

# Tell It On The Mountain

Sierra Vista Presbyterian Church 559-683-6742 April 2005

*Dear Friends,*

It is not my custom to use this space for personal matters, but I must make an exception this time. You, our Sierra Vista family, have been so wonderfully supportive of Barb and me during this past eight weeks of her illness, we simply have to say "Thank you!" For your prayers, cards, food, flowers, calls, visits and ongoing love, we are deeply grateful. She is not "out of the woods" yet, but our Lord is very near. We often feel as if we are being carried on a current of love and peace. We attribute much of that to your prayers.

\*\*On a much lighter note, congratulations are in order: The mortgage on Sierra Vista's property has been paid off! As soon as all key players can participate, we will burn the mortgage during Sunday worship services, soon! Due to the generosity of Ardeene Sweet and William Lee, who left us a total of \$128,000 in their wills, we only needed to take \$4,222 out of capital development (building) funds to meet the amount we owed on the mortgage. So the money to pay the mortgage did not come out of our operating budget which is in the red. What a blessing Ardeene and William gave our church!

\*\*About financial support of the Presbyterian Church, USA: Your Session has spent considerable time in prayer and discussion about whether or not to withhold the "per capita tax" of \$5/member/year from our denomination's General Assembly in protest of a series of actions with which we disagree. It was decided that because such an action is in fact a last resort, Sierra Vista would pay per capita this year. Instead of withholding, it seems wiser to increase our visibility and voice in addressing the issues with which we are concerned, rather than weakening our position of influence through withholding money. This initiative has resulted in an invitation to Henry Green, board member for Presbyterians for Renewal, to counsel us on how we might most effectively make our voice heard. If you are interested in learning more, please contact an Elder or the church office.

\*\*"The Covenant of Membership" is a work in progress. In anticipation of our service of commitment April 3<sup>rd</sup>, and in a desire to include every person whose heart is committed to Sierra Vista, we will provide opportunity for members and our extended family of committed believers alike to affirm what we are calling "A Covenant of Love." (Please note a copy of this "Covenant", along with further explanation, elsewhere in this "Tell It On the Mountain".)

"May the God of hope fill you with all joy and peace as you trust in him, so that you may overflow with hope by the power of the Holy Spirit." Romans 15:13

Thankful to be with you,  
Rick Irish  
Interim Pastor



Save the date!

May 29<sup>th</sup> & 30<sup>th</sup>  
our 3<sup>rd</sup> Annual

Feast  
of  
Tents

*What's Inside*

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## NEW PICTORIAL DIRECTORY

Have you ever stopped to think how many changes have taken place in our church in the last three years? People moved away, new members joined, new babies were born, new staff is on board. All of that change just cries out for a new pictorial directory! Wouldn't it be great to have all those new faces available in a convenient directory where you can look them up and memorize their names? And, in addition, in the not-too-distant future (we hope), a new pastor will arrive, who, I'm sure would also like to have up-to-date pictures of our congregation near at hand.

We want EVERYONE to participate, whether members or not, because we're all ONE big church family. There will be NO cost to you for the sitting and you will receive one free 8 x 10 color portrait plus a new color directory. In about an hour's time, you will get your photo taken, view the images, and select the pose you want, all with only one trip to the church. Of course, you can order more pictures if you like. You will have to pay for those, but seniors over 60 get a 10% discount, so you can get one for Aunt Martha too.

The main photography dates are scheduled for May 11, 12, 13, and 14, with make up dates on June 2, 3, and 4. Signups will be on April 17<sup>th</sup> & 24 and May 1 & 8.

Now with apologies to David Letterman:

### THE TOP TEN REASONS TO HAVE YOUR PICTURE TAKEN FOR THE NEW SIERRA VISTA PICTORIAL DIRECTORY

10. It's an inconspicuous way to learn the names of the people you don't know.
9. Your children are so unbelievably cute that you want to show them off to everyone at the office.
8. The pictures make great gifts.
7. Two words: No carbs!
6. You get a free 8 x 10 picture and a new church directory.
5. Who knows, a future president of the United States might be in the directory and you can show everyone his/her picture and tell them you were best friends.
4. It's an excuse to wear that new dress or outlandish tie you just bought.
3. If we have 100% participation, Pastor Rick will preach a 10 minute sermon!!!
2. It's the one time a year that you can get your family together in one place.
1. THE SIERRA VISTA PICTORIAL DIRECTORY WON'T BE COMPLETE WITHOUT YOU!

## STUDENT MINISTRIES REPORT

Hello! I am writing this report on the eve of our departure to Tijuana, Mexico with 12 fun & enthusiastic high school students. After a long 7-hour journey last night, we are resting and enjoying the sights of La Jolla before we cross the border to Mexico. The high school students at SVPC are partnering with La Jolla Presbyterian Church for a unique mission project. We're spending Spring Break just south of the border in Tijuana, Mexico. When we're not building houses, we'll be staying and sleeping at "Dios Habla Hoy," a Mexican Presbyterian Church in Tijuana. From there, we will eat breakfast each morning, load up the vans and head to the work sites with our sack lunches that we'll prepare each morning, come home after a hard day's work, rest, eat dinner, sing some songs, hear a message, and hit the sack! We are hoping that this time will be a chance to serve God, by serving others, as well as an opportunity for personal growth and enrichment in our own walks with Christ. Praise God for this trip!

On another note, College & Career Ministries is up and running. We've had a group of young adults from Sierra Vista meet weekly at the McKenzie's house for a time of fellowship, worship and studying God's word. We are currently in a study of the lives of the 12 apostles which has been both encouraging and challenging. We meet on Monday nights at 7 pm. Please call Ryan @ 683-1341 for directions if you are interested in joining us!

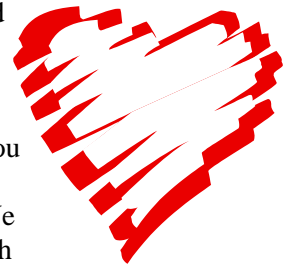
Thanks again for all your continued prayer and support! It's such a blessing to be able to see hearts transform and grow as Christ works in their lives!

Grace & love,

Ryan McKenzie  
Director High School/College/Career Ministries

### CAREGIVER SUPPORT GROUP

Caregivers: past, present, and future – of parent, spouse, child, sibling or friend. Are you interested in a Christian centered support group? If you are, please call Kay Poffenberger at 658-5936. We meet the third Monday of each month 10:00 a.m. to noon.



**NEW MEMBERS**



On Sunday, April 3rd, we will welcome 7 new members into our fellowship.

These people have made the commitment to become members of our church family and are excited about becoming involved in ministry at Sierra Vista.

They are:

*Rita Altimus, Joan Ganey, Ed & Louise Hickman, Chris & Vanessa Jasper, and Marie Turner*

Remember if you see someone new at church please take the time to introduce yourself and make them feel welcome!



Save the date for this year's  
Vacation Bible School.  
July 18 – 22  
5:30-8 p.m.

If you are interested in helping out this year see Pastor Paul.



We're looking forward to GRRREAT VBS THIS YEAR!

**COVENANT OF LOVE**

“A Covenant of Love”—On Sunday, April 3rd, you will be given opportunity to affirm/reaffirm your commitment to Sierra Vista Presbyterian Church, whether you are an official member or not. If you believe God has called you to be an active part of Sierra Vista, even if you have not taken the step of becoming a member, you are encouraged to consider the following “Covenant of Love.” Our purpose in calling for this commitment is simply to provide opportunity for each of us to evaluate and affirm our intentions as Sierra Vista prepares for the future. (And please be assured that nothing negative will happen to you if you choose not to affirm this covenant. It is not a requirement in order to maintain your membership or to participate in the church.)

My Covenant of Love  
with my Lord and with  
Sierra Vista Presbyterian Church

Confessing my faith in Jesus Christ as Savior and accepting his Lordship over all of my life, I wish to affirm/reaffirm my commitment:

*To love the Lord my God with all my heart, soul, mind and strength; to love others as Jesus Christ has loved me; and to give of my time, talent and money to advance Jesus Christ's mission through and beyond Sierra Vista Presbyterian Church.*

**Psalm 100**

**A psalm for giving thanks.**

Shout for joy to the LORD , all the earth.  
Worship the LORD with gladness;  
Come before him with joyful songs.  
Know that the LORD is God.  
It is he who made us, and we are his;  
We are his people, the sheep of his pasture.

Enter his gates with thanksgiving  
And his courts with praise;  
Give thanks to him and praise his name.  
For the LORD is good and his love endures forever;  
His faithfulness continues through all generations.

## SESSION NOTES &amp; VOTE

March 15, 2005



## IT WAS NOTED...

- Attendance from February 20 – March 13 was 457. (The Sunday of the Women's Retreat was a low attendance Sunday.)
- That our **mortgage will be paid in full on March 16, 2005**. This was a 30 year loan repaid in 10 years, thanks to the gifts of *Ardeene Sweet* and *William Lee*. God is faithful! A *Mortgage Burning* is planned in the near future.
- VBS will be held July 18 – 22, 2005. The theme will be *Serengeti Trek*.
- *Chris Jasper* presented our new Website. It should be up and running very soon.

## IT WAS VOTED...

- To receive the following into church membership on April 3, 2004. They completed the recent Come and See class.  
**Certificate of Transfer:** *Rita Altimus* (Avenel Pres), and *Ed and Louise Hickman* (First Pres, Fresno)  
**Reaffirmation of Faith:** *Joan Ganey* (Kirk of the Valley, Reseda), and *Marie Turner* (Nazarene Church, Coalinga)  
**Profession of Faith:** *Chris and Vanessa Jasper*
- To raise a **special offering of \$3 per member for the San Joaquin Presbytery**. This money will go toward funding our SJP mission projects such as *La Fe* in Lindsay, *Centro Cristiano Ague Viva* in Corcoran, *F.I.R.M* in Fresno, and *Calvin Crest* right in our own back yard.
- To approve the minutes of the regular Session meeting on 2-15-05 as corrected.
- To approve the presentation of the *Covenant of Membership* on April 3, 2005.
- To approve a *Congregational Meeting* for March 20 or April 3 for the purpose of electing *George Wren* as a Member At Large for the Nominating Team since *Bob Goodrich* resigned.
- To approve *Ron Rand* to teach us "how to fish" on November 4, 5, 6, 2005. (You can check out his ministry at [www.upbuildingministries.org](http://www.upbuildingministries.org).)

Betty L. Strain, Clerk of Session

## JR HIGH MINISTRY REPORT

The name of the church where we are staying in Mexico for this Spring Break Mission Trip is "Dios Habla Hoy", which means "God's word today" and I've been reflecting on how that name pretty much sums up what's been going on in the Jr. High Ministries.

Inspired by the question, *How do you know that Jesus is alive today?*, along with a series of questions presented by the Jr. High students, has prompted our new study simply titled "Knowing God", where we are seeking to understand how God is in relationship with us today. Our students have had a strong desire lately to understand purpose, meaning and reason for our existence and these "bigger picture" life questions has led me to ask God what his desires are for these students and I believe that all He wants is for them is to *know Him*. Our new series at youth group and Cocoa Mobile is challenging us to seek to know God more. We believe that in knowing God and by being in relationship with Him, many of these life questions will be answered. Through prayer, worship and discussions we hope to provide an opportunity for students to seek God and understand his character and attributes.

The prayer that you can join in with us during this season is that God will reveal himself to these students so that they will **know Him** and his love and grace for us!

A way that I hoped to challenge our students this month was by taking them to Jr. High Winter Camp at Hume Lake! What a great weekend! The band was awesome and the speaker, Chris Simming, was even better! He shared his powerful testimony and taught our students to use the hard things in life to "give you traction" to be used by God. He shared Paul the apostle's Road to Damascus experience and compared that to his own life as a Junior High student diagnosed with a rare muscular disease. I wish that everyone could have heard his story! Be sure to ask one of our 13 students who went on the trip to tell you about it!

Blessings,  
Nellie McKenzie  
Director Jr. High Ministries



**CAMP  
SUGAR PINE  
MEN'S  
RETREAT**

Calling all mountain men. Yes, that means you. We want fathers and sons, seniors and singles who wants 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](mailto:dan@bizdev-inc.com)

This is the second 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: Part 2**

*SCRIPTURE: "they said to one another, 'Did not our heart burn within while He talked with us on the road, and while He opened the scriptures to us?'" (Luke 24:32)*

**TITLE: THE MYSTERIES REVEALED!!**

Someone has said of the Old and New Testaments: "The New is in the Old concealed. The Old is in the New revealed." However, before we get into this terrific truth, let us review our last issue's morsel.

We noted in introducing this series that we would show why we should have God's Word dwelling in our hearts, and we would look at how we can do this on a consistent basis. Can just anyone have God's Word hidden in their hearts? Yes! However, we must recognize that as we enter the day, the pressure of the world, the flesh, and the devil will be present. We do have a choice. It has been said: "We can first meet with the One who has the pressures under control, before we enter the pressures that try to control us!"

In Luke 24:13-32 we read of our risen Lord Jesus Christ's visit with two of the disciples on the road to Emmaus, 3 days after the crucifixion. But first, looking at the event as if it were today -- the news boys would have hit the street first thing in the morning shouting: "EXTRA! EXTRA! READ ALL ABOUT IT! MESSIANIC KINGDOM DEFEATED!! Death to the one who claimed to be God!" Yes, and after hiding out for three days - we might be "slump shouldered" and going back to our homes with long faces. My, what a picture we see as we look back to the account of the disciples on the road to Emmaus.

It was a trek of several hours to the disciple's home. As they were talking, much like we would, they spoke of the sad turn of events that had just taken place. Then Jesus Himself joined them and He asked why they were so sad as they talked. They were surprised that there was anyone in that part of the world that didn't know what had happened. Then Jesus in His loving and patient way gave them opportunity to tell Him what was on their hearts. They pointed out what they believed about this one called Jesus and how His life was cut short. How they had hoped that He was truly the Redeemer. Then they spoke of the women that had gone to the tomb and not found Him, but were visited by angels saying, "He is alive!" A couple of the other disciples ran to the tomb and found it just as the women had said, empty! Here, Jesus gave the two a gentle rebuke. Drawing their attention to the fact that the Scriptures prophesied Messiah would be cut off. Then He questioned, "Ought not the Christ to have suffered these things and to enter into His glory?" At this point Jesus, putting His stamp of authority on the Old Testament Scriptures, explained to them in all the Scriptures the things concerning Himself. Now, they had arrived at their home, and it seemed as though Jesus would keep on going. So they pleaded with Him to abide with them. He did, and as they sat around the table He took over; "He took bread, blessed and broke it, and gave it to them." (Luke 24:30) Here is the most wonderful thing in this first part of the story, God's Word tells us, "Then their eyes were opened and they knew Him; and He vanished from their sight." (Luke 24:31) Now comes the most poignant statement; "And they said to one another, 'Did not our hearts burn within us while He talked with us on the road, and while He opened the Scriptures to us?'" (Luke 24:32)

Forgive me for rehearsing the whole section of the text. But I thought you should hear it again, somewhat in my own words, as I remember in the fall of 1976 in that morning quiet time, when deep within me - the thought impressed upon my spirit by His Spirit - was, "Gene this is my greatest desire, to open the Scriptures to you." And may I say, "My heart burned within me!"

**A GUIDE FOR PRAYER FOR OUR PRESBYT  
SIERRA VISTA'S DAY TO PRAY IS APRIL**



Dear Friends,

April begins the 7th month of prayer for us in the churches of the Presbytery of San Joaquin, in our 12 months of prayer. As we engaged in our holy week activities last week, our focus was appropriately on Christ, what He has done for us, and what He will do for us in the future that we cannot even begin to imagine yet. Hebrews 4:15-16 reminds us that "We do not have a high priest who is unable to sympathize with our weaknesses, but we have one who has been tempted in every way, just as we are - yet was without sin. Let us then approach the throne of grace with confidence, so that we may receive mercy and find grace to help us in our time of need."

In your prayers this month, please pray for the following four areas:

- 1) We are most grateful for a major mission initiative that took place at our Hispanic church in Corcoran in March. A workday was planned for a Saturday, and about 200 people showed up! The major work involved installing 81 new windows in the building. People also joined together in painting, yard work, child care, worship, eating, and fellowship together. There was a wonderful spirit there. We had people from Sierra Vista/Oakhurst, Trinity/Clovis, First/Fresno, Westminster/Fresno, Millbrook/Fresno, and Hanford. Please pray for this ministry to continue and grow.
- 2) People here.
  - a) Please pray for the family of the Rev. Judith Piper. Judith died on March 3, and her funeral service was held on March 8. Her husband Dan is a member at our Hanford church, and serves on the presbytery's Committee on Preparation for Ministry. Judith was the first woman chaplain in the California National Guard. She served as a hospital chaplain and did some writing. She and Dan have one son, two daughters, two grandsons, three nieces, and four nephews. Please keep their family in your prayers.
  - b) Please pray for the family of Linda Dungan. Linda died on March 1, and her funeral was held on March 7. She was a member of the Foothill Presbyterian Church in Porterville. Her husband Duke is an elder and serves on the presbytery's Committee on Ministry. She has been very involved over the years in lots of church and community activities. She was a "behind the scenes" person, who did so much. She was greatly loved and will be missed. Please pray for her family and friends.

- c) Some of you have asked about my wife Linda Cowden. She had an outpatient procedure in February to insert an event monitor onto her heart. The doctor will leave this in until August, and then decide if she needs a pacemaker. She is doing relatively well, although has been up and down fighting colds and fever and lack of energy. We live in Visalia. Please continue to pray for her and for our family.

3) People overseas.

The churches of our presbytery have sent many people out in missions to serve in other parts of the world. We don't want to forget the many sacrifices and the great ministries of these people. They serve in situations where they need our prayers. Please remember to pray for:

Rev. Ken Saito and Rev. Linda Schmidt. This husband-wife team is serving at the Yokohama Union Church in Yokohama, Japan.  
 Rev. Dan Link - military chaplain, currently stationed in Guam. Rev. Steve Walsh - military chaplain, currently stationed in Washington State.  
 Revs. Greg and Chris Callison - from the Coalinga church, serving in Germany, reaching out to Kurdish people  
 Rev. Eric Gundy - from First Pres in Bakersfield, serving in Albania.  
 Revs. Dave and Kim Zovak - from First Pres in Visalia, serving in Australia.  
 Rev. Dusty Ellington - from First Pres in Visalia, teaching at a seminary in Cairo, Egypt.  
 Please keep these people in your prayers. If you know of others you want us to pray for, please let us know.

4) We continue to pray each month for our denomination's Theological Task Force on Peace, Unity, and Purity. They met early in March for three days, but there isn't much news yet on what they may or may not recommend to our denomination. They are in the process of writing up their tentative final proposals, so please pray for those. They will meet again in July, and their report is scheduled to be released to the church in September. Pray that God will work through this small group to convey the right message, the right attitude, and the right spirit, that can move us forward as the missional people of God.

Thanks for your prayers! They are very important to our ministry!

Clark Cowden  
 Evangelist Presbyter  
 Presbytery of San Joaquin





# April 2005



| Sunday                                                                                     | Monday                                                                                                    | Tuesday                                                                                                                                   | Wednesday                                                                                                                       | Thursday                                                                                                                        | Friday                               | Saturday                                          |
|--------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------|-----------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------|-------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------|---------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------|---------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------|--------------------------------------|---------------------------------------------------|
|                                                                                            |                                                                                                           |                                                                                                                                           |                                                                                                                                 |                                                                                                                                 | 1                                    | 2<br>12 p.m.<br>Women's<br>Fellowship<br>Luncheon |
| Daylight Savings<br>time begins<br><br>Worship<br>9, & 10:45 a.m.<br>Communion<br>& 6 p.m. | 3<br><br>4<br>7 p.m. Boy Scouts<br>7 p.m. Stephen<br>Ministers Training                                   | 5<br>10 a.m. Attendance<br><br>7 p.m. Mission Tm<br>7 p.m. Jr. High Group<br><br>Sierra Vista's<br>Day Of Prayer For<br>Pres Church (USA) | 6<br>10 a.m. Staff Mtg.<br>3 p.m. AWANA<br>4:30 p.m. Bells Reh.<br>6:30 p.m. PNC<br>7 p.m. Choir Reh.<br>7 p.m. Sr. High Group  | 7<br>6:30 p.m. Worship<br>Tm.                                                                                                   | 8<br><br>Sierra Choral Festival      | 9                                                 |
| Worship<br>9, & 10:45 a.m.<br>& 6 p.m.<br>Blood Drive<br>10:30 a.m.<br>to 2:30 p.m.        | 10<br><br>11<br>7 p.m. Boy Scouts<br>7 p.m. Stephen<br>Ministers Training                                 | 12<br>10 a.m. Attendance<br><br>6:30 p.m. Session<br>7 p.m. Deacons<br>7 p.m. Jr. High Group                                              | 13<br>10 a.m. Staff Mtg.<br>3 p.m. AWANA<br>4:30 p.m. Bells Reh.<br>6:30 p.m. PNC<br>7 p.m. Choir Reh.<br>7 p.m. Sr. High Group | 14<br>4:30 p.m. A-Team<br><br>6 p.m. MOPS<br>7 p.m. Website Tm                                                                  | 15                                   | 16                                                |
| Worship<br>9, 10:45 a.m.<br>& 6 p.m.                                                       | 17<br>10 a.m. Caregiver<br>Support Group<br><br>7 p.m. Boy Scouts<br>7 p.m. Stephen<br>Ministers Training | 18<br>10 a.m. Attendance<br><br>6:30 p.m. Session<br>7 p.m. Jr. High Group                                                                | 19<br>10 a.m. Staff Mtg.<br>3 p.m. AWANA<br>4:30 p.m. Bells Reh.<br>6:30 p.m. PNC<br>7 p.m. Choir Reh.<br>7 p.m. Sr. High Group | 20<br>10 a.m. Staff Mtg.<br>3 p.m. AWANA<br>4:30 p.m. Bells Reh.<br>6:30 p.m. PNC<br>7 p.m. Choir Reh.<br>7 p.m. Sr. High Group | 21<br>6 p.m. Jr. High<br>Movie Night | 22<br>7 a.m. Men's<br>Breakfast                   |
| Worship<br>9, 10:45 a.m.<br>& 6 p.m.                                                       | 24<br><br>25<br>CHURCH OFFICE<br>CLOSED<br><br>7 p.m. Boy Scouts<br>7 p.m. Stephen<br>Ministers Training  | 26<br>10 a.m. Attendance<br><br>7 p.m. Jr. High Group                                                                                     | 27<br>10 a.m. Staff Mtg.<br>3 p.m. AWANA<br>4:30 p.m. Bells Reh.<br>6:30 p.m. PNC<br>7 p.m. Choir Reh.<br>7 p.m. Sr. High Group | 28                                                                                                                              | 29<br>5 p.m. AWANA<br>Awards         | 30                                                |

## WEEKLY BIBLE STUDIES

### Monday

- 7 p.m. College Bible Study at the McKenzie's house. Call Ryan at 683-1341

### Wednesday

- 9:30 a.m. W.O.W in the Chapel. Call Carol Taylor, 683-8085
- 9:30 Men's Bible study in the Parent's Room. Call Gene Johnston 692-2711
- 7 p.m. Women's study in the Parent's Room. Call Michelle Frasher at 683-1754
- 7:15 p.m. College Age Women's Bible Study in the Cottage. Call: 683-8705

### Saturday

- 7 a.m. Men's Study in the Chapel. Call John Ramsey at 642-3152

