

Variations

1 Corinthians 12:4-6

A Bi-Weekly Message from Vestavia Hills Baptist Church



The Shepherd's Pen

It's a Wonderful Life! Really!

Every year about this time, I get nostalgic to see Capra's old film, "It's a Wonderful Life" again. "It's a Wonderful Life" is about a man played by Jimmy Stewart who comes to a crisis in a time of war and economic calamity. Through the shenanigans of the town's villain, the deposit for the Savings and Loan is stolen and the bank cannot make it. George panics, despairs, and drives to the town bridge to end his life.

By the intervention of a bumbling angel named Clarence, he is given the rare opportunity to see what difference his life made. His dreams are always being disrupted by realities, and he is convinced his life has come to nothing. Then, when the Savings and Loan that has anchored him to the little town he longed to flee so he could see the world, he falls into depression and crisis.

Clarence enables George (Stewart) to experience a world in which he, George, had never been born. He realizes in that experience that each of our lives, filled with the disruptions, apparent failures, and disappointments, are instead the actors in a drama of eternal importance. *We matter.* At the end, George's friends come pouring forth to help him out. It is a scene of joy, and as corny as it is, it's hard not to cry every time you see it.

Clarence says to George, "Remember, George: no man is a failure who has friends." And that, in short, is the whole point of the movie.

And it is the point of Christmas, too. We are not alone. Our lives matter. This life is a drama in which we are actors who help write the scenes. And, as I said last Sunday, each of us is God's hero and heroine.

So, in this very undependable world of 2008, with its shameless villains of Wall Street and uncaring Mr. Potters of the Housing industry, is also one in which we can discover what lasts and what finally matters. As people face uncertainty and sometimes economic struggle, no one is a failure who has friends.

Jesus said to his disciples "No one has greater love than this, to lay down one's life for one's friends...I do not call you servants any

Special Holiday Schedule

Wednesday, December 24

"Come See the Baby" Worship Experience, 4:30 p.m.
(For children & their families)

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

Mark Your Calendars!

"Being the Presence of Christ"

Winter Bible Study

Led By

Daniel Vestal

Sunday, January 18

Morning Worship Service &
evening teaching sessions

longer...but I have called you friends, because I have made known to you everything that I have heard from my Father.” (John 15:13-15) If God cared so much for us to enter this world in the person of the Son, to love us with such faithfulness, to companion with us as the Holy Spirit, then we are rich indeed.

God then so kindly gave us one another, where this Presence in each of us could multiply and energize us by the very joy of being together. We truly know by the joy of fellowship that we are never truly alone. We are loved, we are prayed for, we are accompanied.

Friends, I wish you a merry, merry Christmas. God has given us to each other. What a gift it is. From my family and all the church staff, thank you for the privilege, joy, and comfort of being with you. We are, if we reckon it right, rich indeed. And if times are a little hard for you right now, hang in there. It’s going to be okay. We’re all here with you—*and it’s still a wonderful life.*



Welcome New Member

Susannah Harvey
1108 Camellia Circle
Hoover, AL 35226

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 and we will gladly send them to you.

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 online at vhbc.com

Don't forget to invite a friend!

Contact Ryan Bradley for more information.
335-2805 or ryanbradley@bellsouth.net

2009 PLEDGES IN EFFECT

Beginning with the new year, your 2009 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.

Electronic Services Available to Automatically Send Your Tithe or Contribution to the Church

There are several ways to contribute to the church without having to write a check each week:

- ◆ **Online Bill Pay** – Most banks today offer free online bill pay to its checking account customers. Online bill pay allows you to specify the name and address of the entity that you want to send money to. It will also allow you to automatically send regular checks in the amount that you specify on the schedule that you specify (weekly, biweekly, monthly, etc). When it comes time to pay the bill, your bank will draft a check off of your account and mail it to the church at no cost to you. The checks are also guaranteed by the bank to make it to the recipient so there are no worries that it will get lost in the mail.
- ◆ **Telephone Bill Pay** – Many banks offer a service similar to online bill pay for its customers without Internet service. The basic principal is the same; you talk to an agent and set up a payee and an amount to send to that payee. You can set this up to recur as well. The funds are drafted automatically from your account. Unlike online bill pay, there is often a fee for doing this.
- ◆ **Account Software** (i.e. Quicken and Microsoft Money) – Online bill pay service is available through most account management software, such as Quicken and Microsoft Money. Many times these software packages will include a subscription to a service that will allow you to send a bill payment request from the software package on your computer to the software company. They will draft a check from your account and make the payment for you.

There are many options available to each of us to automate our giving. Check with your financial institution to find out which one works best for you!

REMINDER

We will not have Sunday School on
December 28th.

Remember in Prayer...

Members in the Hospital

*Sybil McCrory—Brookwood, Rm. 384

*Helen Rosenow—Lakeshore, Rm. 221-A

Members at Home

Grace Barnes

Virginia Booth

Irene Burton

Norma Collier

Virginia Deaton

Earl Donegan

Kathryn Eidson

Martha Galyean

Elaine Goodwyn

Leta Holliman

Mary Lou Hughes

Emily Jones

Dorothy Lindsay

Elizabeth Lindsey

Sarah Little

Nancy Lochamy

*Fred McCrory

Doris McWaters

Nora Ousley

Elizabeth Quinby

Martha Ray

Velma Smyth

Henry Vincent

Arthur Weeks

Linda Whitt

Jody Wilson

Maxine Womble

Edith Wood

Nettie Worrell

Christian Sympathy

Christian Sympathy is expressed to Ryan Hankins and family in the death of his grandmother, Jan Gober, in Arkansas on December 18.

Christian Sympathy to Don Baker & family in the death of his niece, Jo Ann Hull, on December 16.

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 \$91,992

Budget Given This Month \$127,003

Budget Needs This Year \$1,563,877

Budget Given This Year \$1,373,091

Unified Missions Offering

2008 Goal \$52,400

Given to Date \$50,855

Free the Future Capital Fund

Pledges \$1,725,894

Given to Date \$630,578

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.

We Care

Monday-January 5

10:00 a.m. - Fireside Room

Round Table

Tuesday, January 6-10:30 a.m.

Refreshments & Book Review

Fireside Room

Lottie Jacks will give a brief overview of the book Things We Couldn't Say by Diet Eman. It is an unforgettable story of heroism, faith, and over all love in rescuing the Jews in Holland in World War II.

IMPORTANT INFORMATION ABOUT YEAR-ENG GIVING

ONLY 1 MORE SUNDAY FOR 2008 PLEDGES & GIFTS

There is only one more Sunday 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.**

Week of Dec. 25-31

Thursday, Dec. 25

Church Office & CDC Closed

Friday, Dec. 26

Office & CDC Closed

Sunday, Dec. 28

NO BIBLE STUDY

10:00 Worship Service

Wednesday, Dec. 31

NO MID-WEEK ACTIVITIES

Week of Jan. 1-7

Thursday, Jan. 1

Church Office & CDC Closed

Friday, Jan. 2

College Retreat

Sunday, Jan. 4

8:45 Bible Study

10:00 Worship Service

11:15 Missions Committee Meeting

4:00 Youth Choir

5:00 Acteens/Adelphoi

6:00 YOSE

Monday, Jan. 5

9:30 Ladies Bible Study

10:00 We Care

4:00 4 to 8

6:30 Boys Basketball game

Tuesday, Jan. 6

10:30 Round Table

Wednesday, Jan. 7

6:30 Prayer Breakfast

10:30 Pastor's Bible Study

4:30 Fellowship Supper

Library Open

5:00 Handbells

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

6:00 Prayer Serv—Youth Group

6:15 Mission Friends, GA, RAs

7:00 Sanctuary Choir Rehearsal

Volunteers in Service for the Week of December 28

Deacons of the Week: *Kevin Jaquess, Ann Marie Harvey

Counting Team: David McPherson, Steve Thackerson

Sound Technology: Mike Wells, Lee Watford

Shuttle Service Team: Jeff Baker, Kevin Studinka, Milton Fullman

Flower Committee: Becky Griffith, Sharon Hartzog

Library Committee: Martha Eskew

Worship Care

Babies Nancy Scruggs, Jackie Hughes

Creepers Melissa McBrayer

Ones Ryan & Tabitha Bradley

Twos Laura & Burton Verner

Threes Brent & Lisa Warren

Fours Amanda Jordan, Brooke Fleming

4's-K Scott McGinnis, Elizabeth McCarty

Desk Bob Lochamy

Volunteers in Service for the Week of January 4

Deacons of the Week: *Alynn LeBerte, Todd Jordan

Counting Team: David Compher, Kevin Jaquess

Sound Technology: Allen Fulks, Mike Wells

Shuttle Service Team: Tim Franklin, Chuck Gillespie, Ed Whatley

Flower Committee: Leslie Doyle, Elizabeth Studinka

Library Committee: Jeanne Harrelson (4) Sybil Cox (7)

Worship Care

Babies Kristie Chandler, Amy Hamilton

Creepers Lisa Churchill, Jennifer Carter

Ones Libby Pittman, Margaret Winkler

Twos Colleen & David Burroughs

Threes Kathryn Stewart, Sara Taylor

Fours Erin Burton, John Chandler

4's-K Laura Griffo, Jan Deagon

Desk Janice Fulks

THANK YOU

Dear VHBC,

Thank you so much for your generous contribution to Jessie's Place. We greatly appreciate your willingness to help others in need. The bus tickets you all provided will allow our staff to better serve the residents.

Again, thanks for your donation to Jessie's Place.

Sincerely,
Jessie's Place Staff

FELLOWSHIP SUPPER December 31
NO FELLOWSHIP SUPPER

FELLOWSHIP SUPPER for January 7
Kraut & Wieners, Baked Beans, Potato Chips, Moon Pies

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OUR MINISTRY STAFF

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