

Variations

1 Corinthians 12:4-6

A Bi-Weekly Message from Vestavia Hills Baptist Church



The Shepherd's Pen

We live in a time of intellectual impatience, verbal abuse and unkindness and general disrespect. We have become harsh and too angry in our conversations to and about one another.

The "blog" has created an amazing opportunity to communicate with each other. People can respond to an article or idea someone puts online. There is a heady freedom in writing things you don't have to be identified with or responsible for. When you sign your name you are saying, in effect, "I will accept responsibility for these things I am saying. You may know who I am, where I live, and what my phone number is, should you need to speak with me about them."

The anonymity of the internet tempts people to say things they would never speak in polite company. I see so many things people write--many really thoughtful comments on the blogs, but often interspersed with profanity, verbal abusiveness, unkindness, and disrespect. (I will refrain from my pet peeve--rampant misspelling and bad grammar. We should loose a cloud of retired English teachers upon the bloggers like a plague of locusts. If you're going to be disrespectful to all the rest of us, you can at least spell correctly.)

Enemies can only reconcile face to face. Problems are best solved in honest, painful, respectful dialogue. The further we are from someone else, the easier it is to hurt them, trash them, vilify them, verbally criticize and generally avoid community.

This past weekend, many of us experienced a wonderful opportunity for community building at the New Baptist Covenant. I sensed there a great hunger, not merely among Baptist folk, but all people, to figure out in this disconnected, hostile, stressed out, challenging time to find something deeper and more lasting that can help us through life. I believe that is most powerfully found in practicing the teachings and example of Jesus.

The call to love one another is not a platitude or a cliché. It is a prescription for what

Members Gave Faithfully in 2008 and God Blesses

On Sunday, January 25, the Deacons received the year-end financial report. The church received the report at their quarterly business meeting on Wednesday, January 28. God has blessed the faithful and generous gifts of members to the cause of Christ through Vestavia Hills Baptist Church. Below are a few highlights:

- Gifts to the 2008 budget were \$1,512,373. While these receipts were 5% less than the budget, all agreed that they reflect the tremendous love, commitment, and sacrifice our members feel toward their church during these tough economic times.
- Over \$116,000 were given to mission-related causes through our regular church budget.
- Gave over \$170,000 to special missions causes over and above the church budget.
- 13%, or over \$286,000, of total funds received by the church went to budgeted or non-budgeted missions causes.
- Gave over \$53,000 through the Unified Missions Offering to support the Youth Mission Trip to Hungary, to the Kenya Pastors Project, Youth at Risk Center in Nairobi and to special denomination missions offerings. This exceeded our goal of \$52,400.
- Ended the year with over \$75,000 in the Capital Reserve Fund.
- Ended the year with over \$20,000 in the General Reserve Fund to use for 2009 expenditures.
- Received \$605,026 to the "Free the Future" Fund. Year-end balance in the "Free the Future" Fund is \$88,489. Total "Free the Future" gifts are \$667,509 against pledges of \$1,725,894.

Praise God From Whom All Blessings Flow!

ails us. We need authentic communion with God and each other. It is what God made us to experience. It takes reaching out, but it can always happen with God's help.

John Wesley, the founder of the Methodist Church, was a man of broad spirit and reconciling heart. He sought Christian cooperation in every way possible. He once preached a sermon on 2 Kings 10:15, which says, "When [Jehu] left there, he met Jehonadab son of Rechab coming to meet him; he greeted him, and said to him, "Is your heart as true to mine as mine is to yours?" Jehonadab answered, "It is." Jehu said, "If it is, give me your hand." So he gave him his hand. Jehu took him up with him into the chariot."

Wesley said "But although a difference in opinions or modes of worship may prevent an entire external union, yet need it prevent our union in affection? Though we cannot think alike, may we not love alike? May we not be of one heart, though we are not of one opinion? Without all doubt, we may. Herein all the children of God may unite, notwithstanding these smaller differences."

In other words, unity of heart, spirit and love can exist even though we must have differences that will take longer to resolve. We begin with this willingness to know a fellow Christian's heart and build upon the possibility of fellowship. It does not mean give up our convictions. But we must begin with the hardest and highest call Jesus gave to us—to love one another as He loved us. That is not what we do once we have worked out all our disagreements, our differences or our hurts with one another. Forgiveness itself is born out of obedience to the Savior's call to love one another.

Do you love Jesus Christ? So do I. If our hearts are one, even if all else is "not yet," *then give me your hand.* This is the miracle of Christian community, and I would add, the hope of an angry, hostile and troubled world.



Pastor's Sermon Series

The next several Sunday's the Pastor will be continuing the study that we began during the Winter Bible Study with Daniel Vestal on his book *Being the Presence of Christ*. We have a few more copies of the book which will be available to purchase this Sunday morning and next Wednesday night for \$12.

- Sunday, Feb. 8 "Pain and Sacrifice"
John 12:25-26
"Embracing the Presence of Christ in Suffering", Chapter 7
- Sunday, Feb. 15 "Engagement and Ministry"
Matthew 8:19-22
"Being the Presence of Christ as a Servant", Chapter 8
- Sunday, Feb. 22 "Peace and Justice"
Luke 18:22
"Becoming the Presence of Christ for the World", Chapter 9

Parenting Seminar

"Parenting in the Valleys and Shadows of Life"
Sunday night, February 8 at 4 pm; Led by Paul Byrd;
Please RSVP with Miss Nancy.

Sixers - For sixth graders!

Moes & A Movie - Saturday, February 7

CHILDREN'S MINISTRY DAY

Saturday, February 14th! We will join children across the U.S. as we learn about ministries in our community. The Birmingham project is with M-Power.

Who - 1st - 6th Graders; Parent volunteers

Schedule

9:30 am - Meet in the children's activity room.

10 am - Attend the M-Power Open House

12 - Trip to Vestavia Publix for budget shopping.

Signup - Contact Miss Nancy by Wed, February 11.

Can't Go? - Your child can participate by donating items to M-Power. A list of items can be found on the desk in the children's foyer.

17th Annual Mom's Retreat

February 20/21, Brochures available in children's foyer.



ROGER DAY

ROGER DAY IS COMING TO VESTAVIA HILLS BAPTIST!

Join us as we sing and dance with Roger!

Free hot dog supper.

Meet Roger at www.rogerday.com.

Sunday, March 1
5:00 pm

Churchwide Fellowship

THANKS!! Please give our VHBC preschool and children's teachers a word of appreciation during the month of February. "Thank you" cards, along with a list of teachers and contact info, are available in the children's foyer.



Welcome New Member

Zachary Burton
2428 High Bluff Rd., Birmingham, AL 35216

Remember in Prayer...

Members in the Hospital

*Fred Wood —St. Vincent's, Rm. 654

Members at Home

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

Spring Season of Prayer For World Missions

Could you "help hold the rope"? Mission work everywhere needs and relies on prayer. Join us for any or all seven special prayer times led by Mavis Hardy, missionary to Japan. Here's the schedule:

Tuesday, Feb. 10 & 24
Tuesday, March 10 & 24
Tuesday, April 14 & 28
Tuesday, May 12 with a
Fellowship luncheon after the meeting

All Meetings are
in the Chapel
at 11:30

If you can stay a while after the February-April meetings, bring a sandwich (coffee and tea provided) and enjoy a short time of fellowship.

Christian Sympathy

Christian Sympathy is expressed to Melissa McMurray and family in the death of her grandmother, Doris Collins on February 1.

Christian Sympathy is expressed to Fred McCrory and family in the death of his wife, Sybil, on January 21.

Christian Sympathy is expressed to Brenda Henderson (former member) & family in the death of her husband, Frank Henderson, on January 20.

Called Business Meeting

Wednesday, February 11

6:00 pm

Fellowship Hall

Agenda:

Vote on By-laws Review Committee Recommendation

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	\$30,754
Budget Given This Month	\$34,279

Budget Needs This Year	\$164,020
Budget Given This Year	\$156,883

Free the Future Capital Fund

Pledges	\$1,725,894
Given to Date	\$682,956

New Women's Bible Study Groups are Beginning Soon!

Discerning the Voice of God by Priscilla Shirer is a 7 video/six-session interactive study. It includes both personal workbook study and messages on DVD. Available on Tuesday evenings at 6:30 (begins February 17 with facilitator Brooke Fleming) or Monday mornings at 9:30 (begins March 2 with facilitator Melissa McBrayer). A Sunday afternoon group may form if there is another interest. Please contact Betsy in the church office to sign up. (Betsy@vhbc.com or 979-5920) Participant workbooks will be available for purchase at the first session for \$12.00.

Week of Feb. 5-11

Saturday, Feb. 6

- 4:00 Sixers Activity
- 6:00 Girls Basketball Game

Sunday, Feb. 8

- 8:45 Bible Study
- 10:00 Worship Service
- 11:00 HS Mission Trip Meeting
- 11:00 Second Sunday Coffee
- 4:00 Parenting Seminar
- 4:00 Youth Choir
- 5:00 YOSE 120

Monday, Feb. 9

- 9:30 Ladies Bible Study

Tuesday, Feb. 10

- 9:30 International Friends
- 8:30 Boys Basketball game

Wednesday, Feb. 11

- 6:30 Prayer Breakfast
- 10:30 Pastor's Bible Study
- 4:30 Fellowship Supper-Called Bus Meeting—Library open
- 5:00 Handbells
- 5:30 Music for PS 3's—6th Grade
- 6:00 Prayer Service - Youth Group
- 6:00 Financial Peace Univ.
- 6:15 Mission Friends, GA & RA's
- 7:00 Sanctuary Choir Rehearsal

Week of Feb. 12-18

Saturday, Feb. 14

- 9:00 Youth Choir Departs for New Orleans
- 9:30 Children's Ministry Day

Sunday, Feb. 15

- 8:45 Bible Study
- 10:00 Worship Service
- 11:00 Mexico Mission Team Meeting

Monday, Feb. 16

- 7:30 Boys Basketball game

Tuesday, Feb. 17

- 9:30 International Friends
- 6:30 Ladies Bible Study

Wednesday, Feb. 18

- 6:30 Prayer Breakfast
- 10:30 Pastor's Bible Study
- 4:30 Fellowship Supper-Library
- 5:00 Handbells
- 5:30 Music for PS 3's-6th Grade
- 6:00 Prayer Service —Youth Group
- 6:00 Financial Peace Univ.
- 6:15 Mission Friends, GA, RAs
- 7:00 Sanctuary Choir Rehearsal

Volunteers in Service for the Week of February 8

Deacons of the Week: *John Barth, Fred Wood

Counting Team: Alynn LeBerte, Jerry & Priss Pittman

Sound Technology: Mike Wells, Pete LeBerte

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

Flower Committee: Libby Brown

Library Committee: Jackie Hughes (8) Lynn Taylor (11)

Worship Care

- Babies Jane Bowick
- Creepers Matt & Carole Miller
- Ones Kevin & Elizabeth Studinka
- Twos Pat Cooper, Betsy Stockdale
- Threes David & Cathy Compher
- Fours Nancy Akins, Leigh Simmons
- 4's-K Steve & Becky White
- Desk Lottie St. John

Volunteers in Service for the Week of February 15

Deacons of the Week: *Bob Bradley, Roger Bates

Counting Team: Taylor Burton, Steve White

Sound Technology: Dan McMurray, Mike Wells

Shuttle Service Team: Mike Oatts, John Wood, Suzanne Dupree

Flower Committee: Amy Hamilton, Marilyn Tinnermon

Library Committee: Martha Eskew (15) Jeanne Harrelson (18)

Worship Care

- Babies Billie Lochamy, Mindy Bodenhamer
- Creepers Dan & Gay Caldwell
- Ones Rebecca McKinney, Alexa Brooks
- Twos Virginia & John Wood
- Threes Jeff & Monica Graveline
- Fours Lynne & Katie O'Neal, Kim Brindley
- 4's-K
- Desk Dick Bodenhamer

FELLOWSHIP SUPPER February 11

Ham, Field Peas, Yams, Slaw, Cornbread, Rolls, Apple Pie
Volunteers—Bob Eskew, Mindy Bodenhamer

FELLOWSHIP SUPPER for February 18

Poppy Seed Chicken, Rice, Broccoli, Carrot Salad, Strawberry Cake
Volunteers — Sue Edfeldt, Johnnie McCracken, Bob Eskew, Janice Fulks

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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