




The BELL TOWER

VALLEY COMMUNITY CHURCH



Getting Better

One of the most important responsibilities of the leadership of a church is to see that the people of that congregation have every opportunity to become and to have all that God intends for them. We certainly take that seriously here at VCC. Our hope is that we can, as the Apostle Paul puts it in Ephesians 3:12-13, "prepare God's people for works of service, so that the body of Christ may be built up until we all reach unity in the faith and in the knowledge of the Son of God and become mature, attaining to the whole measure of the fullness of Christ."

We never want to become complacent in this quest and so we are committed to always striving to get better. We want to learn from others who are walking this same path and we want to learn from each other as well. As we seek to do this, you can help in a big way. Beginning on Sunday, October 7 we will be participating in a Spiritual Life Survey that will give us needed feedback to assess how we as a church are doing in assisting you grow in your faith. By participating in this survey you can contribute not only to your own spiritual growth, but to all those who are a part of our fellowship.

So what does this mean exactly? It means that sometime between October 7-20 you will need to commit 30 to 45 minutes to take this survey. It is an online survey and you will be directed from our website (vcclive.org) to the appropriate link. If you do not have access to a computer or need any kind of assistance, we can provide that. We will have stations at the church where you can complete the survey if you would like to do that.

The survey is completely anonymous so no one will be checking up on any of your personal responses. The results that we will receive are a cumulative report on the health and the needs of our congregation as a whole. It will help us determine areas where we are doing well and areas where we can be doing better. The more of you that participate the more accurate will this assessment be.

The New Testament is full of "one another" commands. Some of these are to encourage one another, love one another, and serve one another. These types of commands remind us that God has given us each other as a precious resource in our walk with Christ. I encourage you to enter into this opportunity with a "one another" mind set, to participate so that we can all grow in Christ more deeply.

Danny Danny Hall
SENIOR PASTOR



Why Become a Member?



From the Bylaws: “The leadership at VCC does not solicit membership for the sake of having large numbers on the roll. We believe that under Grace your responsibility is to live your own life “as unto the Lord” (1 Corinthians 10:31). Membership then becomes a way for you to identify with a local group of believers that is doing those things in which you believe God wants you to be involved. Membership legally identifies you with VCC for business purposes and is a sign to the leadership of VCC that you are willing to be committed to this body.”

Membership carries with it responsibilities and privileges. All Deacons and Elders must be members. To be eligible to vote on issues brought to the congregation, one must be a member. If you want to take that next step in identification with this local body, our next membership class will be in late October on a Friday night and Saturday morning.

We will meet on Friday, October 26, from 7:00 to 9:00PM and Saturday, October 27, from 8:30AM until 12:30PM. A light breakfast will be offered on Saturday morning and we will have snacks at both classes. If you have children and need childcare, it will be provided by reservation only. You can indicate you child’s name and age on the Communications Slip when signing up.

Those completing the class and making the decision to join will be received into membership on Sunday, November 4. Sign up by contacting the church office at 846-6622 or filling out the Communications Slip in the Sunday bulletin.



BLT: Building Life Together *by Sharon McCracken*

On Sunday mornings we have taken the letters “BLT” to a whole new level. During second service the Seminar Room is full of friendly adults of all ages who love to grow in the Lord and want to build life together. We love to fellowship, share our talents, enjoy yummy snacks and pray for God’s care and guidance in our lives. We are studying the books of the Bible. The teaching is great and there is lots of interaction and table discussions guided by our wonderful leaders. We recently had a hymn sing-a-long that was very well received. There are many requests to do it again soon.

BLT is a place where we meet, become friends and care about each other through Caring Connections. Caring Connections gets everyone involved whether they are helping or being helped. Get well calls and cards of encouragement are sent to members who are sick or hospitalized. It doesn’t matter whether you have a big need, a small need or just need a friendly voice to encourage you; members of BLT are there for you. At Christmas time we gather to take our caring out into the community. We carol in downtown Pleasanton and at senior convalescent homes. Our BLT members support one another and their community.

Good food is always a part of our activities. We have a monthly, informal luncheon and often get together after a work day for a barbecue—more time to fellowship, laugh and relax!

We recently passed around a paper giving members an opportunity to write down things they have in their lives to give thanks for. Over and over, members listed that they are thankful for the ways BLT has touched and blessed their lives.

If you love the Lord and want to grow in His Word, would like to make new friends and care for others, then BLT may be just what you are looking for. We would love to have you join us. There is no need to sign up—just drop in.



Living in the Meantime

BECOMING A WOMAN WHO TRUSTS GOD

Does Peace sound like an empty promise in today's hectic culture? Are you tired of living buried under your problems? Have you ever considered that living overwhelmed is optional? Could God possibly work good stuff in the middle of bad stuff in your life? If you answered "yes" to any of these questions...it sounds like you could use some time away to reconnect with both God and other women.

Join us at our annual Women's Retreat October 19-21, at Koinonia Conference Grounds in the beautiful redwoods of the Santa Cruz Mountains. Come away and nourish your body and your soul as we learn from our speaker, Debbie Alsdorf about being A Woman Who Trusts God. Her sessions will encourage us to lean on God while Living in the Meantime. Practical, Biblical instruction to live one day at a time, rejoice and not worry, while learning to give thanks in every circumstance.

To register or find out more details visit www.vcclive.org. If you have any questions or are in need of a scholarship, contact Heather Schomaker at schomakers@sbcglobal.net or 925-249-0505.

Men & women: do you need some time away this fall to refresh or recharge yourself? Here is your chance!

What Defines Your Life? *by Dean Hampton*

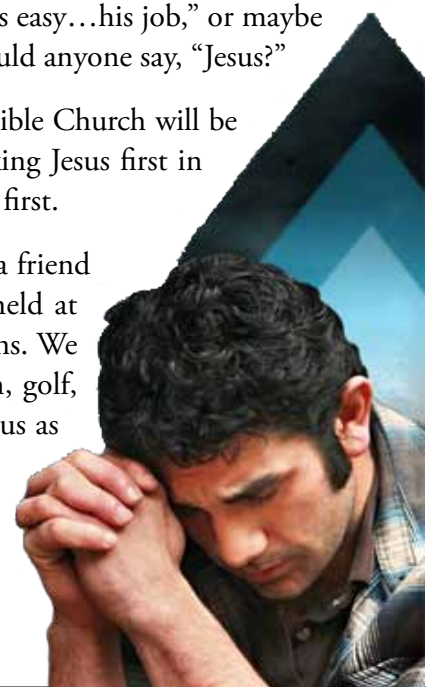


I have a question for you. Ready? If I were to ask three of your closest friends to answer the following question about you, what would they say? The question is this, "what is the most important thing in his life?" Would they say, "that's easy...his job," or maybe family or service to the church or community. But would anyone say, "Jesus?"

This November 2 and 3, Gary Darnell from Valley Bible Church will be speaking at our Men's Retreat on the power of making Jesus first in our life; why is it so important and how we put him first.

Mark your calendar for these dates, and then invite a friend or two to join you at the Men's Retreat. It will be held at Redwood Christian Camp in the Santa Cruz Mountains. We will have time to learn, worship, get to know other men, golf, ride bikes and just relax. It will be a great time! Come join us as we tackle one of the central questions to our life: "How do we make Jesus first in our life?" Sign ups will begin online soon.

For more information contact Dean Hampton at deanhampton10@gmail.com or watch for more information in the church bulletin.





Children Receive More Than a Shoebox!

Ankhtuya clutched the picture. It was a color illustration of Jesus holding out His arms to comfort a child. “The girl looks like me,” she exclaimed, pointing to the similar black hair and rosy cheeks. “When I see this picture, I feel like Jesus is hugging me. I am going to keep this forever.”

The Mongolian girl pulled another gift out of her shoe box and showed it triumphantly to her sisters. “A teddy bear, I have always wanted one!” she said. Ankhtuya came with her mother and two of her sisters to the Operation Christmas Child program at their rural village in Mongolia, a vast and sparsely populated nation between China and Russia.

They didn’t know what to expect—only that local Christians had brought gifts from America. Ankhtuya had heard about Jesus through Sunday school classes at the local church, but she didn’t truly realize how much He cared about the hopes and dreams of a little girl in Mongolia. When she heard the Christmas story through music and dramatic skits at the Operation Christmas Child distribution, it brought the Gospel to life for her. “I realize that Jesus is alive. He is here,” she said as she glanced again at the photo of Jesus and the child. “I want our Sunday school teachers to teach more about Jesus to us.”

Balginyan rises early every morning to milk his family’s cows and helps his father look after their herd of sheep, goats, and yaks. Horses are his mode of transportation as he leads the livestock to good pasture. When the boy opened his box, he was amazed to find a beautiful toy horse, as well as other small gifts. Along with his box, Balginyan also received “The Greatest Gift of All” Gospel booklet in his own language. He was so taken by the story and pictures that he carried it with him when he herded the sheep that evening. “I took the book with me and read it,” he said. “After that, I started to read the Bible and I began to pray. I learned that God is a shepherd, the Great Shepherd.”



Bearing gifts: Long-haired yaks are used to transport Operation Christmas Child shoe box gifts to children living in remote villages in Mongolia’s Gobi Desert.

As thousands of Mongolian children receive shoe box gifts this year, they are also hearing the blessed news of the Good Shepherd who lovingly cares for His flock of sheep. Jesus said, “I am the gate; whoever enters through Me will be saved. He will come in and go out, and find pasture. The thief comes only to steal and kill and destroy; I have come that they may have life, and have it to the full” (John 10:9-10, NIV).

You can help to reach children around the world like Ankhtuya and Balginyan by giving the gift of a shoe box. Gift suggestions and directions for packing your shoe box and including postage can be found on the brochures available in the church office or online at samaritanaspurse.org/OCC. Please drop off your shoe boxes no later than Sunday, November 11 in the church office. After November 11, you can deliver your box directly to Crosswinds Church in Dublin.

Mixing, Making Music, Movies and More! *by James Whittle*

We are excited to tell you about a ministry that the Technical and Media Department at Valley Community Church will be offering to students as part of an after school program for middle and high school students. The program will cover various areas of the creative arts:

- Audio recording
- Video recording
- Video and audio editing
- Pre/post production
- Transfer video from VHS to DVD
- HD Camera operation
- Media conversion and encoding
- Green screen compositing
- Audio mixing
- Lighting
- Stage management
- Music lessons
- Drama
- Basic Photoshop

We want to equip the next generation with the knowledge and tools necessary to create high quality media using high definition cameras, mixing on digital audio consoles, record and produce a band and so much more.

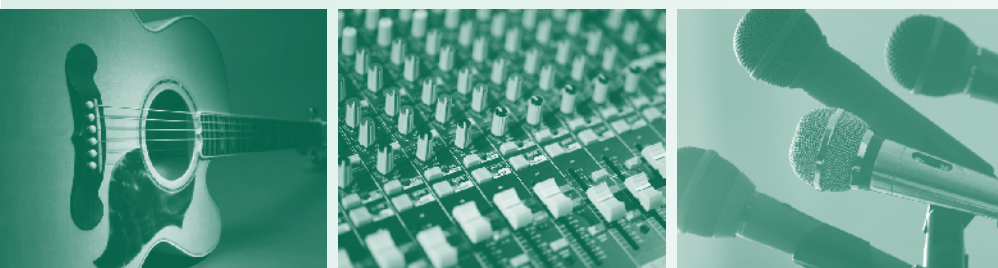
Lisa Lee Akacsos has an extensive background in script writing and directing. She will be leading a drama program that will give students with a desire to act or to write a script an opportunity to do that to the glory of God. She will coordinate the students' efforts with the pastors' series teaching material to produce skits as well as to present material for special events such as Vacation Bible School, Easter and Christmas.

Music lessons will be offered by Danny Min, Scott Welsh, and Jake Lemmer. Instruments of focus will be drums, electric guitar, acoustic guitar and bass guitar. Students who express an interest in Christian music ministry will also be given an opportunity to audition for the Student Ministries teams, leading the TNT middle school and VISION high school students in worship. This audition would simply cover basic musical/vocal skills.

James Whittle and Josh Pickering will show the students what it's like working behind the scenes. We will give them a tour of the facility and all of the technology-driven areas. Areas of focus are video and audio recording, live sound, media format encoding, lighting, stage management, green screen compositing, and basic Photoshop.

Our vision is to teach students how to serve one another in ministry, as well as serve other ministries.

We will start the program on October 23. Sessions will be held on Tuesday from 3:30-4:15PM for music lessons and from 4:30-5:30PM for drama. Wednesday students will meet from 3:30-4:30PM for audio visual media training. This free program is for all middle school and high school students. Please watch the bulletin for information on enrolling your students.





SPIRITUAL LIFE **SURVEY**

Dear church family:

Your spiritual growth is of vital importance to us. Whether you're just starting to explore the Christian faith, or you're a long-time follower of Christ, we want to do everything we can to help you on your spiritual journey. That's why we need your help.

We're asking you to take a survey that asks questions about your spiritual life and the role our church plays in it. Since the survey touches on a wide range of thought-provoking issues, you should anticipate needing 35 - 40 minutes to complete it.

This survey is completely anonymous. An expert third-party research organization will compile your input with responses from others, so your survey will not be viewed individually. It is very important for everyone to participate so that we can get the most accurate picture of where we are as a church.

Thanks in advance for your time and contribution to this tool that will help us understand our church's role in your spiritual life. The link to the survey will be available on the home page of the church's website, vcclive.org, beginning October 7.

Coming Up

Aphesis begins: Monday, October 8

Women's Retreat: October 19-21

Membership Class: October 26-27

Men's Retreat: November 2-3

Celebration of Hope Thai Dinner: November 9

Celebration of Baptism: November 11 (class on 11/4)

Thanksgiving: November 22

First Sunday of Advent: December 2

Women's Christmas Concert: December 2

"Around Back" Living Nativity: December 7 & 8