

THE SALTSHAKER

JANUARY 2025 | VOLUME 286

MARK YOUR CALENDARS!

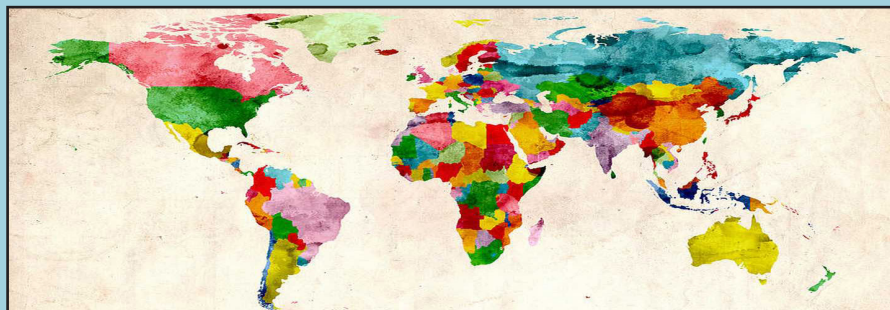
2025 MISSIONS CONFERENCE

The annual AVPC Missions Conference is scheduled for Wednesday, February 5, through Sunday, February 9, 2025! This year's theme is **"Behold Our God: Saving The Nations"** based on Psalm 67:1-2 **"And they sang a new song, saying, "May God be gracious to us and bless us and make his face to shine upon us, that your way may be known on earth, your saving power among the nations."** This year we have several countries represented: UK, Albania, Croatia, Kosovo, and the USA! Please pray with us that our Missions Team planning will be in line with God's plan, that our missionaries will stay healthy, and that there will be traveling mercies on each family. We hope you will be able to spend time with our missionaries – consider taking one of them to lunch on Thursday or Friday. It's a great opportunity to hear about how the Lord is working worldwide. Look for more Missions Conference details coming soon.

MISSIONARIES ATTENDING

- Jeph Guinan (Alabama Church Planting Network)
- Dan & Gini Herron (Serge – Arizona)
- Peter & Janet H. (Serge)
- Scott & Dana Jennings (Worldwide Evangelism for Christ – UK)
- John & Lynn Lehn (Greater Europe Mission – Croatia)
- Jeremy & Angel Martin (Serge – London, England)
- Hysen & Esmerelda Kanani (CRU – Albania)
- Agron & Elona Sopaj (CRU – Kosovo)

See page 3 for a complete schedule of events, and check out our conference brochure for more information.



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Pastor's Pen

"God travels wonderful ways with human beings, but he does not comply with the views and opinions of people. God does not go the way that people want to prescribe for him; rather, his way is beyond all comprehension, free and self-determined beyond all proof. Where reason is indignant, where our nature rebels, where our piety anxiously keeps us away: that is precisely where God loves to be. There he confounds the reason of the reasonable; there he aggravates our nature, our piety—that is where he wants to be, and no one can keep him from it. Only the humble believe him and rejoice that God is so free and so marvelous that he does wonders where people despair, that he takes what is little and lowly and makes it marvelous. And that is the wonder of all wonders, that God loves the lowly...God is not ashamed of the lowliness of human beings. God marches right in. He chooses people as his instruments and performs his wonders where one would least expect them. God is near to lowliness; he loves the lost, the neglected, the unseemly, the excluded, the weak and broken."

– Dietrich Bonhoeffer

"A Child in a foul stable, Where the beasts feed and foam; Only where He was homeless Are you and I at home;" – G.K. Chesterton

"Then the Grinch thought of something he hadn't before! What if Christmas, he thought, doesn't come from a store. What if Christmas...perhaps...means a little bit more!" – Dr. Seuss

"Unless we make Christmas an occasion to share our blessings, all the snow in Alaska won't make it 'white.'" – Bing Crosby

"Christmas is an indictment before it becomes a delight. It will not have its intended effect until we feel desperately the need for a Savior." – John Piper

'He confounds the reason of the reasonable; he aggravates our nature, our piety — that is where he wants to be, and no one can keep him from it'. God is working all the time, everywhere! God intends far more for us and from us than our best imaginations can reach because his grace and his glory are too good for us to truly believe. Christmas allows us the opportunity to pause a for couple of days and observe how grace is working, how Christ's will meets our work, how his heart works in our relationships, what he would have us to see in his world.

Allow for a short time of reflection on how deplorable life would be without Christ in it, how bleak our world would be without Jesus forbearance towards it. Do this for a handful of moments then allow those tears to course-correct these holiday days of celebration towards Jesus who is here, is working, is loving, is reconciling. Noticing the details of Jesus as we turn to him is truly a terrific gift of the advent season.

As a Grinch in recovery I think he was onto something 'What if Christmas... perhaps... means a little bit more!' I am grateful for you all and wish you the Merriest Christmas and Happiest New Year.

– Kyle Parker, *Senior Pastor*

MISSIONS CONFERENCE SCHEDULE

DAILY EVENTS

FEBRUARY 5-6

SUPPERS WITH SMALL GROUPS

This can be small groups, individual families, or groups of families.

FEBRUARY 7

5:30 – 6:15 PM

Dinner in the Fellowship Hall

6:30 – 7:45 PM

Evening service with flag parade, singing and missionary spotlight.

FEBRUARY 8

8:30 AM – 10:00 AM

Prayer Breakfast with missionaries

5:30 – 6:15 PM

Dinner in the Fellowship Hall

6:30 – 7:30 PM

Panel Discussion with our Missionaries

FEBRUARY 9

8:30 AM & 11 AM

Missionary spotlight at each service.

Rev. Jeph Guinan to preach at each service.

9:45 AM – 10:45 AM

Missionaries sharing in Sunday School.

KID'S SCHEDULE

FEBRUARY 7

6:15 – 7:45 PM

Nursery Available (0-4)

6:15 PM

K4 – 5th: Gather in Conference Room for the Flag Parade

K4 – K5: Fireplace Room

1st – 5th: Acton Hall

PARENTS: PICK UP YOUR CHILDREN FROM THEIR MEETING ROOM

FEBRUARY 8

8:30 – 10: AM

Nursery Available (0-4)

6:15 – 7:45 PM

Nursery Available (0-4)

FEBRUARY 9

9:45 AM – 10:45 AM

K4 – K5: Fireplace Room

1st – 5th: Acton Hall

PARENTS: PICK UP YOUR CHILDREN FROM THEIR MEETING ROOM

AVPC NEWS

OUR SYMPATHY

We extend our sincere condolences to the Bodkin family upon the recent loss of Lisa Bodkin. Please remember them in your prayers as they grieve.

MEMBERSHIP MORNING - JANUARY 25



Are you thinking about church membership at Altadena? Come to our next Membership Event on Saturday, January 25. You will meet church staff and hear about ministry opportunities. You can sign up on the AVPC website. Attendance at this or another weekend offered is required for church membership. For more information or to register, scan the QR code below.



LEGACY MUSEUM TRIP - JANUARY 18



The Mercy Leadership Team is inviting you to visit the Equal Justice Initiative's Legacy Museum in Montgomery on Saturday, January 18, 2025. The Legacy Museum is part of the vision of Bryan Stevenson, author of *Just Mercy*, a powerful book and movie informed by a Christian perspective about the injustices related to racism and material poverty in our justice system, and how to respond in a Biblical manner. You can sign up by using the QR code below.



minutes

SESSION MEETING • NOVEMBER 19, 2024

- Elder John Franklin, a long time Deacon, was interviewed and examined by the Session. The Session then voted to approve him as a candidate for the office of Elder.
- The Adult Discipleship Ministry Team's requested Winter Sunday School topics were approved with unanimous consent. The topics are:
 - Conference Room Class: *Loved by God* by R.C. Sproul
 - Acton Hall Class: *Jesus, The King (Study of Mark)* by Tim Keller or *Respectable Sins: Confront the Sins We Tolerate* by Jerry Bridges
 - Mezzanine Class: *Ecclesiastes: Life in the Light of Eternity* by David Gibson
 - Fellowship Hall Class: *Forgive* by Tim Keller

DIACONATE MEETING • DECEMBER 10, 2024

- In an effort to achieve a balanced budget over the course of next several weeks, the Finance Team recommends the Diaconate postpone the finalization of the 2025 General Fund Budget until the January 14 Diaconate Meeting. This was approved unanimously.

CHILDREN'S MINISTRY

Throughout 2024, our Children's Ministry Team renewed our commitment to teach the whole counsel of God to our covenant children and those in our community. This reflects our strong desire to partner with you, as parents, in rooting your children as oaks of righteousness for the display of His splendor. But what does it mean to teach the "whole counsel of God"?

As a child, I was told all the Bible stories: David and Goliath, Noah and the ark, Samson, Ruth, and so on. However, I often heard them as independent tales of Biblical heroes. Although it is important for our children to know these anchor stories, it is essential to their growing faith to discover them in the context of Jesus Christ as the critical connecting thread and to grasp that all of scripture from Genesis 1:1 to Revelation 22:21 points to Him, man's great need for a sin crusher, and the cornerstone reality that Christ is coming again. The "whole counsel of God" amplifies that God knows what He intends to accomplish from the beginning to the end. In our AVPC children's ministry, we believe this approach protects us from shrinking God into a box that fits into our lives, and instead, plants us in the reality that we are ordained threads in a grand story of rescue, redemption and radical restoration, that demands our worship.

What does a commitment to this approach tangibly look like? means our children's ministry is a space that provides a haven for infants and toddlers to feel and hear the safety and love of Jesus, a preschooler to encounter the foundations of a worshipping community, an elementary child to be anchored in his or her identity as a child of God, and for a preteen to safely wonder and explore covenant theology and their vital role in the tapestry. From this, our prayer is ultimately that our seniors will graduate from this abiding space with the core conviction that a church community where they can worship, commune, grow, and serve is essential to their being. From there, our prayer is for them to grow into the mature men and women of the One True God and as future leaders of the Universal Church.

Together, as a covenant family, we are tasked with this overwhelming mission. Alone, it is impossible, but Colossians 2:6 strengthens us, "As you have received Christ Jesus the Lord, so walk in Him, rooted and built up in Him and established in the faith as you were taught, abounding in thanksgiving." Our hope is that as we have received Jesus Christ, His living and active Holy Spirit allows us to walk in Him on behalf of a watching generation.

For Christ's Crown and Covenant,
Catie Lumpkin
Director of Children's Ministries



It



YOUTH HAPPENINGS

When you live long enough, you begin to see repeating patterns in this world, and it is easy to become jaded. Maybe you have told yourself the same thing the son of David proclaims in Ecclesiastes; "What has been is what will be, and what has been done is what will be done, and there is nothing new under the sun. Is there a thing of which it is said, 'See, this is new'? It has been already in the ages before us." In many ways this is true. When I was young, I pushed the envelope on music as much as I could. In middle school I was a big hard rock/metal fan. As all of it started to blend together, I went down the rabbit hole of underground rock which led to lo-fi indie rock, which led to math rock, which led to post-punk, which led to, well, hearing recurring patterns in the bands (no matter how weird) and getting a little bored with it all. The result was that in order to find a "fresh" experience, I got really weird: the country greats of the 1970s and prior and jazz/swing. In order to find something "new" I went back to the music of my parents and grandparents. Nothing new under the sun, indeed!

One of my favorite aspects of student ministry is getting a chance to see the world through the eyes of younger generations. They continually remind me that there is great wonder in the world, even in places where I think I've seen it all. In areas where many of us older and wiser people have given up and, perhaps, grown a little jaded in the process, they are not afraid to hope and dream. They continually ask questions that serve to show me that I don't know as much as I thought I did. They are not afraid to challenge the status quo, which last time I checked, is not necessarily a bad thing among God's people who are living in a world that is not their true home. As we approach a new year, my prayer is that I could view it with hope and wonder like many of our students. Don't get me wrong, our students have their own fears as they are realizing that the world is a big place where bad things can, and do, happen. That is where us older people come in as we can remind them of the truth Paul proclaims in Ephesians 4, "The Lord is near; do not be anxious about anything, but in everything by prayer and supplication with thanksgiving let your requests be made known to God." In order to really hold to this ourselves, we (i.e. older people) need to have the courage to hope and dream like our students. In order for the students to remain free to hope and dream, they need to be reminded that the Lord is near by us (i.e. older people). May 2025 be a year at AVPC where we labor to encourage one another in the reality of God's sovereignty and goodness.

Peace,
Clint Cvacho
Youth Director

LOOKING AHEAD...

January 8: Small Groups Resume

January 12: Registration for Senior High Missions Trip Begins

January 12: Youth Group Resumes

February 9: Super Bowl LIX

WOMEN'S MINISTRY

SAVE THE DATE

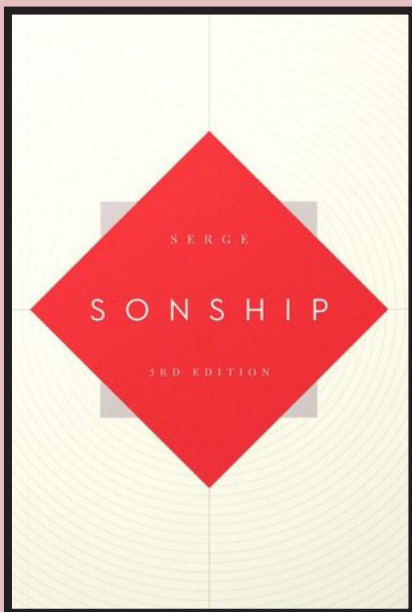
WOMEN'S RETREAT 2025

Friday, February 28 – Saturday, March 1

"Be still, and know that I am God. I will be exalted among the nations,
I will be exalted in the earth!" – Psalm 46:10

More details coming soon!

SONSHIP MANUAL BY SERGE



If you would be interested in being in a small group of women for Sonship, contact Heather Sommer (heather@avpc.org).

"Many followers of Christ understand faith intellectually, but sometimes the heart isn't on the same page. The creators of Sonship Manual are committed to helping believers understand the beauty of the gospel on a mind and heart level, offering profound understanding and opportunities to experience the implications of the gospel."

MEN'S MINISTRY

AVPC MAN MOOT – JANUARY 20

Calling all men, young and old, to the first ever AVPC MAN MOOT. Join us on Monday, January 20 at 7 PM as we gather around a bonfire to welcome Kyle Parker into our brotherhood.



JANUARY BIRTHDAYS

| | | |
|-----------------------|---------------------------|----------------------|
| 1/2 Roderick Jackson | 1/13 Angie Klose | 1/26 Lauralyn Bobo |
| 1/3 Laura Edwards | 1/13 Jim Sheetz | 1/28 Paul Barber |
| 1/4 Steve Driggers | 1/14 Anna Waldrip | 1/28 Gary Gray |
| 1/6 Ric Lewallen | 1/15 John Wimberly | 1/28 Brenley Peters |
| 1/7 Brice Jackson | 1/16 Will Cvacho | 1/29 Ben Black |
| 1/8 William Boggs | 1/16 Michael MacCaughelty | 1/29 Lisa Campbell |
| 1/9 Nikki Armstrong | 1/18 Abigail Amerson | 1/31 Jim Bryant |
| 1/9 Melissa Ireland | 1/19 Kevin Drace | 1/31 Denise Davidson |
| 1/10 Randy Friday | 1/19 Danny Richards | |
| 1/10 Amy MacCaughelty | 1/20 Nancy Jackson | |
| 1/11 Susan Baird | 1/20 Emily Shepherd | |
| 1/11 Everett Jones | 1/21 Brenda Church | |
| 1/12 James Walls | 1/21 Claire Franklin | |
| 1/13 Cooper Campbell | 1/23 Joanna Linder | |

GOD'S HOUSE KINDERGARTEN

We wrapped up 2024 with lots of laughter and cheer. We are so thankful for these little ones and are excited to see them grow in the new year.



SAVE THE DATE – JANUARY 13

Registration for God's House Kindergarten begins Monday, January 13. Questions? Please email Lydia Moore (ghkadmin@avpc.org) for more information.

YOUNG ADULT SUNDAY LUNCH



Join us for lunch after church on Sunday, January 12, 12:45-2:00 PM, for a time of food and fellowship at the Savoie Home!

NOVEMBER FINANCIAL REPORT

| | BEGINNING BALANCE | INCOME | EXPENSES | TRANSFER | ENDING BALANCE |
|---------------------|-------------------|-----------|-----------|-----------|----------------|
| GENERAL FUND | \$51,793 | \$153,033 | \$126,025 | (\$6,669) | \$72,132 |
| MISSIONS | (\$13,951) | \$20,927 | \$32,767 | \$6,669 | (\$19,122) |
| TOTAL | \$37,842 | \$173,960 | \$158,792 | \$0 | \$53,010 |