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Quarterly Newsletter

Van Wyck Connections

A Word from the Pastor

A NEW CHAPTER After 3 years of waiting for COVID-19 to no longer be a global threat, I safely traveled to Israel March 7-16. I latched on with 4 other disciples from Unity Presbyterian (Fort Mill, SC) to tour the Holy Land with Educational Opportunity Tours. A total of 80 participants (5 pastors) gathered from churches in Florida, Virginia, and South Carolina. The whole was divided into three smaller groups: the Red bus, the Gray bus, and the Orange bus. Our 5 disciples from Fort Mill joined 19 disciples of two churches from Virginia (Pisgah UMC and Shady Grove UMC); together we were the Orange Bus and led by Hussam (Sam), our tour guide, and Reid, our bus driver.

Our tour went from the north (Sea of Galilee) to the south (Jerusalem) as we walked the ancient paths of Jesus' birth, life, ministry, passion, death, and resurrection.

The days were full as we toured by bus and LOTS of walking from 7:30am – 5pm. Each and every day I was simply in a state of awe to behold where the good news of Jesus Christ took place and was written about. The Sea of Galilee is so beautiful, expansive and holds so many biblical stories. It is there Jesus called the first disciples (fishermen), calmed the storm, invited Peter to step out of the boat and walk on water. After Jesus' saving death and resurrection, it is where Peter coped with depression (fishing), the Risen Lord made breakfast for the disciples, and forgave Peter's denial in order to prepare him to be the rock of the early church. And yet I found it incredibly ironic that the pier leading to the boats along the Sea of Galilee had a sign saying, "NO FISHING."

I was moved to tears visiting Magdala where Jesus encountered and healed Mary Magdalene and the hemorrhaging women (Mark 16:9; 5: 21-43). It is here that a chapel is dedicated to all the women of Jesus' ministry (1st Century through today). In 2009 an archeological dig at



Rev. Carson
with
Sam
the Camel
in
Jericho.

A Word from the Pastor (Continued)

Magdala revealed a small community of homes, a ritual bath, a synagogue and the Magdala Stone, where the scrolls would have been placed, read, and proclaimed. Jesus' ministry took him to every synagogue on a regular basis and the Jerusalem Temple (3 times annually). Certainly, Jesus was there at the synagogue in Magdala to fellowship, preach, and teach as well.

Walking through the live archeological digs at Jericho and also Qumran (where the Dead Sea Scrolls were found) left me speechless. I saw where Jesus was tempted in the wilderness (the desert area of Jericho) and where God led Moses to see Canaan at a distance from Mount Horeb (across from Qumran).

My new adventurous heart jumped at the chance to float in the Dead Sea on a rainy and cold afternoon! There were no words as we walked the path where Jesus carried the cross throughout Jerusalem, even kneeling to touch the very stones of the 1st Century Roman street where Jesus carried our sins and shame.

Praying at the Western Wall (Wailing Wall) with fellow Jewish women was meaningful, emotional, and spiritually renewing. We have much to learn from our Jewish sisters' and brothers' devotion to God in prayer; it was beautiful. I am blessed to have taken YOUR prayer cards and prayed over them near the stone of Golgotha where Jesus died on the cross. And again, I prayed over our many prayer cards before tucking them into a niche in the Wall.

We entered the Upper Room where Jesus and his disciples feasted on the Last Supper. We visited the Garden of Gethsemane where Jesus prayed and sweat drops like blood. We stood in the Sacred Pit where Jesus was imprisoned to await his trial with Caiaphas. We walked through the streets of Jerusalem where Jesus carried his cross; I knelt and touched the very stones of the 1st Century Roman street where Jesus walked the Via Dolorosa (Way of Sorrow). We drew near to Golgotha where Jesus was nailed to the cross and died for our sins. We walked into the empty garden tomb believed where Jesus was buried and rose from the grave.

Our tour ended as we sat upon the "Teaching Steps," the remaining 1st Century steps from the Second Temple of Jerusalem where Jesus taught his disciples, the crowds

who listened, and where Jesus debated with the Pharisees.

This educational opportunity has blessed me with friendships, many of which I consider "divine appointments" by God, as our shared conversations intersected our respective seasons of life in life-giving ways. I am blessed in that I heard God speak to me twice on the trip. And it goes without saying that this was a life-altering trip which has deepened my faith, my devotion for God, and completely changed my reading of Scripture as I can now see these spaces of grace in my mind.

I will be sharing my pictures and stories of Israel and Jerusalem following Psalm Sunday worship April 2. I hope you are able to come as we all prepare for Holy Week and Easter.

Thank you, Session, and Van Wyck for giving me this gift to walk the ancient paths of our Lord and Savior. I am forever changed, and I am now more whole than I have ever felt.

Your Sister in Christ,

Rev. Carson Montgomery



Holy Week & Easter at VWPC

- 11:00am April 2 - Palm Sunday Worship
- 12:00pm April 2 - Holy Land Talk with Rev. Carson
- 6:30pm April 6 - Maundy Thursday & Communion
- 7:00pm April 7 - Good Friday (Van Wyck United Methodist)
- 9:30am April 9 - Easter Breakfast (Fellowship Hall)
- 11:00am April 9 - Easter Worship & Flowering the Cross *

*bring flowers!

vwpc.org

Sabbatical 2023

It was in April 2022 that a trusted ministry colleague, who is retired from serving many levels within our denomination, and has been a mentor to many pastors and myself, suggested that I apply for the Lilly Foundation Clergy Renewal Sabbatical Grant. The Lilly Foundation awards a limited number of grants to pastors across denominational lines who are in need of a three to four month period of time away from the obligations of ministry to reconnect to God, self, and family to rest and be renewed in God's creative grace. In order to qualify for this highly competitive grant, a 10 page proposal and rationale is submitted with a theme for the Sabbatical, why it is needed, what it will entail, how pastoral leadership will be delegated in the pulpit and in the life of the church, a financial budget for the pastor's time away and the honoraria required for the church to fill the pulpit, and how the pastor and congregation are hoped to be enriched and renewed by this Sabbatical journey.

I am grateful that the session approved my desire to apply for this grant and that our congregation has approved my time away for Sabbatical this year. In writing my Sabbatical proposal I realized that I had not had a dream for myself since I dreamed of going to seminary 15 years ago. I am thankful to have received this grant in order to hear God singing a new song over me as I enter a new chapter of life and ministry with you.

My Sabbatical will begin the afternoon of Sunday April 16 (following worship and a Sabbatical send-off luncheon). It will end July 31 and I will return to the church office August 1.

The Session and I have worked together prayerfully and with deep intention to make sure our guest preachers are secured; ministry is planned by our committee teams for the spring and summer; spiritual leadership expectations among our Session's Ruling Elders are agreed upon; pastoral care is planned for weekly with an "Elder of the Week". We have also secured local ministers in Lancaster (colleagues and friends of Rev. Carson) within our Presbytery who are "on call" to respond to critical emergencies or death while I am away (I pray all at Van Wyck Pres remain well!!!).

The Session has a monthly rotation for serving during Sunday worship as "Elder of the Day." The Elder of the Day will open and close the church grounds each Sunday

and greet the guest preacher. He or she is ready to respond to any needs in worship in addition to the Ushers who are serving. The Elder of the Day counts the weekly offering with the Treasurer or another Elder. The Elder of the Day will also serve as the "Elder on Call for the Week" to respond to pastoral care concerns. In the case of critical emergency or death, the Elder of the Week or Clerk of Session (Linda Pelletier) will contact our Minister on Call to respond and continue the pastoral care required.

The Session will continue to have stated monthly meetings for the dates of April 25, May 23, and June 27. A local pastor has been secured to moderate these session meetings per the Book of Order. The Session will not meet the month of July. An elected elder from the Session will also be attending the Sunday June 25 Stated Summer Providence Presbytery Meeting, convening at 2:30pm at Beth Shiloh Presbyterian (1184 North Shiloh Rd. York, SC).

Within our VWPC flock a desire has been organically expressed to re-instate our shepherding groups which were implemented in 2020 as the COVID-19 pandemic began. Our congregational list from the new directory has been divided into small groups with a designated Shepherd to periodically reach out to their small group, especially in times of difficulty or absence. Tony Flanagan has been working with VWPC disciples who have felt called to serve as a shepherd for a smaller group of the congregation. Our Shepherds are: Mary Baker, George & Mona Baker, Vivian Calcote, Annette Flanagan, Claudia Thompson, and Janesta Williams.

We have secured a wonderful array of guest preachers to bring God's Word every Sunday from April 23 through July 30. I am overjoyed that three pastors whom you already know well are bringing the Good News to you in this time of renewal for our congregation: Rev. Dr. Craig Butler (former Interim Pastor of VWPC), Rev. Gayle Montgomery (sister of Laine Ardrey), and Rev. David Brown (led us through the Shift Initiative in 2020 and 2022). I am equally grateful for local ministry colleagues from our Presbytery who are wonderful preachers with excellent pastoral experiences; they will be new faces to you: Rev. Megan Watson (former Director of Christian Education at Unity Presbyterian), Rev. Steve Simon (a retired pastor who is a frequent guest preacher within our Presbytery), and Rev. James Platt, newly retired pastor within the Presbytery. Some will be preparing sermon series. Each guest preacher is delighted for the opportunity to prepare the service along with Janesta

Sabbatical 2023 Continued

Williams (Director of Music) and Donna Fox (secretary) AND be with you in worship! I do ask you to support my Sabbatical by coming to worship weekly to be spiritually encouraged and possibly challenged by our guest preachers! They are as follows:

April 16 – Rev. Gayle Montgomery is preaching and I will lead worship with her.

April 23, 30, May 7, 14 – Rev. Dr. Craig Butler

May 21 – Rev. Megan Watson

May 28 - Rev. Steve Simon

June 4 – July 9 – Rev. Gayle Montgomery

July 16, 23 – Rev. Dr. David Brown

July 30 – Rev. James Platt

Lastly, I want to share with you how the Lord has led me to envision and plan out this Sabbatical. I am overjoyed to have time set apart to worship at various churches in different places; to be with my daughters, parents, and family; to travel internationally and in country; to pray and journal as I rediscover myself after divorce; to write more poetry; to take painting lessons; and to be utterly surprised by God's steadfast love and grace.

I will be traveling the following dates:

April 19 – May 4 to Scotland. My seminary friend and ministry colleague, Emma Ouellette and I will travel together to Glasgow Scotland where we will have a 7 day pilgrimage to the Isle of Iona to learn about Celtic Spirituality on a guided prayer retreat with John Phillip Newel (April 22-29). The remainder of our time in Scotland will be to explore Edinburgh and also Glasgow where I have learned I have ancestral roots within the Montgomery clan.

June 10 – 21 to Greece. I will once again travel with my friend Emma to Greece for a guided tour of walking the ancient paths of the Apostle Paul's ministry. This tour is through Educational Opportunity Tours. We will explore Thessaloniki, Philippi, Acropolis, Corinth, Cenchræae, and Athens. Immediately after the land tour we will take a 3 - day Greek Isle Cruise to Turkey to tour Ephesus, Patmos, Crete, and Santorini. I cannot wait to experience the Isle of Patmos where John received God's Revelation, as we studied the New Testament book of Revelation during the pandemic for one year!!!

July 1 – 8 to Santa Fe, New Mexico with Devon and Ashley. From Santa Fe, the girls and I will spend a week at Ghost Ranch, a PC(USA) retreat center to explore and hike in the desert, as well as engage in a multitude of creative workshops, such as painting, jewelry making, and guided hikes and kayaking.

Please know that when I leave the church after the Sabbatical Send-Off Luncheon on Sunday April 16 I will completely unplug from social media, ministry, and from communication with you and Presbytery. Please know I am not being rude if you email, call, text or message me and I do not reply. I am simply keeping my boundaries to honor this time away for Sabbatical.

Please do direct any questions or pastoral concerns to either the Elder of the Day / Week or to the Clerk of Session, Linda Pelletier (lindampelletier@gmail.com). Any ministry communication that is to be sent to the church will continue to be supplied through our secretary, Donna Fox (vwpcsecretary@gmail.com). Please do email Donna by Thursdays to have ministry updates and events placed in the weekly bulletin, email, and church website.

Lastly, please be in regular prayer for our Session Elders who are the spiritual leaders of VWPC, our Staff, our guest preachers, our church disciples, and my family and me in this time set apart.

For many months now, I have witnessed God's Spirit stirring the imagination of our elders and disciples to engage in new opportunities, strengthen existing ministries, and prepare the way forward. There is SO MUCH EXCITEMENT and renewed energy among us. I am so very encouraged by God's faithfulness to VWPC and the good ministries that we share together.

Surely the Lord knows the plans he has for us in this time of Sabbatical – for each of us to lean into a deeper trust of God's provision and leadership. For the Lord is preparing the way to give us a future with hope and one that affirms God's desire to enrichen our well-being and the well-being of our surrounding community.

May God's name and presence be praised in this time of our collective rest and renewal.

Your Sister in Christ,
Rev. Carson Montgomery

Session and Staff Updates:

As moderator of the Session, I want to inform you that Jeremy Sinclair has resigned from the Session, effective March 28, due to a change in his schedule and ability to serve the remainder of his 3 year term. The Session and I have greatly appreciated Jeremy's time and faithfulness in serving within the Class of 2024.

I also share with you the gratitude which the Session and I have for Donna Fox's faithfulness to serve as our Interim Secretary for the past 6 months (September 11, 2022 - March 11, 2023) since Betty Broome retired September 10, 2022. With the evaluation that the Session and I had with Donna, it is with joy to share with you that we have now hired Donna Fox as Church Secretary. Please do email Donna by Thursdays each week to have announcements added to the Sunday bulletin or to reserve a room on the church property for ministry meetings. Donna may be reached through her church email (vwpcsecretary@gmail.com).

Please know any reservations for usage of church property that come outside of church membership require Session approval. For this type of reservation, please contact Clerk of Session, Linda Pelletier (lindampelletier@gmail.com).

A Note From The Secretary

I wanted to let everyone know about an opportunity to place flowers in the Sanctuary. I will have a calendar located on the bulletin board in the Vaughn Room and you will have a chance to sign up to place flowers in the Sanctuary on Sundays starting April 16th. The flowers may be placed In Honor Of the living and In Memory Of deceased loved ones. You may reserve a Sunday to provide your own store purchased floral arrangement or have members of our Flower Guild prepare an arrangement for you from their seasonal garden. The cost for the Guild to arrange your flowers is free, but they do need a two weeks notice. Any bulletin requests can be sent to me using vwpcsecretary@gmail.com. You can also send requests to reserve the Vaughn Room or the McSpadden Fellowship Hall to the same email address.

Thank you all for the wonderful welcome as your secretary, and all of your continued support.

STRENGTHENING

On March 19 we held a new member reception for John and Rebecca Bowyer with donuts, fruit kabobs and egg bites.

We are planning a Sabbatical celebration on April 16 after worship. Craig Denton will grill chicken and the congregation will be asked to bring side dishes and desserts.

Other upcoming activities this summer are "Hat Day" on Sunday June 4th with a Build-Your-Own Sandwich Luncheon after worship. A "Back to School Bingo" will be held on Sunday August 13th at 5:00 pm with a pancake supper. The Strengthening Ministry Team is also planning to begin visiting families who are new homeowners in the community of Van Wyck. If you would like to be a part of welcoming them please contact Strengthening Co-Chair Laura Clark.

THE SESSION

& STAFF OF VWPC

CLASS OF 2023:

LAURA CLARK (STRENGTHENING)

TONY FLANAGAN (WORSHIP)

CLASS OF 2024:

LINDA PELLETIER (CLERK & MISSION)

CLASS OF 2025:

HOLLY MASSEY (CHRISTIAN ED)

CRAIG DENTON

(GROUNDS & MAINTENANCE)

TREASURER: STUART GRAHAM

ORGANIST: JANESTA WILLIAMS

SECRETARY: DONNA FOX

Keeping Up With Missions

*We have something for everyone in Missions!
Join us for the heartfelt experiences of reaching out
to serve our fellow man.*

March

- Our VWPC Mission Team took the children from the Lancaster Children's Home out to dinner at Wa Chang (their request!) this month, and it was delightful. The children are most grateful for their dinners away from the Home and for the love we share through our actions. Come experience it with us in August; you won't regret it!
- Our Session served VWPC's first dinner this year to the men at Bethel Men's Shelter on March 23; what a gratifying way to share our Lord's love! Our next dinner is scheduled for June; contact Linda P. if you have a date in mind. Gather a group to care for the least, most forgotten of our brethren. I guarantee you will find it a most moving experience.

April-May

- Our Pocket Prayer Squares are quite popular –so much so that our supply is running low! Linda P. will provide you with all the instructions, fabric and tools you need to create these little jewels: poignant reminders that our Lord is always with us. Everyone is invited –men, women and children; you do NOT need to know how to sew; you only need to have a giving heart and the desire to serve! Though if you know your way around a machine I can keep you busy! We need folks to turn and iron the sewn squares, so everyone can help. Find a few hours to join us as we create these physical manifestations of God's love.
- Our very first Van Wyck Little Free Food Pantry will be up and running soon; this is collaboration between the VW Outreach Committee and Van Wyck Presbyterian Church - our way to help our Van Wyck

neighbors who lack food security. It will contain a limited number of non-perishables such as canned meats, pasta, cereal, peanut butter, jelly, etc. to help those who would otherwise miss a meal that day. Anyone can contribute. Together we can do wonders; stay tuned for more into!

- We will again be collecting non-perishables for HOPE in May, so be looking out for more information from Rosa Sansbury as we draw closer to the actual date.
- VWPC Missions will be working with White Oak AME Zion and the VW Outreach Committee to sponsor a Community Garden this year. Fun for our youth and adults, featuring a virtual reality demo on a combine from the SC Farm Bureau thanks to Bob Yoder. We hope to have grow bags located on the Community Center grounds and an in-ground garden at White Oak. Stay tuned for this healthy way to connect with your neighbors –gardens need the Lord's love, too!

June-July

- These will be big months for us as we join the Van Wyck Outreach Committee for our local Back to School Drive for children's clothing. The drive for clothing will take place during the month of July. What better way to send our Angel Tree kids off to school than with brand new clothing! We know the families and know their needs; all sizes will be provided. *Two kinds of donations* will be available
 - o You may donate *a whole outfit* for one child. All sizes/genders provided.
 - o You may provide *single item donations* such as tee-shirts, shorts, socks, underwear and shoes. All sizes and genders will be provided.You can choose which manner of donating suits you best to enhance the start of the school year for these children. More info to come! Contact Linda Pelletier for more information.

Keeping Up With Missions

August

- Another dinner with the teens from the Lancaster Children's Home is scheduled for August, so reach out to Linda Pelletier if you would like to somehow be involved.
- The clothing drive donations will be delivered to all recipients at the beginning of August; the delight of serving others continues!

As you can clearly see, opportunities abound to share our Lord's love with others. Join us to experience that joy!

PRESBYTERIAN WOMEN

Presbyterian Women of Van Wyck Presbyterian Church now has two PW circles. The original circle meets at 10 a.m. on the third Monday of each month, September through May, in the McSpadden Fellowship Hall of the church. All ladies are welcome. Fellowship, bible study, prayer, missions and ministering to our church family and congregation are important functions of the Monday circle. Contact Pat Oglesby at 803-517-0775 for more information.

A second option for those who need to attend PW at a different time is now available. This group meets at 7 p.m. on the second Sunday evening of each month in the McSpadden Fellowship Hall. The April meeting of this group will be at 7 p.m. on Sunday, April 23rd because the second Sunday is Easter. Contact Janet Campbell at 704-724-2713 or Jen McCalmont at 501-515-7175 if you need information about this group. Come to PW to see how the circles are the heart and hands of Van Wyck Presbyterian Church.

Presbyterian Women Spring Gathering to be held at Grace Presbyterian Church in Lancaster at 8:30 am on Saturday, April 15. This is sponsored by the Providence Presbyterian Women Coordinating Team and Providence Presbytery. It is a training event for everyone interested in Presbyterian Disaster Assistance and preparing your church in the event of a disaster.

CHRISTIAN EDUCATION

In our multi-generational Sunday School sessions, we are discussing ways that we can help fight global warming and be good stewards of our planet. We're studying the book, "50 Ways to Help Save the Earth" by Rebecca J. Barnes. How You and Your Church Can Make a Difference" in which the author reveals a connection between being good keepers of the earth and living our faith.

We will be discussing some big topics, like energy, agriculture, transportation, water, and land - as well as people and other species that share this earth. We hope to educate ourselves a little, and then consider feasible action items that we can accomplish.

To have our children grow up with an appreciation of nature, and a sense of connection to this planet and all its residents, requires us to first set a good example. But we can also learn a great deal from our children on this topic, as their generation, along with generations yet to come will be most impacted by global warming. They are growing up with more awareness of this issue, then we ever were at their age.

The author, Rebecca Barnes states, "We are not in charge of the earth. We are not, by our own human prerogative, going to be able to save the world. We do not know enough. We do not have enough power or resources."

"While these truths may make us nervous, they can also liberate us. We trust that God is already at work in the world, constantly moving the world toward good. Because God is omnipresent and active, we participate in the call to curb climate change knowing that we are not alone. We participate because it is a way to praise God, honor the creation God made, and to become who we are called to be. We learn not just what to do in the world, but also how to be in the world."

Your Van Wyck Presbyterian Church Media Team

“THREE, TWO, ONE; we are live”. This is what is heard in our Media Room each Sunday morning at 10:55 am at (VWPC) Van Wyck Presbyterian Church. Then there is a quick prayer that everything goes well. At 11:00 am VWPC touches the world through YouTube and Facebook. We have an average of 8 to 10 households that watch and listen to our broadcast each Sunday. The two main people that are at the controls are; Clayton Massey and Jon McCalmont. Watching these two guys accomplish their tasks is like watching a ballet. Clayton is like a production engineer pressing an array of buttons that brings not only a picture to the screen but also text, hymn numbers and scriptures to life to all that are watching. Phasing cameras in and out is quite a creative art presenting various views, effects and moods. While Jon resembles a music conductor; meticulously orchestrating sound levels with up to four to five microphones on line. With his headphone on and listening intently, his fingers dance over volume sliders, adjusting and blending music and voice, not only in our sanctuary, but also in the Fellowship Hall and what is heard on YouTube and Facebook. This is quite a balancing act considering all the various levels of sound coming from pipe organ, piano and voice.

There is so much more that takes place prior to “Going on air” First, computer and live stream hardware is turned on, checked and adjusted, the sound board is activated, five monitors in the Media Room and two in the Fellowship Hall are turned on and adjusted, microphones turned on and checked. Then the bulletin, hymns and scripture text are all

entered into the live stream equipment so our viewers can follow along with the worship service. However, sometimes the best laid plans go astray. We have had monitors go completely blank for no apparent reason, sound working fine in the sanctuary but not over the air, distorted sound, stuck cameras, screeching sounds, equipment failures just minutes before a church service. When this happens our amazing team goes into overdrive action, by the way, God is also on our team. Before long the problem is found, adjustments made and people barely knew we just avoided a major catastrophe. We just look at each other and say “thank you Jesus”

Let me give you a brief portrayal of Clayton and Jon. Clayton was born in Charlotte NC. He is married to Holly and they have a daughter, Alena. They have lived in Lancaster for 21 years. Clayton came to VWPC 15 years ago with his parents. Clayton loves music and is quite knowledgeable on that subject; he is also a movie enthusiast. Clayton also serves on the Grounds and Maintenance Committee at VWPC. Jon was born in Houston TX. He is married to Jennifer and they have a daughter, Kate. They have been in Van Wyck for a year and previously lived in Indian Land. He and his family attended Transformation Church but after some research Jennifer found just what they were looking for at VWPC. They love to travel and work on their house and landscaping. Jon is a fitness buff and an avid runner. In addition to the Media Team, Jon also contributes to the newly formed Safety and Security Team at VWPC. He has recently been appointed to the Van Wyck Planning Commission for the Town of Van Wyck.

Next time on your way out of church, stop in and say “ey”

