



From the Pastor's Desk

If then you were raised with Christ, seek those things which are above, where Christ is, sitting at the right hand of God. Colossians 3:1



As you can probably tell, I am always excited about communicating truth from the inexhaustible source that is God's Word. I have been

richly blessed over just the course of the past year, and trust you have been too, by last summer's study in Matthew's Gospel, our ongoing study in the book of Ephesians, and this year's theme on sanctification. Truly, God's truth is an infinite source of riches for those who will "seek things above" and "set their minds" upon them!

But there is also something important about the reminders that naturally come our way with the Church calendar—in particular with Easter and Christmas. No matter how much we might like to plumb the depths of Scripture, the calendar tends to bring us back to the basics:

*God so loved the world
that He sent His only begotten
Son that whosoever...*
John 3:16

*He Himself bore our sins on
His body on the tree...*
1 Peter 2:24

*He was raised because of the
forgiveness of sins.*
Romans 4:25

And so as we approach another celebration of Easter, I am glad for the opportunity we are going to have to become a *sending church* for one of our missionaries and commission her to service. I am glad for the opportunity to open the church on Saturday and Sunday so that our choir might proclaim our risen Savior to the community. But most of all, I am glad to be reminded that Jesus called out:

It is finished!
John 19:30

His work on the cross was finished with respect to the judgment of our sins, and then He was raised from the dead as the *First-fruits* of all those who will one day follow.

Farewell Friends

In mid-April, long-time members Ken and Karen Hunt are moving to Texas to be closer to family. VCC has been blessed with their devoted service since they joined the Church in 2003. Ken served as chair of the Property Committee and as a Deacon and has been a faithful greeter and usher. Karen has been a willing volunteer on many hospitality projects and has most recently helped coordinate the VCC Stitches group.



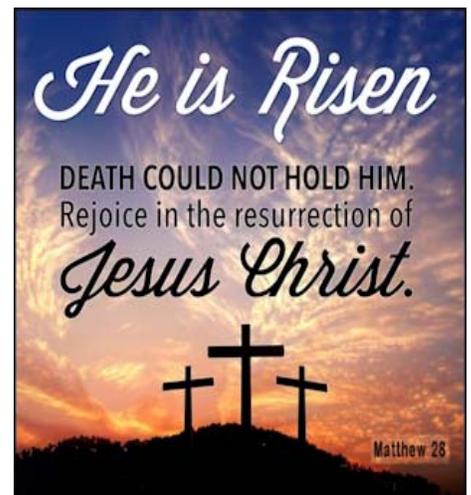
I trust as a church fellowship we will continue to major in the great truths of the faith while we continue to study God's Word—line upon line and precept upon precept.

A most blessed Easter to all of you.

Kevin Redig

Do You Know Someone Who Needs a Little Help?

Our Deacons have developed a program to provide services—rides, visits, meals, minor repairs—to members of the congregation who need this type of support. The hardest part, however, is alerting the Deacons to the needs and that is the purpose of the orange cards that are available on the sign-up shelf just to the left as you enter the fellowship hall. If you know someone who needs help—or if you need help yourself—complete one of the orange cards and put it in the box provided on the sign-up shelf. A Deacon or volunteer will contact you.



VCC Missions Report

WHY WE ARE SENDING A MISSIONARY

On Sunday, March 25, VCC took the novel for our fellowship action of becoming the Sending Church for one of our missionaries. At the worship service on Sunday morning, Our sent missionary was blessed with the laying on of hands by the Missions Committee members and many from the congregation and with a commissioning prayer.

Up until now, VCC's expanding involvement with missionaries and missions projects and entities has been a successful partnership program of prayer and financial support. Though our fellowship has been blessed with a number of missionaries, active and retired, who worship with us, we have never been led to send out a missionary from this local church body.

Our sent missionary has been part of this fellowship and has worshipped with us for a number of years, and now calls VCC her Home Church. She has involved herself in ministries and Bible studies as time and her various international assignments have allowed, and she was instrumental in the forming of our self-managed mission's program.

Increasingly the missions committee has felt God leading us to deepen VCC's personal and spiritual commitment with and to our sent missionary. This is accomplished by commissioning our sent missionary from our body, and for VCC to become her *Sending Church*.



What Does It Mean to Be a Sending Church?

Supporting our sent missionary's ministry will become the concern of the entire fellowship and will include enhanced prayer as well as financial and relational support. We will seek to discern the ongoing needs of her ministry and be sensitive to the challenges associated with our sent missionary's extended service in the mission field. We will also need to make every effort to minister to her when she is home in order to encourage and refresh her spirit. Please keep our sent missionary in your prayers as she takes on a short-term assignment in Africa and continues planning for a more extended posting.



Conda Dyche	4/02
Marian Stoleson	4/06
Michael Galyen	4/09
Don Hess	4/10
Dorrie Libby	4/11
Arlene Burt	4/12
Kenneth Oliver	4/14
Judy Maples	4/14
Ardith Matthews	4/25
Ermina Tomrell	4/27
Wayne Bruning	4/27
Judy Hindman	4/29
Gwen Ogard	4/29
Karen Redig	4/30



Dennis and Glenann Hanson—57 years	4/02
Wayne and Helen Bruning—3 Years	4/06
Alan and Rita Bolty 22 years	4/06
Larry and Jo Hunt	4/11
John and Sue Koch 38 years	4/11
Warren and Peggy Thurmond—55 years	4/24

Ooops!

If your dates are either incorrect or missing from our lists, please notify the office so that our congregational database can be updated or corrected.

A MESSAGE FROM OUR SENT MISSIONARY

As I write this I'm watching a huge, dark, bird of prey perched on a utility pole, wings open wide like a black cape, looking menacing. He rotates his body, scanning the open field beneath him looking for his next meal. I watch for a while, hoping for a good show. We have too many ground squirrels and I'm rooting for the bird.

As I watched him scan for his lunch, the words, "*your enemy the devil prowls around like a roaring lion seeking someone to devour*" came to mind. This bird was on the prowl, actively seeking something to devour, just as our enemy does. This verse from 1 Peter 5 begins with, "*Be alert and of sober mind.*" I don't know if the ground squirrels and small birds were being alert and of sober mind. I don't know if they were aware that they were in the presence of their enemy.



frequent time in the Word and we let the things of the Lord drift from our minds. Maybe our energy becomes more and more invested in ourselves—our comforts, pursuing our own importance and fulfillment. Maybe we remove ourselves from the sanctification process by choosing not to abiding in Christ and restoring ourselves to fellowship through confession. On and on it goes. Everywhere we look there is something we can choose that will devour us bit by bit if we let it.

Onde I was nearly devoured. I was a ground squirrel who exposed herself to the enemy. It wasn't too many years ago that I let some thoughts take hold of my head and heart.

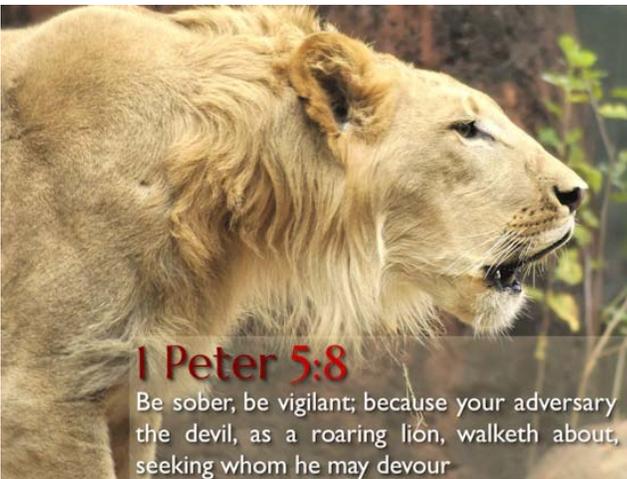
My focus was shifted from Christ to myself. I left myself vulnerable to being devoured. It took some time and some wrestling, but I chose to place my focus back on Christ, to walk in fellowship moment by moment. I could just as easily have chosen to keep my focus on myself and my circumstances—with ugly results. After looking back on this time of testing, these two words—*choice*

and *focus*, became important to me. They are important to me even today, years later.

As I finish these thoughts, I note that the huge, dark bird didn't get his meal, but he's now circling the field watching for vulnerable prey. The hungry lion didn't get me back then, but, like the hawk he's also watching for vulnerable prey, for those who have lost their *focus*. Then he can sneak in, bit by bit, leading us away from Christ, our source of joy, purpose, and contentment.

As I prepare to continue my journey with the Lord in another country, I encourage you to check up on me. Am I choosing to focus on our Lord? Am I a willing participant in my sanctification or am I choosing to walk outside of fellowship with Him? Am I a useful tool in His hands or am I bringing shame to His name through my disobedience?

I'm grateful for you and your care for me. It's been a pleasure to grow together.



1 Peter 5:8

Be sober, be vigilant; because your adversary the devil, as a roaring lion, walketh about, seeking whom he may devour

Isn't that how it is with us too? We go about our lives, largely unaware that we are in the presence of an enemy who is actively seeking to destroy us. Our destruction may not come as quickly and thoroughly as it would for an unlucky ground squirrel.

Instead, our destruction often comes in subtle steps. Maybe we first stop spending meaningful,

Editorial Note

In this version of *The Vistoso Voice* that is going to be distributed via e-mail and posted on our church web site, we have not named our sent missionary or included her picture. Unfortunately, this is a necessary precaution in this day and age when our missionaries are ministering in countries that are violently opposed to Christianity. From now on, we will be taking these types of precautions in all of our online communications to help ensure the safety of our missionaries. If you would like further information, you can call the Church office.