



MERCER ISLAND  
UNITED METHODIST  
CHURCH

## December Events

December  
2, 9, 16, 23

Advent Bible Study  
6:30pm

December 3  
Ad Council  
7pm

December 24



5:30pm

# Passing It On

December 2015

## From Pastor John



When I first came to the United States many years ago, I was impressed by the vast web of highways that spread everywhere. This is a huge country, and these highways showed me the great transportation system we have. Highways save us time, and they are necessary for our lifestyles. Companies can bring their products everywhere so easily. People can move around where they need to go. These highways have helped our nation prosper.

In the same way, spiritually we also need a highway. Isaiah 40:1-5 uses a metaphor of a highway as a means to relate and connect us to God. ***The voice of one crying in the wilderness: Prepare the way of the Lord; make straight in the desert a highway for our God.*** To make a highway, a bulldozer moves the earth and fills the land and then levels it. The mountains must be made low, and the valleys must be lifted up.

As we enter the Advent season we must think about the things that hinder the welcoming of Christ in our lives. ***Every valley shall be exalted ...*** This means raised or lifted up. It is the same when we deal with the valley in our hearts. A valley is a crevice, a very low place. Sometimes the valley is deep, and we can hear an echo saying to us, "I am lonely, I am afraid, I am hurt." These are the wounded areas in our hearts: dark, empty, lonely, and painful places that need to be raised up for the coming of Christ.

The uneven areas of our lives speak of the inconsistencies in our Christian living – the ups and downs; the hot and cold; the rough places where we still need further refining to make our lives smooth. Let us prepare our hearts and minds to be on the right highway for the coming Messiah.

But not only are there valleys in our own hearts. There are low places in our society as well. Our call is to go down to those valleys to spread God's hope, prepare the highways of the Lord and ***make the rough places smooth.***

Our 2015 Advent Bible study material is *Sent* by Jorge Acevedo. In this book, Jorge inspires us with this statement: *Two thousand years ago, a baby was born who changed the world. God sent Jesus, and today you and I are sent to be his hands and feet, delivering God's gifts of hope to a world in need.* Together we will explore what it means to be SENT, and I invite all of you to participate in this Bible study that takes place on Wednesdays, Dec 2, 9, 16 and 23 at 6:30pm.

Then on the following evening, Dec 24, we will hold our traditional Christmas Eve candlelight service at 5:30pm.

As we welcome the season of waiting, let us ready the path for the Lord in our hearts and celebrate the birth of our savior, Immanuel God.

Peace and Grace,  
*Pastor John*

## Rethink Church



**Open Hearts** Our hearts are full of love for our local communities and our world. Our service reflects that love.



**Open Minds** We all think in different ways. But when we work together to serve others we share a common goal.



**Open Doors** Our doors swing wide, not just to let others in but so that we can all get out to serve our community.

### MIUMC Leadership Administrative Council

#### Chairpersons

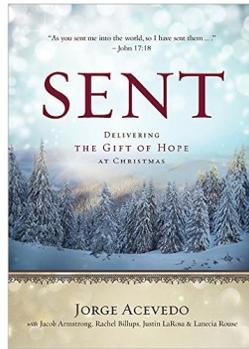
Bill Blakney and Chick Hodge

Pastor - John Chae  
Secretary - Judith Hullin  
Diana Blakney  
Linda Hodge  
Sanny Bold  
Dave Hullin  
Jim Maners  
Carla Neames

### Newsletter Information

*Passing It On* is published the first working day of the month. Photos and items for the newsletter are always appreciated.

**Mercer Island United  
Methodist Church**  
miumc@hotmail.com  
www.miumc.org  
(206) 232-3044



## ***Sent: Delivering the Gift of Hope at Christmas***

This year our Advent Bible study is based on the book *Sent* by Jorge Acevedo, plus four young clergy who join the author with story, art and Bible study. The book's theme is from John 17:18—*As you sent me into the world, so I have sent them...* and takes us on an Advent journey to discover how, where, and why we are sent. The first session is Wednesday, Dec. 2, at 6:30pm with three Wednesday sessions following. Please consider attending this worthwhile opportunity during Advent as you share and connect with others in our faith community.

## **A Safe Sanctuary**



Beginning in 2015, the PNW Conference of the UMC has contracted with MinistrySafe, an organization dedicated to the protection of children and those that serve them. This organization provides online tools and training and a background check process to PNW ministries. MIUMC is part of this Safe Sanctuary program and is currently conducting the Conference-required background checks and online training.

## **Stewardship Report**

Many thanks to those who returned their 2016 pledge cards during our November stewardship campaign. To date, 15 pledge cards have been submitted totaling \$61,200. Your financial commitment to support the work of MIUMC is greatly appreciated. If you have not presented your pledge card, please do so by the end of 2015 so that our budget preparation can continue. We look forward to your generous giving in



## **You May Not Know...**

In October, **Chandler Neames** competed in the Louisiana State Karate Tournament and placed 2nd in Lower Rank Women's sparring and 2nd in White Belt Kata. Her Engage Group from the Wesley Foundation was there to cheer her on.



Meanwhile, **Caleb Neames**, Chandler's dad, spent time last month refinishing our church sign, much improving the look of the front courtyard. Thanks for the good work.

*IN MEMORIAM—2015*

*David Brown  
Sue Ogilvie  
Will Quayle*