Christmas at Altadena Valley

Christmas at Altadena is a special time. We have several special services during December. We hope these special services, activities, and even changes in our Sunday School format help us anticipate the season and celebrate the true meaning of Christmas and the greatest gift ever given: that God became man, so that we might be reconciled to him.

DECEMBER SUNDAY SCHOOL

We will be combining all of our adult, youth, and children's Sunday school classes this month for special programming. Here's our schedule:

DECEMBER 4
Congregational Meeting/Christmas Mercy Project
We begin with our election of officers. Then, we will help wrap gifts and write cards for all of the kids that are part of our Christmas project with The Forgotten Initiative. Jamie and Catie Lumpkin will update us on plans to make this a special Christmas for these foster children.

DECEMBER 11
Pray for Me Campaign
We believe every teen needs a team of Prayer Champions strategically praying for them. The Pray for Me Campaign creates a vast web of intergenerational relationships for teens and equips adult believers to pass on a sustainable faith to the next generation.

DECEMBER 18
Annual Children's Christmas Pageant & Carols
All children's classes (except 2's and 3's) will perform the Christmas story for the congregation. Then, Steve Whitner will lead everyone in the singing of some of the all-time favorite hymns that celebrate Christ's birth.

DECEMBER 25
11:00 a.m. Worship Service only and no Sunday School
JANUARY 1
11:00 a.m. Worship Service only and no Sunday School

SPECIAL SERVICES

DECEMBER 11
Lessons & Carols Service
Join us at 6:00 p.m., for a special service featuring the Chancel Choir, Bell Choir, Preschool Praisers, Gradeschool Choir, and other AVPC musicians. A reception will immediately follow. Childcare will be provided through age three.

DECEMBER 24
Christmas Eve Candlelight Services
There will be Christmas Eve services at 5:00 and 7:00 p.m. Childcare will be provided through age three for both services.
I have been encouraged recently in the area of evangelism by two things, one expected and the other unexpected. The expected encouragement has come from a book I’ve read called *Get Real*, by John Leonard. The author is a PCA pastor in the Philadelphia area, as well as a professor at my alma mater, Westminster Theological Seminary. He challenges the traditional approach to evangelism in which the evangelist looks for an opportunity to shoehorn a gospel presentation into a conversation with an unbeliever. He finds a different approach in the Bible, one that is anchored in prayer and in the way of Jesus with people. Jesus frequently asked questions of people. He listened well, and he crafted his gospel presentation to fit the unique needs of each person. Leonard makes this all practical by giving many examples from his own life and ministry, both as a missionary to Muslims and as a pastor in America. I commend this book to you for your own reading as you seek to become more fruitful in reaching the unbelievers God has placed in your life.

The unexpected encouragement came from a movie Wendy and I saw this week. It was a movie about an alien invasion of the earth. *Arrival* stars Amy Adams and is about aliens who come to the earth not to conquer but to bring a gift of their language. This language, once learned, has the power to help one see the future. But those on the earth feel threatened by this invasion and seek to respond to it with violence. I was reminded in all this of another “alien” invasion of the earth, this one by God himself. He also has come bearing a gift, and those who learn the language of grace are given some knowledge of the future, a future of everlasting joy and life. But many see this invasion as a threat and seek to stop it. As Christians, we have the privilege of telling people that this invasion is good news, not a threat but the greatest opportunity any human will ever have.

Brad Allison, Senior Pastor

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**SESSION MEETING, OCTOBER 18**

- The full-time Facility Manager Job Description and position description were approved.
- Brian and Lynn Beckett, Joel Brumbach, and Maria Knuth will become members by transfer of membership.
- Approval passed for Elder representation at the next Presbytery meeting to be Ken Francis, Cal Martin, and Karl Poythress.

**DIACONATE MEETING, NOVEMBER 6**

- The new Safety and Security Plan was approved.
- Steve Klsoe presented the requirements for a Video Surveillance System at Altadena Park that supports the proposed Security Plan and Recommendations.
MEET OUR NEW MEMBER

Tom Hinke

HOW DID YOU FIRST FIND OUT ABOUT OUR CHURCH? We just moved from California to Alabama and the Altadena area in January 2016, into a house about a half mile from the church—we drove by often for errands and appointments. I love the architecture of the church and I decided that I would try it once, as I started my search for a church here in the Birmingham area. AVPC was the first and last church that I visited in my church search.

WHAT HAVE YOU ENJOYED ABOUT AVPC THE MOST? I liked the very friendly people that I experienced in my first visit. I also like that fact that there is some ethnic diversity in the church. I really enjoy Pastor Brad’s teaching. It is excellent. I have really enjoyed the Fellowship Hall Community Group speakers. I have also enjoyed the Friday morning men’s small group. In addition I have enjoyed playing bass guitar on the AVPC Praise Team. I also enjoyed starting the Pastor’s class on my second visit. I had never seen such a class for newcomers before and I found it a great experience.

HOW LONG HAVE YOU BEEN A CHRISTIAN? I became a Christian while a Junior in college at the University of California, Berkeley in 1966. So I have been a Christian about 50 years now.

WHERE WERE YOU BORN AND RAISED? I was born in Columbus, Ohio, but when I was part way through Kindergarten, my dad was called back into the Navy for the Korean War and we moved to Long Beach, California. I lived in Long Beach through 3rd grade and then we moved to Garden Grove, California.

AS A YOUNG MAN, I THOUGHT I WOULD BE …. BUT ACTUALLY… I really had no idea, although upon graduation from high school I thought I wanted to major in physics, but now I am doing computer science remotely for the NASA Ames Research Center that is located in the San Francisco Bay Area of California.

I KNEW IS WAS GROWN UP WHEN… I took off on my own in my new Volkswagen bug for Air Force Officer’s Training school half a continent away from California in Texas.

WHAT IS SPECIAL TO YOU ABOUT YOUR SPOUSE? Kate is a very caring person. She was the American Mom to over 1,000 Chinese government officials, and in one case, when one of the delegates (what they called themselves) explained some problems that he was having, Kate insisted that he go to a doctor. They discovered a brain tumor that was successfully operated on. In another case, the delegates called and said that they were cold at night, and Kate collected blankets that we took to them late one night. On one of our trips to China (where we went to cities from which the delegates came to follow up on some who had become Christians while in California) a mayor that we met, who had never even been a delegate, said how he appreciated the fact that she had brought blankets several years earlier. Thus, you never know where the simplest act can ripple to far off places, like a stone tossed in a lake.

WHEN I HAVE FREE TIME I ENJOY… Amateur radio operation, playing my ukulele and guitar, and watching chick flicks. I love movies that are romantic and have happy endings. I also like taking group motorcycle rides with CMA and the HOGs.

MY ALL TIME FAVORITE MOVIE IS… The Runaway Bride is my current favorite, but I also like Invictus, which is not a chick flick, but is about the wisdom of President Nelson Mandela as he came out of prison and showed forgiveness to those who had put him there. Through his forgiveness and leadership, he kept South Africa from exploding as apartheid was ended. He kept the white community from fleeing and kept them engaged in the job of running a country. It strikes me as I watch this movie that all of the wasted time that he spent in prison for 27 years, served the purpose that if he could forgive and move forward with building a united South Africa with whites and blacks, then how could anyone not follow his example. Very inspiring.

MY FAVORITE RESTAURANT IS… I like Black Pearl Asian Cuisine restaurant since I love Chinese food and they have great Chinese food.

MY HOPE FOR AVPC IS THAT IT COULD… I would like to see AVPC embrace international student ministry at Samford and perhaps even joining with Briarwood for international student ministry to UAB international students. I would also love to see more ethnic diversity, although I have noticed that AVPC does embrace ethnic diversity as a very welcoming church. That was one of my observations on my very first visit and is one of the things that attracted me to AVPC. In California today there is no majority, and in the San Francisco Bay Area there is great ethnic diversity. One of the churches that I served in was about half Asian, including the lead pastor, and I really enjoyed that.

Hello
My name is
Tom Hinke

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Welcome to the AVPC Family!

Molly Faith Shepherd
Daughter of Brent & Emily Shepherd
Born November 4

Welcome Back!

Bethany Jane Washington
Daughter of Shahn & Naomi Washington
Born November 19

Rachael Joyce Gray
Daughter of Holt & Laura Gray
Born November 21

CONGRATULATIONS

• If you are ever in the Chick-fil-A in Inverness look for Mason MacCaughelty—he just got a job there!

• The Evangel Football team, which includes our own John Lloyd, Davis Windsor, and Zach Windsor, will represent the state of Alabama at the National Association of Christian Athletes (NACA) tournament in Tennessee.

• Congratulations to Ann Marie Granberry and Daniel Hausler on their recent marriage on November 5.

• Congratulations to Betty and Jon Carter—they are going to be GRANDPARENTS! Their daughter, Joanna Briggs is having a baby in May!

GREAT EXPECTATIONS

• Jamie and Catie Lumpkin—March

• David and Sarah French—March

• Chris and Kendra Knowles—April

GRAHAME AND CATHERINE BOBO HAVE MOVED BACK TO BIRMINGHAM AND ARE BACK AT ALTADENA! THEY WERE MEMBERS HERE AT AVPC FROM 1979 TO 2010 WHEN THEY RELOCATED TO PENNSYLVANIA. SOME OF YOU MAY REMEMBER THAT CATHERINE USED TO BE THE DIRECTOR AT GOD’S HOUSE KINDERGARTEN. WE ARE HAPPY TO WELCOME THEM BACK AND IF YOU DON’T KNOW THEM, BE SURE TO GREET THEM SOME SUNDAY WHEN THEY ARE IN THE PEO WITH YOU!

WE EXTEND OUR SYMPATHY TO CAL AND SANDRA MARTIN AND THEIR ENTIRE FAMILY ON THE RECENT DEATH OF CAL’S MOTHER, MARY JO MARTIN.
Celebrations are in the air! We just finished learning about Thanksgiving, and now it is time for Christmas. As you know, kids become excited at the very mention of Christmas, and we are dedicated to teaching the true meaning of Christmas at God’s House. It isn't always easy, but it can be done! Our class parties are for Jesus’ birthday, and our annual music program is an opportunity to tell of the best Christmas gift of all—JESUS! We pray God will bring those parents and grandparents who need to hear His word. Our four-and-five-year-old students will present their program on Wednesday, December 14 at 10:00, and you are all welcome to attend. You are sure to be blessed!

At God’s House we celebrate Thanksgiving just like the Pilgrims and Indians might have done, except we substitute candy corn for real corn! We hope you enjoy these photos of our kids at their feasts.

Lou Ann Spell, GHK Teacher
**YOUTH HAPPENINGS**

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**December 2016**

- **SR HIGH CHRISTMAS PARTY**
  (Sat., December 10, 5:30-8:30 p.m.)

- **JR HIGH CHRISTMAS PARTY**
  (Wed., December 14, 6:00-8:00 p.m.)

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**PRAY FOR ME KICK OFF**
Join us for the kick off during the Sunday School hour.

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**LOOKING AHEAD...**

- **JAN 4**—Small Group resumes
- **JAN 8**—Youth Group resumes
- **JAN 15**—Parent’s meeting @ 5pm

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**PRAY FOR ME CAMPAIGN**

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**SS**—Attend Joint Sunday School with the rest of the church.

**YG**—Jr. & Sr. High Youth Group @ 5:00 p.m.
This time of year brings many opportunities to provide special gifts to others. AVPC members gathered food for Thanksgiving Baskets for 30 families for Urban Hope Church in Fairfield and Household of Faith Church in East Lake, bought gifts for foster children through our Angel Tree, and the youth and children filled shoeboxes for Operation Christmas Child. It’s a blessing to be able to share a piece of what God has given each of us.

**THANKSGIVING BASKETS**

**ANGEL TREE**

**OPERATION CHRISTMAS CHILD**

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**Women’s Winter Retreat**

Do you often find yourself rushing through the day just to get everything done and realize that maybe you’ve missed precious time with God, the blessings He’s given and tomorrow you may do it all over again? Don’t we all desire “to do our one life well?” Each January we are given the privilege of attending our Ladies’ Retreat to escape our everyday routine for a period, to refresh and renew our souls and bodies. This year’s retreat can be the time for you to slow your pace, relax, sing, and laugh and to enjoy each other as we fellowship and worship our sweet Father. We hope to see you there! You will be blessed!

**DATES**
Friday-Saturday, January 20-21 (registration opens at 4:00 p.m. on Friday and the retreat will wrap up at 3:00 p.m. on Saturday)

**LOCATION**
Children’s Harbor, Lake Martin (accommodations are lovely; private rooms are available)

**COST**
Cost is $65.00, which includes three meals, unlimited snacks, lodging, and all craft materials. Partial scholarships available (contact Katey Windsor).

**REGISTRATION**
To register, pick up a brochure in the Parlor or Welcome Center. All registrations must be in by January 15.
NEW FACILITIES MANAGER POSITION

Please be in prayer for God’s provision of a new full-time AVPC Facilities Manager. This position includes benefits. Refer anyone you think may be interested to Nancy Klose (nancy@avpc.org) or to the church website, www.avpc.org/about-us/job-opportunities. Application deadline is December 15.

OCTOBER FINANCIAL REPORT

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**October Financial Report:**

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**Did you know...**

1. **Which member of AVPC was once a nun?**
   - A. Jan Morris
   - B. Linda Murphy
   - C. Diana Lloyd
   - D. Merrily McCary

2. **Who does Frank Thielman say was one of the smartest students he ever had?**
   - A. Clint Cvacho
   - B. Betty Carter
   - C. Jay Lloyd
   - D. Tracy Whitner

**Answer Key:**

(1) B—Linda went to Catholic school for 12 years and then at age 17 didn’t see any options for more education & the nuns encouraged her to come & try life in the convent as her vocation. She found that that particular convent was very harsh & controlling and tried to leave several times but didn’t succeed. Finally, at age 22, she made a plan to run away. She rode a bus all night & her parents picked her up & took her home. “I made my escape but I carried guilt & shame with me far too long time,” she says. Six months after leaving she met her husband, Dan, and the rest is the Lord’s beautiful plan.

(2) D—Tracy Whitner was one of his New Testament students at King College.