

THE SALTSHAKER

MARCH 2024 | VOLUME 277

Mercy Sunday MARCH 17

In Scripture, the Diaconate is tasked with the care of the marginalized, neglected, and impoverished. The “widows and orphans” of Scripture.

Acts 6:1-7 – The neglected widows led to the creation of the office of deacon.

James 1:27 – “Religion that is pure and undefiled before God the Father is this: to visit orphans and widows in their affliction, and to keep oneself unstained from the world.”

Because this ministry is so vast in nature, the Diaconate appoints godly men and women to assist them in this work. That’s the Mercy Team, and our task is to work in poverty alleviation and human flourishing.

WHAT IS POVERTY ALLEVIATION?

“A process in which people, both the materially poor and the materially non-poor, are empowered to move closer to living in right relationship with God, self, others, and the rest of creation” (from *Helping Without Hurting in Church Benevolence*).

HOW DO WE PRACTICALLY DO THIS?

INSIDE THE CHURCH:

- Our call is first to the household of the saints (our own church body)
- As we are made aware of needs within the church body, we develop care teams of 3-6 people to walk alongside them to assist.
- Our Enfold Team partners with individuals and families facing cognitive and/or physical differences.

OUTSIDE THE CHURCH:

- “Cold Calls” – Ask people to fill out a “Mercy Ministry Questionnaire” and then meet face to face with 2 people from the Diaconate and/or Mercy Team
- Partner with other ministries

MINISTRY PARTNERS

The ministry partners of the AVPC Mercy Team include: Urban Hope Community Church in Fairfield, Oak Mountain Ministries, Lifeline Foster Care training, Foundations Early Learning & Family Center (Fairfield), Sav-A-Life, and Christian Service Mission.

WHAT DOES THIS MEAN TO ME?

On Sunday, March 17, Dion Watts of Urban Hope Community Church will preach on Malachi 4, and Mercy Team members will share in Sunday School classes about your Mercy Team. We hope you can join us.

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New Members
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Pastor's Pen

Brad Allison, Senior Pastor

A big change is coming to AVPC, and I'm not talking about our pastoral change. Beginning April 7, the format of our adult Sunday School classes will shift from the current elective system to a community-based system consisting of four "mini-congregations." While anyone can attend any community they want at any time, the goal is that people would find a "home" in one of these communities and stay there for a while. Feel free to try out any community you want to try out, but you should note a couple of things as you make your decision on this. First, we are encouraging the members of our existing small groups to join the same Sunday School Community. Second, we are aiming for these communities to be age-integrated.

Since change is hard for most people, it's worth asking why we are doing this. Our purpose in this change is threefold. First, we believe this will be a big help to us in our shepherding of the congregation. One of the weaknesses identified early in the pastoral search process was in this area of shepherding. We have need of a better structure to assist in shepherding every individual and family in the church, and we believe these communities will provide that structure. We'll report more on that later. Our second purpose in this change is to help us in assimilation of new people in the church. Our hope is that these communities will provide a good avenue for new people to connect at a deeper level. Third, we still want to emphasize the central importance of teaching in our efforts to make disciples.

On April 7, please consider trying out one of these communities. You'll be seeing brochures by mid-March that will be giving you more information about this. Additionally, our pastors will be leading each of these four communities on April 7 to communicate the vision for this and answer any questions you might have.

Brad Allison

minutes

SESSION MEETING • JANUARY 16, 2024

- Brad Allison presented the job descriptions and assignments for ruling elders.
- The following applicants were approved for membership: Ryan and Rebecca Barley, Luke Bishop, Oliver Chase, Zeke Prettyman.
- The Children's Ministry Team requested that each small group would be "on call" for children's activity nights one week per semester. This request was approved by unanimous consent.

DIACONATE MEETING • FEBRUARY 13, 2024

- Ed Wofford announced that he and Marianne will be helping with a church plant starting next month and is asking for a six month Sabbatical. A motion was made, seconded, and approved to add Drew Russell to the Missions Team Administrative Sub-Team.
- John Peters reports that the 2023 closeout resulted in a \$40,533 surplus.
- Bill Sommer reports that the Session approved the funds release for the automatic door installation on the Fellowship Hall side.
- Mercy Team to add Lynn Wheeler to the leadership team.
- Russell Lloyd reports that Michael Bobo is doing well in his new job as the church IT coordinator and that the transition from Steve to Michael has been smooth.

MEET OUR NEW MEMBERS

Rebecca

HOW DID YOU FIRST FIND OUT ABOUT OUR CHURCH?

We found out about the church from Ryan's parents, Steve and Lee Ann Barley.

HOW LONG HAVE YOU BEEN A CHRISTIAN?

I became a Christian in my early 20s.

WHAT HAVE YOU ENJOYED ABOUT AVPC THE MOST?

We have enjoyed the fellowship in small groups and bridge nights for the kids. Also the sermons!

WHERE WERE YOU BORN AND RAISED?

I was born in Mobile, Alabama, but grew up in St. Louis, Missouri.

HOW DID YOU MEET YOUR SPOUSE?

We met in nursing school at South Alabama.

HOW LONG HAVE YOU BEEN MARRIED? WHAT HAVE YOU DONE TOGETHER THAT HAS MEANT THE MOST TO YOU?

We have been married 11 years. Raising our kids and traveling have been some of the most enjoyable things in our marriage!



Ryan

HOW LONG HAVE YOU BEEN A CHRISTIAN?

I became a Christian when I was 10 years old.

I KNEW I WAS GROWN UP WHEN...

I had to pay rent for my first apartment!

MY WORST JOB WAS...

in a label factory for a few months. That motivated me to stay in school!

MY FAVORITE RESTAURANT IS...

Any Mexican restaurant.

WHEN I HAVE FREE TIME I ENJOY...

Hunting, being outside, and traveling.

WHAT'S SPECIAL TO YOU ABOUT YOUR SPOUSE?

The special thing about Rebecca is she is a follower of Christ.

MY ALL-TIME FAVORITE MOVIE IS...

"It's a Wonderful Life", and a close second is "Gladiator".

MY HOPE FOR AVPC IS THAT IT COULD...

Be a welcoming light in a dark world.

WOMEN'S MINISTRY

WOMEN'S LUNCHEON

APRIL 21

Ladies - you are invited to the Ladies Spring Small Group Luncheon on Sunday April 21 after the late service. We will dine in groups of 6-8 of women. Your group can choose to eat inside, outside, in a home, at a park, or at a restaurant. We hope you decide to join in this fellowship time with your sisters.



AVPC PEOPLE NEWS

OUR CONDOLENCES

We extend our deepest sympathies to Patrice Bonner and her family following the death of her father, Donald Jeakle.

We would also like to extend our deepest sympathies to the family of Bob Muhlig after his passing in early February.

Easter at AVPC

Join us as we celebrate Christ's resurrection together!

Saturday, March 30

Easter Egg Hunt - 10:30 AM
(In Altadena Park)

Sunday, March 31

Sunrise Service - 7:00 AM
(In Acton Cemetery)

Easter Breakfast - 7:20 AM

Worship Service - 8:30 AM

Sunday School - 9:45 AM

Worship Service - 11:00 AM

No Sunday Evening Activities



Thank You

Dear Friends at AVPC,

Thank you for your commitment to our King and for your passion and involvement in His global mission. The AVPC Missions Conference was great. It was well done and very encouraging. I was very honored to be a part of it. It was so encouraging to be around a church passionate for God's glory and a church invested in missions. Thank you for your kindness to me and my family. Thank you for welcoming me and allowing me to participate. Thank you for the opportunities to share and update you on our work and ministry. Thank you for your partnership in the gospel. To God be the glory, great things He has done!

Grace and Peace,
Bradley and Sara Cordell
AVPC Supported Missionary

UPCOMING EVENTS - SPRING 2024

March 17	Mercy Sunday
March 31	Easter Sunday
April 7	Fellowship Dinner
April 19	Membership Night
April 20	Youth Talent Show
April 21	Fellowship Dinner
May 5	Youth Sunday
	Senior Girl's Tea
	Senior Guy's Fellowship
May 12	Mother's Day Brunch
June 10 - 13	Camp Solid Rock
July 8 - 11	WACK Week

CHILDREN'S MINISTRY

Each year, I hold my breath through the months of January and February; it's like I am unconsciously counting the seconds until daylight extends and the winter doldrums subside. It's an annual battle I continue to repent of; the mantra: Let's just get through the winter. The last two months have once again exposed my mental struggle of not pressing into the Father and His presence. In His faithful tenderness, God has used specific groups to remind me that I am not forsaken; our days are purposed. In 2024, our AVPC youth have twice come to serve at Bridge Nights. Witnessing their desire to simply love the children of our church and show them Jesus was glorious for my heart. As Clint wrote, "The students were a shining example of what it looks like to serve with a joyful heart, without expecting anything in return. Everything was geared towards our AVPC kids feeling seen and loved (seriously, we didn't even have snacks for the youth!) and yet all of our students had a continual smile on their faces, and I saw each of them engaging in the different activities with the kids and talking to them, whether they were a preteen or a toddler. It was a beautiful night that truly felt like a family gathering."

Likewise, the Beckett small group entered in with our covenant children on another Sunday evening. In their willingness to love, several children heard and witnessed Gospel love in action for the first time.

Finally, the Lord drew my heart to Him throughout the entire Missions Conference week. It was and is a sobering honor to witness friends from my childhood laying down their lives for God's grand story.

This year, I am meditating daily on Psalm 16, "The Lord is my chosen portion and my cup; He holds my lot. The lines have fallen for me in pleasant places; indeed, I have a beautiful inheritance." What a gracious reminder that even in the darkest nights of winter, we have a beautiful inheritance because of Christ's love for us.

For Christ's Crown and Covenant,

Catie Lumpkin
Children's Ministries' Director



YOUTH HAPPENINGS

As I look at the brokenness of this world, I am almost overwhelmed by the darkness that exists. Students who are picked on for any number of differences. Parents who have lost children. Parents who are doing the hard work of raising children. Those who desperately wanted to be parents, but never got the chance. Broken relationships. Broken fellowship. Poverty. Failing bodies, turning on both the young and the old. Mothers mourning at a murder trial. Wars. Threats of wars. Abuse, both outside and inside the church. In a world of such beauty, we are continually facing utter darkness. The first century church father, Ignatius of Antioch, who was said to be a disciple of the Apostle John, gave both an observation and a warning when he wrote: "Seeing, then, all things have an end, these two things are simultaneously set before us—death and life; and every one shall go unto his own place."

Indeed, we are living in a land of death and shadows, with death ever before us...but death has been defeated! As we celebrate Easter at the end of the month, may we remember Jesus' victory over both sin and death on the cross and in the tomb. May we remember that when we walk in His

Way, we have been set free from the power of both sin and death, and life is set before us. As Jesus said in John 10:10 (as recorded by Ignatius' teacher) "The thief comes only to steal and kill and destroy. I came that they may have life and have it abundantly." Yes, we see the work of the thief all around us, but when we fix our eyes in the right direction, we see the beauty of new life all around us. We see those who have experienced loss coming alongside those in the midst of the darkest night of the soul. We see relationships restored through repentance and forgiveness. We see fellowship restored through personal conviction and humility. We see those who have abundance pouring out their resources and lives for those in need. We see miraculous medical technology and medical professionals who care for the body, but also minister to the person through the love of Jesus. We see the peace that passes all understanding, the presence of the Holy Spirit, on those in need. In short, we see glimpses of eternity. As you celebrate Easter this year, may you experience the abundant life made possible by Jesus as we continue to live in a broken world. May healing continue in you and through you.

Peace,

Clint Cvacho

LOOKING AHEAD...

MARCH 10 | Mission Trip Meeting

MARCH 17 | Parent Night

APRIL 20 | Youth Talent Show

MAY 5 | Youth Sunday

MAY 5 | Senior Girl's Tea
Senior Guy's Fellowship

JUNE 17-21 | The Edge (Junior High)

JULY 13-20 | White Swan, WA Mission Trip
(Senior High)

YOUNG ADULT MINISTRY

YOUNG ADULT DINNER - MARCH 21

On Thursday, March 21, the Young Adults will be having a dinner at 6:00 PM. Please join us for a sweet time of food and fellowship! For details, please contact Blake Harris (blake@avpc.org).



MISSIONS NEWS

CELEBRATE MISSIONS WEEKEND – THANK YOU!



Last month's Missions Conference was wonderfully inspiring. Did you hear a missionary share? Did you have lunch with a missionary? Did you get to pray with a missionary? The five days were a blessing to everyone.

Because our church has a heart for missions, our Conference is always a highlight of the year. Many of you participated in several events during the Conference. You are the ones who were the most blessed. Even if circumstances prevented you from attending some or all of the events, you were with our visitors in your heart. And as you always do, please remember to fill out your Faith Promise Card and drop it in one of the Jars of Clay.

Our first annual Read a Missionary Biography program took off like a rocket! It's not too late to check out a book and read it yourself or to young ones in your family. Our biographies and sign out sheet are in the church library. Just sign your name next to the title of the book you're checking out and draw one line through your name when you return the book. The children's certificates and a prize for the most biographies read will be awarded at the Summer Missions Report in August. Frank Barker said that the people he found to be the most excited about their faith were those who had just read a missionary biography!



Thank you for your prayers and participation in our conference.

Your Missions Team

MEN'S MINISTRY



MEN'S GAME NIGHT - MARCH 7

Men of all ages! Please join us on Thursday, March 7, from 6:00 - 8:30 PM at the home of Holt and Laura Gray for pizza and board games! This will be a sweet time of fellowship and fun!

MARCH BIRTHDAYS

3/1	David Allen	3/9	Isaac Lumpkin	3/22	Ansley Cohen
3/2	Larry Church	3/9	Courtney McCrory	3/25	Silas Allday
3/3	Brooklyn Collier	3/10	Tricia Foster	3/26	Jack Cwynar
3/3	Clint Cvacho	3/11	Bailey Collier	3/27	Ava Labreche
3/4	Jackson Hall	3/12	Nancy Chambers	3/27	Faye Walls
3/4	Catie Lumpkin	3/13	Addy Kate Armstrong	3/27	Gayle Young
3/4	Carol Popwell	3/17	Joel Bostrom	3/28	Nancy Becker
3/5	Kip Blighton	3/17	Jay Lloyd	3/28	Sherrill Coley
3/5	Jim Davis	3/17	Sue Ann Oaks	3/28	Barrett Hall
3/5	Mark McCallum	3/20	Carol Apol	3/29	Kathy Light
3/5	Eric Sommer	3/20	Tim Cambron	3/31	Rosemary Bobbitt
3/6	Sarah Jane DeRieux	3/20	Michael Chick	3/31	Zoe Labreche
3/6	Tom Hinke	3/20	Shari Wimberly	3/31	Allen Short
3/6	Tara McCallister	3/21	Jim Baird		
3/6	Daniel Sommer	3/21	Suzanne Brown		

GOD'S HOUSE KINDERGARDEN

The children at GHK had a great time celebrating Valentines Day! We are very blessed to teach and guide these children in the knowledge and love of the Father.



DECEMBER FINANCIAL REPORT

	BEGINNING BALANCE	INCOME	EXPENSES	TRANSFER	ENDING BALANCE
GENERAL FUND	(\$56,782)	\$221,314	\$116,593	(\$7,406)	\$40,533
MISSIONS	(\$21,058)	\$88,638	\$33,034	\$7,406	\$41,952
TOTAL	(\$77,840)	\$309,952	\$149,627	\$0	\$82,485

UPDATED FOLLOWING 2023 CLOSEOUT