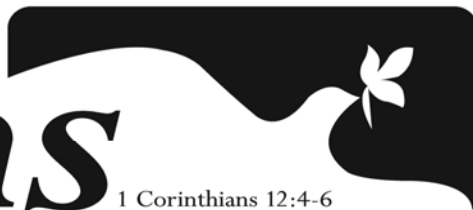


Variations

1 Corinthians 12:4-6

A weekly message from Vestavia Hills Baptist Church



The Shepherd's Pen



Singer-songwriter Gillian Welch has a tune on her "Soul Journey" CD called, "One Little Song." It goes something like this:

There's got to be a song left to sing
Cause everybody can't have thought of everything
One little song that ain't been sung
One little rag that ain't been wrung out completely yet--got a little left
One little drop of falling rain,
One little chance to try again,
One little bird that makes it every now and then.
One little piece of endless sky,
One little taste of cherry pie,
One little week in paradise and I start thinking,
There's got to be a song left to sing
Cause everybody can't have thought of everything
Dr. Tom Wright, the New

Testament scholar, calls the parables of Jesus "open-ended stories" in his brilliant book, *Jesus and the Victory of God*. They are also stories of the coming Kingdom. In these teachings, he argues, Jesus does four things—he issues an invitation, a word of welcome, words of challenge, and words of decision and calling. If we are to understand what God is about in the world, we must listen to the teachings of Jesus in these stories and understand that something new is at hand.

Is that not our problem? The very thing that gives us stability and comfort—our routines, our habits of mind and heart, the familiar and reassuring—are also the very ways that we become immune to new possibilities of the soul and of human

Winter Bible Study Groups for Adults

- *Would you enjoy studying the Bible with others?*
- *Would you benefit from caring and sharing with people just like you each week?*

If so, attend one of the wonderful Bible study groups for adults that meets each Sunday morning at 8:45 AM here at the church. Each week over 250 adults do, just ask them about it.

This winter the groups are learning about the many ways we encounter God and the things that really matter in the Christian's life. Books of the Bible that are being studied include Psalms, portions of the four Gospels, and Paul's letter to the Ephesians. Bring your Bible, come this Sunday morning and one of our friendly greeters will introduce you to a Bible study group.

A Great Way to Start the New Year!!

Mark Your Calendars!

Winter Bible Study

Led By

Allen Walworth

Sunday, January 27

Morning Worship Service &
evening teaching sessions

community.

Jesus came teaching. In fact, I would argue, and will in the weeks to come, that there is no greater calling for our time than to be *a teaching church for an emerging kingdom in a searching world*. This is our mission for this time and place. We are gifted to be a teaching church, helping our people and the world around us with three great areas of focus: *to be rooted in scripture, growing in Christ, and active in God's mission*.

At the end of all that we do, these three things are our calling as God's church in this time and place. It is not my agenda. It is a central part of what Jesus commanded us to do—preach the gospel, make disciples, and go to the world's need.

This Sunday I will begin a sermon series entitled, *"The Open-Ended Stories: Jesus' Parables for Us Today."* From now until Easter we will listen to the teachings of our Lord and founder as we seek to understand more deeply this profound calling to be the people of God in our time.

The parables are open-ended and intended to provoke us to open to new possibilities. These possibilities are not mere programs but transformation of ourselves and our life together. As we learn together from the Master Teacher, I hope it will invite us into some new understandings of how our lives can be, shatter the chains of old habits, and welcome a new year of new possibilities.

Is your life a closed book? Have you stopped dreaming and hoping? Jesus may have a word for you. Maybe, indeed, for us all there is yet "a song left to sing."



Changes in the *Variations* for 2008

Variations to be printed Bi-Weekly

Beginning with this issue, the *Variations* will be printed bi-weekly. Each issue will contain information for the upcoming weeks. For weekly updates, please check –out the church website, www.vhbc.com or the Mid-Week Promoter and Sunday worship guide.

Variations Available Electronically

Beginning in January, you can receive the *Variations* electronically instead of through the mail. You can view it on the church website www.vhbc.com, or you can have it sent to you via your email as an attachment. If you would like to receive it via your email instead of via the Postal Service, please contact Martha Neill at martha@vhbc.com

Financial Peace University Classes start January 9th @ 6:00pm

Join us for a brief class preview!

This Sunday, January 6
Immediately Following Worship
Adult Seminar Room

Want more information? www.vhbc.com or
speak with the class coordinator: Ryan Bradley
(ryanbradley@bellsouth.net)

Welcome New Member

William F. (Bill) Spear
1863 Kentucky Ave.
Vestavia Hills, AL 35216

Thank You

The many expressions of sympathy after the death of my mother, Katherine Hill Pickett on November 30, 2007, were deeply comforting to us. We are grateful to the VHBC family for their caring love.

Terry & Gisela Pickett

Women's Bible Study for Spring

6 weeks
beginning Monday, Jan. 28 at 9:30a.m. or
Tuesday, Jan. 29 at 6:30p.m.

Beth Moore's newest study is *Stepping Up: A Journey Through the Psalms of Ascent*. Through an in-depth look at 15 Psalms, participants in this study can pray, reflect, and write a personal rendition of these ancient choruses. Themes such as unity, joy and gratitude, redemption, repentance, the power of blessings, facing ridicule, and more are explored in detail. Join us! Childcare available upon reservation.

Contact: Merryl Cooper, 822-4600

Remember in Prayer...

Members in the Hospital

- ♦ Edith Wood—Brookwood, Rm. 412

Members at Home

Grace Barnes	
*Lou Bell	Sarah Little
Theda Cowen	Nancy Lochamy
Virginia Deaton	Doris McWaters
Earl Donegan	Marge Olive
Kathryn Eidson	Nora Ousley
Jim Galyean	C.O. Paugh
Elaine Goodwyn	Jo Powell
Wyatt Guy	Elizabeth Quinby
Bob Harrelson	Martha Ray
*Sarah Page Harvey	Leon & Joan Sanders
*Ron Howard	Judy Schlegel
Leta Holliman	Velma Smyth
Mary Lou Hughes	Arthur Weeks
Faye Knowles	Bob Wilson
Dorothy Lindsay	Jody Wilson
Elizabeth Lindsey	Richard Wilson
	Nettie Worrell

Christian Sympathy

Christian Sympathy is expressed to:

- ♦ *Mary Ann Goodson and family in the death of her sister Amelia Gunnell on December 19th.*
- ♦ *Amanda Worshum and family in the death of her grandmother, Essie Lyndall on December 15th.*
- ♦ *The family of Edna Cox in her death on December 24th.*

“Sowing Seeds of Hope”

Perry County
Mission Project Blitz
Saturday, Jan. 12
9:00 a.m.—4:00 p.m.

This one day event will include everything from yard cleanup and light home repair. A library carnival is also scheduled for the day.

For more information contact John Mitchell at the Alabama CBF office: 888-245-4223 or email john@alabamacbf.org.

Ministry Budget Offering

Budget Needs This Week	\$30,201
Budget Given This Week	\$115,079
Budget Needs This Month	\$130,873
Budget Given This Month	\$213,917

Budget Needs This Year	\$1,570,477
Budget Given This Year	\$1,496,244

2007 Unified Mission Offering

2007 Goal	\$75,000
Given to Date	\$62,073

Mom's Brunch Bunch

Saturday, January 12
9:30-11:30 am
Room 205

Offering Envelopes

In an effort to save money we have decided to put the 2008 offering envelopes out for people to pick up when you are at the church. We do not use the numbers on the envelopes, so just pick up any box. They will be put out on tables in the front foyer and the Fellowship Hall foyer. If you are unable to come and pick one up please call the church office at 979-5920 or email lynn@vhbc.com and we will gladly send them to you.

2008 PLEDGES IN EFFECT

Beginning with the new year, your 2008 Pledges go into effect. If you have any questions about the amount you pledged back in October, please call Lynn Stewart our financial secretary, 979-5920.

REQUEST FROM THE FINANCIAL SECRETARY

Please write your **full name and address** on your offering envelope. This will aid in correctly posting gifts on your giving envelope.

We Care
Monday, January 7
10:00 a.m.
Fireside Room

Round Table
Tuesday, January 8
10:30 a.m. - Fireside Room
Refreshments & Book Review

Lynn Taylor will give an overview of the book Three Cups of Tea by Greg Mortenson. It is the story of Mortenson's dangerous and difficult quest to build schools in the wildest parts of Afghanistan.

Week of January 3-9

Thursday, January 3

10:00 College Retreat

Saturday, January 5

4:00 Girls Basketball game

Sunday, January 6

8:45 Bible Study

10:00 Worship Service

11:00 FPU Preview

4:00 Youth Choir

5:00 Acteens/Adelphoi

6:00 YOSE

Monday, January 7

10:00 We Care

4:00 4 to 8

7:30 Boys Basketball game

Tuesday, January 8

9:30 International Friends

10:30 Round Table

Wednesday, January 9

6:30 Prayer Breakfast

10:30 Pastor's Bible Study

4:30 Fellowship Supper

4:30 Library Open

5:00 Handbells

5:30 Music for PS 3's-6th grade

5:45 Missions Committee

6:00 Prayer Service, Youth Group

6:00 FPU

6:15 Mission Friends, GA's, RA's

7:00 Sanctuary Choir

Week of January 10-17

Saturday, January 12

9:30 Moms Brunch

5:00 Girls Basketball game

Sunday, January 13

8:45 Bible Study

10:00 Worship Service

4:00 Youth Choir

5:00 Deacons Meeting,

5:00 Acteens/Adelphoi

6:00 YOSE

Monday, January 14

6:30 Boys Basketball game

Tuesday, January 15

9:30 International Friends

Wednesday, January 16

6:30 Prayer Breakfast

10:30 Pastor's Bible Study

4:30 Fellowship Supper

4:30 Library Open

5:00 Handbells

5:30 Music for PS 3's-6th grade

5:45 Missions Committee

6:00 Prayer Service, Youth Group

6:00 FPU

6:15 CDC Meeting

6:15 Mission Friends, GA's, RA's

7:00 Sanctuary Choir

Volunteers in Service for the week of January 6

Deacons of the Week: *John Chandler, Jason Dearing

Counting Team: Bob Bush, Mel Kukelhan

Sound Technology: Mike Wells, Lee Watford

Shuttle Service Team: Gene Turner, Pete LeBerte, Bob Simpson

Flower Committee: Bob & Martha Eskew

Library Committee: Jeanne Harrelson (6) Lynn Taylor (9)

Worship Care

Babies Nancy St. John, Amy Hamilton

Creepers Lisa Churchill

Ones Libby Pittman, Margaret Winkler

Twos Colleen & David Burroughs

Threes Steve & Michelle Thackerson

Fours/Fives Laura Griffio, Liz Philpot

Desk Jennifer Carter

Volunteers in Service for the Week of January 13

Deacons of the Week: *Gilda Coker, Jason Cooper

Counting Team: Ann Holt, Jason Dearing, Mike McCrory

Sound Technology: Allen Fulks, Mike Wells

Shuttle Service Team: Mike Oatts, Stuart Collier, Dean Gober

Flower Committee: Leigh Whatley

Library Committee: Martha Eskew (13) Liz Wells (16)

Worship Care

Babies Jane Bowick, Sharon Hartzog

Creepers Ryan & Meredith Hankins

Ones Erin Burton, Kevin Jaquess

Twos Leigh Whatley, Ellen Sheumaker

Threes Rachel & Todd Jordan

Fours/Fives Bob & Mavis Hardy

Desk Don Baker

FELLOWSHIP SUPPER

Jan. 9 Chili, Chicken Noodle Soup, Grilled Cheese, Fruit, Choc. Éclairs
Volunteers —

Jan. 16 Baked Chic. Brest, Creamed Potatoes, Broccoli, Pear Salad,
Walnut Cake
Volunteers —

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Gary A. Furr, Pastor

K. Dennis Anderson,
Minister of Education/Administration

Nancy E. Akins,
Minister to Preschool/Children

Mike McBrayer, Minister to Students

Terre Johnson, Minister of Music

Beth McGinnis, Organist

C. Otis Brooks, Pastor Emeritus

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Worship Broadcast Live on Sundays
at 10:00 a.m. on WVSU, 91.1 FM