



# PERSPECTIVE

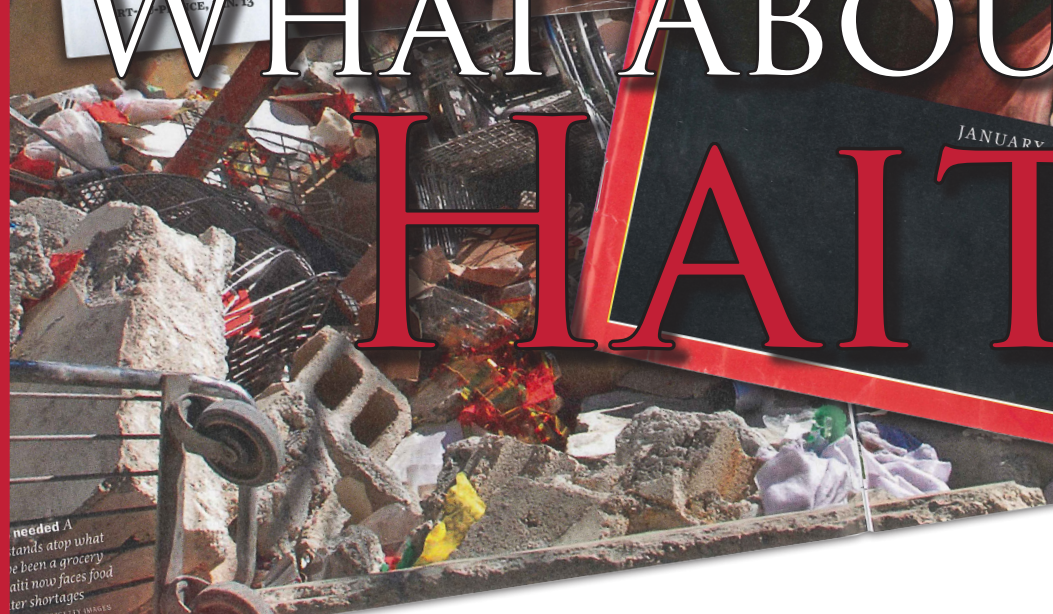
THE MONTHLY JOURNAL OF MOUNT VERNON BAPTIST CHURCH

## WHY HAITI MATTERS

BY BARACK OBAMA



# WHAT ABOUT HAITI?



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# Welcome to Mount Vernon!

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## SERMON SCHEDULE

- February 7 ..... *Myth 5: I'm Defined by What I Do*  
Galatians 4:1-5:12
- February 14 .... *Myth 6: Christ is My Savior, but Not My Lord*  
Galatians 5:13-26
- February 21 ..... *Myth 7: I Don't Need the Local Church*  
Galatians 6:1-18
- February 28 ..... *The King and His Kingdom of Refuge*  
Psalm 2  
Guest Preacher: Tony Higgins



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# New Members



**CAMDEN & MARY CHERBONNIER**  
(KELLIE ANN, AMY GRACE)  
Chamblee



**TONY & NATALIE WATSON**  
Tucker



**KIMBERLY FERGUSON**  
(BRIAN)  
Marietta

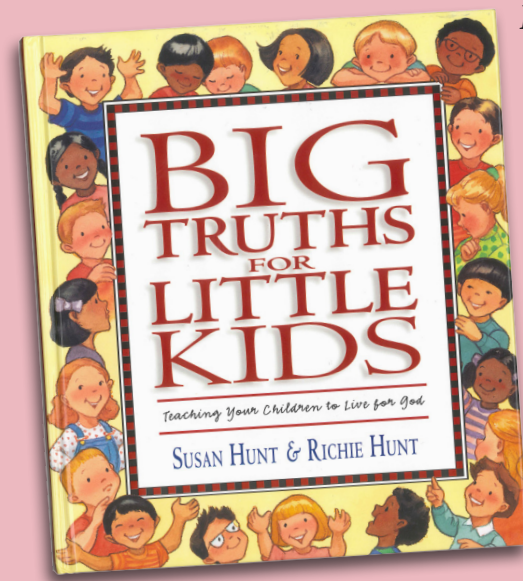


**RYAN & AMY LAMBERT**  
(JOSEPH, ANNA, ESTHER, JESSE, NAOMI)  
Sandy Springs

# The Bookshelf

**Introduction**

Navigating through all the children’s resources and educational tools for parents is like making your way through a new house in the dark. You know approximately where the light switches are and the location of the thermostat. You’re not exactly sure how far the wall extends, so you may have a sore shoulder from all the bumps. It takes time to learn all the ins-and-outs of a new house. The same is similar to navigating all the resources for parents and a children’s ministry that seeks to raise children in the fear and admonition of the Lord. Thus, in the following book reviews, I hope to shed light on some of the darkness by making you aware of four good resources.



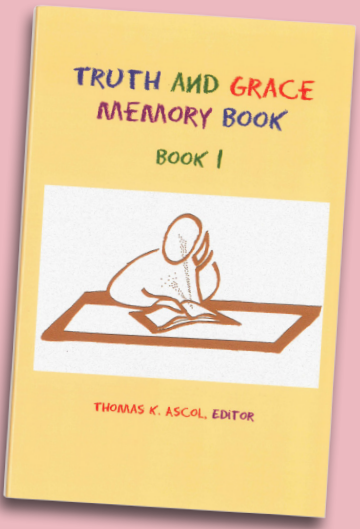
**Big Truths for Little Kids (ages 4-8)**  
Susan Hunt and Richie Hunt

A mother heard her little boy telling his friend that his daddy was at work. “Why does he go to work?” asked the friend. Without hesitation this little theologian answered, “For God’s glory.” What Christian parent wouldn’t love to hear that kind of response? In this book, children will learn to respond biblically as parents are able to lead them through learning the basic truths of a catechism. A catechism is simply a series of questions and answers that systematically teach the doctrinal content of the Bible. Families can follow Caleb and Cassie, the “Catechism Kids,” in their daily adventures from a birthday party at the zoo to camping trips. In each scene, the new biblical truths they learn come alive, and children gain a framework for building a Christian worldview. With an easy to use format and helpful information for parents, you will find this book a fun and useful tool for teaching children the deep truths of God.

**Truth and Grace Memory Books (ages 2 yrs-12<sup>th</sup> grade)**  
Thomas K. Ascol, Editor

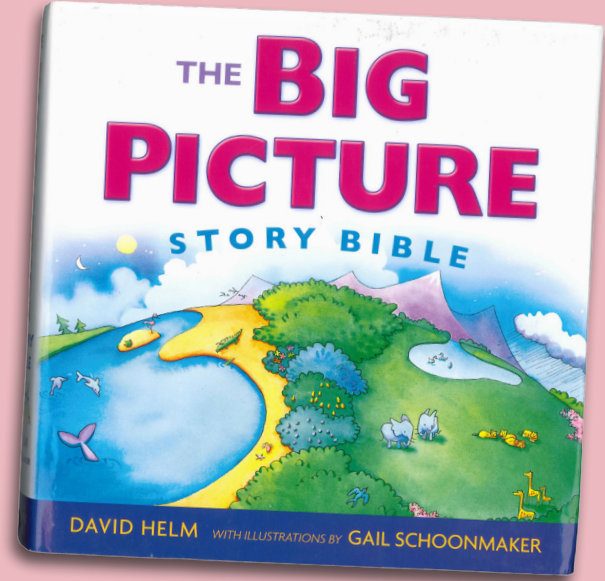
Like many Christian parents, you may find yourself struggling to find biblical materials you can share with your children who are in different stages of development. *Truth and Grace Memory Books* are a set of three little books used from early preschool through the end of high school. These books offer a simple outline of scripture memory, catechism questions, and twenty four great hymns of the faith. While the emphasis is on memory, the underlying message is not helping our children to simply regurgitate verses but rather to teach the verses’ meaning, thereby providing building blocks and a biblical vocabulary in which our children’s understanding can grow.

Children *will* memorize! The question is whether their little minds will be filled *only* with “One fish, two fish, red fish, blue fish” or the great truths of God’s Word that will give them solid ground to stand on when the storms of life blow their way. *Truth and Grace Memory Books* are a treasure trove of God’s truths broken down in kid size bites. Once completed, children will have read the New Testament twice, the gospels three times, Proverbs five times, and the Psalms twice. They will memorize the Beatitudes, the Lord’s Prayer, 1 Corinthians 13, many Psalms ( including 119), and all the books of the Bible. These books are a great tool for taking advantage of this window of time in your child’s life when memorization is comparatively easy and to give them tools for a life worth living.



It can sometimes be overwhelming when looking at the choices of children’s Bibles on the market. Before giving a couple of recommendations, it might be helpful to know that children’s Bibles fall into several categories: 1) Bibles, 2) condensed Bibles, and 3) storybook Bibles.

With condensed Bibles, make sure to choose one that properly reflects and emphasizes the major points of the biblical narrative. In this latter category of storybook Bibles, we need to be mindful to communicate to our children that this is *not* the actual Word of God, as some of these are full of human error and moralistic teaching. Choose ones in which the poetic license helps *explain* the message but not *change* it. Stories should emphasize major biblical themes, people, and events and treat them with reverence and respect. Most importantly, God should be seen as the main character and the “hero” of the Bible, not man because all men, women, and children are sinful. With those qualifications in mind, here are a couple of recommendations.

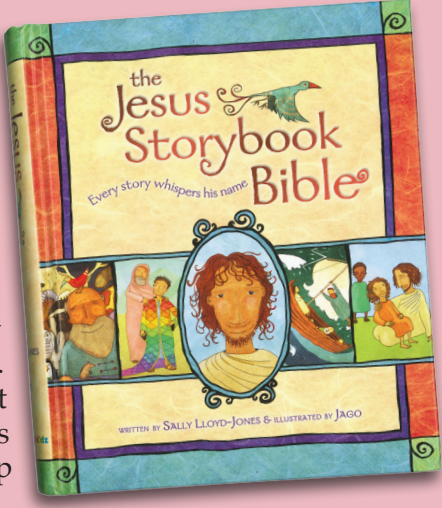


**The Big Picture Story Bible (ages 4-8)**  
David Helm

*The Big Picture Story Bible* is a great example of a storybook Bible that meets all these qualifications. Told in chronological order with simple short sentences, Helm combines the stories with creative pictures to tell the BIG picture of redemptive history of creation, fall, and redemption. It is a BIG book and depicts God as a BIG God!

**The Jesus Storybook Bible: Every Story Whispers His Name (ages 4-8)**  
Sally Lloyd-Jones

The title clearly gives away the plot in *The Jesus Storybook Bible: Every Story Whispers His Name*. Every child loves a hero, and this book tells us of King Jesus, the greatest hero ever. Unlike many other storybook Bibles, this book begins with the “Rescuer” and follows His story all the way through the central stories of the Old and New Testament. Beautiful pictures and lyrical phrases draw in both child and adult as we learn that His story is also our story. A word of warning: It’s real page-turner, and you may find your child (and you) wanting to stay up past your bedtime to keep reading to see what happens next!



**Conclusion**

Let me conclude with a word to all our children’s ministry teachers. If you’re like me, you may struggle at times to find age-appropriate language to communicate big truths about God. You realize in those moments that you’ve grown so accustomed to talking about your faith with language only other adult Christians can understand that it is difficult to teach it with a child-like simplicity. If that is you, these books are the perfect tools. You will learn child-friendly language and the fundamentals to the very things you believe. 🙏

*Books reviewed by Terry Earl*



# WHAT ABOUT HAITI?

On January 12, 2010, a magnitude 7.0 earthquake hit Haiti. The devastation defies the imagination. Millions are without food and housing. The death toll will likely exceed 250,000. This is more people than the entire population of Birmingham. Wheelbarrows and grocery carts are being used to transport the dead to mass gravesites. This leaves millions (in 2008, Haiti was at 9.8 million residents) with little access to food, water, clothing, or shelter.

Our first response must be compassion. Aid is being mobilized by nations and states by nonprofits and by churches. Christian groups bring more than food and water, we bring the gospel and with the gospel comes faith. All who repent and believe in the name of Jesus Christ will be saved. If you have not contributed to the relief efforts, consider sending a donation directly to:

Florida Baptist Convention  
1230 Hendricks Ave.  
Jacksonville, FL 32207

Our second response is reflection. This may be the largest natural catastrophe of our generation. Where is God in the rubble?

Many are having a hard time answering this question. Lisa Miller, religion writer for *Newsweek*, offered no answer. She did cite Rabbi Harold Kushner who said, "The will of God is not to send us the disaster, but to send us the disaster to overcome." While there is a lot of truth in that reply, it still does not address how a good and powerful God could allow such a thing to happen. Miller also quoted a well-known religion professor, but mainly to indicate that it was this kind of suffering that finally led him to abandon the Christian faith. "I just got to a point where I couldn't explain how something like this could happen if there's a loving God in charge of the world." This just proves that it is difficult to understand how a God who loved the world could allow the world to fall apart.

As Christians we should beware of easy, quick, and pithy explanations. Job's friends are a good model for us. When Job first lost everything he had, they gathered around him for seven days. They did not speak. They joined him in silence "because they saw how great his suffering was" (Job 2:13). But eventually, the silence must be broken. On that day, what answer will Christians, who praise the Almighty God, give for the devastation in Haiti?

### Creation was and will be perfect.

Whether we are looking at our television screens viewing the carnage of Haiti or simply looking out our car windows we are aware that this world is far from perfect. Whether it is a natural disaster, like a tree falling on a home, or a human decision, like a criminal robbing by gunpoint, we have evidence that the world is dangerous.

This is not how things began. The message of Genesis 1 is that God created everything and declared it to be good. Everything. "God saw all that he had made, and it was very good" (Genesis 1:31). This is the glorious beginning of history: a world without quarrels and wars, without tornadoes and floods. In this paradise man worked, but the work was not laborious. Every day was a day well planned and well spent. How many nights do you ask yourself, "What did I really accomplish today?" In the beginning, that question did not need to be asked. This is how it was.

And this is how it will be. The Bible begins and ends with Paradise. One day, God's people will again be in his presence. "They will be his people, and God himself will be with them and be their God. He will wipe every tear from their eyes. There will be no more death or mourning or crying or pain, for the old order of things has passed away" (Revelation 21:3-4). In fact, it will be better than that first paradise. Adam and Eve always lived with the ability to sin but not so in heaven. There will not be the

possibility of another fall away from God.

As we reflect upon God's role in Haiti, it is vital to remember that this was not God's original plan for creation and it is not his ultimate plan for his people. So what happened?

### God's creatures rebelled against him.

Though God made everything "very good" he gave angels and humans the ability to sin. We know from 2 Peter 2:4 that some angels sinned. One of these fallen angels tempted the first humans. Not long after the creation of humanity, Adam and Eve veered from God's authority. Though God provided everything they needed, they chose more. They turned their hearts against God. Just as God punished the fallen angels, sending "them into gloomy dungeons to be held for judgment," God also punished humanity. The consequence of humanity's rebellion is described in Genesis 3.

We see the personal consequences of sin. From now on, childbearing will be painful and difficult. From now on, the relationships between men and women will be sources of conflict and controversy. From now on work will be excruciating. From now on, men and women will die.

IN THE MIDST OF TRAGEDY, THROUGH CHRIST, WE MUST FLEE TO GOD.

Just think for a moment about all the difficulties in your life that arise from conflict with other people. A boss who flies off the handle. A child who refuses to listen. A mother that you can't please. Your own desires that you can't control. The conflict God promised would face the first humans faces us today. The consequences of their rebellion against God—including death—are consequences that we must face.

Christians have always understood that sin and its consequences are now part of the fabric of human existence. So Paul wrote to the church in Rome, "sin entered the world through one man, and death through sin" (Rom. 5:12).

There is no way to hide from sin and its consequences because when it entered the world it entered our very hearts. This is what Jesus taught: "evil thoughts, sexual immorality, theft, murder, adultery, greed, malice, deceit, lewdness, envy, slander, arrogance, and folly. All these evils come from inside and make a man 'unclean'" (Mark 7:21-23).

Adam and Eve's rebellion against God is commonly referred to as "The Fall." This is the moment life changed. It explains why we do wicked and awful things. But what does it have to do January 12, 2010?

### God's creation feels the effect of our rebellion.

When sin came into the world, so did judgment. This judgment affected our bodies—we now age and we die. Interestingly, our sin also affected the land. We learned this early on. To Adam, God said:

*Cursed is the ground because of you; through painful toil*

*you will eat of it all the days of your life. It will produce thorns and thistles for you, and you will eat the plants of the field. By the sweat of your brow you will eat your food until you return to the ground, since from it you were taken; for dust you are and to dust you will return (Gen. 3:17-19).*

It's not that God was angry with the ground—he was angry with his rebellious creatures. God's judgment for that anger included a land that would no longer be easy to manage. Such is life today.

For Christmas, one of my kids received a video game called "The Oregon Trail." Players follow in the footsteps of Lewis and Clark who traveled from Pittsburgh to the Pacific Ocean. It was a treacherous journey. Storms, rivers, mountains, sickness, all conspired against the travelers. These dangers are simulated on the computer game as well where the Columbia River regularly swallows up pioneers before they reach their final goal. This is art imitating life.

The land now works against us. This is how Paul understood it:

*For the creation was subjected to frustration, not by its own choice, but by the will of the one who subjected it, in hope that the creation itself will be liberated from its bondage to decay and brought into the glorious freedom of the children of God.*

*We know that the whole creation has been groaning as in the pains of child birth right up to the present time (Romans 8:20-22).*

The teaching of Genesis and Romans helps us understand why natural disasters take place. Like death itself, these disasters are a result of the Fall. God subjected the creation to frustration—he allows it to make life difficult for us—as part of this original judgment upon humanity. But does this mean that the earthquake in Haiti is the wrath of God?

**We do not know why particular disasters happen.**

Biblically, we must say that all natural disasters are the outworking of God's wrath against sin. But this is different from saying that God *particularly* hates Haiti.

Consider Jesus' teaching in the opening verses of Luke 13. Jesus made reference to a natural disaster of sorts—a tower in Siloam crumbled, killing eighteen people. Some wondered what those eighteen did to deserve such a fate. Here is how Jesus answers: "Do you think they were more guilty than all the others living in Jerusalem? I tell you, no! But unless you repent, you too will perish" (Luke 13:4-5).

We can draw at least two conclusions from Jesus' words. First, we have no reason to think that the Haitians' sin directly caused the earthquake. Pat Robertson tried to argue that ever since they made a pact with the devil in the eighteenth-century the country has suffered a laundry list of political and now natural travesties. Robertson left us to think that we can draw a line between that pact with the devil and the casualties of January 12. He did not directly say that the earthquake was God's wrath—but that was

the implication. We certainly live in a fallen world that regularly suffers the consequences of our rebellion against God. But we have no reason to say that particular sins cause particular catastrophes. That is Jesus' point.

Second, every natural disaster warns us of a day of final judgment and should encourage us to repent. That is exactly how Jesus applied the collapse of the tower of Siloam. He wanted his disciples to know that a day of judgment was coming when everyone who rejects God will face destruction. Every disaster serves as a reminder that the consequences of sin are serious and we should repent. We do not, however, have the freedom to connect the dots between a particular disaster and a particular sin.

But there is another, deeper issue at stake. Why would God ever allow sin to enter the world in the first place? How can we speak of a just God while we look into the eyes of a Haitian girl who endured the loss of her mother and father and now doesn't know where to sleep? Only by speaking of Jesus.

**The greatest injustice took place on the cross of Christ.**

We cannot finally explain evil—whether in the form of a cruel parent or a devastating earthquake. We can only rely on a God who understands weakness and suffering better than we do. Christ's death was unlike any other death. In no sense did he deserve to die—and yet he did. Before he died, he experienced the cruelest pain and agony the Roman world knew how to inflict. Yet, because of his great love, he did not flinch. He endured pain for us. In the midst of tragedy, through Christ, we flee to God.

A minister in World War I, Edward Shilito, saw the ravages and suffering of war. His poem, "Jesus of the Scars," is an important reminder that, ultimately, our answer to the problem of suffering is found in Christ.

*If we have never sought, we seek Thee now;  
Thine eyes burn through the dark, our only stars;  
We must have sight of thorn-pricks on Thy brow,  
We must have Thee, O Jesus of the Scars.*

*The heavens frighten us; they are too calm;  
In all the universe we have no place.  
Our wounds are hurting us; where is the balm?  
Lord Jesus, by Thy Scars, we claim Thy grace.*

*If, when the doors are shut, Thou drawest near,  
Only reveal those hands, that side of Thine;  
We know to-day what wounds are, have no fear,  
Show us Thy Scars, we know the countersign.*

*The other gods were strong; but Thou wast weak;  
They rode, but Thou didst stumble to a throne;  
But to our wounds only God's wounds can speak,  
And not a god has wounds, but Thou alone. ☩*

~Aaron Menikoff



**"BEING A TITUS 2 WOMAN"**

SATURDAY, FEBRUARY 6  
10:00-12:00 IN ROOM 211

SIGN UP IS AVAILABLE  
WEDNESDAY NIGHTS  
DURING DINNER AND AT  
CONNECTIONS CORNER.



The first session is Sunday, February 14, at 9:15 am in the Mount Vernon room and will be led by Pastor Aaron. The following three sessions are Friday, February 19, beginning at 7:00 pm. Though this is class is primarily for prospective members, we encourage all members to make a point to attend to learn the expectations for being a member. You may RSVP by signing up on the edge of the bulletin or by emailing [info@mvbchurch.org](mailto:info@mvbchurch.org). Please put *Knowing MVBC* in the subject line and your name and contact info in the message.

**Free to Serve**

*Humble yourselves, therefore, under God's mighty hand, that he may lift you up in due time.*  
1 Peter 5:6

Pastor Menikoff's web blog, "Free to Serve," is a great means to find his insights and recommended resources on all sorts of topics related to a Christian's individual and corporate life.

Included in this blog is a five part series discussing the book by Kevin DeYoung and Ted Kluck:

***Why We Love the Church:  
In Praise of Institutions  
and Organized Religion.***

Other recent posts include:

***"Forgiveness in the Body"  
"A Dangerous Prayer"  
"Preparing for Sunday"***

The blog can be found at:

<http://freetoserve.typepad.com>

**Knowing MVBC: The Membership Class** is a new prospective members class that introduces them to life of Mount Vernon. It is a four session class covering the following topics:

- Knowing Our Commitments: Church Covenant
- Knowing Our Beliefs: Statement of Faith
- Knowing Our Disciplines: Personal Discipleship
- Knowing Our Structure: Nuts & Bolts

# February

1	2	3	4	5	6 10:00am A Change of Seasons
7 12:00pm New Member Luncheon 6:00pm Lord's Supper	8	9	10	11	12
14 9:15am Knowing MVBC: Session 1	15 12:00pm RW&A Luncheon	16	17	18	19 9:15am Knowing MVBC: Sessions 2-4
21	22 6:00pm Finance Meeting 7:00pm Deacons' Meeting	23	24	25	26
28 10:30am Guest Preacher: Tony Higgins					27 6:00pm Faith & Film

**Events Key**

- Churchwide
- New Members
- Preschool
- Children (1<sup>st</sup>-6<sup>th</sup> grade)
- Missions
- Youth (7<sup>th</sup>-12<sup>th</sup> grade)
- Women's Ministry
- Adults

## Happy Birthday!

- |                    |                     |
|--------------------|---------------------|
| 1 Bob McCallum     | 15 Lisa Cloudt      |
| Emilee Morgan      | 16 Amiee Hamby      |
| Blake Morgan       | Kristin Rios        |
| 2 Pearlene Koenig  | 17 Sandy Wellman    |
| Ottavio Lobefaro   | 19 Mary Cherbonnier |
| Bill Long          | Jacob Hall          |
| Jim Voyles         | 20 Jeff Case        |
| 4 Jeanette Ripley  | Diane Neal          |
| 6 David Clark      | Sweden Swilley      |
| 7 Tony Higgins     | 21 Dorothy DeFreese |
| 8 Isabelle Carver  | 22 Austin Nable     |
| Sarah Lee Flint    | Larry Norwood       |
| Jenna Langmack     | 23 Mark Lamprecht   |
| Mary Roth          | 24 Marni Daniel     |
| Sarah Anne Voyles  | Tammy Glass         |
| Danielle Wood      | Doug Langmack       |
| 9 Chris Carnes     | David Pattillo      |
| Richard Carron     | Natalie Watson      |
| 10 Jackie Marler   | 25 Howard Kauffmann |
| Mike Mitchell      | Kerns Sage          |
| Aimee Speas        | 26 Paula Mosby      |
| Lincoln Stillwagon | Stacy Roth          |
| Lynne Warren       | 27 Brent Reid       |
| Christina White    |                     |
| 12 Rick Roth       |                     |
| Taylor Wilkins     |                     |
| Dianne Williams    |                     |

# FIGHTER

verses

*I have been crucified with Christ and I no longer live, but Christ lives in me. The life I live in the body, I live by faith in the Son of God, who loved me and gave himself for me.*

Galatians 2:20

**A CHANGE OF SEASONS**  
**FEBRUARY 6 - 10:00 AM**  
 Ladies, join us for our next "A Change of Seasons," bringing together the women of Mount Vernon. We will pray, share, and encourage one another as we continue to seek Titus 2 relationships.

**NEW MEMBER LUNCHEON**  
**FEBRUARY 7 - 12:00 PM**  
 All new members are invited to a luncheon to become better acquainted with other new members and staff members. If you are a new member and are interested in attending, RSVP to Kristine Harris at 404-255-3133 or kristineharris@mvbchurch.org.

**LORD'S SUPPER**  
**FEBRUARY 7 - 6:00 PM**  
 We will be celebrating the Lord's Supper in remembrance of Christ's death and resurrection during the evening service. We encourage members to examine their hearts and relationships with one another in preparation.

**KNOWING MVBC**  
**FEBRUARY 14 - 9:15 AM, FEBRUARY 19 - 7:00 PM**  
 If you are interested in knowing more about what Mount Vernon believes and how we agree to live together then please make a point to attend the new membership class entitled *Knowing MVBC*. This is a four session course that introduces you to our commitments, beliefs, spiritual disciplines, and structure. *Knowing MVBC* is a requirement for membership.

**FAITH & FILM**  
**FEBRUARY 27 - 6:00 PM**  
 The youth will be meeting in the youth room to watch and discuss a film from a Christian worldview. Contact Jacob Hall at jacobhall@mvbchurch.org for more details.



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[WWW.MVBCHURCH.ORG](http://WWW.MVBCHURCH.ORG)