



VHBC

Connections

Holy Week

starts this Sunday!

March 19, 2024

things to see in this week's newsletter

03

SHEPHERD CONCERT IN APRIL

April 7th at 10 am

05

REFLECTION ON HOLY WEEK

Pastor's Article

07

THE HARDY HOUSE

aka The Hospitality House

08

WEDNESDAYS & MORE

10

EQUIPPING OUR CHILDREN

A 2-part seminar for families

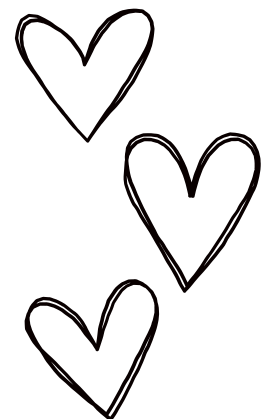
12

WAYS TO SERVE AT VHBC

on the back

CHECK OUT THE NEW CHIMES!

To our amazing interim student minister, Sara Binet, who planned the most touching and thoughtful youth Sunday that I can remember, and to her dedicated youth ministry team who didn't miss a beat and carried out those plans to perfection, **THANK YOU!** I am beyond grateful for your talent, commitment, and most of all your genuine love for our kids. Our youth are in very capable hands.



Classical CONNECTIONS

Shepherd Memorial Worship Concert

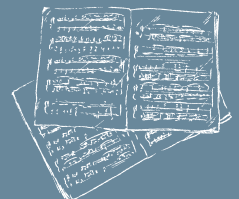


On Sunday, April 7, at 10 am, the Music Ministry of Vestavia Hills Baptist Church presents Classical Connections for the annual Shepherd Memorial Concert. We have the opportunity at this special event to celebrate the legacy of our church's beloved organist Betty Sue Shepherd, to recognize the contributions of our Shepherd Scholars who sing in our Sanctuary Choir, and to be reminded of the opportunity to direct financial gifts toward the scholarship fund bearing her name. This scholarship connects area college and university students with Vestavia Hills Baptist Church and the Music Ministry.

This special worship concert features our own Sanctuary Choir and a chamber orchestra comprising church members and community musicians. Making up the worship concert will be sacred musical selections that utilize familiar tunes from classical music repertoire by composers Bach, Mozart, Beethoven, and others. Shepherd Scholars will be featured as soloists and one of them will direct the Sanctuary Choir as well. To hear the original classical pieces that the program is drawn from, here are playlists to check out on **Spotify**, **Apple Music**, and **YouTube**.

The Shepherd Scholar program not only enhances the musical excellence of our Sanctuary Choir in worship each Sunday, but these scholars are also a part of the larger Vestavia Hills Baptist Church family through their participation in other areas of church life. These students are indeed recipients of a scholarship, but they are, more importantly, the recipients of the blessings of fellowship and support that is the heartbeat of Vestavia Hills Baptist Church.

Each Shepherd Scholar is awarded \$2000 per academic year, half of which is applied to their school account at the end of each semester. Gifts toward the Betty Sue Shepherd Memorial Scholarship Fund will be received during the worship concert itself on April 7 or they may be sent in directly to the Church Office. Contributions may also be made online at www.vhbc.com/giving.





joy

*To you before your passion
they sang their hymns of
praise;*

*to you, now high exalted,
our melody we raise.*

*As you received their praises,
accept the prayers we bring,
for you delight in goodness,
O good and gracious King!*

***“All Glory, Laud, and Honor”
St. Theodulph***



REFLECTIONS *on* HOLY WEEK

By Eric Spivey

*“To weep is to see.
To be is to bow.”*

I discovered poet Christian Wiman at Christmas. I happened upon an article about him in the New Yorker magazine and quickly ordered his book, *Zero to the Bone: Fifty Entries Against Despair*. The New Yorker described Wiman as “among the most distinguished Christian writers of his generation.” I have been reading his book of poetry and narrative - SLOWLY - in 2024. The words are too dense to read quickly. They take time for me to ruminate.

For the past eighteen years, Wiman has been fighting lymphoma. Whenever his cancer threatened to kill him, a new medical intervention saved his life. His writing, his poetry, and his reflection on other poets lived up to his subtitle; *Fifty Entries Against Despair*.

As I reflect on Holy Week 2024, I am deeply aware we go into this week with many in our congregation fighting against despair. We are in a season of significant medical challenges. Wiman’s writing has



has offered new and unique angles demonstrating God's presence in despair. In his short poem "Reading Pascal in Quarantine," one line caught my attention.

"To weep is to see. To be is to bow."

in the weeks leading up to Palm Sunday, the Gospel of John tells the story of the death of Lazarus. Jesus enters his home brimming with mourners. Grief and pain fill the space. In solidarity, "Jesus wept." (John 11:35)

Later in John 20, Mary comes to Jesus' tomb grief-stricken to anoint his body. She stands over the empty grave weeping. The resurrected Jesus comes to her and asks, "Woman, why are you weeping?" In her tears, she sees Jesus.

"To weep is to see. To be is to bow."

As we walk through the events of Holy Week, grief and pain surrounds us. Despair fills the air in the long night and day of arrest, trial, torture, and execution. Tears flow as disciples scatter.

"To weep is to see. To be is to bow."

In the moments where the God of the Universe hangs on the cross as a human and his body lays in the grave - God fully experiences what it means to be. **To be is to bow.** Our tears in this moment give us eyesight to truly see God at work; God's love revealed.

As we walk through the events of Holy Week next week, let's pay attention to our tears. May our tears strengthen us for the fight against the despair we feel. May resurrection and Easter not only fill us with hope and power, but also be reminders we do not fight despair alone. God is with us. God's love covers us.

This week, let me invite you to remember in prayer those among us fighting against despair. You can also join me on the **first Wednesday of Easter Season, April 3 at 6:10 pm** for a special service of prayer in the Fellowship Hall. We will spend time in intentional, guided prayer for those in our congregation and their families who are facing medical challenges. Let us lift their names to God together as we fight despair in the power of resurrection.



I'll see you on Sunday. You are loved.

Eric

THE HARDY HOUSE

A ministry to families among us.

In 2020 when our pastor Gary Furr shared the decision of the church to name the home on our property the Hardy House in honor of Bob and Mavis Hardy, he described it as a place of “...hospitality, renewal, rest, ...an opportunity for guests to connect with the membership of Vestavia Hills Baptist Church.”

This mission and hope for this house is lived out daily as missionaries, clergy and families find their way to the Hardy House. Currently, Jon and Debbie Moore, the parents of Ashley and Yates Norris, are living in the Hardy House. They have come to call the Hardy House *a home away from home* as they support daughter Ashley, her husband Yates, and their grandchildren, Faulkner and Jackson, as Ashley continues to receive cancer treatment and care at UAB and in Houston in the coming days.

The Hardy House provides a way for families to be together and support one another in times of need. Jon and Debbie are regular attendees now at VHBC. By sharing the gift of hospitality we are able to build community with new members of the body of Christ. When you see John and Debbie in worship share a message of encouragement and greeting. And when you think of VHBC and the ways we as a fellowship of believers are committed to be the hands and feet of Christ, think of the mission of the Hardy House. We've been blessed with a gift to share with others for rest, renewal and connection.



THIS WEEK



**MORE
AT
VHBC**



WED. NIGHT MEALS IN MAR

20th: Chicken & Spinach Lasagna,
Caesar Salad, Bread, & Dessert

*Reserve your plate online at
vhbc.com/dinneratvhbc*

Adults: \$7

Children: \$5

Preschoolers: Free

College Students: Free

*New menu & take
out options for
families coming in
April!*

MIDWEEK ADULT BIBLE STUDY

Wednesdays at 10 am in the Seminar Room

ALL ADULTS WELCOME

Memento Mori: A Lenten Experience by local author and
speaker & Bible scholar, Erin H. Moon.

LENTEN ADULT WEDNESDAY SESSIONS

Contemplative Prayer at 6 pm in the Chapel

Facilitated by George Van Kirk

Enneagram Workshop: A 4-week study with Jess & Sara

Nix at 6 pm in the Seminar Room

February 21 & 28; March 13 & 20

In the Fellowship Hall during Lent

March 20: Hope in the Wilderness with Noel Forlini Burt

March 27: No Wednesday night activities during Holy
Week

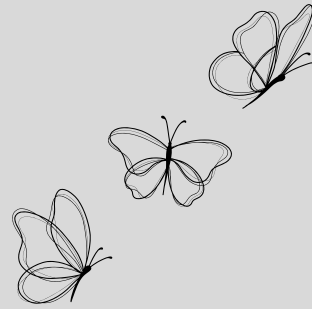
March 28: Maundy Thursday service at 6 pm

March 29: Good Friday 11 am - 1pm in the Chapel

**WEDNESDAY SESSIONS WILL RESUME AFTER
HOLY WEEK! KEEP READING...**

Opportunities for
Connection

in APRIL



April 3rd

Secrets in the Sauce

Spring is a great time to try out new sauce recipes for grilling. Join Adam Casey for taste testing, recipes and fellowship around the table. Adam will introduce different sauces from around the country to tempt your palette! One night only. Sign up online to join the fun. Location: Children's Activity Room

Butterfly Gardening

Butterflies announce the arrival of new life and a new season. Would you enjoy seeing more of these elegant creatures visiting your garden? Join the conversation with Mindy Bodenhamer and other gardeners in our congregation, and consider how we can invite butterflies into our gardens, regardless of the size of the garden space. Resources will include suggested plant species for creating a working food web that can attract butterflies to visit and return. Sign up online. Location: Seminar Room

Contemplative Prayer in the Chapel facilitated by George Van Kirk

Praying Together

Join Eric in the Fellowship hall for an intentional time of congregational prayer for our membership. Many in our midst are carrying great burdens and we have the privilege of coming alongside them and praying with them and for them. Bring your body mind and spirit and join together with others to pray for our church family in specific and needed ways.

April 10th

A Night of Testimony

Come hear voices from our church family sharing what God has done and is doing in their lives. Location: Fellowship Hall

Equipping our Children with Skills to Manage Anxiety

Read more about this helpful seminar for families on the next page!
Location: Children's Activity Room

Childhood Ministries of
Vestavia Hills Baptist Church

presents

Equipping our Children with Skills to Manage Anxiety

Session 1

Wed, April 10

6-7pm

Children's Building
Activity Room

Session 2

and

Sun, April 14

4:30-6pm

Children's Building
Activity Room

Do I need to register?

Wednesday Night

There is no need to register for the Wednesday night session, no cost, but please make a **dinner reservation** if you and your family plan to join us for dinner, 5-5:45pm, in the Fellowship Hall.

Follow the on back to make a dinner reservation. **Preschoolers eat free!**

Activities are available for preschoolers and children.

Sunday Evening

Please follow the QR code on the next page to RSVP for the Sunday evening session so we can plan for food and childcare.

Led by:



Becky Milstead, LPC

Over 20 years experience helping children, teens, and families

Session 1

Fears and Anxiety in Childhood and Adolescence

WEDNESDAY, APRIL 10
6-7 PM

No reservation is needed for the seminar.

Activities and childcare are available for all children.

Interested in joining us for our weekly Wednesday night Fellowship Supper, 5-5:45pm?

Follow the QR code to make a dinner reservation.



Optional dinner reservation

Fear and anxious distress are normal experiences in a healthy life. Children experience fear and anxiety throughout development and these in themselves are not typically a cause for significant alarm.

Parents who understand the role of fear and anxiety as an engine that a child needs to fuel their growth as they meet normal developmental challenges are better prepared to support and guide their child.

Come join us to learn about some of the **reasons for anxiety** in healthy development and learn some tips to **guide your child/teen** in their developmental journey.

Session 2

Problematic Anxiety and Parent Skills to Support Healthy Development

SUNDAY, APRIL 14
4:30-6 PM

For our Sunday session, **please follow the QR code to RSVP** so we can plan for food and childcare.

Free pizza dinner for all.



Sunday Session
RSVP

Fear and anxiety can become problematic when they overwhelm a child/teen and block the developmental process. There are skills that parents, children and teens can learn to manage anxiety to unblock the process.

All children benefit from parenting that acknowledges the real fears that life presents to us in an age appropriate manner. Parents are a powerful model for children and teens on how to tolerate anxiety and communicate when it becomes too heavy to carry alone.

Come join us to learn some tips on **how to open up communication** about anxiety in your family and to **recognize the signs** that professional help may be needed.



Questions: Call Nancy Akins @ 205-979-5920

OPPORTUNITIES FOR SERVICE

Have you found a ministry at VHBC yet? If not, here are a few ways to serve or give at our church!

Worship Care

01

Our Worship Care ministry is utilized weekly on Sundays at VHBC and we need teachers like YOU! Currently, we have four spots with no teachers and we are in need of even more for Easter Sunday. Please consider filling this need. Call Nancy or email nancy@vhbc.com for more information.



Lovelady Center

02

We are still collecting travel-size hygiene products for the ladies at the Lovelady Center where we serve. Please drop off any donations in the bins around the church by Friday, March 29.



Curriculum Collection

03

When you are finished with your study guides, teaching materials, or devotionals, please consider placing them in the basket in the Fellowship Hall foyer or in the bin on Laura Tadlock's desk in the church office. We will be sending them to an organization called Love Packages that shares used curriculum with other churches and organizations.



This will be an ongoing collection at the end of each curriculum cycle.

Partners in Ministry

04

If you'd like to join other opportunities around the church and don't know what's available, please consider filling out our Partners in Ministry questionnaire. The list is long and needs are great and we need you to help fill them.



Visit www.vhbc.com/partners-in-ministry-2024 to sign up today!

Deacon Consideration

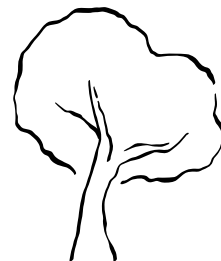
05

The deacons at VHBC are an important ministry at our church that walk alongside our VHBC families. Every year our sacred partners choose from a list of our membership to nominate more to join this group. Please help us in this nomination process. Find the list around the church or go online and submit your choices.



<https://www.vhbc.com/deaconconsideration2024>

upcoming events




Egg Hunt on Saturday, March 30 at 10 am

All children are invited to participate in our Easter egg hunt on the front lawn at VHBC! Don't forget your basket, invite your friends, and check out the sweet baby animals (Parents can take photos of their children with baby bunny!)



Sunset Vespers on the Lawn on Wednesdays, April 24 & May 1

SAM Spring Luncheon on Friday, May 10 at 11:30 am in the Fellowship Hall
More details to come!



When they were approaching Jerusalem, at Bethphage and Bethany, near the Mount of Olives, he sent two of his disciples and said to them, "Go into the village ahead of you, and immediately as you enter it you will find tied there a colt that has never been ridden; untie it and bring it. If anyone says to you, "Why are you doing this? just say this: "The Lord needs it and will send it back here immediately." They went away and found a colt tied near a door, outside in the street. As they were untying it, some of the bystanders said to them, "What are you doing, untying the colt? They told them what Jesus had said, and they allowed them to take it. Then they brought the colt to Jesus and threw their cloaks on it, and he sat on it. Many people spread their cloaks on the road, and others spread leafy branches that they had cut in the fields. Then those who went ahead and those who followed were shouting, "Hosanna! Blessed is the one who comes in the name of the Lord! Blessed is the coming kingdom of our ancestor David! Hosanna in the highest heaven!" Then he entered Jerusalem and went into the temple, and when he had looked around at everything, as it was already late, he went out to Bethany with the twelve.

MARK 11:1-11



VOLUNTEERS *at* VHBC



Worship Care

3/24: Jan Dulin, Stacey Sapp, Becky Atkinson, Millie Ehrett, Dianne Horn, Laura Griffo, LaRue Gillespie
3/31: Amy Gillis, Caroline Nordlund, Maria Madden, Hadley McFarland, David & Cathy Compher, Barbara Kimbrel

Transportation Team

3/24: Cris Speegle & Tommy Cherry
3/31: Scott Phillips & Craig Youngblood

Welcome Team

3/24 & 3/31: Carolyn Slappey, Joe Perez, Dan Caldwell, Howard Finch, Kathy Finch

Worship Tech Team

3/24: Brent Warren & Lillie VanGiessen
3/31: Norfleete Day & Dan VanGiessen

Deacons of the Week

3/24: Becky Griffith & Todd Jordan
3/31: Sara McFarland

Counting Team

3/24: David Compher & Danny Cox
3/31: Charles Evans & Harry Harden

Flowers & Decor

3/24: Becky Griffith & Millie Ehrett
3/31: Hydrangeas & Lilies for Easter Sunday

VHBC *Connections*



Ministry Staff

Nancy Akins	Minister to Preschool & Children
Sara Binet	Interim Student Coordinator
Mike McBrayer	Administrative Pastor
Dr. Eric Spivey	Senior Pastor
Laura Tadlock	Senior Adult & Adult Ministries Coordinator
Marty Watts	Minister of Music & Worship

New Hand Chimes Used in Worship



This past Sunday, two new octaves of hand chimes were debuted in worship. In January, the church voted to use a portion of the 2023 budget surplus, along with designated funds, to purchase these instruments. This extends the three octaves we already owned to five, one octave above and one below. Pictured are the highest and lowest hand chimes we are able to utilize. We are grateful for this wonderful enhancement to our worship through music. If you're interested in learning more about the VHBC Handbell Choir, please contact Marty Watts at marty@vhbc.com.

The highest and lowest hand chimes at VHBC. Photo by Marty Watts.

