



The Valley Voice

VALLEY CHRISTIAN CHURCH
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NO. 3

COFFEE AND A STORY

In January, I tallied all the parks and outdoor spaces in and around Birmingham that Carrie and/or I took Sadie to in 2020 after we moved here at the start of August. If you count Valley's own walking trail and playground, we made it to eighteen different outdoor spaces in twenty-two weeks—a new one almost every week! Carrie and I also spent our New Year's Day taking a tour of several murals that Birmingham is justly well-regarded for, and we have many more locations on our list for 2021.

I have said this many times by now, but I know these are not the circumstances any of us imagined our time together being like, at least initially. But I am grateful that my family and I are not only here, but have made a regular practice of exploring so many different places and spaces. Our family outings to each have been among the genuine highlights of my 2020, and they serve to remind me that in times of transition and tumult, God's presence amid beauty remains everlasting.

I think of the Lenten season we are about to turn towards in a couple of short weeks, and how Lent is just as much about picking up new holy practices as it is about giving up old temptations. The imposition of ashes on Ash Wednesday is an addition to our outward appearance, an adornment made not to draw attention to our beauty, but to our faith. Lent begins with our adding something, and I have appreciated all the many things Carrie and I have added to our lives by moving here.

In that spirit, I invite you to receive ashes for Ash Wednesday in an outdoor, drive-thru, "ashes-to-go" manner at the roundabout in front of our church building on Wednesday, February 17, from 11:00 am to 1:00 pm. Our elders Sarah Draper and John Gregory will be assisting in offering ashes and prayer to everyone. For everyone's safety, we will ask that you remain in your car and be masked throughout the entire offering of ashes and prayer.

Finally, I am excited to share that Lola Kiser and I have been hard at work these past few weeks building the first-person theme of last Advent's devotional book into a Lenten sermon series and Holy Week devotional book! Beginning Sunday, February 21, I will be preaching through the Passion story using perspectives of several key characters, while other characters are given voice in this year's Holy Week devotions.

I look forward to experiencing my first Lenten season alongside all of you as your minister.
Christ's and yours, Pastor Eric

ASH WEDNESDAY, FEBRUARY 17TH

You are invited to receive ashes and prayer in a drive-thru 'ashes-to-go' manner outdoors at the church roundabout from 11:00 am to 1:00 pm on Ash Wednesday, February 17. For everyone's safety, please remain in your car and be masked throughout the entire offering of ashes and prayer.

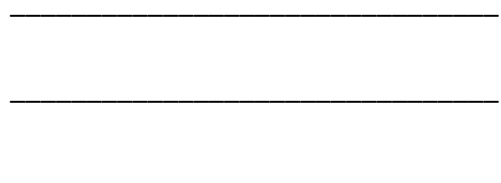
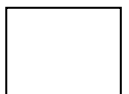
Then, at 5:30 pm, join Pastor Eric on Zoom in our usual worship room for a brief Ash Wednesday devotional service. Holy Communion will be included, so be ready with those elements at your home or worship space as part of the devotional.



FAITH, HOPE AND LOVE

The Greatest of These is Love - 1 Corinthians 13:13
February is the month of love, and Valley Christian Church wishes a hug and a kiss for each of you, and of course a pretty Valentine's decorated cookie. Thanks to Eve Harman for inspiration and Sarah Draper for setting up the photo shoot. Where is the cookie? Somehow it just disappeared.

VALLEY CHRISTIAN CHURCH
2600 CHEROKEE PLACE
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WORKDAY AT VALLEY 2-13-21

There will be workday this coming Saturday from 9 – noon on 2-13-21. Hope to see you there.

WEEK OF COMPASSION OFFERING

Let Love Flow

“Nobody hungry, nobody thirsty,
shades from the sun, shelter from the wind.”

Isaiah 49:10a

We will be receiving the Week of Compassion Offering during the month of February. Week of Compassion offering gives aid to those who are experiencing disasters in their lives. When you give to Week of Compassion, you let love flow. You empower families and communities around the world to live healthier, safer, more hope filled lives. And ultimately, you build a world that honors the interconnectedness of all God’s people.

MOUNTAIN BROOK CITY ALERTS

Opt-In to receive Mountain Brook City Alerts via text message – Text “MOUNTAINBROOK” to 91896

DID YOU KNOW?

Support your local community. Shop your city first. Keep your sales tax dollars in your city by using, for example, Mountain Brook or Vestavia Hills, instead of Birmingham when ordering online or from catalogs as your delivery address.

BUILDING VALLEY MACEDONIA HISTORY – PART TWO

The first event after our organizational meeting was a trip for members of both churches to the recently built Civil Rights Institute. Many of us were living in Birmingham during the sixties and had experienced the fear, the physical and emotional distress, and the violence that permeated the city. The tour of the Institute was led by Rev. Lewis of Macedonia and Rev. Clifford of Valley. After lunch they led us in a discussion of our memories and our reactions to what we had seen at the Institute. The day was an educational experience, although painful, and also an opportunity for us to get acquainted with each other. At the conclusion of this workshop we all agreed that such shared events were important and should continue.

In preparation for Easter of the following year the group sponsored joint worship services: Maundy Thursday and supper at Valley, Easter morning and breakfast at Macedonia. These services were alternated between churches each year and they have continued until the present. Several times the ministers exchanged pulpits on Sunday and on at least two occasions the members of one church attended the Sunday worship service of the other.

Service projects have always been an important part of Building Valley Macedonia, now called BVM. One of our objectives was to choose projects that would show to the community that people of both races could work together in harmony and love toward a common goal. To that end, we volunteered our group to work with Habitat for Humanity in renovating older houses. We were told that ours was the first mixed racial group in our area working with Habitat, although there had been other groups of each race separately helping with Habitat projects. A picture of one house we worked on is located on the table in the library.

One of our most successful projects was a tutoring program each Monday night at Macedonia for elementary school students in the areas of reading, mathematics, history and English. Children from both churches, as well as from the neighborhood, attended. Rev. Lewis used the Macedonia van to provide transportation to anyone who needed it. Following the study sessions we always offered everyone a light supper.

Led by “Miss” Maggie Bristow of Macedonia and Rev. Carl Flock, our retired Regional Minister, we pieced a quilt top and then quilted it by meeting on one Saturday each month. After many stuck fingers and lots of fellowship, the quilt was finished and given to a needy family at a special dedicatory service at Macedonia. A picture of the quilt now hangs in our church office.

To be continued....

LIFE IN THE VALLEY

- Dear Valley Christian Friends – Please excuse my slow response, but I did want to thank you for your very generous Christmas gift! It is both a privilege and a pleasure to serve our Lord and you as the pianist at VCC. It is always my prayer that my music will be reverent and worshipful and a sweet fragrance before our Savior. After being stuck at home for almost a year, we have started making a few home improvements. I am planning to use your monetary gift to help fund some of that. So, thank you again. I appreciate your kindness to me. - In His love, Margaret Cox.
- Keep the people of Fultondale in your prayers because of the tornado that went through their community recently.
- Ginny Guindon called Odelia Reyes (Valley’s former housekeeper) who lives in Fultondale and she said her and her family escaped harm from the tornado.
- Margaret Cox’s good friends, Tim and Sherry, who we have been praying for healing for Sherry’s cancer have found out that Sherry is going on hospice. Please pray for them again.
- Carrie Atcheson would like to us to pray for the pediatrician in Nashville who was in the news and was held at gunpoint and lost her life in her office. A lot of doctors are concerned about the gun violence in their offices.
- Ted Stuckenschneider’s friend Richard Higgins passed away. Please pray for his friends and family.
- Joan Noland had her 99th birthday recently. Please pray for her.
- Peggi Zinser’s sister-in-law, Linda Rothoff, who is recovering from a broken leg and COVID got to get out to Buc-ee’s in Leeds, a popular spot.
- Linda Reeves’ Aunt Mildred is 96 and recovering from a brain bleed, is back to work! Also her family members in Ethiopia are doing well despite the problems they are having there. Her family member is expecting her baby any day.
- Pastor Eric’s friend Jules Woodson’s mother passed away. Jules works at making churches safer for the members and their children.
- Please call or email the office with your prayer concerns, joys or reports to include in “Life In The Valley”.