

The BELL TOWER

VALLEY COMMUNITY CHURCH

IMAGINE
THAT

It's hard to believe, but we are just a few months away from the 10th anniversary of 9/11. Shortly after these horrific events happened, the news outlets were filled with people offering explanations as to how this could have occurred. The explanations were quite varied and often reflected an agenda of the one offering the opinion. However, one of the ideas that captured my attention attributed our lack of readiness to what the author called a failure of imagination. He pointed out that no one ever imagined that someone would actually do the kind of thing that was done on 9/11. He even went on to say he thought that in general evil has a more developed imagination than good.

This really stopped me in my tracks. I don't know if it is true or not, but it was an interesting thought. Since then, I have often thought about this idea of what we imagine. By this I don't mean the kind of imagining that is fanciful or unreal, nor am I talking about what is sometimes called positive or possibility thinking where we can will God to do something just by saying it. Rather I am talking about seeing possibilities, what might actually be within our reach if we stepped out in faith, believing that God is able to empower us and use us to do amazing things.

All of this is just another way of talking about vision. Andy Stanley, in his book *Visioneering* defines vision as "a clear mental picture of what could be, fueled by the conviction that it should be." Here at VCC we sum up our vision in the statement, "Transforming Lives in a Christ-centered Community". In our efforts to make this more than a slogan, to see it actually come to pass, we have been working on implementing our Spiritual Growth Pathway. This process is a way for us to imagine how God might actually be building us into that kind of community of transformed people, a people who can meet the challenge of making a real difference in our broken world.

To be honest, it is far easier to imagine how much worse everything could get. There's no question that things are a mess. I can sit here and think of a myriad of reasons to not even try imagining a different world. But God calls us to have a different starting point. Rather than dwelling on how impossibly broken our world appears, we have to begin with God. It is God who is in the business of rescuing and transforming broken souls. It is God who is extending mercy to the fallen, love to the needy, comfort to the hurting, justice to the abused and neglected, new life to the soul-dead captives of the evil one. And...he calls us to be his instruments in all this.

So, it is our challenge and privilege to trust God to transform and use us to see people cared for, children given hope, marriages restored, racial divides bridged, righteousness lived out in the face of evil, people brought into God's family. It can happen and we can be a part of it.

Imagine that.

Danny
Danny Hall
SENIOR PASTOR

Leading from a Healthy Soul



We hold two gatherings per year for our small group leaders. These gatherings are beyond informational. They are a great way to be encouraged and challenged, and to connect with others who also lead and care for small groups.

Our spring gathering will be held on Sunday, April 17, from 12:15-2:00PM, in the Seminar Room. The topic will be *Leading from a Healthy Soul*, which is a reminder to us that our skills in serving are secondary to our serving from a healthy relationship with Christ. We'll also review and contrast the symptoms of soul health and soul neglect.

Come and be refreshed. We'd love to share this time with you! This will be an interactive equipping time, along with a potluck lunch. Please bring an entrée, salad, or appetizer.

Childcare is available upon request. Please RSVP to Tony Catudal, at tcatudal@vcclive.org or at 925-846-6622x17.



Company is Coming! | Church Workday

The feelings we get when we are introduced to new people or new places whether positive or negative, are not the result of logical evaluation. They are based on instinct rather than reasoning. FUSION BY NELSON SEARCY

Do you know that seven minutes is all you get to make a positive first impression? In those first seven minutes, you will be sized up and evaluated based on the way you look, the way you act, and how you talk. The same is true of the first seven minutes of contact with our church; within seven minutes of stepping onto our campus our guests will know whether or not they will be joining us again.

Creating an environment that makes our visitors feel welcomed and leaves them wanting to come back is a huge responsibility. Whether we know it or not, our church is always sending a message. Volumes are spoken through the way our buildings look, whether the grass and plants are green and clipped, and the sidewalks are swept clean. Each person that steps on the grounds is taking a reading and making a decision about returning based on what they see and the friendly people they meet.

Once an impression has been made, there is little we can do to change the way a person thinks. Wouldn't you like to help us leave an impression that has our guests wanting to return again and again? You can help us take the first steps

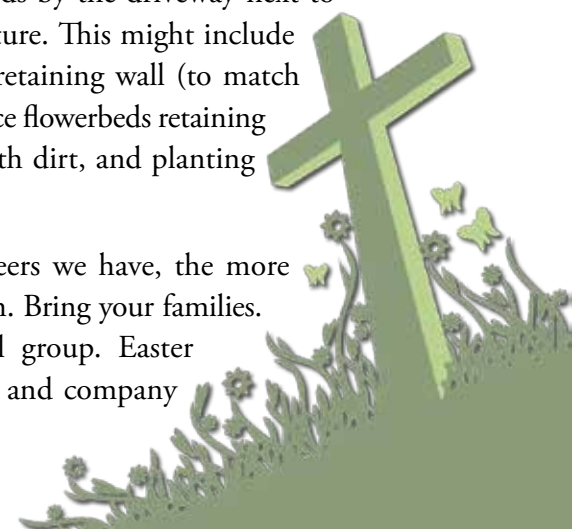
to accomplishing this by joining us for our upcoming church workday on Saturday, April 16. We will start at 8:00AM and finish by noon.

Here are some of the typical workday projects:

- Power wash sidewalks
- Clean storm drains
- Tan bark flower beds
- Deep clean Sanctuary
- Clean windows

If we have enough volunteers, we will also be working on the two flower beds by the driveway next to the parking structure. This might include building a small retaining wall (to match the Gathering Place flowerbeds retaining wall), filling it with dirt, and planting some plants.

The more volunteers we have, the more we can accomplish. Bring your families. Invite your small group. Easter will be here soon and company is coming!





Growing Up Female
FAB2BFEM

Friday, May 20
5:00-9:00PM

OR

Saturday, May 21
10:00AM-2:00PM

We are excited about a workshop coming this May called Growing up Female—FAB2BFEM. Our guest speaker, Amy Sluss, is a registered nurse and will be talking to our fourth, fifth, and sixth grade girls about body changes and the realities of being female. The sessions are designed for one-on-one interaction between the attending adult and child.

This uplifting session explores the normal changes that occur in 9-12-year-old girls, gives them tools and tips, and connects girls with adult women in a powerful and positive way. This session is crafted to build self-esteem, positive body image and a healthy sense of "being a girl". A warm and comfortable environment, this experience between adult woman and young girl sets the stage for future conversations and positive growth as your daughter transitions to adulthood.

Two sessions will be offered, one on Friday, May 20 from 5:00-9:00PM and one on Saturday, May 21 from 10:00AM-2:00PM. Choose which session works for your schedule. The cost is \$50 per pair which includes either a light dinner on Friday or a light lunch on Saturday AND learn-at-home audio materials.

Who can attend? Mothers with their daughter; grandmothers with their granddaughter or aunts with their niece, are all welcome. Scholarships are available upon request.

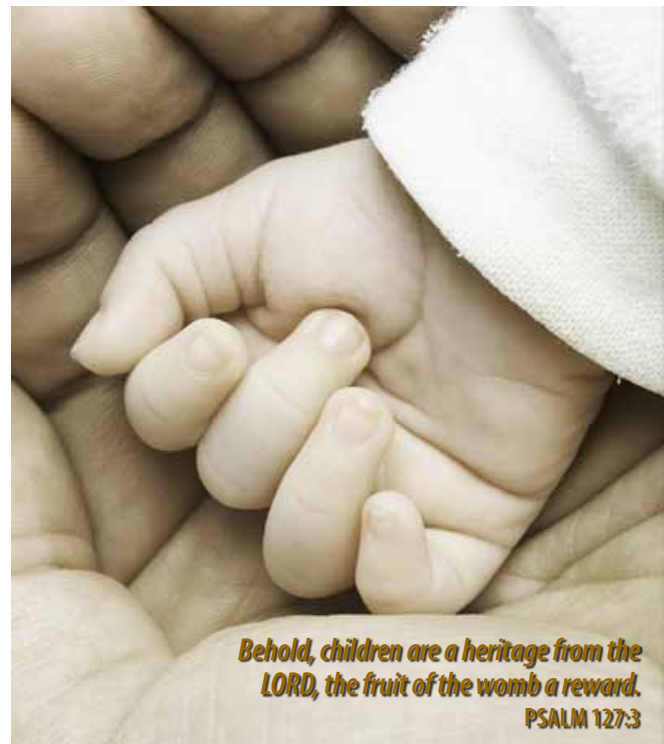
Online registration will begin in April. If you have any questions, please call Cheryl Blea at 846-6622 x13.

Giving Back What God Has Given

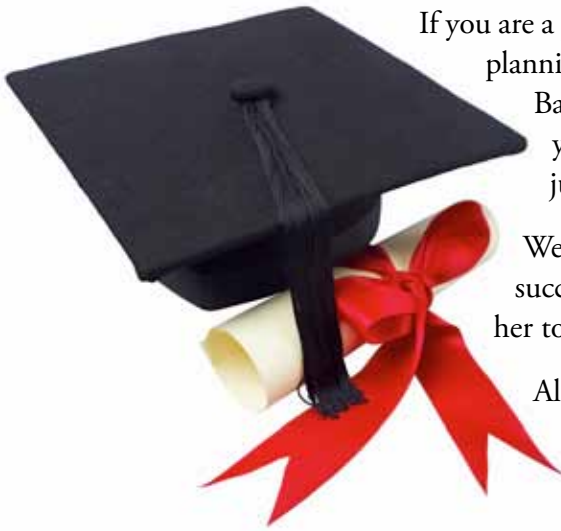
God gives us many gifts. However, none is as precious as the gift of a child. To a new mother or father holding their child for the first time, there is a sense of wonder and delight. These small humans are made for their parents' arms, fitting perfectly into the curve of an elbow or snuggled under a chin. Nothing quite compares to that feeling of contentment a parent has when their newborn is sleeping peacefully in their arms.

On May 8, parents have the opportunity to give thanks to God for their precious children. Take the time to dedicate your baby or other young children to the God who created and loves them. Give them back into his loving care so that together you may grow your children into the men and women God wants them to become.

Baby dedications will take place at both services on Mother's Day weekend. There will be a short class, for parents who have never participated before, on Sunday, May 1 during second service in Room B210. Please watch the bulletin for sign-up information. You may leave your children in their classrooms during second hour.



Celebration & Blessing



If you are a parent with a graduating high school student, you are probably in the throes of planning a graduation party to celebrate this major milestone in the life of your child. Banners, balloons in school colors, matching plates and cups, napkins and flatware, your child's favorite foods—you will see to everything so that the celebration is just right.

We want to celebrate with you, giving joyful thanks to God that your child has succeeded and is starting on the road to becoming who God has intended him or her to be.

All parents and their graduates are invited to join us on May 6, for a celebration dinner that honors your students. It is a night of joy and a time to gift your child spiritually. Parents and leaders will have the opportunity to stand before these children and publicly bless their future.

Invitations and Parent Letters will be sent out soon. If you do not receive one by April 12, and are interested, please contact Laura Rodrigues at 925-846-6622x20 or email her at lrodrigues@vcclive.org.

Planning Ahead this Spring & Summer



- Saturday, April 16, 8:00AM** Church workday
- Sunday, April 17, 12:15PM** Small group leaders meeting
- Sunday, April 17, 6:00PM** Invisible Children
- Thursday, April 21, 7:00PM** Maundy Thursday communion service
- Sunday, April 24, 8:00, 9:30, and 11:00AM** Easter Sunday services
- Sunday, April 24, 8:30-11:30AM** Easter Breakfast
- Tuesdays, May 3 & 10, 7:00PM** 100 Words Seminar
- Friday, May 6, 6:00PM** High School Grad Banquet
- Sunday, May 8** Mother's Day/Baby Dedications
- Saturday, May 14** Missions Weekend/International Dinner
- Sunday, May 15** Missions Sunday
- Sunday, May 22** Shadow Cliffs Picnic and Baptism

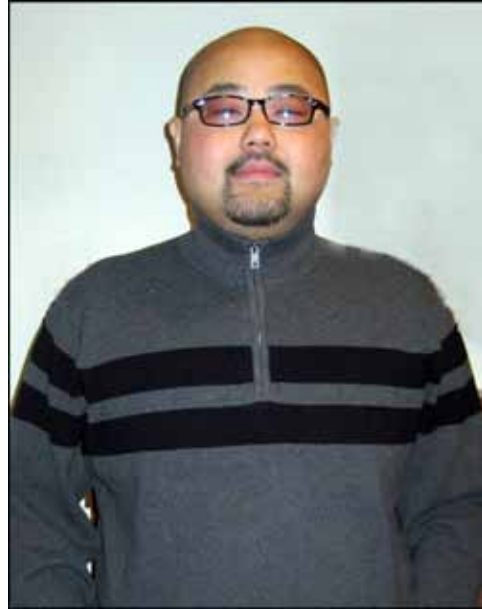


- Sunday, June 5** Kidz Kick Off the summer
- June 12 to June 17** High School 'Xtreme Camp
- June 18 to June 23** Middle School 'Xtreme Camp
- June 19 to July 4** Spain Mission Trip (departure dates vary)
- June 20 to June 24** Elementary Sports Camp
- June 28 and June 29** Blank Canvas
- July 5 to July 7** A.B.L.E.
- July 11 to July 15** Vacation Bible School
- July 11 to July 22** Guatemala Mission Trip
- July 20 and/or July 27** Wild and Wacky Wednesdays
- July 23 to July 31** High School Ensenada Trip
- August 7 to August 13** Adult Ensenada Trip

Welcome New Members!



Philip & Elizabeth Fisher-Ogden



Anthony Kim



Ron & Jan Mickelson

That I may know Him
and the power of His resurrection,
and the fellowship of His sufferings,
being conformed to His death,
if, by any means,
I may attain to the resurrection
from the dead.

Not that I have already attained,
or am already perfected;
but I press on, that I may lay hold
of that for which Christ Jesus
has also laid hold of me.

PHILIPPIANS 3:10-12