

The BELL TOWER

VALLEY COMMUNITY CHURCH

Celebrate!

One of my favorite quotes from Tolkien's *The Lord of the Rings* is this exchange between Frodo and Gandalf as they face the formidable challenge ahead of them.

"I wish it need not have happened in my time," said Frodo.

"So do I," said Gandalf, "and so do all who live to see such times. But that is not for them to decide. All we have to decide is what to do with the time that is given us."

Like Frodo, it is easy for us to wish that life would not entail challenges that seem beyond us or that will exact from us a level of commitment that pushes us out of our comfort zone. But as the wise words of Gandalf remind us, we rarely get to choose the challenges we face, rather they simply present themselves and we then decide how we are going to respond. When we choose to face our challenges, particularly in partnership with like-minded people who make the same commitment, we get to experience an amazing adventure of trust.

This season of our church reminds me of this and because of it we have much to celebrate. These past few weeks, as we have entered our **setting us free** campaign, have been a rich time of seeing the people of VCC uniting around a common goal for the purpose of being able to more fully and effectively live out our God-called vision. Here are a couple of the things we can be thankful for.

We are learning to trust God. We cannot reach our goals without a growing reliance and belief in the faithfulness of our God. As we are exploring God's Word both in our Sunday services, in small groups, and in conversations with each other "setting us free" is deepening our understanding that we serve a great God. While at this writing we do not have the final total of our commitments toward our goal, there has already been strong indications that people are being led to sacrificially give.

We are growing in our walk with God. When we launched our Spiritual Growth Pathway last fall to serve as a guide in walking closer and more faithfully with God we did not know that one year later God would use something like a capital campaign to spur us on to an even deeper walk with Him. But that is exactly what is happening. I have been delighted to hear of many conversations about really important issues of discipleship. These conversations are flowing out of our wrestling together with the message of the Scriptures about what it means to be a fully committed follower of Jesus in the vital area of how we think about and manage our money and possessions. This is far more important than the actual monetary goal of the campaign and is something truly worth celebrating.

The holiday season is just on the horizon and we will again be celebrating God's amazing gift of His son. These holiday celebrations will take on a new and deeper meaning this year as we are able to celebrate the great things God is doing through the **setting us free** campaign.

Danny Danny Hall
SENIOR PASTOR

Celebration Services

Family Thanksgiving Service

Wednesday,
11/23, 7:00PM

Christmas Weekend Services (all identical)

Saturday,
12/24, 3:30 and
5:00PM

Sunday,
12/25, 10:45AM

Rest and Be Thankful

It is hard to be thankful, let alone rest, when you are not sure where your next meal is coming from. For far too many people in our world today, worrying about the next meal has become a way of life. While most of us on Thanksgiving Day will be gathered around a table laden with food and surrounded by family and friends, there will be many who will have little or nothing to eat.

Here at VCC we have a tradition of preparing bags of food with all of the fixings for a Thanksgiving dinner. These are distributed through Valley Bible Church Food Pantry to those in our community who are in need. Won't you join with us to help make this Thanksgiving special to those who might otherwise not have a meal?

Donations should be dropped off in the church office lobby by Friday, November 11. Saturday, November 12, at 10:00AM we will gather in the sanctuary lobby to fill bags to be delivered to the VBC Food Pantry.

If you know someone in our church family or have a friend or neighbor who is in need, please contact the church office, 925-846-6622, and arrange to pick up a Thanksgiving meal to share.

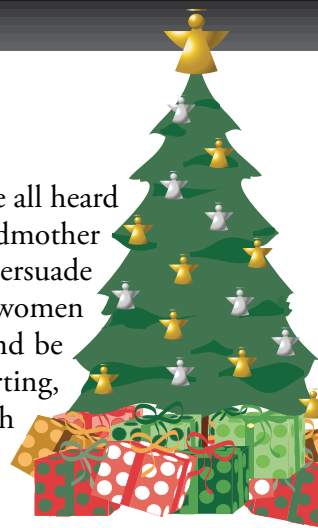
You can help by donating the following for each bag:

- | | |
|---|---------------------------------------|
| \$15 grocery store gift card (for turkey) | Pumpkin pie filling (already spiced) |
| Canned corn | Paper cups (multiples of 8) |
| Canned peas | Paper plates (multiples of 8) |
| Canned cranberry sauce | Thanksgiving tablecloth |
| Canned sweet potatoes | Thanksgiving napkins (multiples of 8) |
| Stuffing mix | 2 candles with candlesticks |
| Potatoes (instant, mashed) | |
| Gravy (canned or mix) | |
| Marshmallows | |
| Pie shell | |



Be an Angel!

“Will you be an angel and...” We have all heard that phrase. Perhaps a mother or grandmother has even said it to you as they tried to persuade you to do the right thing. Men and women of VCC you can do the right thing and be an angel to someone who is lonely, hurting, or needy. You can be an angel and reach out to others through our annual Angel Tree giving ministry.



Our Angel Tree will go up in the lobby of the church the Sunday after Thanksgiving. Show God how thankful you are for all he has given you by sharing with others through this ministry. You can take as many gift tags as you want and donate a gift in His name. All gifts will be due in the church office by Sunday, December 11. You can also volunteer to help wrap all of the gifts that come in. Watch the bulletin for more information.

Forms will be available in the office November 6 if you would like to have help from this ministry or if you know of someone who could use help through this ministry.

Give SUM Help, Fill a Stocking!

The School of Urban Missions (SUM) is hoping to increase by 50% the number of stockings they gave out last year to school age children in Oakland. “This is a wonderful cause,” says a SUM representative. “Parents are touched by the generosity of those they don’t know. Often this stocking is the only gift a child will receive. We tell them that Jesus loves them and that Christians around the greater Bay Area want to show that love. A stocking can often open the door to dialog about God and giving their life to Christ. When one family member chooses Jesus, the whole family often follows.”

The challenge is on VCC. Last year your generosity filled 413 stockings. Can you increase that by 50% and fill 620 stockings this year? Gift suggestions include school supplies such as pens, pencils, sharpeners, crayons, markers, tablets, solar calculators, coloring books. Toys: small cars, balls, harmonicas, yo-yos, jump ropes, small stuffed animals, Slinky. Hygiene items: toothbrush, toothpaste, bar soap, comb, washcloth. Other: individually wrapped candy, lollipops, gum, socks, hair clips, flashlights (with batteries).



Have a Hannah Heart



Baby Dedications

**Sunday, November 27,
both services**

Preparation Class

**Sunday, November 20,
10:45AM in Room B212**

As surely as you live, my lord, I am the woman who stood here beside you praying to the LORD. I prayed for this child, and the LORD has granted me what I asked of him. So now I give him to the LORD. For his whole life he will be given over to the LORD!" And he worshiped the LORD there. 1 SAMUEL 1:26-28

It is always exciting for a family whenever a new child is born; be it the first child or one of many. That moment when parents sense that children are a gift from God is an especially poignant moment. Just as Hannah dedicated her child to God, Christian parents can express their full appreciation to God for this special gift through baby dedication.

Parents who dedicate a child make a promise to the Lord to do everything within their power to raise their child in a godly way until he or she can make a decision on his or her own to follow God. Parents who make this vow of commitment are instructed to raise the child in the ways of God, and not according to their own ways. Some of the responsibilities include teaching and training the child in God's Word, demonstrating an example of godliness, disciplining according to God's ways, and praying earnestly for the child.

Our next baby dedication will be Sunday, November 27, at both services. Baby dedication preparation class will be Sunday, November 20, at 10:45AM in Room B212 (above the church office). Watch the bulletin for more information.

Celebration of Hope

They are interested in fashion, makeup and posing like their favorite models; they look like typical teenage girls. They are in fact, young girls often terribly abused at home, who have been sent off to find work or sold to support their desperate families. The girls arrive in Bangkok, only to discover they have no skills of interest to those in the big cities, except as a human purchase. They earn an income but at great cost! Degraded and humiliated in ways unimaginable by those who assume they have chosen this life, these girls have no hope of salvation from the lives they have been forced to live.

In steps a woman with a heart for the plight of her sisters. She discovers that a mere forty dollars can buy these young girls out of despair for one evening. She has learned that she can use one night and throw a party—a party that not only provides rescue for one night, but one that offers eternal salvation through Jesus Christ. But there are so many girls. How can she ever reach them all?

Sisters and brothers in Christ, here is your chance to set free, for one night, one who is truly in bondage and give her the hope of freedom in Jesus! Your generous contributions will go towards the "purchase" of freedom for young girls just like the ones pictured here.



Join us on Friday, December 9, at 7:00PM for our Third Annual Celebration of Hope Benefit Dinner. Tickets are \$5 per person and are available at the Gathering Place beginning Sunday, November 20. An opportunity to donate to the ministry will also be provided. Watch the bulletin for more information regarding this event.

Ginger Hall, Debbie Niemeyer, Jo King and Jeanie Lundell will be sharing the events and experience of their trip to the Home of New Beginnings. Come and discover what a tuk-tuk is and why Jo & Ginger are holding on for dear life...



Celebration of Hope BENEFIT DINNER

**Friday,
December 9,
7:00PM**

**Tickets
available
November 20**



Finding Giuseppe *by Mary Richardson*

May 2011 found my husband Phil and I at the Sheraton Cerritos, in town for our younger daughter Lisa's graduation from Biola. After getting in the car Phil related an encounter he had in the elevator while I waited in the lobby. As he tells the story, a young man got on the elevator bound for the hotel pool. After just a moment of awkward "elevator silence", the young man asked Phil, "So how's your day going?" They continued chatting and exchanged names. Giuseppe (Phil asked him his name several times to get it right) was in town for his girlfriend's graduation. He asked Phil where he was from. Upon hearing that we were from Pleasanton, Giuseppe said, "I just applied for a high school pastor position at a church there; Valley Community Church, ever hear of it?" What a small world! We ran into Giuseppe again at graduation the next day (out of the thousands of students, faculty, and families in attendance). Phil has commented repeatedly since then that he has never met such an engaging young man. "He just wasn't going to allow a stranger to go by without trying to reach out. I thought later if he would take this time with me, a complete stranger, how much more he would reach out to kids that need to know Christ."

Giuseppe is now living in the Bay area (in Brentwood) to be near his now-fiancé, Jodi. On Sunday, November 6 you will have a chance to meet him too. After 6 months of searching, 150+ resumes received, 6 formal interviews, and uncounted prayers, we are bringing Giuseppe Gatto to the congregation as candidate for High School Pastor. Giuseppe met with high school parents on October 26 and taught the students on Sunday morning, October 30.

On Sunday night, November 6 at 6:00PM there will be a congregation informational meeting to allow everyone to meet Giuseppe. After that meeting the elders will solicit feedback. A second meeting to vote upon Giuseppe's candidacy is tentatively scheduled for Sunday, November 13, also at 6:00PM. The meeting will be confirmed mid-week so watch your emails. The search committee, staff, and elders are all very excited for you to get to meet him. Phil and I hope that you will like him as much as we do!

To recap the search process:

- Held our first search team meeting in April of this year. We also utilized a student advisory group to assist the search team in the process, primarily by giving their feedback on candidates they interacted with.
- Over 150 resumes received in response to the job posting and personal networks
- 15 candidates were interviewed by at least one search team member
- 6 candidates—formally interviewed by the entire search team and conducted reference interviews (from June 20 to August 11)
- 5 candidates—made on-site visits to meet personally with search team, Student Ministries staff, and interact with students
- 3 candidates—also met with staff and elders
- 1 candidate—Giuseppe Gatto—taught high schoolers on a Sunday morning and interacted with parents of high schoolers

Make a Bear; Give a Bear *by Gretchen Zaballos*



I am personally putting out a call to you, your friends and families to PLEASE help us find bear knitters and crocheters so that we can continue to bring cuddly Doctor's Giving Back bears to the kiddos in Ethiopia! Here we are in November and our storage has only a few bears. Our goal is to have 600 bears to take with us when we travel to Ethiopia in March 2012.

If you would like help by knitting or crocheting bears, please contact [Gretchen Zaballos](#). She can give you more information and a pattern if you are interested.

Many Ways to Give *by Susan Hann, Treasurer*

As we approach Setting Us Free Commitment Sunday, November 6, and close in on the calendar year end many folks are thinking about their giving. We provide several ways in which you can give. The first, of course, is by putting your gift in the offering basket every Sunday or dropping off your gift at the church office. Many prefer to mail their gifts and these are counted as part of the following Sunday's giving. These are the traditional forms of contributing.

Many folks are now finding it convenient to give online. There are two ways in which this can be done. The first is through bill pay through your bank. This is set up either as an automatic check written from your bank on a regular basis and then mailed to us, or you can give a one-time gift. You can ask your bank for details. The other way to give online is through the church website. Simply go to www.vcclive.org and click [online giving](#) and follow the instructions. In this case the funds are taken from your

bank account and put into VCC's account. This can also be set up as a regular withdrawal or a one-time gift.

Some employers provide their employees the opportunity to make charitable contributions through a payroll deduction that is forwarded to Valley Community Church. An additional benefit is that some employers will even match the amount. It is a convenient and easy way to give. Check with your employer and see if this is available to you.

Finally you might want to consider donating appreciated stock. There are tax benefits for you because you can deduct the fair market value of the donated property. You can find information on how to do this in the church office. Please just ask me for this information.

January 2012 will bring some changes to our online giving so stay tuned for more information. If you have any questions, feel free to contact me at shann@vcclive.org.



Making Room for Christmas VCC Women's Ministry Christmas Concert & Dessert

Ladies, it's that time of year again when the days fly by, the decorations come out and arrangements are made for the holiday season. You ask yourself, "How will we get everything done?"

We'd like to invite you to slow down a bit in the midst of all you have to do and enjoy an elegant evening of music, story and wonderful dessert at our annual Christmas concert and dessert, *Making Room for Christmas*, on Friday, December 2nd.

We are excited to have Staci Frenes join us this year. She is a recording artist from right here in the Bay Area. Through her speaking and her music she will help us focus on creating space in our lives for important relationships and sacred moments and cultivating a heart of simple worship instead of busyness. This will be a wonderful event to invite those neighbors, family and friends who may not yet know Jesus or truly understand the reason for the Christmas season.

The evening will begin at 7:00PM in the sanctuary with an elegant dessert to follow in the church lobby. Tickets will be \$10 and can be purchased [online](#) or at the Gathering Place on Sundays. So before you get frazzled by the shopping, wrapping, baking and entertaining, take a moment, bring a friend, and make room for Christmas.



Downtown Route Bus Service to Sunday Church

The City of Pleasanton Downtown Route (DTR) provides transportation for eligible Pleasanton and Sunol residents. Now they are adding church stops to their fixed route on Sunday mornings and Valley Community Church has its own stop. The bus arrives at VCC at 8:42AM, 10:27AM and 12:00 noon every Sunday.



For a modest fee (\$1.50 for all-day service), you can catch the bus from some senior housing complexes (pick up a brochure for a list) and ride to church. All vehicles are wheelchair accessible and staffed by trained drivers for the City of Pleasanton. Rides are available to registered seniors 60 years of age or older and disabled adults 18 years of age or older who reside in Pleasanton or Sunol. All tickets must be purchased in advance at the Pleasanton Senior

Center or by mail. DTR drivers cannot take money on the bus. Riders' applications and guidelines can be picked up in the church office lobby, viewed online at <http://www.ci.pleasanton.ca.us/services/transportation/> or call 925-931-5367. DTR tickets are sold as an eight (8) ticket voucher for \$12.00.

November/December Calendar

November 4-5

Men's retreat

Sunday, November 6

Setting Us Free—Commitment Sunday

Saturday, November 12, 9:00AM

Mocha Moments: Just in Case!

Saturday, November 12, 10:00AM

Thanksgiving bags preparation

Sunday, November 13

Setting Us Free—Celebration Sunday/First Fruits

Wednesday, November 23, 7:00PM

Family Thanksgiving service

Saturday, November 26, 9:00AM

Church decorating

Sunday, November 27

1st Sunday of Advent; baby dedications

Friday, December 2, 7:00PM

Women's Christmas Concert & Dessert

Friday, December 9, 7:00PM

Celebration of Hope Benefit Dinner

Saturday, December 24, 3:30 and 5:00PM

Christmas weekend services

Sunday, December 25, 10:45AM

Christmas weekend service



Adam & Jonie Bailey



Ian & Jenny Davis

Congratulations!



Ben & Lindsay (Benjamin) Godinez



Corey & Shannon (Popp) Hamlin



Nathan & Michelle Riccomini



Nick & Kirstie Rodrigues

Congratulations!



Dustin & Chelan (Glavan) Shepherd-Hoppis



Matt & Amy (Hann) Walker