin holding Sunday Worship by Zoom, beginning this Sunday, June 21, Fathers’ Day, at our regular time, 10:30 a.m. Members of the congregation will take part in readings and prayers, and Martha will play the hymns from home – to which we will sing along (while muted). The Order of Worship bulletin is attached which includes the words to the hymns and prayers for Father’s Day, everything all in one PDF document. Click on the Zoom link to join the service, **highlighted** below:

Join Zoom Service:

<https://us02web.zoom.us/j/4971608531?pwd=cVJIUmw1QndYcmtiakhDVjVmWDA2UT09>

Meeting ID: 497 160 8531

Password: 038040

Telephone if you need it: 1-929-205-6099

### **NEW! Rice City Outdoor Worship**

Now that we are in Reopening Phase 2, Rice City will begin worshipping outside at 9:00 a.m. on Sunday Mornings – socially distanced and masked – beginning June 21. The theme will be Father’s Day.

### **A Few Stories of Our Fathers....**

My step-father used to take us skiing, and he would get lost on the way, and Ma wanted him to stop at the nearest gas station, but he would keep going and going telling her he knew where he was! He did not know! When we would meet people, he would say, “Hi, Mac.” Ma would ask him who it was, and he would say he didn’t know, but the guy looked familiar. He pronounced Colorado “Codorado,” and she could not seem to correct him. I guess it was a spelling problem. He would be in the living room reading the

paper, and I would be in the kitchen with Ma, and he would always tell her he was going to read the death notices to her. She would look at me cross-eyed! He was a great guy. I miss them both. –*Anonymous*

My dad took a lot of pride in the homestead. He raised cows, pigs, and turkeys. He had a garden to beat the band. He would offer vegetables to friends and family, “just bring your own bag.” Weekends were working in the wood lot on Plainwoods Road for a warm winter. –*Susan*

My father had a nickname for everyone he liked, such as Mert and Gert, Boomer, Bubba, Guin-A-Babe, Puddles, Gabby, Mad-e-line, the General, Lish the Dish, and Patrick. [You know who you are.] My great grandma was Eva Paine and Dad called her Little Eva – I swear, she was about 4 feet tall – she always wore a full apron and when he walked into our grandma’s house he would holler “Hello, Little Eva” and then proceed to untie her apron. She always pretended to be angry with him, but again, if he didn’t do the two things simultaneously, she would think something was wrong. Do I know where all these nicknames originated? No.... but I know anyone Dad had a nickname for looked forward to him bellowing out their nicknames whenever he was with them. He loved to tease, but these were affectionate terms for all of us. I would give anything to hear Dad call me by my nickname again. –*Cheryl Annabanana*

My father was a Vermonter who came down to Rhode Island to study engineering at Brown where he met my mother. He was thoughtful about people and their behavior, and he talked to me a lot when I was a teenager. He would ask, “Why do you think your Aunt was so angry?” Or, “Why do you think so-and-so did this or that?” And he loved animals. I have a memory of his walking through the house with our cat, Mittens, in a football carry on his hip, and he said once, “When you think about how much love an animal needs, think about how much more love a person needs.” –*Rev. Betsy*

### **The Sun Changes His Mind: A Pondering**

And the sun stands still, skidding in place like a bowling ball at the end of the alley, after its six-month climb towards the light, and then, it is as if the Sun changes his mind about continuing northward, and he stands still. It’s the Summer Solstice, and, actually, *we’re* the ones who stand still, not the sun – the Earth stands still. Twice a year we make the long journey from darkness to light and then back again. Ancient peoples would have been afraid of being abandoned by the Sun as they watched the days growing shorter and then joyful as the sun climbed back into the sky. Their crops, their lives depended on the sun. They would have made sacrifices – perhaps their first-born son – to appease the Sun God. They would have promised anything to get him to change his mind.

In the same way, our scriptures are filled with “meaning stories” of how God changed God’s mind. We humans make meaning through stories, and our Biblical stories express something, teach something, explain something. They aren’t based on science; they are stories about faith. They are true about human life, even if they aren’t factual.

In the Hebrew Bible, we have the familiar story of Jonah who had been commissioned by God to cry out against the City of Nineveh, which God plans to wipe out. But Jonah takes the first boat in the other direction, and God caused a great storm to rise up against the ship. The crew blames Jonah and throws him overboard, where he’s swallowed by a big fish, giving him three days to think it over. And God thinks it over, too, and in response to Jonah’s prayers, changes his mind and causes the big fish to throw Jonah up onto dry land. And again God charges Jonah to go to Nineveh, and this time he does. And the king of Nineveh and his nobles repent and turn from their evil ways. And, as the story goes, “When God saw what they did, how they turned from their evil ways, God changed his mind about the calamity that he had said he would bring upon them; and he did not do it” (*Jonah 3:10*)

Even Jesus changes his mind in a New Testament story. In Matthew’s gospel, chapter 15: 21-28, a Canaanite woman comes to him asking him to heal her daughter, but Jesus declines because she is not a Jew, responding, “I was sent only to the lost sheep of the house of Israel” ... and “It is not fair to take the children’s food and throw it to the dogs.” But the woman will not be put off and responds, “Yes, Lord, yet even the dogs eat the crumbs that fall from their masters’ table.” And Jesus changes his mind. These stories mean something, often many things – not only that Jesus has his blind spots, but also that the Gospel of God’s love is for everyone, not just the “in group.”

Over the years, as science has opened up the mysteries of the universe, we have had to change our minds. We accept that the Earth was not made in seven days, and that the Creation story is poetry and not science. We accept the science that the Earth is not the center of the universe – and not flat. Humankind tries to understand, and we create stories to “explain” the way things are, and we create doctrines to give us license to take what we want for our selfish purposes.<sup>[1]</sup> And not just physical stories, but also social ones.

Hundreds of years ago, we created the story of Whiteness to give us an excuse for slavery and the relocation of Native Americans. We created the myth of inferiority – that persons of color are less than human – to justify racism. Whenever we label some of the people as “other” – different – a different color, a different gender, a different sexuality, a different nationality, a different religion – we create the conditions to marginalize them and to justify our own behavior. This is what Hitler did to the Jews in Germany.

In the United States, we built our economy on slavery, not just in the South but also in the North, even in Rhode Island. And now the country is changing its mind about racism,

seeing it widely for the first time, perhaps: The damage racism has done not only to our communities of color, but also how it has warped our “white” minds and allowed the oppression our black sisters and brothers have experienced for 400 years. Let us pray that, in the words of another ancient anthropomorphic story in Revelations, a complex book filled with plagues, warfare and bloodshed, in an end-times battle between Good and Evil, God says, “Behold I make all things new.” (Rev. 21:5).

The sun will have climbed to the highest point in the sky this Saturday afternoon at 5:43, a long journey begun on the winter solstice in December. Our Biblical storytellers would understand it as a long journey into the light, before the sun turns again to descend into the darkness. Let us pray that our nation will use this metaphorical opportunity to change our minds about some things, to be enlightened, to break the yoke of racism and to live into the love and justice of our sacred texts. May it be so! Amen.

### **Outdoor Services**

The Mt. Vernon Larger Parish met on Monday evening and agreed that, to minimize the risk and to not have to turn anyone away because of the limited number of chairs that could be set up, each church would hold their own service when they thought it safe to do so. However, the churches are considering the feasibility of holding an outdoor Hymn Sing together on July 12<sup>th</sup> and August 9<sup>th</sup>, at Moosup Valley because of the large lawn, stage with an electrical outlet for a keyboard, and available parking. We will keep an eye on COVID-19.... Pastor Bob hopes to live stream the Hymn Sing.

### **Evening Prayer**

We have begun holding Evening Prayer, Vespers, on Wednesdays at 7:15 p.m. by Zoom, a brief (20 minute) time of scripture, song, meditation and prayer, a time to give thanks for the day just past and praise to God. Please let Rev. Betsy know if you are willing to read or sing. We will join in ancient beloved prayers. It will be acceptable to come in your PJs! Here is the Zoom link:

Join Evening Prayer Zoom

Meeting: <https://us02web.zoom.us/j/4971608531?pwd=cVJlUmw1QndYcmtiakhDVjVmWDA2UT09>

Meeting ID: 497 160 8531

Password: 038040

Telephone if you need it: 1-929-205-6099

Also, if you would like to hear the Evening Prayer service, we could include you by telephone, even if you do not have a computer.

### **NEW! Mount Vernon Live Streaming Wednesday Evenings**

Mt. Vernon Baptist Church will begin live streaming a Wednesday evening service at 7:00 p.m., beginning Wednesday, June 24<sup>th</sup>. The Order of Worship will center on Isaiah

43 – A Child of God – and is attached. (This was last week’s service which was not able to be streamed.) The link: <https://www.facebook.com/MVLPspirit/?ref=bookmrks>).

**Special Prayers:** Please hold in your heart and prayers...

- Michelle DiBiasio’s brother-in-law, Rick, who is struggling with cancer.
- Joanne Newton, now recuperating at home. The family asks us not to call because they are afraid she will stumble, running for the phone. Cards are welcome, however. Send to 51 Victory Highway, Greene, RI 02827.
- Barbara Cederfield is at Woodpecker Hill for rehabilitation, following her knee replacement. Pray for a quick recovery and healing; O.T. and P.T. are working her hard!
- Beverly’s Aunt Helen, 94, who has fallen in Assisted Living and may have a broken hip.
- Richard Lucky has received good news in hopes of healing for this throat.
- Mary Joseph as she prepares to celebrate her 90<sup>th</sup> birthday on June 26. Cards may be mailed to 201 Plainfield Pike, Foster, RI 02825

### **Gather ‘Round for Bible Study**

Both Rev. Betsy and Pastor Bob are leading Bible Study. Here’s how to participate:

**Mornings:** Tuesday & Friday mornings at 10:00 a.m. with Betsy, reading and discussing the lectionary texts and selected psalms on Zoom. Contact her for the link at [BetsyAldrichGarland@gmail.com](mailto:BetsyAldrichGarland@gmail.com).

**Evening:** The Rice City Bible Study is finishing up Paul’s letter to the Philippians on *Tuesdays* (new day) at 6:30 p.m. They have discovered that an old fashioned teleconference works just as well for them. (Send Bob your phone number, and he will call you.)

### **Puddle Cake**

*Laila reminded us at Bible Study of the most delicious chocolate cake ever that has no eggs or dairy, is easy to make right in the pan – but you can double it for a birthday cake or make it as cupcakes, just adjust the baking time. She grew up calling it “Puddle Cake,” and some of us knew it as “Crazy Cake.” It’s a King Arthur Flour recipe. A good cake for Father’s Day! Here is the recipe:*

*Sift these dry ingredients directly into an ungreased 8-inch cake pan:*

**1 ½ cups of flour, 1 cup of sugar, 3 tablespoons of baking cocoa**

**1 teaspoon of soda, ½ teaspoon of salt**

*Dig three holes in the dry mixture and put these wet ingredients in the holes:*

**6 tablespoons of salad oil, 1 tablespoon of vinegar, 1 teaspoon of vanilla.**

*Pour one cup (8 ounces) of cold water over everything and stir with a fork.*

***Bake for 35-40 minutes in a 350 degree oven and invert to cool.*** Remove from pan or front right in the pan.

### **Behind the Scenes**

Mt. Vernon live stream worship has been blessed by being able to use Steve Carter's Professional Equipment. But he will called in to work more and more, like he was last week, Pastor Bob writes. To make the ministry ideal, we are in need of a camera and a computer. If you have upgraded (or now use your phone or tablet for a camera) and have one to spare we could use a donation (or a discounted rate) on items with these specifications:

PROSUMER CAMERA - HD in the 16x9 ratio, 720 minimum resolution (1080 preferable) - 4k is great, SDI or HDMI video output connection (composite is not acceptable), audio inputs (XLR preferable) an SD card for video would be ideal.

COMPUTER - either a macOS high sierra or windows 10, processor: i7 quadcore 2.8GHz, Memory: 4-16 GB RAM, Hard Drive: 500GB solid state OS drive, graffix card: intel HD, Directx 11, Nvidia Gef orce or AMD Radeon, 16GB video memory. If you have one or know someone who might, please contact Pastor Bob.

### **Closing Meditation**

One of the great liabilities of history is that all too many people fail to remain awake through great periods of social change. Every society has its protectors of status quo and its fraternities of the indifferent who are notorious for sleeping through revolutions. Today, our very survival depends on our ability to stay awake, to adjust to new ideas, to remain vigilant and to face the challenge of change. –*Rev. Dr. Martin Luther King, Jr.*

**Offerings** may be mailed for:

**Mt. Vernon** to Ron Allen (116 Barbs Hill Road, Greene, RI 02827),

**Moosup Valley** to Pat Safstrom (76 Moosup Valley Road, Foster, RI 02825),

**Rice City** to Phyllis Dexter (53 Moosup Valley Road, Foster, RI 02825).

**Mt. Vernon Larger Parish** to Scott Knox (150 Foster Ctr. Rd., Foster, RI 02825)

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Reverend Betsy can be reached at [BetsyAldrichGarland@gmail.com](mailto:BetsyAldrichGarland@gmail.com) or 401-463-8697.

Pastor Bob can be reached at [revbobh@gmail.com](mailto:revbobh@gmail.com) or 401-440-7831.

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<sup>[1]</sup> The **Doctrine of Discovery** established a spiritual, political, and legal justification for colonization and seizure of land not inhabited by Christians. It has been invoked since Pope Alexander VI issued the Papal Bull “Inter Caetera” in 1493.

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