

VHBC

FEBRUARY 21, 2023

VOL. 30 ISS. 4

Connections



**LENT
BEGINS
FEB. 22**



LENTEN HYMN

**Lord, who throughout these forty days
For us didst fast and pray,
Teach us with Thee to mourn our sins,
And close by Thee to stay.**

**As Thou with Satan didst contend
And didst the victory win,
O give us strength in Thee to fight,
In Thee to conquer sin.**

**And through these days of penitence,
And through Thy Passiontide,
Yea, evermore, in life and death,
Jesus! with us abide.**

**Abide with us, that so this life
Of suffering overpast,
An Easter of unending joy
We may attain at last!**

Claudia Frances Hernaman (1838-1898)



PAGES 8-9
Read Part 2 of Eric's
Love Story

contents

SPECIALS

- 02** Lenten Hymn
- 07** Lenten Devotion
- 11** A Note on Lent
- 12** A Word from Bonhoeffer

FEATURES

- 04** Weekly Schedule
- 08** Pastor's Article
- 10** Wednesdays at VHBC
- 13** Prayer List

EXCLUSIVES

- 05** Journey Through Lent
- 06** Ways to Connect During Lent
- 09** Easter Baptism Service
- 14** Stories to Reckon With

WEEKLY SCHEDULE AT VHBC



8:45 AM SUNDAY MORNING BIBLE STUDY

- Children's Sunday School meets in the Children's Building. Please sign your child in at the front reception desk.
- Find our Welcome Team in the main foyer if you need assistance looking for a class for you and your family.

10:00 AM WORSHIP IN THE SANCTUARY

- Worship guides and hymn sheets are available at the sanctuary entrances.
- If you are unable to worship in person with us, please join us online or over the radio at 91.1 FM.
- Worship Care for babies through Kindergarten begins at 9:45 am.

5:00 PM YOUTH ON SUNDAY EVENING

- All youth meet in the Student Building to play games, listen to a devotion, and prepare for the upcoming week.

4:45 PM FELLOWSHIP SUPPER

- Meet us in the Fellowship Hall starting at 4:45 every Wednesday.
- Register online weekly at vhbc.com to reserve your meal!
- Adults/Youth \$6 per person
- Kids (K-6th) \$4 per person
- Preschoolers & College Students eat free!

4:45 PM HANDBELLS

5:30 PM CHILDREN'S CHOIRS

6:00 PM YOUTH ACTIVITIES

6:00 PM ADULT SESSIONS

6:15 PM CHILDREN'S ACTIVITIES

7:00 PM SANCTUARY CHOIR



JOURNEY THROUGH LENT



Ash Wednesday

The Lenten season begins at VHBC on Wednesday, February 22. Join us that evening for dinner, beginning at 4:45 pm and a special Ash Wednesday service at 6 pm in the Sanctuary.

*Traditionally, the Lenten season is a time of fasting. People "give up" something for Lent. The idea is not to punish ourselves, but to put aside something that may distract us from our communion with God. It is a time for special devotion to God, a time when He may "abide with us" in a special way. Lent is a time to refocus on our relationship with Christ. (Devotion from *The One Year Book of Hymns*)*

Sundays during Lent

On February 26, Pastor Eric Spivey will begin his Lenten Preaching Series

Remember.

2/26: *Tempted*

Genesis 2:15-17; 3:1-8; Matthew 4:1-11

3/5: *Called*

Genesis 12:1-4a; Matthew 17:1-9

3/12: *Refreshed*

Exodus 17:1-7; John 4:5-42

3/19: *Anointed*

1 Samuel 16:1-13; John 9:1-41

3/26: Guest Preacher -
Tyshawn Gardner

4/2: *Remember Who You Are*

Philippians 2:1-11; Matthew 21:1-11

4/9: *Alive in Christ*

Romans 6:3-11; Matthew 28:1-10



Palm Sunday

Families with children (kindergarten - sixth grade) are invited to *Walk with Jesus: A Palm Sunday experience* on April 2 from 8:45-9:45 am in the Children's Building. Children are invited to process into worship waving palm branches and sing. If you would like your child to participate, please have them meet in the Chapel at 9:45 am.

Easter

All are welcome to join us in our celebration of the risen Christ! Worship begins at 10 am and families are invited to bring flowers to decorate the cross on the lawn. We are also inviting those who have not celebrated believer's baptism to participate in our Easter Baptism Service. Read more about this special time on page 9.



Journey

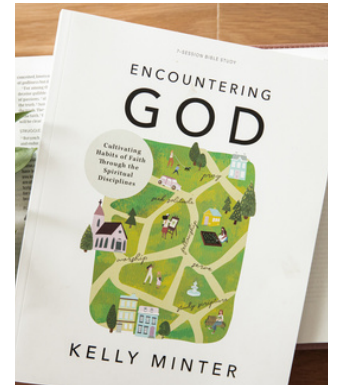
THROUGH

Lent

Ways to Connect during Lent

Women's Bible Study

Women are invited to join a 7-week study, *Encountering God* by Kelly Minter with opportunities to join on Sunday evenings at 6 pm or Tuesday mornings at 10 am.



Adult Bible Study

Dennis Anderson will be leading a Wednesday morning Bible study, starting Wednesday, March 1st - **Seven Days that Changed the World: The Last Week in the Life of Christ.** Meetings will start at 10 am in the Fireside Room.



Bible Study for College Students

Journey Thru Lent, a student-centered gathering is an opportunity for our local college students to join us at VHBC for dinner and Bible study Wednesday in March. Alexis Johnson will be facilitating this great group of students at 6 pm in the Young Adult classroom (next to the library).



LENTEN SCHEDULE

- *Ash Wednesday*
February 22, 2023 at 6 pm
- *Palm Sunday*
April 2, 2023 at 10 am
- *Maundy Thursday*
April 6, 2023 at 6 pm
- *Good Friday*
April 7, 2023 at 11 am
- *Easter*
April 9, 2023 at 10 am

Sign up at
vhbc.com/lent

LENTEN DEVOTION FOR
ASH WEDNESDAY

Matthew 6:1-6, 16-21

The other day I was frantically cleaning my house when my daughter walked in. "Who's coming over?" she asked. I wasn't sure whether to be offended or laugh, because she had me pegged. When someone is coming over, I go into hyper-cleaning mode. I live in fear that one day someone will discover that I am not the world's most fastidious housekeeper.

It occurs to me that we spend a lot of time and money pretending to be something that we are not. From Botox to Spandex, from snapchat filters to social media highlight reels, we are desperate to give the impression that we've got it all together.

I think the root of this grandstanding is our natural human tendency to compare ourselves to others, and a deep-seated fear that we simply don't measure up.

Today's text reminds us that this tendency towards "humble bragging" and comparison isn't anything new. It is as old as humanity, and it is a dangerous trap. Jesus uses the examples of giving, praying, and fasting to illustrate that we are not called to compete, show off, or compare ourselves to one another. We're simply called to do what is right, quietly and without fanfare.

Text from Reflections, Daily Devotional Guide for February 22, available in the church foyer.

FEATURED ARTICLE

the rest of the story

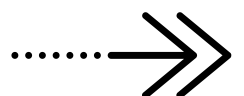


In the last newsletter, I shared the first part of my February love story. I told the story of my adoption in 1969 by John and Jean Spivey. This is the "rest of the story."

At the beginning of 2018, I pulled the first thread of my biological story. Until that moment, I had no biological history, no story beyond the moment my parents picked me up at the Indianapolis Methodist hospital on Valentine's Day, 1969.

On a day in January, 2018 I emailed a distant cousin through a DNA connection. Two hours later, she called me back! With words dripping with excitement, this professional genealogist gave me my first biological connection - William and Frederick Trost were my great, great grandparents. I went from no story to hearing of distant relatives immigrating from Germany to Ohio.

Within days, I received the first pictures of any biological family. My daughters, wife, and I began looking for similarities and traits in faces long past. This first thread brought tremendous gratitude. This information led me to look for new threads using a different DNA company. I sent another email to a stranger. And heard nothing!



the rest of the story

Then on Tuesday, July 31st, in the middle of a Tuesday afternoon, I received this email.

Hello, My name is...I gave birth to a son on February 10, 1969 at the Methodist hospital in Indianapolis, Indiana. I gave him up for adoption through The Children's Services of Indiana. The father and I were both students at Purdue University. I think I might be your birth mother.

My gratitude and joy came together later that fall when my birth mother, Joanna, and 3 half siblings traveled to Georgia to meet my family and me. Gratitude pushed us past the awkwardness. Joy filled our lungs while tears flowed down our cheeks as we told stories, shared family pictures, and took new photographs.

For the first time, I knew my whole love story - the story of a young woman who loved me enough to let me go and the family who loved me enough to welcome me became one story. Joanna has taught me selfless, sacrificial love is costly and powerfully life giving. We celebrated Joanna's love for me and her new role in our lives 2 years ago when attended our daughter's wedding - seated as a grandmother.

Often, during this journey, friends have remarked, "I can't imagine how you are feeling." Imagine a gumbo with all of the emotions of Thanksgiving and Christmas and you get the picture. Better yet, listen to the Psalmist speak for me from 2,500 years ago, "Oh give thanks to the LORD...Sing to him, sing praises to him; tell of all his wondrous works!"

I am aware my adoption story is not every adoption story. I know adopted children and adoptive parents whose stories have not gone well. Yet, at the heart of these stories I find a powerful example of God's love at work - even in the pain.

I share my love story with you to help my church family know me better. I also hope this story can help us find the examples of God's love at work in our lives.

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

ERIC



EASTER BAPTISM SERVICE

On Easter morning, Vestavia Hills Baptist Church will provide an Easter Baptism Service. We invite anyone who believes in (holds tightly to) Jesus as their Lord, but who has not celebrated a believer's baptism to participate. This is also a beautiful opportunity for anyone who wishes to make their first commitment to Jesus as Savior.

For centuries Christian churches have conducted baptism services on Easter Sunday. Baptism symbolizes the inner commitment we make to Jesus as Lord and Savior. Baptism on Easter allows us to participate in the death of Jesus on Good Friday - as we go under the water - and his resurrection on Sunday - as we come out.

If you (or someone in your family) are interested in participating in this meaningful service or want to talk about your spiritual commitment to Jesus, please contact any of our ministers or reach out directly to Pastor Eric Spivey (eric@vhbc.com or 205.979.5920).

WEDNESDAYS AT VHBC

Fellowship Supper

Meals are served in the Fellowship Hall from 4:45 - 5:45 pm and can be pre-ordered/paid online or in person on Wednesdays.

Pricing:

Adults \$6

Kids \$4

Preschool \$0

College \$0

Menu

2/22: Spaghetti w/meat sauce, green beans, garden salad, garlic bread (kids: pizza, fries, dessert)

3/1: Lemon pepper chicken, squash casserole, black eyed peas, roll, dessert (kids: chicken fingers, fries, dessert)

3/8: Smoked sausage & tortellini pasta salad, garlic bread, dessert (kids: pizza, fries, dessert)

Wednesday Sessions during Lent

▶ Ash Wednesday

February 22 at 6 pm
VHBC Sanctuary

Adults and youth are invited to partake in this special service in the sanctuary. Children will meet in their usual space for a service all their own.



▶ Lenten Sessions

Beginning March 1st

Mission Anew in the Fellowship Hall with Pastor Eric Spivey. He will outline our mission in God's kingdom throughout the month of March.

Freeing Jesus by Diana Butler Bass book study with Melissa McBrayer in the Wild Goose classroom. Please sign up online and read the first chapter by March 1st.

Contemplative Prayer in the Chapel with George Van Kirk continues at 6 pm each Wednesday evening.

NEWS & EVENTS

VOLUNTEERS AROUND THE CHURCH

CHILDREN'S RECEPTION DESK

FEB 26

Barbara Kimbrel

MAR 5

Judy Schlegel

WORSHIP CARE (9:45 am until end of worship)

FEB 26

Babies & Creepers: Lisa Speegle, Brandi Brownell

Walking Ones - Threes: Merryl Cooper

Fours - K: Adam & Melissa Pouncey

MAR 5

Babies & Creepers: Kristie Chandler, Amy Hamilton

Walking Ones - Threes: Libby Pittman, Rachel Farley

Fours - K: Jo Davis, Carolyn Slappey

WELCOME TEAM

FEB 26/MAR 5

Sharon Hartzog

Carolyn Slappey

Brandi Brownell

Larry Brownell

Dan Caldwell

Chuck Gillespie

LaRue Gillespie

Sharon Repp

Lisa Speegle

TRANSPORTATION TEAM

FEB 26 Craig Youngblood

Richard Horn

MAR 5 Brent Warren

Scott Phillips

WORSHIP TECHNOLOGY TEAM

FEB 26 Norfleete Day, Hal David, David Philpot

MAR 5 Greg Ruff, Hal David, Lilie Van Giessen



A NOTE ON LENT

Lent is the forty-day season of reflection and preparation for the death and resurrection of Jesus. It is a time of repentance, of considering Christ's sufferings and rethinking how we are called to take up our own crosses. Some of us give up things like chocolate or television during this season as a sort of fasting, and others try to integrate something new into their lives, like visiting folks in prison, sewing clothes, exercising, or praying. It is a good season to rethink how we live and to let some things go, or maybe even to develop some new holy habits.

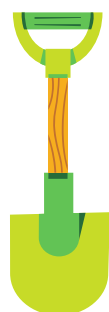
Ash Wednesday marks the beginning of Lent. Traditionally, the palm branches from Palm Sunday of the previous year are burned and the ashes are placed on the foreheads of Christians as a sign of repentance.

FROM P.139 COMMON PRAYER: A LITURGY FOR ORDINARY RADICALS

Spring

**SERVE
DAY**

Sunday, April 23rd



**CAREGIVER
SUPPORT
GROUP**

**Thursday, March 16
11 am
Newk's Vestavia**

WORDS FROM DIETRICK BONHOEFFER
FOR ASH WEDNESDAY

God Deceives No One

In the beginning, even before the start of his ministry, Jesus is tempted by the devil.

The powers of evil, of falling away from God, approach him and try to bring him down at the very moment when he is assuming his role as Messiah (Luke 4:3-4).

Luke reports that Jesus is famished, and then the devil confronts him: If you are the Son of God, tell this stone to become bread, and you will be filled. Why, after all, do you have such power? If you are the Son of God, prove your power...

In this voice of apparent intercessory love, Jesus recognizes the voice of the devil. It was an outrageous suggestion, and he rejects the devil: "One does not live by bread alone, but by every word that comes from the mouth of God" (Matt 4:4). Here that means basically: God deceives no one.

God is on the Cross: Reflections on Lent and Easter

PRAYER

IN THE HOSPITAL

UPCOMING PROCEDURES

ONGOING
TREATMENTS/RECOVERY

Linda Anderson
John Bell
Libby Brown
Mona Fisher
Bob Hardy

Robin Johnson
Jerri Pare'
Gaynell Pinson
Barbara Price
Kay Worley

HOMEBOUND & WE CARE

Juanita Blackburn
Ann Bush
Mary Creech
Jane Deagon
Franciska Dyck
Esther Evans
Milton Fullman
Al & Shirley Furr
Pat Gillespie
Sandy Gillis
Mavis Hardy
Ruford Hodges
Peggy Jones
Charlotte Kyser

Dot Lowe
Al Lowery
Mary Lysaght
Samson Mathangani
Kitty Newell
Margaret Northrup
Jerry & Lorelle
Singleton
Jean Spivey
Alicia Stigler
Hazel Turner
Betty Vanstrum
Doris Wilson

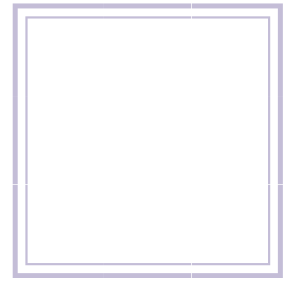
MISSIONARIES AROUND THE WORLD

Dianne & Shane McNary - Slovakia
Awon Shanglai - India
Marco & Omar Vallejo - Mexico
Richard Owiti Kogola, Paul Mbogo, Benson
Mwangangi, & Josphat Thiori - Kenya
Chuck Tarter - Ireland
Kandy & Paul Huynh - Cambodia

**PLEASE SEND UPDATES
TO THE PRAYER LIST**

JENNIFER TIEHEN,
MINISTRY ASSISTANT
JENNIFER@VHBC.COM
205.979.5920

VHBC CONNECTIONS IS PUBLISHED BIWEEKLY BY
VESTAVIA HILLS BAPTIST CHURCH
2600 VESTAVIA DRIVE, BIRMINGHAM, AL 35216



VHBC MINISTRY STAFF

NANCY AKINS, MINISTER TO PRESCHOOL/CHILDREN
TYLER JOHNSON, MINISTER TO STUDENTS
MIKE MCBRAYER, ADMINISTRATIVE PASTOR
DR. ERIC SPIVEY, SENIOR PASTOR
LAURA TADLOCK, MINISTRY ASSISTANT
MARTY WATTS, MINISTER OF MUSIC & WORSHIP



DON'T FORGET!

As part of our Fellowship Anew theme for Epiphany, we are bringing back name tags for February. Please take time to complete your name tag when you come to worship and make an effort to learn the name of of someone new to you.

Stories to reckon with

a moth-inspired event



Sunday, March 19th at 5 pm
VHBC Fellowship Hall
Admission: \$10
Host: George Elliott



Everyone is invited! Food will be served and childcare is available!
Register at vhbc.com/stories