

SIERRA VISTA PRESBYTERIAN CHURCH

2022/2023 ANNUAL REPORT

ANNUAL MEETING
JULY 2, 2023
10:45 a.m.



Pastor's Report

I am in my 17th year as your pastor. I cannot believe my good fortune. The years have gone by quickly and I have enjoyed every one of them. This past year was no exception. Let me make a couple of comments about the year.

As we came out of the Covid pandemic, this year allowed me to do more pastoral work. I was again able to visit people in the hospital. I got to go to people's homes and visit. After what seemed like a long time, I was glad to be able to and visit people. You all have been very hospitable to me and I am thankful.

We have a very good staff here at the church. I enjoy working with Pancho Capuchino and Liz Krietzman who work hard to keep our facilities clean. It was a real blessing to us when Ruben Quintana came back to the area and we hired him to lead our audio/visual ministry. Ruben is incredibly capable and quite dependable. Valerie Ramsey continues her work as our Executive Assistant/ Bookkeeper. Her knowledge of the church is

indispensable and her patience and grace is essential to our office. Mary Samuelson continues to surprise me with her talents and abilities. She may be the hardest of our staff to ever replace. Christie Koetsier took over a very tough job as Children's Ministry Di-

rector. But she is up to the challenge and is creative, insightful, and never seems to run out of energy. Tyler Nunley is a gift to us. He has taken over the Youth Ministry job and has done really well. The youth groups are growing both numerically and even more importantly, they are growing spiritually. It has been a joy to get to work closely with Jason Meyer. I am pretty sure that most folks in the church have no idea how much Jason does for us. His pastoral leadership skills are growing and growing. This is a good staff.

The past year our Session also decided to add an intern. They decided to take some money out of our savings account to pay for Isaac Rumohr to become our Youth Intern. That money was being saved for a rainy day, and the elders decided that our Youth Groups could use some additional help. So Isaac and Tyler have taken over this past year and things are going well. Isaac has become a valuable asset to our ministry. The youth love him.

For much of this past year, Jason and I have been preaching on the

Gospel of Luke. Luke is probably my favorite gospel and I wanted to preach through it. It has been a delight to do that and to do it with Jason has been rewarding. There is nothing I like as much as preaching or teaching and I still can't believe that I get to do it regularly and that I get paid for doing it. What a great job.

I appreciate the chance to coach at Yosemite High School. I coach the Girl's Tennis Team in the Fall and the Boy's Tennis Team in the Spring. One of the delights in this job is that Mark Frasher coaches with me. He is incredibly patient with the students and very helpful. This job helps me meet people that I wouldn't meet just at the church. It also helps me keep sane. But the best part of the job is being with the young people. I was a youth pastor for 17 years and I enjoy working with students. Right now, we have 6 girls on our team that participate in activities here at Sierra Vista.

There are a few things that I am hoping to do this next year. The first is work on the infrastructure of the church. During Covid, some of our Ministry Teams (Service and Mission, Finance, Personnel, Worship, Equipping, Connections, and Building and Grounds) didn't have regular meetings and some lost members. We need to beef up our Teams. These Teams are the place where ministry plans get developed and implemented. If you are interested in being a part of any of these Teams, please let me know. We need to restart some of them.

Second, the Jubilee Program is doing well. But it is time to help this

program become its own “Not For Profit” organization. What is needed is a Board to be formed, By-laws written, and we need to apply for non-profit status with the government. All of this will take a little time, but it will be a good thing to do. It is on my agenda for this year.

Finally, I am toying with the idea of writing a book. It will probably have to wait until I retire. The title will be something like “straining the gnat and swallowing the camel.” It will look at the areas where the church majors on minor issues and minors on major issues. It is not so much that what The Church (not just Sierra Vista, but the evangelical church) teaches is wrong, it is just that it not the major focus of the kingdom of God. If I get serious about this book, I will probably need a few folks to come to class with me where we can discuss and debate some of the issues. If and when that happens, I would appreciate your participation.

Once again, thanks you all for letting me be your pastor. This is a great church. Thanks.

Rick Lemberg, Pastor

Youth Pastor

The beginning of this summer marks my first full year as the youth director at Sierra Vista. I’m so thankful for this opportunity and for the support of the saints at Sierra Vista. I have learned an incredible amount and have been poured into by the many wonderful people I get to interact and work with in this ministry.

This last year has been a learning process. The middle school ministry has been very vibrant and has offered a lot of opportunities for expansion and experimentation. Before summer began, we had grown

to a peak of about 35 middle schoolers. Apparently (and as I’ve been told), things drop off once summer begins and we still have a number of students in the mid-20s. Throughout the year, we’ve implemented new ideas – beginning a meal night on the third Wednesday of every month, which we are planning to further transform into a monthly night of food, worship, and prayer. We’ve also started a monthly “game and pizza day,” where we gather to just play games together and eat pizza.

High School ministry has been very rewarding also. Every third Sunday, we gather early for youth group to cook a meal together. We’ve made homemade pizza, orange chicken, waffles for dinner, among other things. We have hovered comfortably around five or six students for most of the year, all of whom I am very fond of. However, now at the end of this school year we have several of our middle schoolers moving up to high school. To help facilitate this transition, we’ve planned a summer trip together to the Monterey Bay Aquarium, and are taking along 15 high school students! We would happily welcome prayers that the new high schoolers would feel welcome and loved in their new group.

Over the last year, I’ve been thinking about and working on a curriculum for our students, my thought being – if I have a student for several years from middle school through to high school, what would I hope for him or her to learn to be prepared for a life of faith as an adult. Thus far, I’ve been focusing on the theme of biblical literacy. In our increasingly post-Christian culture, there is less and less familiarity with the Bible. Yet familiarity

with the Scriptures is absolutely central to a life of faith. My goal is to give the students an increasingly in-depth encounter with the Bible as they grow up. With the middle schoolers we’ve done about 40 weeks of Old Testament overview, each week learning about one book of the Old Testament. At the end of the summer, I’m planning on leading the middle schoolers in reading through the entire gospel of Luke, one chapter a week. With the high schoolers, after the summer ends, we’re going to read together through the entire Bible in about 50 weeks, each week having a lesson on the reading and offering them the opportunity to ask about aspects of it that are strange or confusing to them.

I would be remiss if I didn’t also mention the others who make the youth ministry really happen. The youth team consists of Kim Vandalingham as elder, Julie Davidson, Michelle Kreiter, and Stacie Roeder. Their help has been invaluable, especially as I’ve been learning how everything works. Over the past year Isaac Rumohr has been our youth ministry intern. He has done an incredible job, and the things we’ve accomplished wouldn’t have been possible or of the same quality without him. We also have a number of adult leaders who on a weekly basis are serving the children at youth group and events. They are truly ministering to the students, and my work would be absolutely impossible without them.

As regards new possibilities for the next year – already we’re taking 15 students up to Calvin Crest for summer camp. And either in the spring or fall I want to take a group on a mission trip. I am hoping to take



them to visit Spectrum Ministries to serve in Tijuana and am in the beginning phase of planning this. Please pray for this and whatever else the Holy Spirit may lead us in.

In Christ,

Tyler Nunley
Director of Youth Ministry

Worship Team

Worship Team 2023: Mary Samuelson, Rick Lemberg, Ruben Quintana, Christina Melahn, Leah Stevens

It has been a joy to continue as your worship coordinator for another year! This year has finally felt like a return to normal for the most part, and the worship ministry has included a wonderful mix of continuing or returning to beloved traditions, and bringing new and different ways of worshipping to our congregation.

I continue to be extremely grateful for the opportunity to make music with such a wide variety of talented singers and instrumentalists. It is a huge blessing to have so many people to rotate through our music ministry, and the church as a whole benefits greatly from having such a varied mix of skill sets and musical styles to worship with. Our sound team also continues to be a vital and strong part of our ministry- Ruben has continued to improve and streamline our sound mixing and expand the quality of our livestream, Jason continues to be a great asset for that ministry as well, and we have developed a core group of talented and committed volunteers. Our adult choir has made a strong comeback after COVID, and they continue to meet regularly for practice and make

regular appearances on Sunday mornings. Leah Stevens continues to lead our bell choir and children's choir, both of which have also contributed to our Sunday morning and special services throughout the year. Our children's choir in particular has seen a great deal of growth, and we are excited to see them continue to learn and share with the congregation.

Each year, my favorite services to plan are the ones around Advent and Holy Week, and this year was no exception. We were blessed with mild enough weather in December to allow us to hold our Christmas Eve service out in the amphitheater. Whether or not that tradition continues will depend on weather each year, but it was another reminder of the blessing of that space as an option. During

Holy Week we shared a special dinner together to celebrate Maundy Thursday, and we are grateful to Marc Neff for providing a delicious meal to eat before sharing the story of the Last Supper and taking communion together. Our choir participated in another beautiful Good Friday service, with a mix of special music and readings, and we continued our tradition of an Easter morning sunrise service to supplement our main Sunday services. We also brought back All Fools Day this year for the first time since COVID, and had a fantastic time turning the building and courtyard into a carnival complete with games, food, and a whole lot of fun.

Recently, I have been able to partner with our prayer team to include various opportunities for prayer on Sunday mornings, and have plans for providing more ways for our church body to grow in this area. Also, the week before our annual meeting I'll be starting up a new

program I'm calling "Summer Jams," for helping teach people how to read music for choir, play chords on instruments, and otherwise become more comfortable and better equipped to participate in our music ministry. On that note, we are always looking for ways to involve more people! If you have any interest in singing, playing, learning to run our sound or livestream, join the bell choir, children's choir, or even if you have ideas for other ways our church can join together in worshipping our great God, please let me know.

-Mary Posluch, Worship Coordinator

Assistant Pastor Report

This year I have enjoyed all the relationship building with you. I feel like I have gotten to know some of you so much better this year, for which I am thankful. My role as Assistant Pastor keeps me involved in lots of different areas of our church ministry. I have been reminded that all of the programs, classes, worship services, prayer meetings, trips, and planning meetings ultimately are only successful when we have strong relationships with one another and comradery. Iron sharpening Iron. Challenging one another to press on to the upward call of God in Jesus. It is a blessing to go through life together as a community and I am thankful to be a part of Sierra Vista.

It is difficult to sum up the events and productivity of a whole year. As I have noted before, my role at the church has been "the man who wears many hats" and that continues to be true. I am involved in overseeing children and youth ministry, education and discipleship, vision for spiritual formation, preaching and teaching

periodically, pastoral care, visits, and involvement with a handful of teams. I have some involvement in the worship ministry leading music when Mary has other responsibilities and overseeing the audio-tech ministry with Ruben. I try to find effective ways to communicate well and to create opportunities for people to connect with one another so that our lives can be sharpened and encouraged placing Jesus as the center of all that we are. I try to support Valerie and the administration of the nuts of bolts that make church “run” behind the scenes. I enjoy working closely with and feel that we are a good team of staff serving the Lord together.

My heart for this church continues to be discipleship. Spiritual growth and formation. Reconciliation. To know Christ in all his fulness and to make him known. This year I was able to take a series of classes in peace-making and Biblical reconciliation. 2 Corinthians 5:17-20 says, “¹⁷ Therefore, if anyone is in Christ, he is a new creation. The old has passed away; behold, the new has come. ¹⁸ All this is from God, who through Christ reconciled us to himself and gave us the ministry of reconciliation; ¹⁹ that is, in Christ God was reconciling the world to himself, not counting their trespasses against them, and entrusting to us the message of reconciliation. ²⁰ Therefore, we are ambassadors for Christ, God making his appeal through us. We implore you on behalf of Christ, be reconciled to God.” I am convinced that a primary and central theme of the Bible is reconciliation and should be one of our daily objectives. Living in unbroken relationship with God. Seeking to live at peace with our brothers and sisters in Christ. Believing that God in the power of His Holy Spirit can make us new and one in Him.

This year it is my prayer, “since we have such a great cloud of witnesses surrounding us, let’s rid ourselves of every obstacle and the sin which so easily entangles us, and let’s run with endurance the race that is set before us, ² looking only at Jesus, the originator and perfecter of the faith...” Hebrews 12:1-2. I invite you to join me in the endurance race to follow Jesus’s faithfulness in this generation.

Jason Meyer

Children’s Ministry

A Note from Miss Christie:

Succinctness in writing is not one of my strong suits. Just ask the Session members who have to endure my monthly Children’s Ministry Reports. Haha! How exactly does one summarize an entire year of Children’s Ministry in just a few paragraphs? As I look back on this past year, there is one quality that does seem to stand out. Growth. Growth that has occurred and growth still waiting to happen. Growth in the kids, Children’s Ministry as a whole, and even myself.

One of the things that I love the most about working with our kids is watching them grow and celebrating each milestone. Last September, our church family had the joy of rejoicing with two of our children as they made a profession of faith and were baptized. Our elementary students worked so hard this past year to memorize the books of the Bible, and they are becoming more proficient at studying their Bibles. We learned about spiritual disciplines such as worship and prayer during Roots, our spring midweek program. The kids are beginning to apply foundational truths such as “God created everything for His glory and our good” to their lives. And I love their questions as they process what we are

learning in Kids’ Church. A few weeks ago, one of the kids asked why all of the Egyptians had to suffer the consequences of Pharaoh’s disobedience when he refused to allow the Israelites to leave Egypt. It prompted a great discussion about how the consequences of our obedience or sin not only affect ourselves but also those around us.

Ever so surely, God is growing His Children’s Ministry at Sierra Vista in His perfect timing. We have been so blessed by the addition of six new babies to our church family this past year. Hooray for baby snuggles! We are currently welcoming an average of 25 children and infants to worship each Sunday morning. I would love to see that average grow to at least 30 children and infants in the next year. Children’s Ministry’s reach into our community has grown drastically through the initiation of Parents’ Date Nights, Community Play Dates, and a collaboration with James 127 in supporting local at-risk families. Over 50 children have participated in Parents’ Date Nights since December with many of those children coming from families who are not currently connected to the church. I am so excited to see our outreach continue to grow as we prepare to host VBS later this summer!

Let’s be honest, I don’t remember much of the class content during my time in nursing school. But for some reason, the one lecture that stands out in my memory was one on the progression of a novice to an expert. Studies have shown that when a person initially starts practicing a skill they start as a novice. With time and continued practice, they slowly progress to the level of an expert. The average time to reach expertise is about 10 years or 10,000 hours of practice. Suffice it to say, as I start my third year in the role of the Children’s Ministry

Director, I still have a long way to go before I reach that expert level. The role and skill set of a nurse is very different from the role and skill set of a children's ministry director. Imagine that! For some reason, skills such as educating children on Biblical truths, recruiting volunteers, learning how to update a church website, or writing monthly newsletters weren't common practices for me as a nurse. The learning curve has been steep, but it is such a blessing to have you all as a supportive church family to provide copious amounts of grace as I learn and grow into this role. I love this opportunity to dream, ask God "What's next?", and know that if things don't work out quite right the first time there is always room to reevaluate and try something different. While Mike and I were foster parents, one of the hardest but most important things that we learned was to love tightly and hold loosely. Time has taught me that this principle not only applies to parenting kids but to life in general as a follower of Christ. In the next year or two, our church family will potentially be experiencing some transitions. The future is unknown and God's plan for me in it is also unknown. I love my church family and my role within it greatly. But it is my hope and desire to hold my position with an open hand and be forever asking, "Ok God, what's next?"

Christie Koetsier
Sierra Vista Children's Ministry Director



Sierra Vista Children's Ministry is a ministry of Sierra Vista Presbyterian Church with a mission to serve

the children and families of Eastern Madera County while pointing their hearts toward their Heavenly Father.

Discipleship: How do we come alongside families to raise up the next generation of Christ followers?

- Kids' Church and Nursery: Offered during the Sunday Worship Service, Nursery and Kids' Church are designed to provide a fun, safe, and inviting environment for infants and children to learn about God and His love for them. Utilizing The Gospel Project for Kids curriculum, children are taught Bible lessons and foundational Biblical truths in a way that is engaging and age-appropriate.
- Weekly Parent Emails: We realize that parents and guardians are often the primary communicators of the Gospel in the life of a child. Weekly emails are sent to our families containing information on the content of our upcoming Kids' Church and Nursery lessons. These emails are intended to equip families as they help guide their children in processing and applying Biblical truth in their lives.
- Roots: Offered for several weeks during the spring and fall, this midweek discipleship class is designed to help children learn about the spiritual disciplines and begin to apply them to their lives.
- Summer Camps: In collaboration with Calvin Crest, we highly encourage and financially assist families in sending their children to Sherwood Forest and Discovery Day Camp. We believe these camps are a fun and effective way for children to grow in their faith while adventuring in God's amazing creation.
- Vacation Bible School: This high-energy, fast-paced event is

our favorite week of the summer! Through family meals, Bible lessons, games, crafts, worship and so much more, families from the church and throughout the community are given the opportunity to hear the Gospel message. Outreach: How do we support the body of Christ in tangible ways? How do we reach a broken world with the hope of the Gospel?

- Promised Land Times: This publication is a fantastic means of communication with our church families as well as families within the community. Information on upcoming events, calendars, birthdays, contact information, and a note from Miss Christie can be found in this monthly newsletter.
- Social Media: In a world where almost everyone is "online", social media can be an effective tool for communication as well as outreach. Children's Ministry maintains a Facebook group (Sierra Vista Children's Ministry) and Instagram page (svpc-childrensministry) to keep our families and community informed of all things Children's Ministry related.
- Parents' Date Nights: One Saturday evening a month, parents/guardians are encouraged to drop their children off at church and take a much-needed break to invest in their relationship. Activities, games, crafts, movies, dinner, and snacks are all provided for the children under the care of loving adults and youth volunteers.
- Community Play Dates: When inclement weather makes it difficult to safely expend all of a child's energy, the Sierra Vista sanctuary can turn into a pretty spectacular playroom! With jump houses, tumbling mats, ball pits, trikes, parachutes, and so much more this as-needed

event provides a safe place for kids to play and parents to enjoy fellowship.

- **Trunk-or-Treat:** Sometimes being a light in the darkness requires us to leave the comfort and convenience of our church grounds. It can also involve candy. Lots of candy. And maybe some popcorn, hot chocolate, costumes, games, and silly fun. Each Halloween, we head to the Pierce Place cul-de-sac to host a trunk-or-treat for the community.
- **Children's Service Projects:** We believe that children are essential members of the church body and we actively encourage their participation in the body. Several times a year, children and their families are provided with opportunities to participate in service projects such as: packing shoeboxes for Operation Christmas Child; delivering Christmas cards and cookies to shut-ins; sending Valentines to special people in the church; or recognizing our veterans.
- **Children's Clothing Closet and Collaboration with James 127:** James 127 is a local nonprofit serving as a link between the body of Christ and at-risk families within our community. James 127 helps connect families in need or crisis with local churches and support agencies by communicating their needs on an online portal called Care-Portal. Sierra Vista Children's Ministry maintains a children's clothing closet through donations to support our church families and families within the community. By helping meet the tangible needs of children and families within our community, we have been able to form relationships with these families and show them the love of Christ.

Children's Ministry Team:

There is no denying that the Sierra Vista Children's Ministry simply could not function without the support of all of our volunteers. From Kids' Church leaders to VBS volunteers to Parents' Date Night caregivers to the Children's Ministry Team, we wouldn't be able to serve our kids and their families in the ways that we do without our volunteers. Thank you to each and every one of you! The current Children's Ministry Team members include: Kim Vanlandingham (Elder), Megan Prigmore, Alexis Green, Ashley Schiavon, and Christie Koetsier (Staff Member). The team meets every second Wednesday of the month at 4:30pm in the church office. If you are interested in serving on the Children's Ministry Team or volunteering with Children's Ministry in some other capacity, please contact Miss Christie!

Deacons

The deacon board: John and Carolyn Honnette, Abby Mendez, John Ramsey, Mary Dodge, Tom and Sara Robison, Mark and Michelle Frasher, Joe Yeatts, Art and Phyllis Thomas, Carla Capuchino, Peter and Claudia Carrott, Randy and Nancy Taylor, Rita Rothchild, Cathie Swenson.

Current officers and coordinator;
Moderator - Phyllis Thomas, Secretary - Carla Capuchino, Treasurer - Nancy Taylor, Representative to Nominating committee - Sara Robison

Home bound coordinator - Claudia Carrott

Wood ministry - John Honnette,
Yard work - Peter Carrott, Receptions coordinator - Rita Rothchild

The deacon board is made up of persons who have made a commitment to serve others, both within the church and in the community.

Areas of service include; meals, rides to medical appointment, phone calls and cards for support and encouragement, yard work for those who are unable to do this themselves, fire wood to keep people warm in the winter months, receptions for happy moments, weddings or babies, or sad moments the death of a family member, home or hospital visits.

Several years ago, the deacons discussed how they might provide comfort to someone who is struggling with the loss of a loved one. Ed Swenson introduced the board to "a holding cross" the board adopted this as a gift to be given at the time of a death. Since that time 31 holding crossing have been given. The recipients often share that the cross gives them great comfort.

A very large part of our giving is through the wood ministry. The wood ministry is managed by the deacon board but helpers are; jubilee workers when possible, volunteers from other churches and occasionally a person from the community. The vast majority of the volunteers are in their 70's. This past winter proved to be a challenge to get wood to everyone who made a request. With the excessive need for wood and the aging volunteers the board has decided that they will need to set some limits and guidelines for who will receive wood in the future. A letter has been sent to all wood recipients explaining the new guidelines. This has been a difficult decision for the board as we would like to be able to give wood to everyone who asks.

The generous donations from the congregation have allowed the board to continue to provide financial support to families, camps and missionaries.

Our goal for the coming year is to

1. Fill the empty deacon positions (3), 2. To encourage others with in the church body to join with the board in providing acts of service 3. To continue to service the church and the community as we have done in the past.

A personal message from all of the board "we have a good time, and enjoy being a part of this board, it is a great blessing to us to be able to serve you. Come and join us."

The board thanks the Body of the Sierra Vista Presbyterian Church for their support. We look forward to the next year and thank you in advance for your continued financial and personal support. We invite everyone to share in the joy of giving by being part of the caring activities of the board. Thank You

Phyllis Thomas
Deacon Moderator

Sierra Vista Church Family who have become Witnesses to the Resurrection in 2022/2023

The following members of our church family died in the last year. But this isn't their end. They are already working on the next chapter of their lives. We serve such a wonderful God that He brings joy out of sadness, hope out of despair, peace out of confusion, light out of darkness, and yes, oh yes, even life out of death.

*Christel Biasell
Mary Ann Fisher
Joyce Greene
Dorothy Landrey
Herb Lewis
Barbara Miller
Lee Pounds
Betty Strain
Jack Tathwell
Carol Taylor
Catherine Walker
Art White*

We are grateful for these individuals and the impact they had on this church family, God's kingdom, and the lives of their families.



2023 Team Members: Marsha Scharton (Elder), Bill Dodge, Lana Jackson, John Ramsey, Valerie Ramsey (Staff)

This past year your Service & Mission Team have continued to strive to keep our congregation updated on ministries Sierra Vista supports both locally and around the world. Bill Dodge coordinates our "Moments for Mission", where missionaries have the opportunity to communicate with us what their ministries are doing in spreading the Gospel of Jesus Christ. In some instances, missionaries have been able to be with us in person, while others have shared videos of what they are doing. It is a blessing for us to be able to hear how their ministries are going and how we can be in prayer for them as they serve.

In 2022/2023 two of our Missionaries have retired, **Vic & Marty Wiens** and **Casey & Joy Crockett**. Another missionary couple has returned from the field, **Bryce & Hilary Fonda**. We pray that they all will continue to be blessed by God as they move into new phases of life.

We have been able to begin support of our own **Lily Lee** as she serves with YWAM Yosemite teaching the Bible to students.

The orphanage we were supporting in Tijuana, **Orfanatorio Emmanuel**, has closed its doors. We have switched our support over to an

orphanage run by **Spectrum Ministries** in Tijuana.

Refuge Emergency Shelter: We hosted guests on 30 nights of cold, snowy, or rainy weather. We cannot offer this shelter without our amazing volunteers! We thank all who served.

In May 2023 we did an Emergency Fundraiser for Calvin Crest to help them with recovery from the devastating storms this past winter. We were able to raise \$5,667.38.

The Prayer Shawl Ministry continued to produce shawls and many have been sent out to families who have been going through difficult times. They meet in person on Tuesday mornings at 9:00 in the Chapel. If you cannot attend, you can still participate by knitting or crocheting from home.

The Tabitha Project has been working on mission sewing projects and meets at noon on the 2nd and 4th Wednesday of each month. You are welcome to join them!

We wish to thank our Sierra Vista family for the support you give to these ministries. Your support reaches nearby and around the world and the Gospel of Jesus Christ is changing lives!

Respectfully submitted
Valerie Ramsey, Chair

Ministries and Missionaries Sierra Vista Supports

Local

Prayer Shawl Ministry
Tabitha Project
Jubilee Ministry
Refuge Emergency Shelter
Calvin Crest
Lily Lee, YWAM Yosemite
Helping Hands Pregnancy & Parenting Center
Manna House, Oakhurst

Regional

Centro Cristiana de Aqua Viva, Corcoran, CA

Fresno Interdenominational Refugee Ministry

InterVarsity International Student Min. Fresno

La Fe Hispanic Ministry, Lindsay, CA

Madera Rescue Mission

Iglesia Neuvo Amanecer, Bakersfield

Rob Carter, Jaron Ministries

International

Jack & Keiko Marshall, Japan

Melody Wachsmuth, Roma People in Croatia

Suey & Jonathan Ciccarone

Erin & Jay Gilbert, Pioneers

Bill & Donna Davis, Ethnos360

Elizabeth Prasad, Witnessing Ministries of Christ in India

Jubilee Program

July 2023

The Jubilee Program continues to be a source of great joy for the church. This Program hires individuals who are unemployed or underemployed and puts them to work through the church. We then try to help them find meaningful, fulltime work, so they can support themselves. The Program is supervised by Pancho Capuchino and Liz Kreitzman.

Since we started the Program, we have had over 70 individuals enrolled at one time or another. Currently we have 8 people employed. This group of 8 are good workers and they are benefitting the church by doing much of our custodial and ground maintenance work.

As you can imagine, this Program does not always run smoothly. Some of the Jubilee Workers have

been or are homeless, some are coming off a drugs or alcohol issues, and some don't have the best work habits. The workers must be sober and not be using alcohol or illegal drugs while working with us. Currently we have workers whose sobriety ranges from 8 months to over 30 years.

This is a fun group to work with. Most are really eager to move on to a better job and a more stable lifestyle. Our supervisors teach them about Jesus Christ as well as work habits. Many of them have had their lives touched by Jesus.

In the past year we have had 4 workers who have graduated from our program and go on to other jobs. One of those 4 is currently back with us, until her new job opens up. Some of those graduates come back and see us pretty regularly. Several of the workers are now attending Sierra Vista Church.

We are going to try and spin this Program off from the church into its own "Not for Profit Organization." This will take some time and some effort, but it will be beneficial to all involved. Right now, all the workers are covered under our Church's insurance policy. When Jubilee becomes its own organization, the church will be freed from its liability. Being its own corporation, the Jubilee Program can go outside the church and look for additional funding from independent sources. We hope to have this accomplished by the end of 2024.

Rick Lemberg

Equipping

Christ is calling you and me to be formed and transformed. Jesus said, if we are to be his disciples, we are to take up our cross and follow

Him. He is inviting us to model our lives after him. This is a wholistic vision of life in which we seek to be Christlike. Kevin Vanhoozer says, "a disciple is one who seeks to speak, act, and live in ways that bear witness to the truth, goodness, and beauty of Jesus Christ." It is the belief that our lives will actually be more whole and meaningful because we model it after the life and teachings of Jesus. *The Equipping team seeks to provide tools and opportunities to grow and mature as a disciple of Jesus.* In the Presbyterian Church, sometimes "equipping" and "discipleship" are treated as synonyms for "education." And we certainly would like to provide opportunities to be educated in the bible, doctrine, theology, and polity. But education alone is not enough. We must be people of prayer, people who know and exercise our spiritual gifts, people who seek to do the hard work of reconciliation, and people who are spiritually and morally formed. In short, we need to be equipped to know how to live in this cultural moment. We need to have the wisdom to discern the times we live in and know how to respond to the challenges and brokenness of the world as we face a world that lives without God and without hope.

Each year we try to offer a "SHAPE" class which is designed to help you discover and live within your spiritual gifts. This year we offered multiple classes taught by the pastors, classes for women and men, youth, and children. We will continue to do so. In the coming year we would like to bring back an event we call "Weekend in the Word" in which we invite someone to go in depth into a relevant topic of our times. We plan to continue to offer opportunities to attend camps, retreats, and short-term missions' trips. This year there will be a youth and family missions' trip with Spectrum

Ministries. In February 2025 we are hoping there will be an opportunity to go to Israel again. It is our desire to engage intentionally in the area of spiritual formation. Corporate prayer, sabbath keeping, reading through the Bible together, and other disciplines that help us draw near to Christ experientially. We will be looking to bring some new small groups, discipleship groups, and we hope to find creative ways to do “neighborhood outreach” as a means of building relationships for the sake of evangelism.

Please pray with us. All these things take time and people and interest. I am praying that this coming year God’s Spirit will fill us with a renewed desire to be transformed and to know Christ. I am praying that God will give each of you an unquenchable thirst to know Him and His love that passes understanding. I am praying that we don’t give up on being the church in this world. And that we would allow ourselves to be shaped into His image until His glorious coming.

Blessings,
Jason Meyer
Jason@sierravistachurch.org

Connections

We live in an interesting and challenging time as it relates to community life. Because of the internet and social media, we are more connected than ever. There is a tremendous opportunity for relationships and meaningful connection with others no matter where they might be physically in the world. At the same time, participation in civic groups and volunteerism has been sharply on the decline. From school programs, to rotary, to camp, and at church there is a community crisis from lack of



**CONNECTED
IN CHRIST**

participation. And yet that leads me to believe the opportunities for the gospel and for the church to fill the gap in ministering, serving, and caring for people are greater than ever. The goal of the connections team is to bring people together in intentional ways so that we can serve, grow, share life, love our neighbor, and mature in discipleship. We do this in a lot of ways. The frontline of our ministry often revolves around food and events. But we also organize the membership classes, plan for baptisms at the lake, try to find ways to connect with and meet new people, and create the systems that help us communicate with one another so that we all can participate and know what is going on. We want Sierra Vista Church to be a place where everyone knows your name!

This year has been filled with BBQ’s, kayaking adventures, breakfast burritos on Easter, new members classes, baptisms at the lake, and coffee with new folks looking for friendship and a church. This coming year we want to get better at communication. We want to know the names of visitors. We want to have a Sunday morning “welcome” team. We want to have “greeters” at all the church services and functions. We want “hospitality hosts” who are trained to care for people as they engage with church services and events. We want to help people find their niche and their spiritual gift so you can serve and be a part of building meaningful friendships that will ground you in Christ and in this community. We pray that when you celebrate your next milestone, go through your next crisis, or gather with loved ones in your back yard, that the names of the people nearest to you will be connections from Sierra

Vista Church. If you’d like to be part of making that happen, we would love to have you dream with us.

Jason Meyer
Connections Team

Building and Grounds

The Buildings and Grounds Team is an active team whose members work hard to keep the facility of our church in good shape. Current members include: Chuck and Sandy Wiest, Gary Friesen, John Peterson, John Honnette, Chris Prigmore, Beverley Rutherford, Frank Huttlinger and Rick Lemberg. One of the big projects for the past year was shade coverings. Gary Friesen headed the effort to get the shade cover put up over the amphitheater. He was assisted by Chuck Wiest. Gary, Chuck, Sandy, Mark Frasher and others also put up the shade coverings over the patio. These coverings will allow us to have more receptions on the patio. Additionally, the Team is hoping to put up shade coverings over the grass area behind Promiseland.

Speaking of the patio, the Team has tried to find an adequate surface for the concrete in the church patio. The flooring has begun to chip away, and it was becoming a hazard for tripping. We applied a new surface, but it didn’t hold (we believe that we applied it when it was too cold). We discussed it with the company that made the surface and tried a second time. This has been much better, but it is still not perfect and we are still working on it.

Another big project this year was replacing the air conditioning units for the Sanctuary and Gathering Room. The old units were about 35 years old and were no longer producing enough cooling. Chuck Wiest found us a good deal and he and the team worked to get the new

units in place before they were needed. Mission accomplished.

We had and still have some large trees that we either took down or need to be taken down. One, near the shed just off the



It had died and if it fell would likely fall on our power lines. So, John Honnette coordinated with PGE and they sent a crew over to drop the tree. Our wood ministry people are in the process of cutting the tree into rounds.

Next year we have several projects planned. First, we want to paint the Sanctuary building. We will do so in September and could use all the help we can get. Second, we are in need of repairing our solar panels. Several of them got damage (we believe by debris from the lawnmower or weed eater. We are also hoping to connect the church thermostats (or at least the main ones) to someone's cell phone. This way the thermostats can be monitored during the week and when not needed they can be turned off.

Rick Lemberg

Personnel Team

The Personnel Team has wrestled with some significant issues this year. We are fortunate to have such a faithful team. The members of the personnel Team are: Nick Vanlandingham, Michelle Hagen, Stacie Lazarcheff, Steve Knight, Elder Bob Rose, Elder Christina Melahn and Rick Lemberg. There are three issues that need to be reported.

The first has to do with personnel reviews. The Covid pandemic kind of threw us off our routine for reviews. Right now, the Team is gearing up for reviews to begin in September. The Team is using a new approach that they borrowed from Calvin Crest Camp and Conferences. We hope it will be an effective tool for evaluating our church staff.

The second issue has to do with finances. We were able to hire Ruben Quintana as our Audio/Visual Technician because Pastor Rick reduced his hours and compensation (his income was now being supplemented by Social Security). When Pastor Rick retires, and we seek a new pastor, will we be able to afford all of our current staff. Particularly since the staff has not received any raises in several years. This issue led to a long and lengthy discussion. Do we go to one pastor? Do we combine the pastor's work with the Youth Directors? Do we combine other positions? These

and many other issues were discussed. The Team is close to making a recommendation to the session on this issue.

The third was the hiring of a new Youth Director. When Peter Koenen left to go to a church in Tennessee, we were in need of a Youth Director. We were quite fortunate to find Tyler Nunley as our Interim Youth Director. Tyler graduated from The Biblical Seminary at Fresno Pacific University just in time to take over our Youth Ministry. The Team then added Isaac Rumohr as a Youth Intern. The two of them are doing a very good job.

The final issue to be discussed in this report has to do with the future retirement of Pastor Rick. Although the date has not yet been established, the Team wanted to have a plan in place so we could move forward as a church. They asked Christina Melahn to join the team for this discussion. The Team has been working on a transition plan and has been in conversation with our Presbytery. We feel confident that when Rick does retire, there will be a smooth transition with the incoming Pastor. The Personnel Team will report their plan to the Session who in turn will approve it, or modify it and then send it on to the congregation. We are trying to be as proactive as we can be so the transition will be a good one.

Sierra Vista Presbyterian Finance Ministry Team Annual Report

Looking back at the previous year, on behalf of Session and the SVPC staff, the Finance Ministry Team would like to express our feelings of gratefulness for the generous and faithful giving from members and attenders of the church fellowship to support our ongoing ministries and programs. The offering and giving of your time, talents, financial and prayer support is especially appreciated.

In the table, is a review of the last five years of giving and expenses. Giving has declined a little and expenses have too. Giving has exceeded expenses each year providing a surplus. It is likely that for 2020, 2021 and 2022 expenses were below the General Fund Budget because of reduced activities due to the COVID19 pandemic. Generally, for the

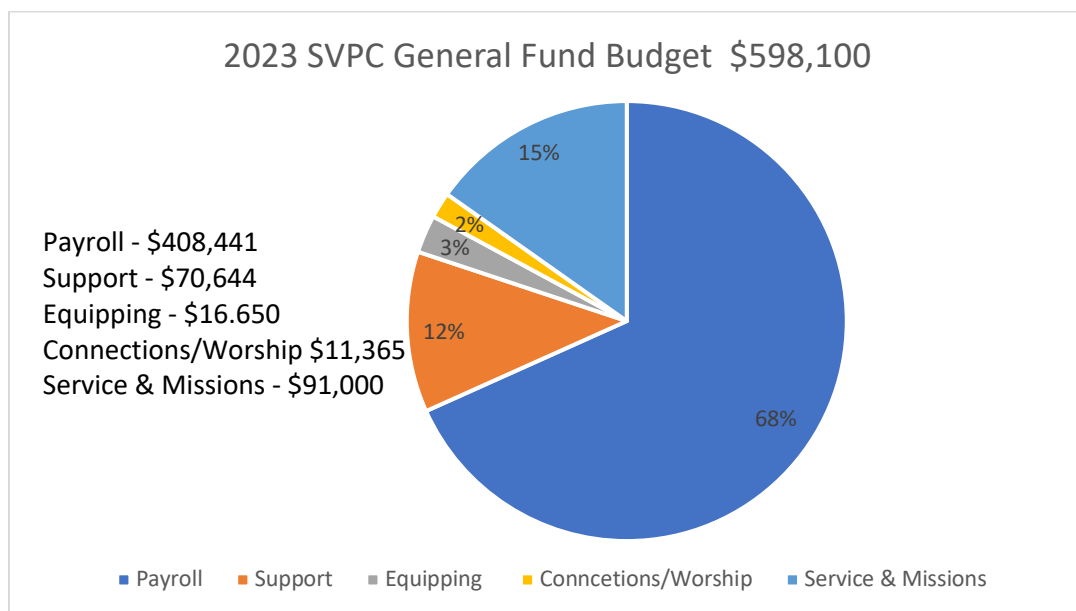
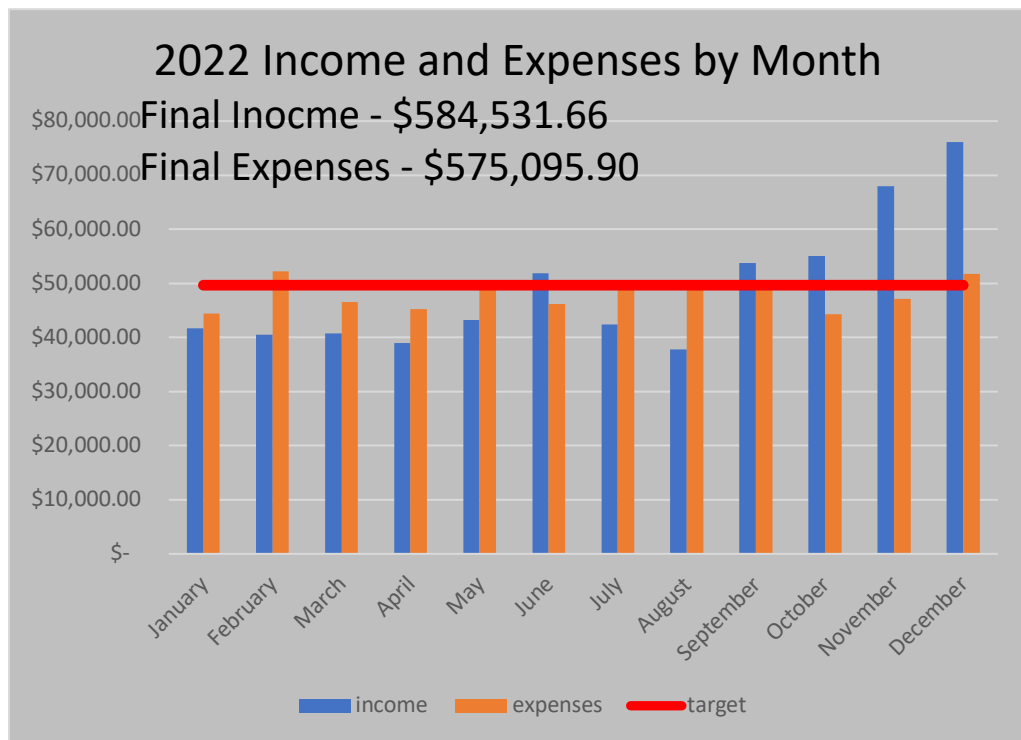
last five years, giving lags behind expenses for the early months of the year and then increases dramatically in the later months so that there is a surplus at the end of the year. Looking forward to 2023 activities will be closer to what they were before 2020 and expenses should be close to the General Fund budget.

YEAR	GF Budget	Income	Expenses	Surplus
2022	\$596,000	\$584,532	\$575,121	\$9,411
2021	\$595,819	\$587,778	\$569,521	\$18,257
2020	\$592,404	\$610,627	\$565,738	\$44,890
2019	\$592,404	\$604,194	\$580,619	\$23,574
2018	\$606,840	\$620,130	\$607,785	\$12,345

You can join the FMT in a number of ways. Continue to share all that God has blessed you with. Is it possible that you would be a mentor or coach to those who need personal, spiritual or financial encouragement? Your experience, education, vocation and insight are valuable to those who are seeking to follow the teaching and leading of Jesus Christ.

It is our hope that members and attenders of SVPC and those we meet along the way continue to grow and mature in their Christian walk each day. Becoming comfortable enough to discuss our personal finance struggles/challenges and triumphs with others who will be understanding and encouraging is a point of prayer the Team would like to emphasize. Join us as we seek God's guidance to be good stewards of all He has given to us.

Team Members: Steve Ewert, Ralph Lucas, Valerie Ramsey
Others involve: (Offering Counters) Bev Rutherford, Art Thomas, Diane Bradley, Richard McCrae, Claudia Carrott, Randy Taylor, Dan Noecker



Sierra Vista
Officers of the Corporation

Christina Melahn, President
Steve Ewert, Treasurer
Marsha Scharton, Clerk

Elders

Mellie Bradley
Steve Ewert
Christina Melahn
Bob Rose
Marsha Scharton
Kim Vanlandingham
Chuck Wiest
Matt Woods

Deacons

Carla Capuchino
Claudia & Peter Carrott
Maddie Davidson
Mary Dodge
Mark & Michelle Frasher
John & Carolyn Honnette
Abby Mendez
Nick & Tricia Nickerson
Cathie Rainwater-Swenson
John Ramsey
Tom & Sara Robison
Rita Rothchild
Nancy & Randy Taylor
Phyllis & Art Thomas
Joe Yeatts

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Pancho Capuchino, Custodian

Elizabeth Kreitzman, Custodian

Marsha Scharton, Clerk of Session
clerk@sierravistachurch.org

Ed Swenson, Parish Associate

Bill Welch, Pastor Emeritus

Betty Strain, Clerk Emeritus

Sierra Vista Presbyterian Church was Chartered at a New Church Development of the Presbyterian Church (USA) on November 16, 1986.

In April 2013 we became a part of ECO, A Covenant Order of Evangelical Presbyterians. For more information on our denomination go to <https://www.eco-pres.org>.

Sierra Vista
PRESBYTERIAN CHURCH

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