

# Variations

1 Corinthians 12:4-6

A Bi-Weekly Message from Vestavia Hills Baptist Church



## The Shepherd's Pen

### *The Advent Journey*

There are two minds about Advent, not counting those who think the whole idea of following the "church year" is questionable. Most of us tend to turn it into a month long Christmas celebration. It's hard not to do that in a community of faith, what with music programs, singing Christmas trees and the like. We smile at our children while having the Hanging of the Green (many churches incorrectly call it "The Hanging of the Greens," which calls to mind either suspending garden vegetables from the walls or a bad day in the old West). We go to an endless array of Christmas parties.

The 'Liturgically Correct' group reminds us that Advent is a time of repentance (thus, the color purple) and preparation. It is a time of spiritual seriousness, remembering the struggles, hardships and faith journey of the holy family and all those who sought the Lord. We are invited into the same seriousness about our own spiritual lives.

My bent is to lean to the latter group. At the same time, I think we can go too far with sobriety. We laugh at funeral visitations. We tell funny stories right after crying about a hard memory. Those who grieve need occasional reminders that even sorrow takes a break now and then. Smiling, laughing, even celebration, have their place in the Season of Purple Somberness.

"Joy to the World" is not something we have to confine to one day of the year or one mood. We hope not because the world looks hopeful to us, but because we serve the God of hope. Always.

So this week we continue the journey with a Wednesday special program of Christmas reflection led by the renowned Bobby Horton. Then, on Friday, we come together for a special time of inspiration and reverent and not-too-reverent joy at the Christmas Banquet. Especially now, especially this year, the year of Two Wars and an Official Reception, should we rejoice.

### *Thank You for Faithful Giving*

Thanks to your faithful gifts and pledges,

## Special Holiday Schedule

### Friday, December 12

Adult Christmas Banquet, 7:00 p.m.

### Sunday, December 14

Third Sunday of Advent

Sunday School, 8:45 a.m.

Morning Worship, 10:00 a.m.

Youth Choir, 4:00 p.m.

### Wednesday, December 19

Prayer Breakfast, 6:30 a.m.

Pastor's Bible Study, 10:00 a.m.

Family Night Supper, 4:30 p.m.

Handbells, 5:00 p.m.

Prayer Service/College Night, 6:00 p.m.

Youth Caroling, 6:00 p.m.

Children's Activities, 6:00 p.m.

Adult Choir Practice, 7:00 p.m.

### Sunday, December 21

Fourth Sunday of Advent

Sunday School, 8:45 a.m.

Morning Worship, 10:00 a.m.

### Wednesday, December 24

"Come See the Baby" Worship Experience, 4:30 p.m.

Christmas Eve Communion Service, 8:00 p.m.

### Wednesday-Friday December 24-26

Church Office Closed

### Wednesday, December 24—Friday, Jan. 2

Child Development Center Closed

### Sunday, December 28

No Sunday School

Morning Worship, 10:00 a.m.

### Wednesday, December 31

No Mid-Week Activities

### Thursday, January 1

Church Office Closed

we are able to continue needed ministry during these hard times. That includes lots of counsel to those in economic distress, support for those who have financial needs and requests, which come to us daily now, and also continuing this ministry of worship, caring and mission.

Your faithfulness to the Free the Future campaign this year underlines dramatically how important it was to reduce and fix our indebtedness. While we had no way to know how timely it would be, we consolidated our obligations and reduced them a short time before the current crisis.

Your faithful to our budget underlines our determination to manage our resources faithfully. Your entire staff is constantly seeking to be better stewards of what we all give to this ministry. Your elected leaders will be meeting soon to determine ways to manage our resources in the coming year in order to avoid any problems in meeting our obligations. We are determined, like you, to seek to be faithful and conservative with our resources.

Your faithfulness, most of all, leads to concrete and real lives that are changed—a person is baptized and changes course in their life; a family finds a spiritual home and joins us; a student in college is shaped by this congregation's love and example. As we finish this difficult and challenging year, thank you for your faithfulness. It matters more than you can know.



## Welcome New Members

Matt and Nicole Hutcheson  
185 Stonebridge Cir.  
Pelham, Al 35124

## Messianic Banquet Report

Thank you to all who came to share an evening with our guests at the Messianic Banquet on November 23rd. We again enjoyed a full house together—83 ladies and 62 children from six local shelters, along with a great number of our members. It was an encouraging time for all of us. A special thanks to those who helped with the banquet activities—crafts, handbells, dinner program, holding babies, transporting guests, decorating tables, preparing desserts, hosting tables, donating fruit, cleaning up....all the ways of joining in to share the love of Christ with others.



## "Come See the Baby"

this Christmas Eve

A worship experience designed for our children and their families. Gather in the Fellowship Hall at 4:30 and join us as the story of Christ's birth is retold in a casual, hands-on setting.

## Offering Envelopes

In an effort to save money we are reusing offering envelopes from previous years. We have put the 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 before the new year starts, please call the church office at 979-5920 or email [lynn@vhbc.com](mailto:lynn@vhbc.com) and we will gladly send them to you.

## Two New Shuttle Service Drivers Needed

Our Sunday parking Shuttle Service needs two volunteers (ladies welcomed). Volunteers will rotate every seven (7) weeks. If you are willing to serve please contact Gene Turner at 942-6775.

Do the **Troubling** Economic Times  
Leave you feeling **Hopeless** and  
**Without a Plan?**

**Discover the PEACE found by over  
650,000 families!**

**Financial Peace University**  
01.07.2009

*Class previews available 12/17 & 12/21  
Or online at [vhbc.com](http://vhbc.com)*

**Don't forget to invite a friend!**

Contact Ryan Bradley for more information.  
335-2805 or [ryanbradley@bellsouth.net](mailto:ryanbradley@bellsouth.net)

## Remember in Prayer...

### Members in the Hospital

### Members at Home

Grace Barnes	Nancy Lochamy
Virginia Booth	Fred & Sybil McCrory
*Irene Burton	*Doris McWaters
Norma Collier	Nora Ousley
Virginia Deaton	Elizabeth Quinby
Earl Donegan	Martha Ray
Kathryn Eidson	Helen Rosenow
Martha Galyean	Velma Smyth
Elaine Goodwyn	Henry Vincent
Leta Holliman	Arthur Weeks
Mary Lou Hughes	Linda Whitt
Emily Jones	Jody Wilson
Dorothy Lindsay	Maxine Womble
Elizabeth Lindsey	Edith Wood
Sarah Little	Nettie Worrell

## Christian Sympathy

*Christian Sympathy is expressed to Steve Blackwelder & family in the death of his mother, Mary Shouse on December 4.*



### Can You Give a Can?

For many years, the 4th-6th Grade RAs have prepared and served meals at the Firehouse Shelter, a shelter for homeless men.

Please help us continue our ministry by donating a can of coffee to the Shelter. Sugar and Cream are also welcome.

Please bring your donation to the church and place it beside the box in the children's foyer.

Donations are welcome through February 8.

### Ministry Budget Offering

Budget Needs This Month	\$30,664
Budget Given This Month	\$47,632
Budget Needs This Year	\$1,492,327
Budget Given This Year	\$1,278,466

### Unified Missions Offering

2008 Goal	\$52,400
Given to Date	\$49,745

### Free the Future Capital Fund

Pledges	\$1,725,894
Given to Date	\$625,120

## Help!!! Volunteers Needed

We are in desperate need of volunteers for Worship Care on Sunday mornings. If you could volunteer one Sunday a month or one Sunday every other month please contact Nancy@vhbc.com or call Nancy at 979-5920.



## Coat Collection

The Joyful Noise class is collecting men's and women's coats, jackets and sweaters to be given to our new Hispanic congregation. You may bring your donations to the front foyer or the foyer by Fellowship Hall. There will boxes designated for your donations.

## IMPORTANT INFORMATION ABOUT YEAR-END GIVING

### ONLY 3 MORE SUNDAYS FOR 2008 PLEDGES & GIFTS

There are only three more Sundays to give your tithes and offering through your church. Let's all finish the year with our pledges paid in full.

### STOCK GIFTS: GIVING THAT GOES FARTHER

Many members of VHBC tithe by giving appreciated stock. You may give to the 2008 or 2009 budgets, to missions offerings, or the Free the Future Campaign. If you want to give stock, please contact the financial office, 979-5920.

Appreciated stock is a good way to tithe, because capital gains taxes are not assessed and your contribution goes farther.

### GOING OUT OF TOWN? MAIL IN GIFTS!!!!

Many of our members will be out of town visiting their families during the Christmas season. Before you leave, mail or bring in your final gifts. You can mail in your offerings and they will be properly credited on the financial records, but they must be postmarked (not just mailed) in 2008 to be credited to your 2008 record. **For your convenience, the Financial Office will be open until 6:00 p.m. on Wednesday, December 31.**

### BYLAWS REVIEW COMMITTEE UPDATE

Scott McGinnis, chair of the Bylaws Review Committee, presented proposed changes to the Bylaws at our Quarterly Business Meeting, October 22. Anyone who has questions or comments regarding the Bylaws can contact Scott at 824-0296 or [tsmcginn@samford.edu](mailto:tsmcginn@samford.edu). Extra copies of his presentation are available on the Member pick-up table outside the church office. After a time of review by the church, the revision will be discussed again and voted on at a later date.

**Week of Dec. 11-17****Friday, Dec. 12**

7:00 Adult Christmas Banquet

**Saturday, Dec. 13**

5:00 Girls' Basketball Game

**Sunday, Dec. 14**

8:15 Breakfast with Miss Nancy

8:45 Bible Study

10:00 Worship Service

4:00 Youth Choir

5:00 Youth Wii Tournament

**Monday, Dec. 15**

4:00 4 to 8

**Tuesday, Dec. 16**

9:30 International Friends

**Wednesday, Dec. 17**

6:30 Prayer Breakfast

10:30 Pastor's Bible Study

4:30 Fellowship Supper

Library Open

5:00 Handbells

5:30 Missions Committee

6:00 Prayer Serv.—College Night

6:00 Youth Caroling

7:00 Sanctuary Choir

**Week of Dec. 18-24****Thursday, Dec. 18**

9:30 Art Camp

**Friday, Dec. 19**

9:30 Art Camp

**Saturday, Dec. 20**

9:30 Art Camp

6:00 Girls' Basketball Game

**Sunday, Dec. 21**

8:45 Bible Study

10:00 Worship Service

**Wednesday, Dec. 24**

4:30 "Come See the Baby"

8:00 Christmas Eve Communion Service

CDC &amp; Church Office Closed

**Volunteers in Service for the Week of December 14****Deacons of the Week:** \*Paul Edfeldt, Don Ehrett**Counting Team:** Alynn LeBerte, Jerry & Priss Pittman**Sound Technology:** Mike Wells, Allen Fulks**Shuttle Service Team:** Gene Turner, Pete LeBerte, Bob Simpson**Flower Committee:** Becky Griffith, Sharon Hartzog**Library Committee:** Jackie Hughes (14) Lynn Taylor (17)**Worship Care**

Babies Jane Bowick

Creepers Matt &amp; Carole Miller

Ones Kevin &amp; Elizabeth Studinka

Twos Pat Cooper, Betsy Stockdale

Threes David &amp; Cathy Compner

Fours Nancy Akins, Leigh Simmons

4's-K

Desk Lottie St. John

**Volunteers in Service for the Week of December 21****Deacons of the Week:** \*David Fleming, Bob Hardy**Counting Team:** Taylor Burton, Steve White**Sound Technology:** Mike Wells, Pete LeBerte**Shuttle Service Team:** Mike Oatts, John Wood, Suzanne Dupree**Flower Committee:** Becky Griffith, Sharon Hartzog**Library Committee:** Rachel Fancher**Worship Care**

Babies Billie Lochamy, Mindy Bodenhamer

Creepers Dan &amp; Gay Caldwell

Ones Rebecca McKinney, Becky White

Twos John &amp; Virginia Wood

Threes Jeff &amp; Monica Graveline

Fours Lynne &amp; Katie O'Neal, Kim Brindley

4's-K

Desk Dick Bodenhamer

**FELLOWSHIP SUPPER for December 17**

Breakfast for Supper — Volunteers— JoAnne Delohery, Judy Schlegel, Bob Eskew, Christina Elliott

**FELLOWSHIP SUPPER for December 24**

NO FELLOWSHIP SUPPER

The *Variations* is published bi-weekly by  
 VESTAVIA HILLS BAPTIST CHURCH,  
 2600 Vestavia Drive, Birmingham, AL 35216  
 Address Service Requested

Non-Profit Org.  
 U.S. Postage  
 PAID  
 Permit No. 1894  
 Birmingham, AL

**OUR MINISTRY STAFF**

Gary A. Furr, Pastor

K. Dennis Anderson,  
Minister of Education/AdministrationNancy E. Akins,  
Minister to Preschool/Children

Mike McBrayer, Minister to Students

Terre Johnson, Minister of Music

Beth McGinnis, Organist

C. Otis Brooks, Pastor Emeritus

Church office 979-5920

Fax 979-2206

Email [vhbc@vhbc.com](mailto:vhbc@vhbc.com)Website [www.vhbc.com](http://www.vhbc.com)Worship Broadcast Live on Sundays  
at 10:00 a.m. on WVSU, 91.1 FM