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Variations



VESTAVIA HILLS BAPTIST CHURCH

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VHBC Giving

Many options are available to give to VHBC. Please visit [VHBC.com/stay-connected](https://vhbc.com/stay-connected) to find the links to our Online Giving page and tutorials on how to use our ShelbyNext giving portal on the app and desktop.

MTD Budget Offering

78,237.49

MTD Budget Needs

100,464.00

YTD Budget Offering

937,390.76

YTD Budget Needs

971,152.00

Thank you so very much for your faithful giving. We continue to be able to operate because of you!

SHEPHERD'S ENCOURAGER

DR. GARY FURR

RECONCILIATION & HOPE

Our present moment reminds me of many biblical moments, none of them pleasant to recall. A few of them come to mind. One is Moses and the Israelites in the middle of their wilderness trek, too far to go back and too far from the Promised land to get a second burst of energy. A second is the Exile in the Sixth Century BCE, particularly when Jeremiah warned the Jews that rumors of a quick return home were false. It was going to be a long haul. Yet another is thinking about the disciples on Saturday evening before they knew about the resurrection of Jesus.

Some times come in all lives like those times but rarely do we all experience them simultaneously. It is understandable at this present moment—people live in fear of dying alone, of getting sick, of the confusion of understandings about where we are, and how soon things might get better.

As we continue as a congregation to proceed carefully and thoughtfully, we are entering perhaps the most difficult part of the journey—the impatience with the difficulty and tenacity required at this moment. The panic that is evident in our society is profound. Robert J. Schreiter once asked in a book why it was that even when the disciples encountered Jesus in John 20 (most especially Thomas and his doubts), that the wounds were still visible on his hands and feet?

Traditionally, students of scripture have said it was to let the disciples know that this Risen Jesus was the same One who had been tortured and died. Perhaps that is so. But Schreiter adds another possibility.

The wounds are not there primarily to create a contrast between what Jesus has gone through in his torture and death and what he has now become in his resurrected glory.

*That meaning is certainly there, but it is not the primary one. I believe the wounds are still in evidence because they are part of the message of the resurrection, of why Jesus appears at all: **they are healing wounds, instruments of reconciliation.***


I have been thinking a great deal about the extraordinary ironies of this moment—a global economy in shambles, the nation with the greatest healthcare system humbled by an invisible virus, and about the strange irony of our long and painful past over race simultaneously erupting. As my late friend Jim McClendon used to observe, we are an unreconciled people.

But with that painful recognition comes a wonderful possibility. When were the gospel of hope and new life ever more precious? We possess a message about reconciling love—healing the divides between God and human beings, the inner divisions of the individual soul, and the brokenness between people amid our many tribalisms.

Even as we possess a gospel that is singularly focused on healing the sick, reclaiming the lost ones, mending the divisions, and welcoming the stranger in, we have allowed its message to be diminished into arguments and legalism. “God so loved the world” is still the reigning truth. Can we live in that truth, even when fear and distrust rule the day? Can we truly believe in it? Do we have confidence that the painful memories of the past can be made whole?

I look forward to being back in worship with you after some rest and vacation. As we enter a traditional time of **starting back** in August that now is anything but, I am going to preach a series of messages on the grand vision of God in the New Testament to reconcile the world to God and one another. It is a vision of forgiveness, restoration, and hope. It’s a hard part of the journey we are in, but take care of yourself and rest up. We keep moving because the vision ahead is of a possibility so beautiful and full of hope that if we might catch it would take our breath away.

Gary



THE BOOK OF HOSEA

This Online Bible Study series concludes this Sunday, July 26th!

A special online Bible study series will be offered during July on Sunday mornings. Our own Ken Roxburgh will be teaching each week from the book of Hosea. The prophet's message to a wayward Israel and promise of God's redemption remains relevant for God's people today. These 15-20 minute teaching sessions will be made available each Sunday at 9:15 am through our website on the Stay Connected page. They can also be accessed and viewed at a later time. We are especially grateful to Dr. Roxburgh for offering his time and insights to our church in this way.

**Past episodes of this series can be
found on our video archives page,
YouTube channel, and Facebook page.**

STAY CONNECTED THROUGH VHBC.COM

Visit vhbc.com and click the stay connected button to find updates for our prayer list, online worship schedule, ShelbyNext giving, family resources, and more!

WATCH VHBC ONLINE



vhbc kids

COMING SOON

Parents of children at VHBC -- be on the look out for more information in the coming weeks about VHBC Kids this fall!

- Backpack Blessing
- Bibles for 1st graders
- Sixers advance to Youth Ministry
- Bible study class for Age Fours - Grade 6



WAGON

In the past year, we've welcomed several members to our VHBC church family. Our welcome wagon continues with Dana & Jim Basinger!



Dana and Jim joined VHBC earlier this year, shortly before Covid-19 prohibited us from meeting together. While Jim is originally from this area, Dana lived in other cities through her early childhood but has been here since the age of 12. Jim graduated from Auburn University. He is a graphic designer and owns his own business.

Dana received her B.A. and M.A degrees from UAB. Dana is Assistant Dean in the College of Arts & Sciences at Samford University and enjoys sharing her expertise and understanding of student life with students and families to help them prepare for and succeed in college.

Dana and Jim have three daughters. One lives locally, one lives in Greenville, SC, and one lives in Montgomery. Dana enjoys exercising, reading, and traveling. She often takes students to London and says it is one of her favorite places. Jim enjoys cycling, running, travel, music (although he says he is not a musician himself), painting, and sports. They have recently begun gardening.

The Basingers have many connections with VHBC. Through her work at Samford, Dana knows many VHBC members who are on faculty or staff there. Jim and Mindy Bodenhamer have been friends since high school.

The Basingers have been utilizing our online resources to worship and stay connected. They have not joined a Sunday School class yet but hope to once we can worship together again. They are thrilled to be a part of VHBC.

Check out our next issue to welcome another new member at VHBC!

UPCOMING EVENTS



Encouragement & Conversation for VHBC Ladies

July 26th at 6:30

Terri Byrd will lead in a time of thinking about sacred space. Please join us by signing up at VHBC.com or calling the church office. On the day of the event, you will receive a ZOOM link from Nancy.

We hope to see you there!



Going Back to School

A Conversation for Grade School Parents

August 2nd at 5:00 pm

No matter when or where children start school, many may have anxious feelings. Even children who are excited to get back into a routine may feel unsure. Sign up for this online seminar at VHBC.com. A link to connect will be sent from Nancy on Sunday, August 2nd.



seed camp update

at home

Thank you all for your support as we accomplished Seed Camp *at Home* this summer! Although it looked a bit different from years past, we are so grateful to Nancy Akins, Lucas Dorion, Alabama CBF, Sowing Seeds of Hope, and our volunteers. Here are some photos that captured our time distributing Seed Camp bags last Monday, July 13th.

