

Tell It On The Mountain

Sierra Vista Presbyterian Church 559-683-6742 March 2005

Dear Friends,

You are one big step closer to having your next Pastor! After untold hours of work and prayer your Pastor Nominating Committee (PNC) has completed the Church Information Form (CIF), with Session's wholehearted approval. Once it passes through Presbytery channels (soon) it will be circulated to prospective candidates. Those who like what they see in the CIF will then submit their resumes to the Committee for consideration. (I would not be surprised if there were 75 to 100 applicants.)

Your help is needed at this juncture:

First, please continue to pray for the PNC. They need much discernment.

Second, if you know of a Presbyterian Pastor that you think would be a good match for Sierra Vista, please give their name(s) to the PNC. (It is not even necessary that they are actively seeking a new church.)

In the meantime, important preparations continue. Our current sermon series on "The Covenant of Membership" is aimed at strengthening the foundation of commitment within the Sierra Vista family so that future growth has a more solid base. I urge you to study the "Covenant" (found on page 2) in preparation for a service of commitment planned for Sunday, April 3, 2005. At that service new members will be publicly received and current members will be asked to reaffirm their commitment to Sierra Vista Presbyterian Church.

In light of this, you are asked to take time during Lent to reflect on your life in light of the specific commitments in the "Covenant". Do you understand what each one means? (If not, please ask for clarification.) Are you ready to say "yes" to them? What help do you need in order to fulfill each one? (Let your leadership know how we can support you better.)

It is not infrequent that couples who have been married for many years choose to reaffirm their vows. Now that Sierra Vista is approaching twenty years of age and you will soon enter a new chapter in your lives together, it seems only fitting that your "vows" be reaffirmed, both to the Lord and to one another.

"Commit your way to the Lord; trust in him, and he will act."
(Psalm 37:5, RSV)

Expectant because of Jesus,

Rick Irish
Interim Pastor

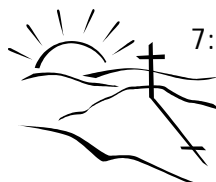
Holy Week Schedule

March 20th
Palm Sunday Worship
9:00 & 10:45 a.m. and 6:00

March 24th
Maundy Thursday
7:00 p.m. Communion



March 27th
Easter Sunday
Sunrise Service 6:30 a.m.
Worship
7:30, 9:00 & 10:45 a.m.
and 6:00 p.m.



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A COVENANT OF MEMBERSHIP at Joining Sierra Vista Presbyterian Church

Confessing my faith in Jesus Christ as Savior and accepting his Lordship over all of my life, I make the following covenant with God and with my fellow Sierra Vista Church members to do the following:

- I. I will make it my highest priority to love the Lord my God with all of my heart, soul, mind and strength,** (Mark 12:30) by:
- A. Attending services of worship regularly wherever I may be; (Hebrews 10:25)
 - B. Studying the Bible and praying consistently, alone and with others, in order to mature in my faith and life; (Philippians 3:12-14)
 - C. Obeying God's Word and Spirit in all that I do, living responsibly in the personal, family, vocational, political, cultural, and social relationships of life; (John 15:10)
- II. I will aim in all I do to love others as Jesus Christ has loved me,** (John 13:34-35) by:
- A. Building the unity of the church through speaking the truth in love, refusing to gossip, being quick to forgive all offenses, and following church leaders; (Ephesians 4:25-32; I Peter 4:8; Hebrews 13:17)
 - B. Praying frequently for the health and growth of the church and for its leaders; (Ephesians 6:18-20)
 - C. Committing myself to supportive and accountable relationships with other believers; (Hebrews 10:24-5; Proverbs 27:17)
 - D. Discovering my gifts and talents and employing them in service of others; and (I Peter 4:10)
- III. I will give of my time, talent and money to advance Jesus Christ's mission through and beyond Sierra Vista Presbyterian Church** (Matthew 28:18-20) by:
- A. Serving people outside the church, sharing my faith whenever led to do so, and working in the world for peace, justice, freedom, and human fulfillment; (Matthew 5:16; Ephesians 2:10; II Corinthians 5:17-19)
 - B. Inviting and welcoming newcomers to Sierra Vista Presbyterian Church; (Luke 14:23; Romans 15:7)
 - C. Setting aside a specific sum of money I have earned and using it as an offering to the church in proportion to God's gifts to me. (Luke 12:33-34; I Corinthians 16:2; II Corinthians 9:6-11; Malachi 3:10)

MEMBERSHIP: YOUR CHOICE

The difference between a church *attender* and a church *member* is commitment. Attenders are spectators from the sidelines; members get involved in ministry. Attenders are consumers; members are contributors. Attenders want the benefit of a church without committing to marriage.

The Christian life is more than just a commitment to Christ, it includes a commitment to other Christians. Joining the membership of a local church is the natural next step once you've become a child of God. You become a Christian by committing yourself to Christ, but you become a *church member* by committing yourself to a specific group of believers. The first brings salvation; the second brings fellowship.

Why is it important to join a local church family? Because it proves you are committed to your spiritual brothers and sisters in reality, not just a theory. God wants you to love *real* people, not *ideal* people. You can spend a lifetime searching for the perfect church, but you will never find it. You are called to love imperfect sinners, just as God does.

Come & See what membership is all about at Sierra Vista

Our next class will be held over two days: Saturday, March 12th, 9 a.m. to 3 p.m. and Sunday, March 13th, 12:30 p.m. in the Chapel. Lunch provided both days. Childcare available. Reserve your spot by calling the church office, 683-6742, by March 7th. Or sign up at the *Welcome Tent* on the patio March 6th.

This class is required for membership, but many attend just for the valuable information given. You'll learn about the history of Sierra Vista and have an opportunity to meet many of those involved in leadership.



SIERRA VISTA HISTORY

I am beginning to compile a History of our church, from its very earliest beginnings and would appreciate your help in REMEMBERING.

- ❖ Do you remember when the original ranch house and grounds needed a cleaning and make over?
- ❖ Were you part of the construction crew when the garage was converted into a sanctuary?
- ❖ Did you donate a piano or furniture, or know someone who did?
- ❖ Were you there when the can full of silver coins was dug up in the playground area?

Talk about a thousand stories, I'm sure we have our share!

Please write down what you remember, or give me a call or Email. Thank you for making this project a success.

Carolyn Weisman, yzman@sti.net, or 683-8620.

REPORT OF CHURCH MEMBERSHIP 2004

Active Members 12-31-03	401
Gains for 2004	
Profession of Faith, Reaffirmation	
Restoration	15
Certificate of Transfer	4
All other gains	4
Total Gains	<u>23</u>
Subtotal	424
Losses for 2004	
Certificate of Transfer	11
Death	3
All other losses	0
Total losses	<u>14</u>
Total Active Membership 12-31-04	410



Baptisms	
Adult	0
Children	<u>0</u>
Total	0

Average Attendance/Worship
 2004 = 466 2003 = 504 2002 = 492

REPORT OF CHURCH OFFICERS

SESSION

Class of 2005	Class of 2006
Ronna Hendrickson	Dave Davis
Teri Lucas	Ginny Harrison (Jim Peterson (moved))
Joan Yeatts (Holly Rogers (resigned))	Lana Jackson
Bob Williamson (resigned)	John Ramsey

Class of 2007	
Aaron Eames	
Jim Konrad	<i>Rick Irish, Interim Pastor</i>
Cyndi Presho	<i>Paul De Pledge, Associate Pastor</i>
Betty Strain	<i>Betty L. Strain, Clerk of Session</i>

DEACONS

Class of 2005	Class of 2006
Patty Bradley	Dennis Creighton
Michelle Frasher, Chr.	Maxine Crossley
Jim Hagen, Treas.	Loretta McKee (Judy Peterson (moved))
Kay Poffenberger	Neal Moberly
Kathie Soar	Dave Rush

Class of 2007	
Pancho Capuchino	
Newt Combs	
Joyce Greene	
Lee Pounds, Sec.	
Steve Presho	<i>Paul J. De Pledge, Pastoral</i>
Advisor	

Respectfully Submitted, *Betty L. Strain, Clerk of Session*

MISSIONS & OUTREACH

Windows of Opportunity – Six churches in our San Joaquin Presbytery (Fresno First, Hanford First, Millbrook, Trinity, Westminster and SVPC) have come together to partner with Centro Cristiano de Aqua Viva (Church of Living Water). This is an Hispanic outreach congregation of our Presbytery in Corcoran. We’ve joined a cluster of churches to come alongside this church and one another that we might better reflect the light and glory of God. This is a pilot program to partner with our Hispanic churches.

Our first joint project is to replace windows that are non-tempered glass which will improve safety and insulation of the facilities. There are about 81 windows that need to be replaced in the church buildings. We would like you to consider adopting a window for \$335.00. You can adopt more than one window and any portion of a window. Whether or not you sponsor a window, you could come to work and fellowship as we start to install the windows and build our partnership.

Saturday, March 12 is the date for this workday. It is appropriate for all ages and is great for families. We’ll be working alongside the members of the Corcoran church and they will provide our lunch. We’re working from 8-5 (or dark). We welcome part-day participation. We will carpool from SVPC at 5:30 a.m. to arrive at First Pres. Fresno at 6:30 a.m. What an exciting day of seeing the body of Christ come together in the valley!

It was recently asked of me when do we pray in front of the church for someone who is going out to do missions. We as a body at SVPC have a strong focus on missions. Teams and individuals from our body go and do missions elsewhere and unless we know about it we can’t have the opportunity to pray for you. Please contact the Missions Team Elder or the church office so we can pray you off as you serve our Lord and make HIM look good!

Isaiah 60:1 The Message
“Wake up. Put your face in the sunlight. God’s bright glory has risen for you.”

Lana Jackson, Elder of Missions and Outreach

LEAVES: GIVING TO GROW

Leaves come in a wide variety of shapes. Even if you don't recognize which trees they're from, you wouldn't mistake an oak leaf from a pine needle, or a weeping willow leaf for one from a maple. There are even differences among leaves in different types of the same tree. Yet despite all their differences, all leaves have the same purpose: to make food for the tree, using water, light, and carbon dioxide. Without all three of these things, the tree cannot grow or even live.

A church is like a tree, and its members are like leaves. Without their constant donations of time, talent, and treasure, the church will soon suffer and may not survive. However, with careful stewardship, the church will flourish. And a healthy church, like a healthy tree, will benefit others. It can be a source of food, shelter, and inspiration, too. Remember this as you decide how you can provide your time, talent and resources to make the "tree" flourish.



P. Love in *Stewardship* by Parish Publishing October 2004

What's Happening In PromiseLand?

Dear Friends

Research shows the most powerful influences on faith development in a child are the conversations that take place in the home. So faith grows best when the family and church partner together in this endeavor. Each week in our PromiseLand children's ministry, our children study the same Bible story, on the same day, in age-appropriate creative ways. Sunday school, children's church, our midweek Awana program are woven together in a resource called FaithWeaver. No matter the age level - Pre-K to Sixth grade - each child goes home with a common reference point, so the Bible discussions and application continue outside the church walls.

FaithWeaver provides young disciples with an overview of the Bible. Summer and fall quarters walk through the Old Testament every three years. Winter and spring quarters follow the church year and provide an overview of the New Testament every year, with a focus on a different Gospel book each year. If you would like a snapshot of what our PromiseLand Kids will be discovering this Spring, you can check the on-line scope and sequence section at faithweaver.com. Thank you Sierra Vista for allowing this vital ministry to happen each week in the life of a child.

Partnering with you,

Pastor Paul



WOMEN'S FELLOWSHIP LUNCH

The *Spring Salad Luncheon* for the Women's Fellowship gathering will be held April 2nd at Noon. This will be a potluck lunch, so get out your favorite recipe and bring a salad for 8. Bread, dessert and beverage will be provided.

Our Speaker will be potter *Carole Wolover* who brings her message of "The Master's Pieces" as she throws pottery on her wheel. She was greatly received when she spoke in the area last year and it will be a wonderful event to share with your un-churched friends. She will bring some hand made items for sale and the whole affair will only cost you \$2.00 when you make your reservations.

Sign up's will begin on March 13th. Watch for further information in the Sunday Bulletins.

Do Short Term Mission Trips Make A Difference?

Read the following letter from one of our own dear missionary couples serving with MAF in Shell, Ecuador.

Feb. 24, 2005

Dear Sierra Vista Family,

Ron just headed to Quito with the four guys (Mark & Spenser Frasher, Gary Hawks, John Ramsey). They have been a huge blessing and a wonderful connection with ALL of you. This has been your seventh team to Ecuador in as many years. I don't know if you realize how significant and encouraging that is to the Hoffmans and to us. Some missionaries never have teams come, and the fact that you come and keep coming speaks loudly of your love and commitment.

We are so thankful for your faithfulness; your prayers, financial support, and annual work teams bolster our spirits and cheer us on. You are our great cloud of witnesses and we are spurred on to do the best and be the best we can for God and for you. You have made a huge investment in us and we desire to do you proud.

The four guys were your ambassadors, and over the years each team has built upon your good name and reputation. As they return, they will be ambassadors for us, for foreign missions, and for what God is doing around the world. Thank you for sending them and for coming along side and encouraging us in such a tangible way. We love and appreciate you.

Amazingly graced,

Ron and Margie Grant



SESSION NOTES AND VOTES January 18, 2005

IT WAS NOTED...

- Attendance at Worship for the year 2004 was **468**.
- Gift Certificates/baskets were given to needy families by the Deacons in December.
- Parish lists will be updated.
- Awana Olympics will be held at YHS on January 22 from 9:30 – 3 pm.
- *Paul De Pledge* will preach at all three services on January 30.
- Beginning Feb. 6, Sunday School will be held at 10:45 am and not at Sunday Six.
- Sugar Pine Winter Camp for grades 4 – 6 will be on Feb. 25 -27. The *Chris and Kay Cantwell* will be counselors.
- PNC will present the Church Information Form (CIF) at the February session for approval.

IT WAS VOTED...

- To approve the minutes of the regular meeting on 12-14-04.
- To approve January 23, 2005 after second service for the Annual Congregational Meeting (as per email vote).
- To approve *Sara Robinson* as our Web site coordinator.
- To receive the Statements of Operations for November and December, 2004, as presented.
- To receive the November and December, 2004, General Checking Account reports as presented.
- To approve a correction in the amount of the **2005 budget** making the total **\$619,195**.
- To approve the *Sierra Choral Festival* with *Allan Petker*, April 8 -10, 2005, as a joint festival with New Hope Community Methodist Church.
- To approve *Bryan Crosby* as a driver for youth events.

A PNC Update:

If you read the PNC report in the Tell It, you know that the PNC has been working on getting our Church Information Form (CIF) ready so that, after session and presbytery approval, we can begin to receive information from candidates for our Head Pastor position. Last week, our session approved the CIF and it is now in the hands of the presbytery. We expect feedback from them after their next meeting in a couple of weeks. Please continue to keep the PNC in your prayers as we prepare to receive Personal Information Forms from prospective candidates. If you have any questions, please contact any member of the PNC.

SESSION NOTES AND VOTES February 15, 2005

IT WAS NOTED...

- Average attendance Jan 23 – Feb 13: **457**
- The Nominating Committee for 2005 is composed of the following people: *John Ramsey*, Chair, and *Cyndi Presho* – Elder representatives
Dave Rush – Deacon Representative
Bob Goodrich, Joanna Myers, Leah Kimes, Frances Hagen – Members at Large
- *Sara Robinson* will chair our new Website Development Team.
- Attendance in Sunday School has grown to about 50 children beginning February 6.

IT WAS VOTED...

- To approve the Church Information Form (CIF) as presented by the Pastor Nominating Committee (PNC) with special thanks to the team for their dedicated work.
- To approve the Annual Statistical Report to General Assembly -Presbyterian Church USA as presented.
- To approve May 22, 2005, for a Called Congregational meeting for the purpose of electing new officers.
- To approve *Jack Tathwell, Rick and Lana Jackson, and Ronna Hendrickson* as delegates to Presbytery for 2005, and to approve *Ryan McKenzie* as an additional representative for the missional process for 2005.
- To receive the Statement of Operations for January, 2005, and the General Checking Account for January, 2005, as presented.
- To approve *Rev. Rick Irish* to serve as Moderator of the Harvest Presbyterian Church in Madera on a temporary basis while they search for a pastor to serve as Stated Supply.
- To approve the following Communion Dates for 2005: The first Sunday of each month for morning worship, each Sunday for Sunday Six, and the special date of Maundy Thursday, March 24, 2005.
- To approve church vehicle use for the trip to Mexico, March 18-26, 2005.
- To approve a bake sale fund raiser for the Youth Group to be held on the church patio before and after all Sunday service for the next 4 Sundays.

Respectfully submitted,
Betty L. Strain, Clerk of Session



CAMP SUGAR PINE MEN'S RETREAT

Calling all mountain men. Yes, that means you. We want fathers and sons, seniors and singles who want to enjoy an exciting weekend at Camp Sugar Pine to join us at the Mountain Man Weekend, April 22nd to 24th.

Keith Poletiek is our genuine "Mountain Man" speaker. Also, for wilderness fun, there will be fishing, a rifle range, rocket-wars, BBQ's, archery, manly crafts, and incredible chapel services. So, go on and grab a brochure at the tent (outside on the patio) or ask one of the manly-men you see at church if you want more information. This is something you won't want to miss, even if you don't have a coonskin cap!

You can also call Mountain-Man Dan for more details 692-2690, although real men use email (dan@bizdev-inc.com)

QuickTime™ and a
TIFF (LZW) decompressor
are needed to see this picture.

STEPHEN MINISTRY:



Hurting people receive quality Christian care, deepen their relationship with their Lord, and feel supported rather than forgotten. Those with gifts for care giving nurture and use their gifts in ministry and grow in faith as they see God working through them to touch the lives of others.

A new Stephen Ministry training class has begun. Those in training are: Kay Poffenberger, Flo Weight, Warren Langager, Julie Setaro and Joyce VanOrnum.

Please keep these people in your prayers through the next four months as they commit themselves to God's call.

This is the first in a series of 5 articles written by Gene Johnston to encourage us to get "into the Word" of God and make it an integral part of our lives.

FROM THE LORD'S TABLE

Scripture: "Let the word of Christ dwell in you richly in all Wisdom, teaching and admonishing one another in psalms and hymns and spiritual songs, singing with grace in your hearts to the Lord." (Colossians 3:16)

Title: The Choice Is Ours! – "Let" GOD'S WORD Dwell In You.

This article introduces a series of articles discussing why we should, and how we can have God's Word abiding in us. Please join me in what I believe will be a joyous adventure into the reality that "Jesus is alive!"

"Richly in all wisdom" sounds like a phrase that is only attainable by the most studious of students. However, praise the Lord for His patience! As we honestly surrender our time to Him each day He will, by the Holy Spirit, illuminate His Word to us and teach us. As the Apostle Paul wrote to the Colossians, he was praying and asking God: "that you may be filled with the knowledge of His will in all wisdom and spiritual understanding" (Colossians 1:9b). Paul knew that our heavenly father wanted each of them [and us] to be rich in God's Word. Jesus said to the devil: "It is written, Man shall not live by bread alone, but by every Word that proceeds from the mouth of God." (Matthew 4:4)

The Lord knows that we are in this world of constant pressure. Paul wrote to the Romans: "do not be conformed to this world, but be transformed, by the renewing of the mind," (Romans 12:2a). I believe he was saying; "Don't let this world squeeze you into it's mold, but have your mind renewed by the Word of God and be transformed by the Spirit from the inside out." King David said in Psalm 119:15 "I will meditate on Your precepts, and contemplate Your ways." The Lord wants to teach us His ways. Isaiah wrote: "For precept must be upon precept, precept upon precept, Line upon line, line upon line, Here a little, there a little." (Isaiah 28:10). Though under pressure, it's a step-by-step process, as we surrender ourselves to Him, daily trusting in His faithfulness. Paul noted: "For we are His workmanship, created in Christ Jesus for good works, which God prepared beforehand that we should walk in them." (Ephesians 2:10). Paul again "being confident of this very thing, that He who has begun a good work in you will complete it until the day of Jesus Christ;" (Philippians 1:6).

As we allow the Word of God to dwell in us richly, the patience of the Lord and the working of the Holy Spirit within will accomplish spiritual growth to the glory of the Father.

In His gospel, Dr. Luke explains the working of the Lord in the hearts and lives of two disciples on the road to Emmaus. However, we will discuss that exciting encounter in next month's issue. Please read Luke 24:13-45 and think about the question: "Who opened whose understanding."

