



CORNER STONE



Special dates

- African American History Month
- Transfiguration of Our Lord, *February 11, 2024*
- Ash Wednesday, *February 14, 2024*
- Valentine's Day, *February 14, 2024*
- Presidents Day, *February 19, 2024*
- Leap Day, *February 29, 2024*

February 2024						
S	M	T	W	T	F	S
				1	2	3
4	5	6	7	8	9	10
11	12	13	14	15	16	17
18	19	20	21	22	23	24
25	26	27	28	29		

God-shaped hole

Have you ever neared the completion of a jigsaw puzzle, only to discover that a piece or two is missing? That's an apt visual for what it's like to live without God. Blaise Pascal, a 17th-century philosopher, observed: "There is a God-shaped vacuum in the heart of each man which cannot be satisfied by any created thing but only by God the Creator, made known through Jesus Christ."

Centuries earlier, St. Augustine proclaimed "Thou hast made us for thyself, O Lord, and our hearts are restless until they find their rest in thee." And in the Old Testament, the writer of Ecclesiastes expounded on the meaninglessness of earthly striving and material pursuits. Only God's Spirit can fill our emptiness and satisfy our eternal longings.

"I have come that they may have life, and have it to the full," says Jesus in John 10:10 (NIV). He alone provides the solution for emptiness. What comfort to be filled with — and to find our fulfillment in — our Savior!



A prayer for Lent

Dear Christ, hasten to me. Release me from my sins. Free my arms from the chains of evil, that I may embrace you. Lift the scales of ignorance from my eyes that I may see you. Why do you delay? What are you waiting for? You are my God and my Lord, you are my refuge and strength, you are my glory and my hope. In you I put my trust. Dear Christ, hasten to me. —Aelred of Rievaulx (12th century)

Spring training for Christians

The word Lent comes from Middle English and German words for springtime. In light of the start of baseball season, some people call the pre-Easter season "spring training for Christians." This fresh perspective moves away from the flawed understanding that Lent must be somber, or that giving something up for Lent is punishment for sin or a way to earn God's favor.

As people of faith, we should never take a season off. But every so often — at least once a year! — we do well to examine where we need to get back in shape spiritually. Perhaps we will indeed opt to give something up: that swearing habit, sleeping in on Sundays, or the cost of a weekly treat so we can donate the money instead. Or maybe we'll take on something new for Lent: a Bible study, prayer routine or service project.

Hebrews describes spiritual discipline as challenging in the moment but yielding righteousness later. The writer urges us, "Lift your drooping hands and strengthen your weak knees ... so that what is lame may not be put out of joint but rather be healed" (12:11-13, ESV). May the spring training of Lent strengthen and heal us all.



FEBRUARY Birthdays

February 12 Dolores Cruz
 February 25 Jake Pargin
 February 29 Jon Hathaway



January 7 Rod & Betty Paulson, Cheryl & Gary Dickens
 January 14 Ken Dalby
 January 21 Congregational dinner
 Thank you to Aubrey Pargin, Beth Davis & VeeAnn Suthers for furnishing the delicious roast beef
 January 28

NOTE: Donations (in the cookie jar) will be accepted for cookies & coffee.
 Also feel free to share a plate of your specialty at any time.



SLV BANK DONATION
 We received \$253.00 from the SLV Bank Spirit of Giving during the holidays. Thank you to all who supported our church in this way.

PWA VALENTINE TEA will be at the church February 3 at 1:00 . Enjoy a fun afternoon making Valentines and visiting with friends.



Bible Study & Fellowship at Cheryl's home Wednesdays at 1:00 p.m.

The realm of the impossible

The wonderful thing about praying is that you leave a world of not being able to do something and enter God's realm, where everything is possible. He specializes in the impossible. Nothing is too great for his almighty power. Nothing is too small for his love. —Corrie ten Boom



Bible Quiz

Use one word (perhaps in different forms) for all the blanks to complete this Scripture passage: "Dear friends, let us ___ one another, for ___ comes from God. Everyone who ___ has been born of God and knows God. Whoever does not ___ does not know God, because God is ___."

- A. believe
- B. help
- C. love
- D. forgive

Answer: C (See 1 John 4:7-8, NIV.)

"Blessed are the cracked, for they shall let in the light."
 —Groucho Marx




*Please be
Praying for...*


Prayers for Betty & Rod Paulson—safe travels to services for Betty’s uncle in Nebraska

Continued prayers for Allen & Tracy Pickett

Joy for Rod Paulson, Gary Dickens, Loren Buss & others helping to ‘undecorate’ and for shoveling snow

Joy for willing hands of Justin & VeeAnn Suthers, Aubrey & Jake Pargin, Betty Paulson, Cheryl Morgan, and Tim

Continued prayers for Annavee Hinkley

Continued prayers for Laurie & Steve Maxfield and Laurie’s mom

Joy for Ancient Promise visiting and sharing their vision, experiences and prayers for continued support

Prayers for the Van family—Dennis’ dad having health issues and his sister, Rebecca, diagnosed with brain tumor

Prayers for Tim’s dad—health issues

Joy for Kyla Davis speaking on behalf of Campus Ministries at Adams State

Joy for successful congregational meeting, delicious dinner, and generous help moving & unloading

Prayers for the Cossell family in the tragic loss of their son, John

Prayers for Orene Hinkley in hospital with pneumonia

Prayers for the family of Dale Powell, former pastor here, in the loss of Dale

Joy and congratulations for Lyza Davis and her friend, Sylvia, going to State History Fair

CARRY EACH OTHER’S BURDENS AND IN THIS WAY YOU FULFILL THE LAW OF CHRIST.

———Galations 6:2

Lay Leaders

February 4 Kyla Davis

February 11 Jim Whitmer

February 18 Lorelyn Buss

February 28 Dennis Burch



Christian symbol



Ushers

February 4 Rod Paulson & Jake Pargin

February 11 Steve & Laurie Maxfield

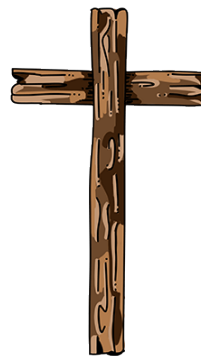
February 18 Kyla & Lyza Davis

February 25 Darin & Tiffani Barnes

February Communion

Cheryl Morgan

CROSS OF ASHES — On Ash Wednesday, as Lent begins, worshipers’ foreheads are often marked with ashes in the sign of the cross. The ashes traditionally come from burning palm branches from the previous Palm Sunday. In the Old Testament, ashes were a sign of mourning and repentance. Today, some worshipers wipe off the ashes before leaving church, to symbolize being cleansed from sin by Jesus’ death; others wear the ashes the rest of the day, carrying the cross of Christ into the world. Reciting Genesis 3:19 often accompanies the placement of ashes: “You are dust, and to dust you shall return.”



Ash Wednesday is February 14 this year. Easter is March 31.



Invaluable!

"The kingdom of heaven," said Jesus, "is like a merchant in search of fine pearls; on finding one pearl of great value, he went and sold all that he had and bought it" (Matthew 13:45-46, NRSV).

In 2021, the Good News Network reported that a crab fisherman in Thailand stumbled upon a valuable Melo pearl while cutting up a snail for lunch. In wonder, he brought it to his brother to verify the discovery. "My family had been fishing for generations," said Prasarnphon Phunwan, "but I believe our fate is about to change because of my lunch." Several months prior, another fisherman had been offered \$351,000 for a similar pearl.

Likewise, God's priceless love immeasurably alters our eternal fate. If we fully comprehended the value of that love, we'd give up everything to obtain it. But the greater wonder is that we don't have to buy it. God gives it to us as a gift! Whether we seemed to encounter Jesus by chance or someone joyfully shared the Gospel with us, our Savior is the merchant who "sold all that he had" — even his life. So priceless is salvation! So valuable are we! —Heidi Hyland Mann



Open invitation

Come, sinners, to the gospel feast,
Let every soul be Jesus' guest;
Ye need not be one left behind,
For God hath bidden all humankind.

Sent by my Lord, on you I call;
The invitation is to all:
Come, all the world; come, sinner, thou!
All things in Christ are ready now.

Come, all ye souls by sin oppressed,
Ye restless wanderers after rest,
Ye poor, and maimed, and halt, and blind,
In Christ a hearty welcome find.

—Charles Wesley (18th century)

"Don't let me ever think, dear God, that I was anything but the instrument for your story — just like the typewriter was mine."
—Flannery O'Connor

Learning to forgive

Forgiveness is great in theory, and it's a wonderful blessing to receive. But granting forgiveness can be another story. As C.S. Lewis said, "Everybody says forgiveness is a lovely idea until they have something to forgive." Likewise, forgiveness doesn't simply happen over time, as forgetting often does. Instead, it's "an act of volition," said Simon Wiesenthal, "and only the sufferer is qualified to make the decision."

Because forgiveness has many spiritual, emotional and even physical benefits, the secular world is taking notice. Colleges now offer classes about forgiveness skills and strategies. "You practically never hear sermons on forgiveness that are practical and give clear instructions on how to approach it," Professor Robert Enright tells the Washington Post.

Graduate student Shyanne Sporrer says a forgiveness class helped her realize the danger of holding grudges. "Forgiving does not mean you are giving up power," she says. "On the contrary, when you forgive, you are the person who is in control. By forgiving, you can empower yourself to move forward from the anger and resentment to be a better version of yourself."

Valentine's Day jokes for animal lovers

What did one sheep say to the other?
I love ewe!

And how did the other sheep respond?
You're not so baaa-d yourself.

Why do skunks love Valentine's Day?
They are very scent-imental creatures.

What did the enamored deer say?
I'm very fawn-ed of you!

What question did the penguin ask on February 14?
Waddle I do without you?

What do you call two birds in love?
Tweethearts!

What did one bee say to the other?
I love bee-ing with you, honey!

Ground rules for love

In *Let Me Be a Woman*, missionary Elisabeth Elliot writes about the “ground rules” for “how this thing called love really works — in a marriage, in the world.” Her list reflects many of the principles found in 1 Corinthians 13, the Bible’s love chapter.

- This love of which I speak is slow to lose patience. It looks for a way of being constructive.
- Love is not possessive.
- Love is not anxious to impress, nor does it cherish inflated ideas of its own ideas.
- Love has good manners and does not pursue selfish advantage.
- Love is not touchy.
- Love does not keep account of evil or gloat over the wickedness of other people. On the contrary, it is glad ... when truth prevails.
- Love knows no limits to its endurance, no end to its trust, no fading of its hope; it can outlast anything. It is, in fact, the one thing that stands when all else has fallen.



Have you ever felt God’s presence in the kindness of a stranger? Through the mystery of a sunset? Through the question of a child? Through the commitment of a spouse? Through a word well spoken? Or through a well-timed touch? Have you sensed Him?

Highlights from Session Meeting of January 11, 2024

Pastor Allen will be conducting Training and Education classes the first Saturday of every month from 9:00 am - 11:30 am. Next meeting will be February 3, 2024.

Rod noted and thanked everyone for the great turnout to take down the Christmas decorations and clean out back Sunday school room.

Ken informed the Session that Ancient Promise will be here on Sunday, January 14, 2024. Robbie will be doing the sermon and there will be a presentation about Ancient Promise during fellowship following services.

Allen and Tracey plan on moving into the manse January 20 or 21st. Allen has set up a new mailbox for the manse. He will be away on vacation from January 23-28 and will be attending the ECO National Gathering January 28 – February 2.

The annual Congregational meeting will be held on January 21 following services. There will be a potluck dinner after the meeting.

Pastor Allen and Rev. Jun Harada are working on bringing Young Life back to the Valley.

Next Session meeting is February 15, 2024, at 7:00 pm

NOTE: The training and Education class will be on the second Saturday, February 10, this month since Allen will be out of town on the first Saturday.

A new perspective

I have a knack for making most tasks bigger than they need to be. Whether it’s my go-getting nature or overcompensating “just in case,” I often complicate the simplest of activities. When asked to bring a potluck side dish, I bring two. What if someone has an allergy? Or I join two Bible studies because I don’t want to offend either facilitator.

Jesus understands people like me. “For my yoke is easy to bear, and the burden I give you is light,” he says in Matthew 11:30 (NLT). In *The Soul’s Slow Ripening*, Christine Valters Paintner explores various Bible-based and spiritual practices. While reading it, I began adopting her insights into the rhythm of my own life. But without a filter or prayerful consideration of what God wanted me to discern, I just kept adding — creating an unnecessary burden.

“Your call may not be to change anything in your life other than your perspective,” Paintner concludes. That provided newfound freedom. Of course, our good Savior — whose burden is light — will help us navigate decisions and commitments. The only takeaway may be a much-needed shift in our perspective.

—Janna Firestone

Walk with God long enough and you come to know His heart. When you spend time with Him, you see His compassion. When you welcome Him to enter the gateway of your soul, you’ll perceive His will. To meet the Savior is to be set aflame. To discover the flame is to discover His will. And to discover His will is to access a world like none you have ever seen!

Our Purpose:

We endeavor to be a Christ-Centered Presbyterian Church with the following primary aims:


- To bring men, women and children to a saving relationship with Jesus Christ
- To nurture one another in the work of God and in the spiritual fellowship of the congregation.
- To serve those who are in need in our community and in the world beyond.

The Corner Stone is published monthly for the purpose of promoting communications within the church family and community.

Church Office (719) 852-2555

Do you have something you would like to share in the newsletter? E-mail to Lyla at: lyla@notes-numbers.com Or leave it in the newsletter tray. All items are appreciated.

FIRST PRESBYTERIAN CHURCH of MONTE VISTA
705 SECOND AVE
P O BOX 527



PUZZLE

CONNECTED BY LOVE

God's Word is filled with messages about love, which connects us to God and to one another.

Directions: Draw a line from the beginning of each Bible verse (on the left side) through the heart to the rest of the verse (on the right side). Use the Scripture references for help.

a. We

b. Above all,


c. My command is this:

d. And over all these virtues put on

e. Greater

f. See what great

g. There is no fear in



1. each other as I have loved you. John 15:12

2. has no one than this: to lay down one's life for one's friends. John 15:13

3. But perfect love drives out fear. 1 John 4:18

4. each other deeply, because love covers over a multitude of sins. 1 Peter 4:8

5. the Father has lavished on us, that we should be called children of God! 1 John 3:1

6. because he first loved us. 1 John 4:19

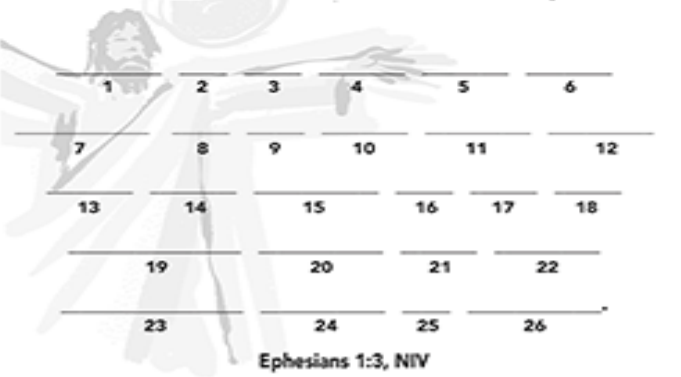
7. which binds them all together in perfect unity. Colossians 3:14

www.notes-numbers.com

Puzzle!

After solving the equations, write the words on the correct numbered lines below. Complete Ephesians 1:3 (NIV) to discover how God shows his great love for us.

- | | |
|------------------------|-------------------------|
| 14 - 7 = ___ Father | 10 + 15 = ___ in |
| 10 + 9 = ___ heavenly | 10 - 5 = ___ God |
| 9 + 9 = ___ the | 6 - 3 = ___ to |
| 12 + 12 = ___ blessing | 12 - 6 = ___ and |
| 2 - 1 = ___ Praise | 6 + 6 = ___ Christ |
| 7 + 7 = ___ has | 18 - 9 = ___ our |
| 11 + 11 = ___ every | 22 - 11 = ___ Jesus |
| 13 + 13 = ___ Christ | 1 + 1 = ___ be |
| 8 + 8 = ___ us | 7 + 6 = ___ who |
| 10 + 10 = ___ realms | 2 + 2 = ___ the |
| 8 + 9 = ___ in | 10 + 5 = ___ blessed |
| 5 + 5 = ___ Lord | 4 + 4 = ___ of |
| 10 + 11 = ___ with | 10 + 13 = ___ spiritual |



1	2	3	4	5	6
7	8	9	10	11	12
13	14	15	16	17	18
19	20	21	22		
23	24	25	26		

Ephesians 1:3, NIV

Answer: Please be to the God and Father of our Lord Jesus Christ, who has blessed us in the heavenly realms with every spiritual blessing in Christ. Ephesians 1:3, NIV



JESUS, THE VERY THOUGHT OF THEE

Jesus, the very thought of Thee,
With sweetness fills my breast;
But sweeter far Thy face to see,
And in Thy presence rest.

Attributed to Bernard of Clairvaux (1092-1153)
Translated by Edward Caswall (1814-1878)

Knowing God is a matter of the heart. This truth dominated the life of Bernard of Clairvaux who entered a monastery at twenty two. God's love was Bernard's lifeblood, pulsing through everything he said and did. His knowledge of God was deeply personal, and it gave meaning to his life on earth and formed his vision of heaven.