

VENTURA

LIFE

LINK

Volume 16, Number 1

January 26, 2012

Calendar

February

- 7..... Leader Meeting
- 12.. State of Congregation, AM
- 19..... Worship in Song, PM
- 20 President's Day
- 21 Leader Meeting

March

- 2 Sr Saint Lunch, Ojai
- 2 - 4 Porterville Youth Rally
- 4 Pre-teen Boys, PM
- 9 - 10 Risen
- 11 Daylight Savings Time
- 18 3rd Sunday Sing, Ojai

Birthdays

- 1/27 Scott Bucy
- 1/31 Jim Delano
- 1/31 Donna Jadlot
- 2/6 Michael Deckrow
- 2/7 Kerrie Anderson

*All
the
Believers
were one
in Heart
and Mind.*



Acts 4:32

Life Stream

Since Spring of last year, we've had a God-created "problem" developing. Our Young Adults group has been out-growing their classroom, and there's not been a larger room to move them into. They average 15 on Sunday mornings, and more on Wednesday nights; but they could easily have 25-30 if they had the space.

So last Saturday, more than a dozen young adults assisted Brent Clements and Keith Fowler in removing a wall between classrooms 8 and 10 (a teachers' supply room). After coordination with teachers and supervisors, items in Room 10 were moved temporarily to the Garage. There's still work to be done in Rooms 8 and 10; and elementary teachers and supervisors will be inconvenienced awhile, as they relocate their supplies.

Recently our young adults identified three goals: 1.) Enlarge their classroom; 2.) Fill it with more Young Adults; and, 3.) Have more studies, of study skills, life skills and Bible knowledge. What great goals, to grow numerically and spiritually!

There's been some concern that we've put emphasis on our young adults to the exclusion of other age groups in the congregation. That's not the intention of our leaders. But they realize that without a continuing focus on reaching and keeping young adults, there is no future for our congregation. It will, like many churches around us, die. Our leaders also understand that if we effectively reach young adults, we also have the potential of reaching their parents and siblings. And when a church becomes known for attracting young adults, it also draws people of other ages. Each of those ages need effective ministry; and our leaders are working toward such ministry.

We have a series of personal challenges before us:

- Recognize that God is at work among us, growing this age group, and that He's called us to work with Him (I Corinthians 3:5-9).
- Recognize the opportunities God has placed before us with this work, to nurture unchurched young adults and others (I Thessalonians 2:6-12).
- Recognize the need of young adults for our respect, even if they aren't where we'd like them to be spiritually (Acts 17:22-31; Romans 15:1-3).
- Recognize that young adults may have spiritual maturity and insight deserving of our respect, even if it's different from ours (Romans 14).
- Recognize that what we say, how we conduct ourselves, and how we do or do not reflect our beliefs in our worship will either draw people to God, or turn them away from God (Titus 2:1-9).

I have faith in us, and in God's working through us, that we will rise to these challenges, to the salvation of many, and to the glory of God.

Love, Dave



Guest Pen

Help Wanted

Web Designer for growing non-profit (Ventura, CA)

Date: 2012-01-29, 11:00PM PST

Expanding Nonprofit organization is currently looking for a web designer to create user interfaces that are both visually appealing and simple to use.

Our unique team fosters a culture that revolves around a positive, 'can do' attitude. Applicants should be eager to make a positive difference in an organization that is rapidly growing, and should be comfortable with a fast-paced and dynamic work environment.

Time commitment: Fluctuates depending on current events requiring revisions or changes needed to the site. Usually averages 2 hours per week.

You are: Very skilled with HTML and CSS, Comfortable working with Javascript and PHP, Able to respond quickly to requests and located within a reasonable distance to Ventura, CA

You have: Experience developing user interfaces, Strong sense of aesthetics and portfolio to match,

Compensation: Negotiable

-- Please read carefully before responding NOTE: This is for IN-HOUSE work with a firm schedule --

We are looking for a talented web/graphics artist to assist in the maintenance of several well established web sites. We are not interested in a "new look" or development of new ideas.

Primary responsibilities include: Modify web sites using an HTML editor based on our direction without altering the "look and Feel" of the web page, Use tape backups to transfer files between web servers, maintain existing web pages using HTML and CSS, Take digital pictures of objects and retouch using MS Paint, Convert video and audio from a variety of sources to our formats.

The ideal candidate should be: Proficient in HTML-editors, MS Paint, DOS, or relevant web design tools on a PC, and are able to use them to create a web site from start to finish with minimal assistance/supervision, Able to alter newly created web sites to conform with the "Look and Feel" of the existing web site as directed, Comfortable with taking digital pictures or scanning material for inclusion in web sites, Familiar with FTP or other tools useful in managing web sites remotely.

If you are able to "fit in" and willing to work Fridays from 5:15 PM to 7:32 PM and be on call 24/7, work for below industry standard compensation and reside within the City of Ventura this job is for you.

Did I get your attention? In these examples our congregation is the employer. The souls we are seeking are the employees targeted in the help wanted ads. Which of these ads do you think will get the most responses? How we present ourselves is very important. Our ideas of how things should "look and feel" may not be exactly what someone else's ideas are. There are lots of great ideas out there. What ideas should we consider? I submit to you that we should investigate ALL ideas that are not in conflict with the scriptures, (1 Corinthians 9:19-23). Now here is the sticky wicket, we should be very careful to consider the feelings of those presenting new ideas. It is easy for us shoot down an idea that does not appeal to us. Is the reason we don't like the idea(s) based on tradition or scripture? More importantly how does the person who presented the idea feel? I hate to say it, but it is the responsibility of each of us to insure we don't use our "freedom" in Christ to squelch the spirit of others. (Matthew 7:3-5)

Each of us should examine ourselves. What are we doing to help make our congregation as appealing as possible to those seeking the truth? (Titus 2:10) I hope when new ideas are presented that each of us is entertaining the ideas, examining each idea based on prayer and scriptures. After prayerful reflection, if you have concerns about the direction our congregation is moving, feel free to contact any of the leadership group so we can address your concerns.

In God's Love, Keith Fowler

RISEN

The Glendale congregation is once again hosting their Young Adult Conference: RISEN. It is March 9th & 10th, 2012. The cost is \$20 per person and is open to anyone in their 20's and 30's. **Jonathan Storment**, from the Highland Church of Christ will once again be the speaker. More information can be found at: www.glendalechurchofchrist.org/risen/

Senior Saint Potluck

The next Senior Saint Potluck Luncheon is Friday, March 2nd at the Ojai congregation. The lunch begins at noon.

Youth Devotional

This Sunday evening, after worship service there will be a Youth Devotional at the home of George and Gigi Magana. The church van will be leaving shortly after service for anyone that needs a ride. See Gigi for information on what to bring.

*I will praise you,
O Lord, with all my
heart; I will tell of all
your wonders.
I will be glad
and rejoice in you;
I will sing praise to
your name,
O Most High.
Psalm 9:1-2*

Porterville Youth Rally

The Porterville Youth Rally is March 2 - 4, 2012 and the cost is \$25 for both youth and chaperones. **The deadline for registration is February 20, 2012.** However it is very important that you get your **registration form in as soon as possible.** There will not be enough housing for all of the participants. Housing will be provided on a first come, first served basis. Once the housing is full, participants will have to reserve a hotel room for the weekend.

Third Sunday Singing

The Ojai congregation will also be hosting the next Third Sunday Singing. It is scheduled for March, 18th at 2:30 PM. Take this opportunity to make some new friends or visit with old friends as they sings praises to our God!

Nursery Care/February

5..... Niki Delano
.....Brooklyn Magana
12..... Lee Chaffin
.....Destiny Schwab
19..... Lindsay Darley
.....Eric Oliver
26..... Donna Fowler
..... Carly Vallier



Dave & Betty Schulze request that we remember **Lisa Martinez and Patrick McDaniels** in our prayers. They are going through an extremely stressful time right now.

Mark Hathway is slowly improving. He is still in the hospital and greatly appreciates our prayers.

Remember the families of Helen Proffer and Armond Guntner as they mourn the loss of their loved ones.

Continue to remember:

Alan Alstot, Cindy Deckrow's Mother, Tom Carlson's Father, Agnes Cook, Leo and Virginia Bartley, Virginia Orr, Vicki Sawyer, Norma Woodrum, Marilyn Rawlins, Gigi Magana, Ed Hathway, Caroline Newport, and Caroline Burke.

Men to Serve/February

Sound Booth . K.Fowler,A.Warwar
Announcements..... V.Alstot

A.M.

Song Leader E.Ewald
Prayer B.Clements
Scripture Reading W.Fowler
Communion D.Jones
B.Lampkins, R.Shuster, E.Oliver,
J.Warwar, B.Escobar, C.Coles,
D.Fowler, J.Ewald

P.M.

Song T.Knouse
Prayer B.Oliver
Communion T.Wilson

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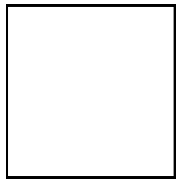
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The Giving Tree

In 1974 Shel Silverstein penned a book called, "The Giving Tree." It is a story of the relationship between a young boy and a tree. The tree gives all she has to the boy. Her branches provide a swing in which he plays, shade from the sun and apples to eat. In her attempt to encourage the boy to grow, develop, thrive and be successful the tree commits to the selfless act of allowing the boy to cut her down. She became less in order to allow him to build a boat that moved him from childhood to life's adventure. The tree's selfless sacrifice is given out of great love for the boy and that ultimately was her joy and legacy.

As a child I grew up under the nurturing braches of this church body in Ventura. My life is a living tale of endless time and sacrifice spent by many in order to ensure I would have an opportunity to grow and develop and thrive in my relationship with my God and His Son, Jesus Christ. I remember as a young teen sitting in church having this thought, "If I lost my family I would survive." You see, I knew that if my parents met with death I had a church family that had my back, so to speak. They were interested in my spiritual growth and wellbeing. I had a sense that I was an intricate part of this church body and that I was actively needed and sought after. The best part was that I was encouraged to expand, develop and grow.

Hebrews 10:24 teaches us, "And let us consider how we may spur one another on toward love and good deeds. Let us not give up meeting together as some are in the habit of doing, but let us encourage one another---and all the more as you see the Day approaching." I looked at the definition of the word spur. The most familiar was a small spike attached to the heel of a rider's boot that is nudged into the horse's sides to encourage it to go faster. It was also defined as a short branch or lateral shoot from a stem or branch of a plant. One last definition described it as a ridge that projects outward from a mountain range and descends toward a valley floor, a small jetty extending from a shore to protect a beach against erosion or to trap shifting sands. Each of these definitions is designed to exhibit a gentle nudge, a bridge across or a port in the storm protecting the highly valued subject. I currently see that we are at a pivotal point in Christ's church and the survival of our church family. We risk the danger of closing our eyes to God's intended importance of protecting the future of Christ's church with our own reluctance to allow it to grow and improve. We dare not let down our church family because we fear something will be unintentionally done wrong. We as the mature adult generation must be the spurs, to guide, to instruct, and yes, to sometimes let it fail. We must be ready to support and explain that through God, all things are recoverable. Proverbs 15:4 says, "The tongue that brings healing is a tree of life, but a deceitful tongue crushes the spirit." It is our responsibility to be careful that our council is sound and in unity and agreement with the word of our God. We are instructed to be intent upon preserving and promoting the spiritual health of those we speak to. Jesus Christ never found it acceptable to discourage or wound the spirit of another searching soul.

Do not merely listen to the word, and so deceive yourselves. Do what it says. Anyone who listens to the word but does not do what it says is like someone who looks at his face in a mirror and, after looking at himself, goes away and immediately forgets what he looks like. James 1:22-24

As the story of "The Giving Tree" ends, the selfless tree has given her all, and even when she had nothing left to give, she says to the old grown man, "Well, an old tree stump is a good place for sitting and resting. Come, boy, sit down and rest." The beauty of this tree is that her love for the boy kept him returning to her from boyhood to manhood. Whenever he was in need, he sought the comfort and security of the tree.

Are we the tree? Rooted in the word out of love? Or are we a church that knows the word but cannot get past our own sense of our truth?

It is my prayer that we are or become the tree. The tree that can't be forgotten and one that a lost and dying world is drawn to.

Love, Denette