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Variations

VESTAVIA HILLS BAPTIST CHURCH

CONTENTS

03 VHBC GIVING



**04 SHEPHERD'S
ENCOURAGER**



**06 THE BOOK OF
HOSEA SERIES**



**07 UPCOMING
EVENTS**



**08 WELCOME
WAGON**



**09 SEED CAMP AT
HOME**



**10 THANK YOU
CARD**



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

33,488.00

MTD Budget Needs

100,464.00

YTD Budget Offering

961,596.00

YTD Budget Needs

904,176.00

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

NOTES FROM THE VALLEY OF THE SHADOW OF DEATH

Our church family lost two wonderful people last week. Betty Longshore went home to be with the Lord. She was 92. How we will miss her, but I choose to think she is home with her husband Les again. We had a simple graveside service last Thursday. Then on Friday evening, we met at the amphitheater outdoors for a memorial for Tyson Stewart, who died the previous Sunday morning at the tender age of 19. His cousin, Corinne gave a beautiful tribute, as did his grandfather George and his Dad, Mark. George read the following scripture during the service:

Isaiah 40:31 *But they who wait for the Lord shall renew their strength they shall mount up with wings like eagles. They shall run and not be weary; they shall walk and not faint.*

Our church knew and loved Tyson and his family his whole life. We are sad and grieving with them. Reflecting on that verse, I said these things Friday evening. Maybe they will help you on your journey with sorrow.

“The first thing we must do is to remember our gratitude for Tyson—the joy of his life, to hold on with every fingernail to every story of his life because it was here. That will not be lost because God keeps it for us. I believe that.

The second is to proclaim hope in the middle of hopelessness. This is not the end of us or him. He made a profession of faith and it was alive in him. And as a preacher once said, it is not the hold we have on God that counts, but the hold God has on us. God had a hold on Tyson.

continued on page 5

Third, we are here to believe that this emptiness and sadness and the tears are not all there

are. They are real, and they go for a long time, but they are not the finish of us. It sounds so unreal to say that. But many of us are in a place where we have been living right next to so many people who are not here now.

For me, it is becoming literally hundreds. I have lost so many people whose first names immediately bring up a lifetime of memories. I am who I am in part because of Forrest and Grandpa and Grandma, but also Charlie and Otis, Amelia and Philip my friend, and on and on the list goes. And in my chest the question, "They were so real, where are they now?"

Classmates teachers and church members and family and friends. The question can hit hard.

There was life, and then it was not here where I could touch it. They spoke to me. I wrote down things they said. They changed my mind and sometimes the course of my life. How can they be gone? And so, we come full circle to something to hold onto here, a week later from the last perfect day with Tyson in the world with us—this love of God's is strong enough to hold him and all of them. "Nothing shall separate us from the love of God in Christ Jesus." That's what Paul said.

We call it heaven, eternal life, but for forty-one years as a preacher, I have held to that truth as a life preserver --- not for my own physical life, but my hope. We're going to walk again. What is lost will be found. What was once desert will bloom again.

We've got a long road back from where we're sitting tonight, but we're going to get there. God is for us if the Bible is true. God has Tyson in his presence if the gospel is real. All the rest, the desert, and the terrible questions and the nights of my soul wrestling with this, we'll get through. But together, somehow, we'll keep going. And what we can't see yet, well, we will just keep walking until we do. Hold each other. And somewhere down this road, so wonderful but also so full of hard, almost impossible things to bear, we'll see clearly at last."

If you wish to view Tyson's service, please click [here](#).

Gary



Online Bible Study series continues Sunday mornings in July!

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.

UPCOMING EVENTS

Processing Grief with Mental

Health Professionals

July 12th at 5:00

Everyone processes grief differently, and in this time of intense shared grief, we invite you to a **virtual session** geared towards parents talking to their children about grief and tragedy. We will be joined by Dr. Kezziah McDaniel EdD LPC-S, Director of Clinical Services at Hill Crest Behavioral Health to walk us through turbulent times. Please click on this **link** to get access to the Zoom meeting.

Encouragement & Conversation for VHBC Ladies

July 12th & 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!

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





WAGON

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



Bonnie is from Birmingham and Joe is from Mobile. They met while working at South Central Bell. Joe is now retired and Bonnie is working from home right now. Joe volunteers as a greeter at Brookwood Hospital and Children's Hospital and hopes to be back to volunteering soon.

They have two sons, Matthew and Michael. Matthew lives in Jacksonville FL with his wife and three year old and Michael lives in Birmingham. They knew many members of our church before they joined and were also influenced by our wonderful music program. Bonnie is a member of our choir. They are also members of the Joyful Noise Sunday School Class. We welcome them and hope to see them soon!

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



Seed Camp AT HOME is happening next week! We will deliver the bags to the children in Perry County this **Monday, July 13.**

at home

Here are two ways you can help!

1) Financially- We have invited our VHBC volunteers who have staffed Seed Camp in the past to contribute their typical registration costs (\$60) to support Seed Camp AT HOME. You can join them by giving online or by check to "Seed Camp". Any amount is welcome.

2) Prayer- Pray for the families and children that will receive these bags. Pray that Seed Camp At Home will touch their lives in an impactful, meaningful way.

Reach out to elise@vhbc.com with any questions!



Thanks to our helpers for packing bags for our participants this summer!

thank you

Gratitude is the word that comes to mind when my brother Kenneth Churchill became ill with leukemia in 2016, and this congregation began immediately to pray for him and our family. How grateful I am to you for your long and faithful support. Before my brother died, he composed a message that he asked one of his daughters to post on Facebook. This is part of that message. It is a message for all of you.
-- Sheryl Buckner

I want to thank everyone that has taken the time to contribute positively to my mental state and health situation over the past four years. Your phone calls, cards, visits, and most of all your prayers --- I have felt every one of them.

I was blessed that God gave me Leukemia and I finally realized that He had more for me to accomplish. It gave me the power and opportunity to interact with so many people from different walks of life such as nurses, doctors, friends, family, and those that I hadn't seen or talked in many years. Sharing what Jesus Christ had done for me was such a divine gift.

*My life in Heaven will be as God has promised. May God continue to bless all of you.
-Kenneth Churchill*

Phil 1:3
