

Tell It On The Mountain

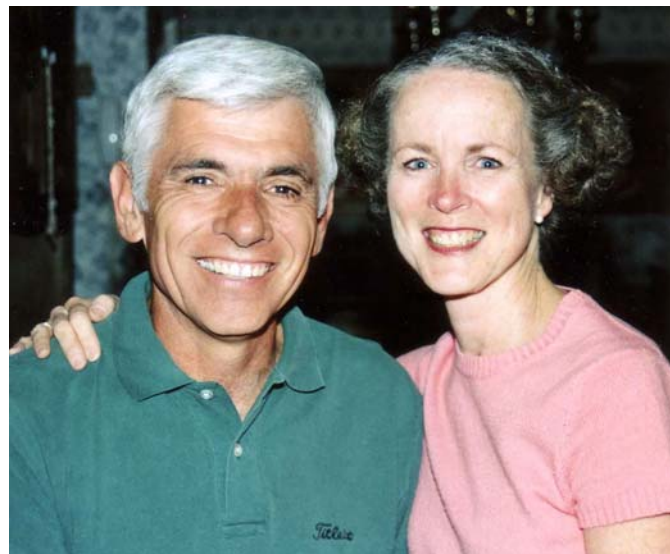
Sierra Vista Presbyterian Church 559-683-6742 December 2005

PNC Update:

November 18 to 20, Reverend Rick and Kathy Lemberg spent the weekend in Oakhurst with the Sierra Vista family. They spent time with our staff, with the elders and deacons, with the congregation over potluck dessert, and Rick preached on Sunday. A congregational meeting held after services consisted of a vote to approve Pastor Rick as our new Senior Pastor, a vote to approve his salary package, and a motion to disband the PNC. Pastor Rick was approved by a greater than 98% margin (with only 3 dissenting votes.) All other motions were approved.

Rick and Kathy were able to spend time with a realtor during their time here, and are in the process of finding a home in Oakhurst. Rick will begin his ministry at Sierra Vista on February 1, 2006. Please pray for them as they tell their current church family about their plans. We all know how hard it is to have a pastor of 18 years leave. There may be hard feelings among his congregation, and we need to pray for a peaceful time of farewell for Rick and Kathy as well as the congregation.

We on the PNC want to thank you, our Sierra Vista family, for your patience through this long process. We worked for one and a half years and Pastor Bill has now been gone from us for over two years. We know that the God who calls us is always faithful, as He has shown us again, but His timing is not always our own. So, we will wait patiently, this time for Rick and Kathy to be among us



Rick & Kathy Lemberg

again. We are truly blessed to have the leadership of Pastor Paul during this time. Please be generous with your expressions of appreciation and thanks to him and to the rest of the staff during this transition time. And thank you, once again for your faithful prayers for us during this process.

Signing off, for the last time,

Your Sierra Vista PNC

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OUR GRATITUDE goes to the nine members of the Pastor Nominating Committee (PNC) for their dedicated and conscientious work, the hours they devoted to screening, researching, interviewing candidates, and the prayerful way in which they did their job. They did an outstanding job and brought to us Rev. Rick Lemberg and his wife, Kathy. We are looking forward to their arrival on February 1, 2006, and the impact that they will have on our church family.

We thank the PNC nine times over for their wisdom and leadership. Members of the team were Bob Celum, Bob Frembling, Ginny Fulmer, Eric Hagen, Amanda Hendrickson, Lana Jackson, Tami Rose, Jim Smith, and Nancy Trauger.

Dear Friends,

Maybe you've heard the new Christmas Carol called "OH, LITTLE BANK AMERICARD," sung to the tune of "O Little Town of Bethlehem?"

*Oh, little Bank Americard,
you bring me Christmas Cheer.
Without your clout, I have no doubt
no gifts I'd give this year.
Your credit line allows me
to run up bills quite large
And when I'm through exhausting you,
I'll use my Master Charge.*

(Same tune, sung in late February)

*Oh, little Bank Americard,
you bring me discontent.
I calculate your interest rate
is over twelve percent.
Each month, your cry for payments
my letter-box bombards;
I'm one more sap caught in your trap.
Next year I'll just send cards.*



Christmas is all about possibility. It is not the kind of possibility that your credit card company tries to sell you. It is possibility that comes solely from the fact that God is God, and that he is the kind of God who comes into our own human existence to reveal himself and call us to himself. It is a possibility that is easily symbolized by a helpless infant that has nothing of its own by which to survive; but an infant that, because he is Immanuel, God-with-us, will forever change the world and all humanity. It is this same God who has promised to be with us, with his people, with the church and with us individually, as we live as his people in the world.

It is this possibility, this God, that we celebrate at Christmas. And we do so with a confidence born, not of our own desire for it to be so, but from the birth of a child over 2,000 years ago. "For nothing is impossible with God." (Luke 2:37)

Trusting in Him,

Pastor Paul

**WOMEN'S FELLOWSHIP BRUNCH**

December 10th at 10:30 am we are celebrating the season with a Christmas Brunch catered by Mike Summers. It is always fun to see the tables that are decorated by members of the congregation. Come early enough to make the rounds and appreciate the ideas expressed in the table settings. The Sierra Chamber Maids will entertain with carols.

The cost is \$7.00 at the time of sign up. Baby-sitting will be available if you let us know ahead of time.

Bring your friends.

Call Joanne Celum at 641-7806 for information.

**ARE YOU A "FRONT-PORCH" PERSON?**

*"And if you greet only your brothers,
what are you doing more than others?"*

Matthew 5:47 (niv)

While visiting the library the other day, I picked up a book on the architecture of houses in America. One of the earliest design elements, I learned, was the porch, connecting the house to nature and the world outside. While the tall stone structure of the castle is designed to keep the world out, the porch welcomes the world to the front door. The porches pictured were wide and inviting, reminding me of the "front-porch people" I've met, whose open arms and inviting smiles seem to say, "Come and sit for a while, and we'll get to know each other.



So I ask myself, "Am I a front-porch person?" I think of the time in our Sunday morning service when the pastor asks us to greet people around us. It's too easy to smile and say Good morning, without much thought behind it. Do I ever introduce myself or ask their name?

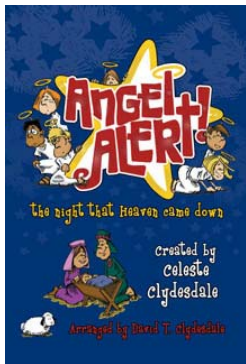
Do I greet them as I would a visitor to my own front porch? Or do I smile and shake hands automatically, creating an impenetrable castle wall that sends the clear message, don't get any closer?

Jesus seemed to encourage the front-porch attitude as part of what it meant to follow Him.

As I read this devotion from Daily Guidepost, it made me even more aware of how important it is to choose our words when welcoming visitors. The next time you greet a visitor, please welcome them with your heart, in such a way that will make them want to come back and visit again next Sunday.

Ronna Hendrickson,
Membership/Assimilation Elder

ALL-CHURCH DECEMBER EVENTS



DECEMBER 11th

Our Sierra Vista Children's Choir will present "Angel Alert" Sunday, December 11th at 9 & 10:45 a.m.

The musical will be followed by "S'mor Christmas" at 12:15 p.m. out on the knoll.

DECEMBER 18th

The Sierra Singers will present their Christmas program, "How Great Our Joy!", during the 9 a.m. and 10:45 a.m. services on Sunday, December 18.

Please join us for this Christmas worship experience, featuring choral music by John Rutter, Mark Hayes and others. The choir, soloists and instrumentalists want to lead you into the joy of the Christmas season.

DECEMBER 24th

Christmas Eve
Candlelight Worship
at 5, 7, and 9 p.m.



DECEMBER 25th

Christmas Day we will have one
worship service at 10 a.m.

Join us for a family style
time of worship.



SESSION NOTES AND VOTES November 15, 2005

IT WAS NOTED...

- Average attendance Oct 23 -13 was 443. (We are no longer recording attendance for Sunday night.)
- The proposed budget was discussed and it was agreed to review it again in December.
- PNC members attended Session to talk about our Candidate, *Rev. Rick Lemberg*. They gave their reasons for choosing him and shared that the PNC vote was unanimous.
- Candidate Sunday will be November 20, followed by a Congregational meeting to vote on *Rev. Rick Lemberg* and to approve his terms of call if he is elected as our new pastor. *Rev. Paul Armstrong* will moderate the meeting.
- *Nicole Mohulski* has been hired as our Nursery Worker for four hours on Sunday mornings.

IT WAS VOTED...

- To approve corrections to the list of Ministry Team members as presented.
- To approve the draft of our new **Purpose, Mission, and Vision** statement as presented by the PNC.
- To approve a Certificate of Transfer to Trinity Presbyterian Church in Clovis for *Ken and Viola Cexton*. They have moved to Clovis.
- To ratify the marriage of *Clarence Hagberg* and *Leslie Fisher* on 10-29-05. Witnesses were *Kurt Williams* and *Katie Steinman*. The ceremony was performed by the *Rev. David Woodworth* at Sierra Vista.
- To receive the Statement of Operations as presented for October 2005.
- To move the December Session meeting from December 20 to December 13.

Betty L. Strain, Clerk of Session

An Inescapable Date

We celebrate Christ's birth by referring to it in the date placed on all our coins, civil records and vital documents. It is inscribed upon metal and written on parchment and engraved on the cornerstones of great buildings. It is on every newspaper, every check, every deed, and it is universally acknowledged at the beginning of a new life.

Every human transaction is related to the birth of Christ. It cannot be avoided or evaded. God has seen to it that this event is more widely advertised than anything on earth that is or that ever has been.

- Dr. Walter Wilson

The Symbolism of the Advent Wreath



The Advent wreath is a symbol of watchfulness and increasing joy as the birth of Jesus approaches. The circular form of the wreath symbolizes eternity or life without end. The candles remind us that Jesus is the Light of the World who brought light and life to a dark world – *In him was life, and that life was the light of men. The light shines in the darkness, but the darkness has not understood it* (John 1:4,5). We light a new candle on each of the four Sundays of Advent. As the light grows, so does our anticipation and joy.

For many denominations, each of the four weekly candles is purple, the traditional color of royalty. For the third Sunday, some denominations use a pink candle to symbolize joy. The other three are purple and represent hope, peace and love, respectively. In the center of the wreath is a large white candle – the Christ candle – which we light on Christmas Eve. White represents the purity of Jesus.

At home, many families observe regular devotional times around the wreath. The practice builds family memories and develops Christmas customs that are likely to pass from generation to generation.





December 2005



Sunday	Monday	Tuesday	Wednesday	Thursday	Friday	Saturday
				1	2	3
Worship 9 & 10:45 am Communion 4	7 pm Boy Scouts 7 pm Stephen Ministers 5	10 am Attendance 7 pm Prayer Tm 7 pm Mission Tm 7 pm Jr. High Group 6	10 am Staff Mtg. 3:10 pm AWANA 4:30 pm Bells 7 pm Choir 7 pm The Refinery 7	6 pm MOPS 6:30 pm Praise Team 8		10:30 am Women's Christmas Brunch 4 pm Children's Rehearsal 10
Worship 9 & 10:45 am ANGEL ALERT Children's Christmas Musical 11	7 pm Boy Scouts 12	10 am Attendance 6:30 pm Session 7 pm Deacons 7 pm Jr. High Group 13	10 am Staff Mtg. 3:10 pm AWANA 4:30 pm Bells 7 pm Choir 7 pm The Refinery 14	6:30 pm Praise Team 15		1 pm Choir Rehearsal 17
Worship 9 & 10:45 am HOW GREAT OUR JOY Choir Program 18	7 pm Boy Scouts 7 pm Stephen Ministers 19	10 am Attendance 20	10 am Staff Mtg. 21	6:30 pm Praise Team 22		5, 7, & 9 pm Candlelight Worship  24
Christmas Worship 10 am  25	CHURCH OFFICE CLOSED 26		10 am Staff Mtg. 28	6:30 pm Worship Team 6:30 pm Praise Team 29		31

Join A

Bible Study Group



SUNDAY

❖ 1st and 3rd Sunday evenings Bible Study on Romans at Dave & Linda Pound's home. Call 683-3365

MONDAY

❖ 7 p.m. College & Career study led by Ryan McKenzie. Call 683-1341.

TUESDAY

❖ 9:30 a.m. Women's Bible Study at the Creighton's home in Coarsegold. Call 683-5813.

WEDNESDAY

❖ 9:30 a.m. Men's Bible Study, "Word Studies", led by Gene Johnston in the Parent's Room. Call 692-2711.

❖ 9:30 a.m. WOW (Women of the Word) "Believing God" in the Chapel. Call 683-8085.

THURSDAY

❖ 12 p.m. Brown Bag Bible Study led by Roy Erford in Oakhurst. Call 683-5062.

SATURDAY

❖ 7 a.m. Promise Keeper Men's Bible Study led by John Ramsey in the Chapel. Call 642-3152.