



# VHBC *Connections*

DECEMBER 8, 2020  
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**IN  
TUNE**  
  
with VHBC

**Thanks so much for listening this year! More episodes to come!**

"In Tune with VHBC" is a weekly podcast about music and worship at Vestavia Hills Baptist Church. Episodes will explore hymns we sing in worship and feature interviews with participants in Music Ministry ensembles.



Listen on

Apple Podcasts



Spotify





# HOLIDAY *schedule* & UPCOMING EVENTS



**Dec 19** [Not So] Together at Christmas 2-4 pm



**Dec 21** PJs & Pancakes Youth Christmas Party 6-8:30 pm



**Dec 23-25** VHBC Offices closed for Christmas holidays



**Dec 24** Christmas Eve Services [see pg. 4 for more info]



**Dec 27 & Jan 3** No Sunday School



**Dec 31-Jan 1** VHBC Offices Closed [Finance office open on Dec 31]

Please remember to register for **in-person worship** on our website every week! If you are unable to attend in person, watch the service on YouTube or Facebook!

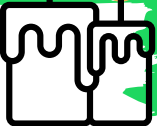
# *(not so)* TOGETHER AT CHRISTMAS

**SATURDAY, DECEMBER 19TH  
2-4 PM**

This is a driving scavenger hunt event featuring church member homes and places around Vestavia. Game Cards will be sent out. We hope you and your family will enjoy this shared-but distanced event!



## *Christmas Eve*



**SERVICES @ VHBC**

*Come See the Baby*

4 pm

VHBC Amphitheater

*Candlelight Services*

6 pm & 8 pm

VHBC Sanctuary

Register online at [vhbc.com](http://vhbc.com),  
starting December 14th.  
Apologies, but no childcare will be provided.



# SHEPHERD'S ENCOURAGER

DR. GARY FURR

*The cast of characters who came to the first advent and Christmas were an interesting lot, weren't they?*



And the WAY they came varied greatly. Mary, by virtue of a profound and unquestioning trust. Anna and Simeon came through long study of the scriptures and deep spirituality. The shepherds, on the other hand, were surprised by pure, unexpected experiences.

God's wisdom in creation blessed our diversity—in temperament, physical appearance, and gifts. God made us different and provided diversity in how we see, hear, interpret and understand things. It is no wonder, then, that we come to faith in Christ in so many different ways. Perhaps God knew that creation was too great and our minds too small by themselves to take it all in. And then again, maybe God made us to need each other to get the whole truth.

Then there were those wise men. Astrologers, most likely, but also probably trusted advisors, like scientists and diplomats today. They might be cabinet officers for the President. They had studied long and hard. The kind of men who likely were suspect among their fellows.

Intellectualism has not always had a welcome place in Christendom. Since I first wrote these words in 2002, the problem has grown worse. Expertise and intellect have been flattened by the insipid leaven of the internet. Everyone has a platform. This means we no longer can easily tell the wheat from the chaff and so swallow it all.

Perhaps the witness of the "wise men" is important to rediscover. If you look among many "unchurched" people today, you may find instead of the loathsome pagans and drug-addicted crackheads of evangelistic lore a huge collection of those for whom Christianity is not intellectually credible and its church not very attractive. And their exit is increasing.

The problem is to get people to consider Christ while helping them navigate past the culture-religion, shallow fundamentalism, institutional self-serving, and spiritual obstacles the church sometimes throws in their way. Evangelicals have been swallowed up by prosperity gospel preaching and the emptiness of politics.



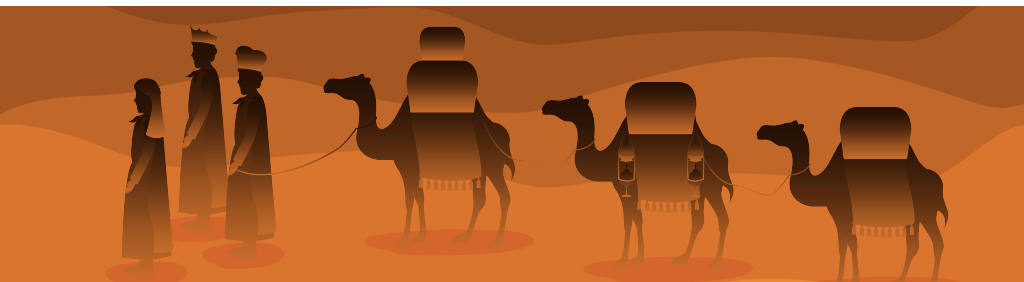
The truth is, Jesus stands up to any examination. And maybe those who can help us in reaching those people are precisely the scholars, scientists, and thinkers about whom we have so much suspicion.

Jesus himself would one day say, "You shall love the Lord your God with all your heart, soul, mind and strength and your neighbor as yourself." In these two commands, Jesus enfolded the seeds of intellectual endeavor, ethics, community, and spirituality. Every part of ourselves deserves to be offered to God, surrendered.

I have always believed it is not a contradiction to be educated and spiritual. It is inevitable. To grow in grace and truth is to grow in our knowledge of the creation. Intellectual endeavor is simply one of the avenues through which we can express our gratitude. God made the creation and made the processes and realities scientists study. Why wouldn't God want scientists to learn to their heart's content about creation?

Anti-intellectualism is a way of trying to be god for each other. It says, "If I can't understand it, it can't be true." I am glad the Wise Men didn't think that when they killed their careers, left the safety of their homes, and headed west to follow their "star." A curious mind and a believing heart can be faithful companions on the adventure of faith. So here's to the Wise Men and to thinking about God and their journey to find the truth. Perhaps as much as a journey to Bethlehem, it would also do us well to sojourn to the Wise Men as they begin their search. The answers we find might be truer and longer-lasting precisely because they are not so easy and self-serving as we wish.

*Gary Furr*





# vhbc kids

## THIS FALL

VHBC Kids' Sunday school meetings will continue on Zoom. Check out the times & leaders for each group below!

### sunday school

9AM

- Kindergarten with Gilda Coker and James Carr
- 3rd Grade Class with Nancy Akins
- 4th/5th Grade Class with Liz David and Jenny Henry
- Sixers with Lucas Dorion and Mindy Bodenhamer

9:30AM

- 1st/2nd Grades with Sandra Bates and Gay Caldwell

No Sunday school on  
December 27th & Jan 3rd!



## Share your Advent experience with us, kids!

How's it going with your Advent calendar? Send us pictures of your Advent Wreath. We would love to get pictures of special activities you might be doing from using your Advent Calendar!



# Prayer List

## MEMBERS IN THE HOSPITAL

Al Lowery      UAB Highlands  
Libby Brown    Grandview  
Mike Chandler   Lakeshore 224A

## MEMBERS AT HOME

Maxine Ammons	Leon Nix
Sam & Libby Brown	Margaret Northrup
Zelle Buckner	June Ousley
Carolyn Cain	Valerie Paul
Pam Coffey	Gaynell Pinson
Geri Dodson	Lottie St. John
Paul Edfeldt	Alicia Stigler
Esther Evans	Hazel Turner
Milton Fullman	Stan & Sue Virciglio
Jim & Natalie Garland	Margaret Walker
Mavis Hardy	Betty Wallis
Ruford Hodges	Bobbye Weaver
Charlotte Kyser	Doris Wilson
Samson Mathangani	

## IN CHRISTIAN SYMPATHY

Maxine Ammons and family as Don Ammons passed away on Saturday, November 28th.







Vestavia Hills Baptist Church family,

At this time, I have mixed emotions about retirement. I am both happy and sad because you have been a part of my family for 49 years. As with most families, I have seen children born, grow up, get married, and have families of their own. This has brought me much joy which makes leaving so bittersweet. I am truly going to miss seeing everyone. Much love and thanks to all of you for everything.

Sadra Dudley

Thanks Vestavia Hills Baptist Church,

I would like to thank you for all that you have done for me leading up to my retirement. I have been blessed working here for more than 20 years.

Dora Samuel



# VHBC GIVING

December Offering: **\$97,827.10**

December Needs: **\$133,952.00**

YTD Budget Offering: **\$1,548,293.62**

YTD Budget Needs: **\$1,640,912.00**

## STAY CONNECTED



Visit [yhbc.com](http://yhbc.com) and click the stay connected button to find updates for our [prayer list](#), online worship schedule, our new **podcast**, [ShelbyNext giving](#), family resources, and more! Click the underlined words to follow each link.

