



### From the Pastor

Where are all the people? A generation or two ago, forming a church took a lot of work, but it was a fairly easy process. Gather people, get a building, advertise in the local paper, do some outreach events, and people would come.

In many cases, the people who showed up were from other churches, or who had been church members somewhere else, and just moved into the neighborhood. There were very few people who came to church who were not already Christians, though we praise God for them!

Still, a generation ago, there was a relative cultural consensus in terms of basic understanding of the Bible and morality. Most people considered themselves “Christian”, whether they had committed themselves to following Christ or had never joined a church.

A generation ago, church membership meant something, as people were used to joining civic groups and institutions.

Today, growing the church is far more difficult.

To begin with, the culture has changed. No longer is there a cultural consensus on the Bible and morality. When we have done the Trunk or Treat event near Halloween, we dress up and decorate our trunks in biblical themes. So we have Noah’s Ark, or Peter walking on water, or Adam and Eve, or Jonah and the Whale. It is amazing, really, that when we ask the children if they know the stories, they do not. When we ask their parents, they don’t know the stories, either!

In addition, the number of unchurched people has increased exponentially. A generation ago, even people who didn’t attend church had a good idea of what the church was. Not so today. A few years ago at a Stand Together event at Mae Hensley Junior High, I got to chat with one of the teachers who volunteered to lead one of the small groups of students. I told her I was the pastor of the church across the street. She regularly parks in our parking lot, mind you, and she replied, “Oh! I didn’t know that was a church!”

Also, the culture around us has changed. When Harvest was founded, Ceres was a small town of 3,000 people. Today, there are almost 50,000 people who live in Ceres. When Harvest was founded, most people lived, worked, and played in Ceres, and most families had one bread-winner (or the entire family worked on the farm). Today, most families have two bread-winners. And many of these commute long miles to work. We had some Harvest members a while back who worked in the Bay Area, and woke up every morning at 3:00 a.m. to commute to their job. Even early in the morning, the drive was 90 minutes or more. Imagine driving to and from work for three to four hours every day. No wonder churches and civic groups have a hard time growing. Our model is based on married couples with kids, one working, and the other having time during the day/week to volunteer.

With so much commuting (and the traffic to the Bay Area now extends to Merced), small valley towns have been transformed into large bedroom communities of the Bay Area because of affordable housing. But the social cost of that has been high. Sociologists speak about a rental mentality and an owner mentality. An owner mentality is more invested in their community, because, well, they own

A life of hospitality begins in worship, with a recognition of God's grace and generosity. Hospitality is not first a duty and responsibility; it is first a response of love and gratitude for God's love and welcome to us.- Christine Pohl

part of it. A rental mentality essentially says, “I just live and sleep here”, so the desire and capacity to be involved is diminished or non-existent.

So how to we reach our neighbors with the gospel? We can try to be attractational, providing exciting activities for people to come. Churches like The House in Modesto do a great job at this. Last Easter, our Easter Eggstravaganza provided 1,200 Easter eggs for kids to find. The House had over 60,000 Easter eggs! Going to The House is like going to Disneyland, with their groups, and their gym, and their school. We cannot compete like that.

What can we do? We can begin with an understanding of what the church is for. While we are a community of people drawn together, we are not a social club. The church has been formed by God to be a witnessing community. Not witnessing to ourselves (come see how good we are), but witnessing to the grace and mercy of Jesus Christ.

There are essentially two things that we can do. The first is to be involved in the community, be involved in the lives of other people, hearing their struggles, giving them encouragement. The second is to practice hospitality, inviting people into our lives, messy as they might be. People by and large will not show up to a church unless they know someone from that church. If we are unknown, we will not grow. We will be exploring these themes in June.

One of the books that is helpful is *The Gospel Comes with a House Key: Practicing Radically Ordinary Hospitality in Our Post-Christian World* by Rosaria Champagne Butterfield.

“We go nowhere by accident...”

SDG

Pastor Jim



### Notes:

- 1) I've read 22 books so far this year, and would encourage you to read, read, read! I've walked over 1,500 miles so far this year, averaging over 10 miles a day, and I would encourage you to walk, walk, walk!
- 2) Beth and I will be on vacation to Nebraska and Colorado from July 5 to 18.
- 3) J-P Moran, our Administrative Assistant, is taking a long-planned vacation with his family. He will return to the office on June 9th. I will be in the office the usual Tuesdays and Thursdays from 9:00 a.m. to 1:00 p.m. If you'd like to volunteer to answer phones, or fold bulletins, or address letters, please let me know. Thanks!

### Presbytery Grant



The Finance Committee has been working on a grant request from the Stockton Presbytery. We are seeking to use the Legacy gift from Florence Bloemendaal as seed money for a 2-for-1 match by the Presbytery. Among the projects on our list are, (1) sealing the parking lots, (2) LED lights for the parking lots, (3) Large screen TV and cart for Worship Center, (4) funding for work with Youth for Christ at Mae Hensley, (5) LED lights for the Worship Center, (6) more efficient cooling for the Chapel, (7) hearing assistance equipment for the Worship Center, (8) MP3 recorder, and MP3 devices for shut-ins to use, (9) hand rails for the Worship Center stage, (10) repairing stairs in Worship Center, (11) moving the Memory Tree to the Worship Center. We'd love your input on these, and any other projects you wish us to pursue. We are hoping for a grant of \$45,000 from the Stockton Presbytery.

## Presbytery News: Merger Being Discussed



Harvest is one of the churches in the Stockton Presbytery. With many of its churches leaving to form a new denomination in 2014, the presbytery is too small to exist on its own. A small task force at the Synod of the Pacific has been meeting to determine possible solutions. They have come up with four possible solutions.

- 1) All of Stockton Presbytery (churches and geography) merges with Sacramento Presbytery
- 2) All of Stockton Presbytery (churches and geography) merges with San Joaquin Presbytery
- 3) Portion of Stockton Presbytery merges with San Joaquin Presbytery and a portion merges with Sacramento Presbytery (likely ½ north and ½ south at San Joaquin/Stanslaus County line)
- 4) All of Stockton Presbytery churches merge with Sacramento Presbytery, and Merced and Mariposa Counties merge into San Joaquin Presbytery with resource funding to plant new churches in those counties.

At our last session meeting, we voted unanimously for option #3. This is an advisory vote, and is not official yet. The Synod will meet in May and then in October, and make a recommendation to the General Assembly next June. The General Assembly will make a decision then.

Sacramento and San Joaquin are both solid presbyteries, and we would do well either way.

In the meantime, not much will change, so do not worry. If you have questions, please talk it over with Pastor Jim.

## Feedback Forum Report



On Sunday evening, May 19th, thirteen people got together for ice cream and ideas at the “Town Hall” meeting.

Some things people felt were positive and effective about the church were the youth activities, bible study, and sermons.

Some concerns were that we would like to see more people in the choir, J.P. being gone for six weeks puts a strain on the pastor, and J.P. leaving permanently in August, and a replacement will be needed.

Other things brought up were that the church library isn’t being utilized; the grant application to presbytery; having another combined worship service with our Emmanuel church neighbors.

The need for volunteers in the following areas was discussed: 1. Help in the office (even an hour now and then) 2. Help with technology 3. Offer to sing in place of the choir during the summer 4. People to help with Campus Life.

It would be good when people notice something needing to be fixed on the church campus they would report it to Tom or Mike so they can take care of it. It was a very good time, a lot got discussed... and did I mention the ice cream?

## VBS is Coming! Help Needed!



VBS is coming July 22-26. The theme is Into the Wild. The event will take place from 9am to 12 noon. Please speak with Brandy Meyer or Beth Stochl if you’d like to participate.

Harvest Presbyterian Church  
1813 Moffet Road  
Ceres, CA 95307



POSTAGE

Mission Statement ~ With God in control, the mission of the Harvest Presbyterian Church is to proclaim and bear witness to the gospel of Jesus Christ and nurture the faith of our church family.

## Harvest Leadership 2019

### Deacons

Virginia Bathe (Moderator) (2021)  
Patty Correia (2021)  
Kate Hendrix (2020)  
Nora McKinsey (2020)  
Nawatha Reed (2019)  
Judy Salyer (2019)

### Elders

Tom Bennett (Finance/Nominating) (2021)  
Michael Cousins (Treasurer/Buildings) (2020)  
Karen Edwards (Clerk/Mission/Personnel) (2019)  
Staci Edwards (Personnel/Worship) (2019)  
Brandy Meyer (Youth/Outreach/Nominating)(2021)  
LaVeta Rhoy (Finance) (2020)



### Church Information

Church Office Phone: (209) 537-3519  
Website: [www.harvestpres.org](http://www.harvestpres.org)  
Pastor Jim Stochl— [harvest.pastor.jim@gmail.com](mailto:harvest.pastor.jim@gmail.com)  
Prayer Requests—[prayer@harvestpres.org](mailto:prayer@harvestpres.org)  
J-P Moran —[secretary@harvestpres.org](mailto:secretary@harvestpres.org)

### Office Hours

Tuesdays: 9:00 a.m.—1:00 p.m.  
Thursdays: 9:00 a.m.—1:00 p.m.



Sun	Mon	Tue	Wed	Thu	Fri	Sat
<b>2</b> Communion— 10:30 am 	<b>3</b>  Prayer Mtg — 6:00 pm	<b>4</b> Dorothy Nelson 100th Birthday! 	<b>5</b> 	<b>6</b>  Choir 5:30 pm	<b>7</b> Harvest Men (My Garden Café)— 7:00 am Women's Bible Study—10:00 am	<b>1/8</b> <b>1st Bookkeeper</b> <b>in Office (9:00am)</b> 
<b>9</b> Worship— 10:30 am 	<b>10</b>  Prayer Mtg — 6:00 pm	<b>11</b> 	<b>12</b>  Praise Team— 6:00 pm	<b>13</b> Campus Life— 1:00 pm @ Smyrna Park	<b>14</b> Starbucks Men— 7:00 am Women's Bible Study-10:00 am <b>Finance Mtg—</b> <b>8:15 a.m.</b> <b>Session—</b> <b>10:00 a.m.</b>	<b>15</b> <b>Bookkeeper in</b> <b>Office (9:00am)</b> <b>HAPPY NATIONAL SMILE</b> <b>POWER DAY!</b> 
<b>16</b> Worship — 10:30 am 	<b>17</b> <b>Eat Your</b> <b>VEGETABLES</b> <b>Day</b>  Prayer Mtg — 6:00 pm	<b>18</b> 	<b>19</b> National Garfield Day  Praise Team— 6:00 pm	<b>20</b> Campus Life— 1:00 pm @ Smyrna Park	<b>21</b> Starbucks Men— 7:00 am Women's Bible Study—10:00 am	<b>22</b> 
<b>23</b> Worship — 10:30 am	<b>24</b>  Prayer Mtg — 6:00 pm	<b>25</b> 	<b>26</b>  Praise Team— 6:00 pm	<b>27</b> Campus Life— 1:00 pm @ Smyrna Park <b>NATIONAL</b> <b>SUNGLASSES DAY</b>  <b>JUNE 27</b>	<b>28</b> Starbucks Men— 7:00 am Women's Bible Study—10:00 am	<b>29</b> <b>Bookkeeper in</b> <b>Office (9:00am)</b> <b>WAFFLE</b> <b>IRON</b>  <b>DAY</b>
<b>30</b> Worship — 10:30 am <b>End of the</b> <b>Month Potluck</b> <b>After Service</b>	<b>1</b>  Prayer Mtg — 6:00 pm	<b>2</b> 	<b>3</b>  Praise Team— 6:00 pm	<b>4</b> 	<b>5</b> Starbucks Men— 7:00 am Women's Bible Study—10:00 am	<b>6</b> 



### Sunday School Schedule \*

- 6/2** Brandy Meyer, Lysie Salyer, Patti Arbizu (Alternate)
- 6/9** Anette Arias, Lysie Salyer, Judy Salyer (Alternate)
- 6/16** Staci Edwards, Lysie Salyer, Martha McNamara (Alternate)
- 6/23** Beth Stochl, Lysie Salyer, Nawatha Reed (Alternate)
- 6/30** Anette Arias, Lysie Salyer, Patti Arbizu (Alternate)

\* This schedule may change! Check with Brandy Meyer or J-P if you have any conflicts or questions.

### Regular Prayer List

#### Health Issues:

John Baughman  
Warren Cawley  
Dorothy Nelson  
Frank Reed  
Ruth Strange  
Bettye Welsh

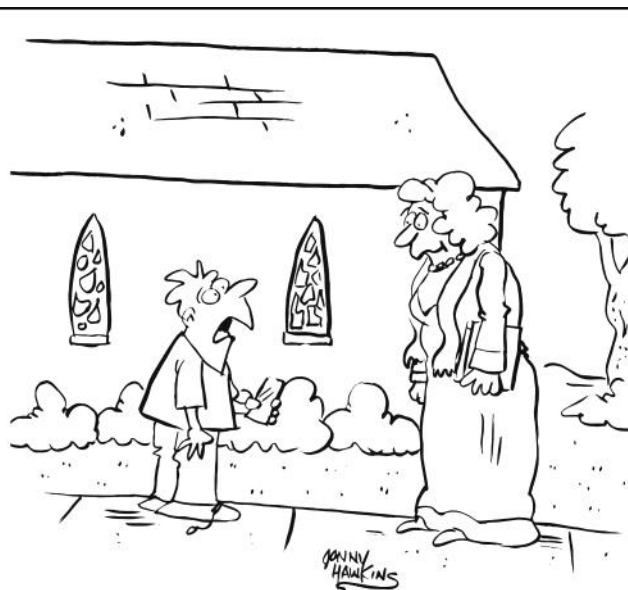
#### Other Concerns:



4—Dorothy Nelson (100)  
12—Brooklyn James  
15—Warren Cawley



8—Leon & Karen Edwards  
15—Ralph & Patti Arbizu  
17—Devon & Michele James



"I'll come to VBS, but can you take the word 'school' out of it?"