

VOLUME 28 ISSUE 3

VHBC
Connections

FEBRUARY 2, 2021

VESTAVIA HILLS BAPTIST CHURCH



CELEBRATING THE FURRS IN FEBRUARY

Dear Congregation,

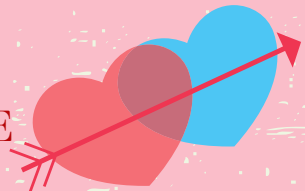
There is no doubt that each of us wants to extend our deepest thanks to Gary and Vickie Furr during this last month of Gary's 27 years and 7-month tenure. Please join us in the activities below for February and know that we look forward to a wonderful celebration together as a full congregation in the future when it is safe to do so.

Sunday Worship in February - We will hear from individuals expressing gratitude for Gary's years of service on All Four Sundays of worship! Each family is welcome to make a reservation for **one** of the four Sundays by registering at the link **here**.

Notes of Thanks - Cards will be collected in the church foyer beginning next Sunday to be bundled together and presented to the Furrs at the end of the service on Sunday, February 28th. Children are welcome to send notes or drawings. Please mail cards to Gary's Retirement Celebration, VHBC, 2600 Vestavia Drive, Vestavia Hills, AL 35216, or bring your card to the church on a Sunday you have a reservation or anytime during the week.

Love Offering - For those who wish to contribute to a love offering, you may do so through Friday, 2/26 by check with Love Offering written in the memo line or online through the website and ShelbyNext app--please select the Love Offering designation.

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CELEBRATE THE FURRS CON'T

Video Hug - For those who may enjoy submitting a brief 10-20 second video of you or your family expressing congratulations on Gary's retirement, please click the link **[HERE](#)**. All videos will be private and shared only with Gary and Vickie as a video memory album. Due Wednesday, 2/24.

Wednesday, February 24th, 6 pm - Don't miss "**A Gary Home Companion: Thoughts and Songs from a Retiring Pastor**" a casual interview-style program hosted by Brent Warren. Register online **[HERE](#)** to attend the event held in the sanctuary or join us live on vhbc.com or social media. Enjoy hearing stories from Gary's ministry with a few tunes mixed in. If you have a question you'd like for Brent to ask our pastor, feel free to submit them for consideration to rbrentwarren@gmail.com. Questions will also be received on Facebook during the event.

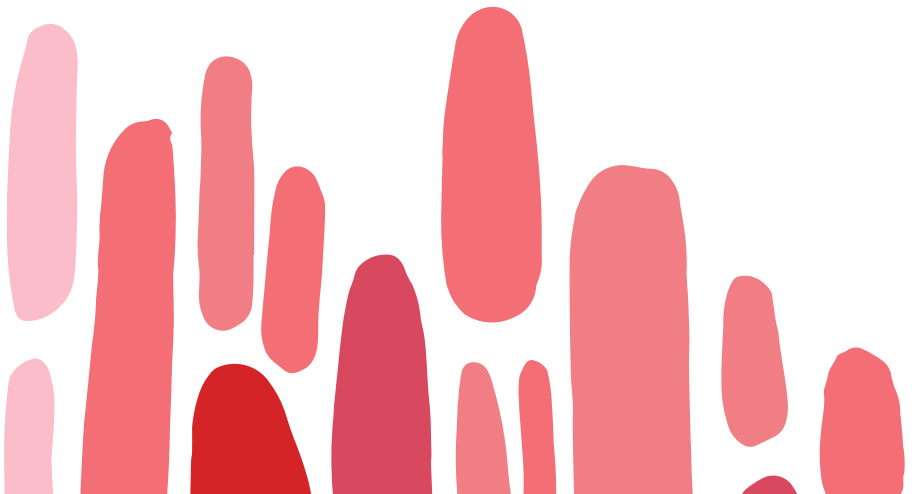
We look forward to celebrating the Furrs with you all,
The Retirement Celebration Committee
Merryl and Jason Cooper, chairs
Jennifer Carter, Rachel and Brad Farley, Becky Griffith,
Libby Pittman, and Brent Warren

TRANSITIONS AT VHBC

At Sunday's business meeting, the church voted unanimously to engage the Center for Healthy Churches (CHC) during our pastoral transition. This will include having Dr. Bill Owen serve as our Transition Pastor. Bill has worked with the CHC for the past six years after a 32-year pastorate at Mt. Carmel Baptist in Cross Plains, Tennessee.



We will greatly benefit from having the experience of a long-time pastor and the skills of a dedicated church consultant working alongside us in the months to come. As we enter this season of spiritual discernment, we can expect God to work in this process just as we have known God's faithfulness through the years. Bill is excited to serve among us and will begin working with our committee leadership in the weeks to come. His first Sunday in the pulpit will be March 14th.



SHEPHERD'S ENCOURAGER

DR. GARY FURR

SAVOR THE DAYS

I was so grateful to hear Bill Owen's timely message for all of us on Sunday morning. It was not only helpful for the church but also for Vickie and me. We found ourselves in a time of turbulence and uncertainty as well. In November of 1979, I was 25 years old and was called to be the part-time pastor at Gholson Baptist Church in central Texas, where, as my late beloved father-in-law Forrest put it, "hades is a local call." He was referring to the climate, not the people, who are some of the most wonderful you could ever know.

I had completed four years of college, three years of seminary, and a summer unit of clinical pastoral education at Baylor Medical Center in Dallas. During that summer, I found myself in the front lines of ministry in critical situations, from visiting the psychiatric ward to sitting with people after a loved one had died. I was so excited about ministry and had learned so much. Now I began my ministry in a tiny church in the open country of Texas. The church averaged 27 members attending Sunday school each week, and that number rarely changed.

There was nothing normal about those beginnings in ministry or that church. Jessie Mae Vigus was my minister of music of sorts, the wife of a retired Methodist minister named Frank. Jessie Mae got the job because no one else could read music. A local dairy farmer, Lewis, served as our treasurer. During our business meetings, he would read every expenditure from the previous month, including my salary, the light bill, and anything we had to purchase.

CON'T ON THE NEXT PAGE

CON'T FROM THE PREVIOUS PAGE

I had also begun to work on my Ph.D. that fall at Baylor University, intending to teach as my vocation. But I was tired, and after the semester ended, I took a year off. I worked in a warehouse shipping dock, loading trucks 40 hours a week, and pastored in every spare minute I had. It was a busy, stressful, turbulent time. I made all sorts of mistakes, I am sure. Being a pastor was hard work but felt as normal and natural to me as breathing. I loved sitting with people who were hurting and needing support. I loved preaching probably more than they did hearing it. I loved being part of a community. My four pastorates have taught me that the oddest and most interesting collection of personalities imaginable fill the church. And that seems to be the way God wants it. Being a pastor taught me that human lives are infinitely interesting, and only by patient study do we come to fully see all that is there.

At the same time, you learn that it is a demanding responsibility and that there are times to come and times to go. It is finally God's church that a shepherd tends, and it belongs finally to God. There is always a danger that we will see ourselves as indispensable. It is not true, of course, but you can still believe it if you are not careful! Fortunately, we all stumbled enough through the years to remember that we never get far from being more than sinners in need of God's grace.

Now I get to test all these things I have come to believe. I am still a pastor by calling, and that does not depend upon a job. I have always believed that, but then again, I have always had a job! There will be important work to do. This is a new season, and I look forward to it.

CON'T ON THE NEXT PAGE

CON'T FROM THE PREVIOUS PAGE

To every question about what I plan to do, I answer this way right now: When you have plowed a field and planted for so many years, it's important to remember to let it lie fallow for a season before you plant again. My farmers through the years taught me that. If you don't want to turn your life into a Dust Bowl, you better take Sabbath every now and then.

These next 28 days I intend to get a vaccination, move into our into our new place and to have no plan except to celebrate and remember and revel that I have had the privilege to do this all these years, and most of them with you. The next chapter of our lives and our church will be written in their own time. Let's savor these 28 days and one another, and the goodness of God we share.

Gary

Children's Moment on Feb. 7th

Plan to tune into worship or attend in-person worship with your children on **Sunday, February 7**, when Ms. Nancy will lead a Children's Moment with Dr. Furr. (Children in the sanctuary will remain seated in the pews.) The Children's Moment can be a wonderful place to begin or continue conversations with your children about Gary's retirement and the upcoming transition.

CHECK OUT MORE INFO ABOUT VHBC KIDS ON
THE NEXT PAGE!



v h b c kids

WINTER 2021

Sunday School

- 9AM**
- Kindergarten with Gilda Coker and James Carr
 - 3rd Grade Class with Marie & Leigh Gwathney
 - 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

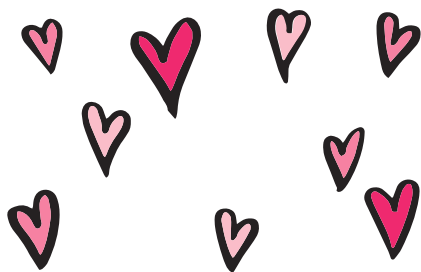
GA & RAs Wednesday Schedule

- 5PM**
- 1st - 2nd Grade GA

- 5:30PM**
- 3rd - 6th Grade GA

- 6PM**
- 1st - 3rd Grade RAs

- 6:30PM**
- 4th - 6th Grade RAs



Children's Ministry Day February 8th

Children's Ministry Day is **Monday, February 8**. We would love for our **WHOLE CONGREGATION TO JOIN US** in flooding our membership with Valentine's Day cards! Think about members who need a special message of love and encouragement and send them a card! This is a great opportunity to connect with one another.



LENT at VMBC

For Adults

Jesus's Guide for 2021 Disciples

Join LaRue Speights each Monday for a new Lenten study in the Sanctuary at 10:30 am. You may sign up to attend in person or join virtually. Sessions will be recorded and available on vhbc.com.

- **Feb 22:** Trust & Don't Be Afraid (Luke 12:1-12)
- **Mar 1:** Emphasize the Important (Luke 13:10-17)
- **Mar 8:** Celebrate God's Grace to All (Luke 15:11-32)
- **Mar 15:** Find the True Treasure (Luke 18:18-30)
- **Mar 22:** Live Out Repentance (Luke 19:1-10)
- **Mar 29:** Finish Well (Luke 23:32-46)

For Families of children and youth

Journey to Easter

Journey to Easter, a special Lenten box, is available to families of preschool, children, and youth. You are welcome to pick up your family's box on Sunday mornings and during the week, starting February 7th.

Journey to Easter begins on Ash Wednesday, February 17.



For All





Lenten Prayer Walk

Our **FIRST EVER** Lenten Prayer Walk starts on Ash Wednesday, February 17, and continues until Holy Week. The walk begins outside to the left of the main entrance and continues through the prayer garden. **For all ages!**







VHBC YOUTH *Schedule*

February

-  *7* YOSE-Bowl at the Amp 2-3 pm
-  *14* YOSE-tines Day in the Fellowship Hall 2-3 pm
-  *21* IME Training/YOSE 6-7 pm
-  *28* YOSE 6-7 pm

March

-  *7* YOSE 6-7 pm
-  *14* IME Training/YOSE 6-7 pm
-  *21* Spring Break (No Activities Scheduled)
-  *28* YOSE-Chill 6-7 pm

stay tuned for special events TBA!

MEMBERS IN THE HOSPITAL

Jim Garland Madison Hospital of Huntsville

MEMBERS AT HOME

- | | |
|-----------------|----------------------|
| Maxine Ammons | Samson Mathangani |
| Dave Bamberg | Sarah Moreland |
| Libby Brown | Leon Nix |
| Zelle Buckner | Margaret Northrup |
| Carolyn Cain | June Ousley |
| Mike Chandler | Jaime Payton |
| Geri Dodson | Gaynell Pinson |
| Paul Edfeldt | Susanne Shepherd |
| Esther Evans | Alicia Stigler |
| Milton Fullman | Hazel Turner |
| Natalie Garland | Stan & Sue Virciglio |
| Mavis Hardy | Margaret Walker |
| Richard Horn | Bobbye Weaver |
| Charlotte Kyser | Doris Wilson |
| Al Lowery | |

PRAYER LIST

IN CHRISTIAN SYMPATHY

Libby Brown and family in the death of Dr. Sam Brown on January 17th. A family-only service was streamed and is now available to view on the website.

Maria Lowery and her family, as they mourn the passing of her mother, Margie Blackwood, on Tuesday, January 26th.

THANK YOU

Liz & I want to thank the church for all of the calls, cards, prayers, and other support you have given us in the last month. It is hard to express in words how comforting your show of love has been to us. We also want to thank the church, especially the We Care group and the Children's Ministry for the love that you showed my parents since their move to Birmingham from Mobile over six years ago.

DAVID & LIZ PHILPOT

STAY CONNECTED



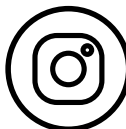
FIND US ONLINE AT VHBC.COM



WATCH RECENT SERVICES &
MESSAGES ON YOUTUBE



STAY UPDATED ON OUR
FACEBOOK PAGE



CONNECT WITH US ON INSTAGRAM



LISTEN TO OUR PODCAST



GIVE ONLINE AT SHELBYNEXT



WORSHIP & PRAY WITH US

Our services have resumed in-person with limited capacity registration. You can also join us every Sunday at 10 am on YouTube, Facebook, or the VHBC.com Live Stream!

If you'd like to see the prayer list, please visit www.vhbc.com/prayer-list to view and contact us for updates.



STAY UPDATED

CHANGE OF PLANS FOR SENIOR ADULT TRIP!

Please note that the Senior Adult Trip scheduled for May 3-7, 2021 has been changed to September 20-24, 2021. If you have not yet registered, there is still time! This will be an exciting trip to Savannah, Jekyll Island, and Beaufort, SC. Please contact Martha Neill at martha@vhbc.com or call 205-979-5920, if you are interested in attending.

READ THE GOSPELS ENDS THIS WEEK!

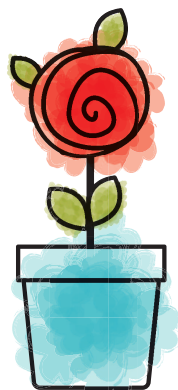
A reading plan for us to read the four gospels together was sent via email on January 4th and is **available to view on our website now**. This is designed for us to read in 33 days. There is a gospel reading of about 3 chapters and a psalm for each day. I encourage you to read the psalm out loud, letting its words be a prayer for you. Let's begin on Tuesday, January 5 as "Day One." By all means, though, don't worry if you miss it. Just pick up the next day.

If you're on Instagram, follow along with us as we post the reading each day!

VHBC GIVING

YTD OFFERING: \$120,580.81

YTD NEEDS: \$168,455.00



VHBC **ministry** **team**

GARY FURR, SENIOR PASTOR

NANCY AKINS, MINISTER TO PRESCHOOL & CHILDREN

TYLER JOHNSON, MINISTER TO STUDENTS

MIKE MCBRAYER, ADMINISTRATIVE PASTOR

MARTY WATTS, MINISTER OF MUSIC & WORSHIP

VESTAVIA HILLS BAPTIST CHURCH