

April 2022

# The Orchard Life

Monthly Newsletter for Orchard Community Church



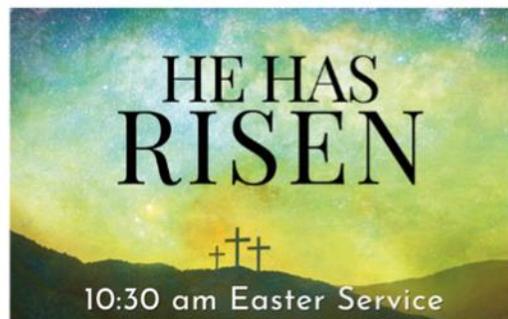
## A note from Pastor Matt

With April this year comes Easter, the celebration of Jesus' resurrection and really the heart of our faith. We believe that Jesus was resurrected and that we will be resurrected too because we have a God in the resurrection business. And this means that Jesus' resurrection speaks a word of hope and healing for what God can do in our lives today and God's promise of life beyond this life. The resurrection tells us a great deal about the heart of God. We have a God of second chances who picks us up when the things of this world knock us down, and he gives us the power to rise again. The resurrection calls us to live with hope because we know that God is with us and will take care of us no matter what happens. Catholic priest, W. Paul Jones, said, "What one sees depends on where one sets up one's shop. Mine is at the entrance of the empty tomb." Easter is a reminder for us to live in the light of the resurrection and the hope, joy, and peace that is ours through our risen Lord.

As we prepare for Easter, I want to invite you to join us for our Maundy Thursday service on April 14 at 7 pm. The word "Maundy" comes from the Latin word *mandatum*, which means

"command." It refers to the command Jesus gave to his disciples at that first communion meal that they should "love one another." At this service, we will take communion and seek in our own way to share in that spiritual moment and to commune with Jesus as well. As a part of this night, we will also follow the story of the last hours of Jesus' life, as he was arrested, tried, and crucified. On Easter Sunday, we will celebrate Jesus' resurrection, but on this night, we will take a moment to pause and focus on his suffering and death.

Join us on Easter Sunday, April 17, to celebrate the resurrection at 10:30 am. There will be an egg hunt for children following the service. On Easter, we expect the service to be full, so if you're able and willing, we'd appreciate it if you could park in the lower lot or on the street to leave room for visitors. I also want to encourage you to be unofficial members of our Welcome Team. Keep an eye out for new people, welcome them, introduce yourself and help them find their way. These small acts of hospitality can make a big difference in people's experience of our church!  
Grace and peace  
- Matt



## April Events

### WORK DAY

April 2 - 9 am to Noon  
The City Center & Tender life

### LENTEN PRAYER & FASTING

April 5 & 12 - 6 to 7 pm  
Worship Center

### MAUNDY THURSDAY SERVICE

April 14 - 7 pm  
Worship Center

### EASTER SERVICE

April 17 - 10:30 am  
Worship Center, patio, & online  
Egg Hunt for the kids after service

### FAITH ON FRIDAY

April 27 - 4 pm  
Orchard Kids Spring Musical  
Children's Center Playground



**Orchard**  
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8180 Telephone Rd.  
Ventura, CA 93004

[www.OrchardVentura.org](http://www.OrchardVentura.org)



April sure is a busy time of year for our Sunshine Preschoolers, and we are looking forward to having lots of fun with exciting activities!

We have Spring Break for the first week of April, and once we get back, we will be getting ready to celebrate Easter! Children will get to dye hard-boiled eggs in their classrooms. We will also have Chapel and Egg Hunts on the same day. During Chapel, we will focus on the empty tomb and what a miracle and gift that was and is for us all.

We will also be hosting our annual Trike-a-thon! Each year, we have our children bring their bikes to school on their

designated day, and they ride laps around our bike yard to raise money. It is a fun event to participate in! Historically, we take the funds raised and split the money between Heifer International and our playground fund. This year, we decided to make a change and donate 100% of funds raised to God's Hidden Treasures "Ukraine War" fund. The donations will provide direct humanitarian relief and supply gas, food, medications, and any emergency needs arising from the situation. We will not be talking to the children about the war, but we will be telling them that we are raising funds for people in another part of the world who need food, clothing, and toys.

As some of you might already know, the COVID-19 restrictions for childcare centers and preschools changed in the

middle of March. Since then, masks are no longer required but recommended. We reopened our center dividers and resumed our regular outside schedule where we have the three younger classes out at 10:00 am and the three older classes out at 11:00 am. After two years of functioning under pandemic conditions, we are cautiously optimistic about getting back to a more normal/typical preschool experience.

As always, we appreciate your steadfast support and prayer!

**Annette Walters**

Sunshine Preschool Director

[Annette@OrchardVentura.org](mailto:Annette@OrchardVentura.org)



## ORCHARD KIDS

A **GINORMOUS** thank you to all who helped host the Children's Tea Party on March 20th. The kitchen crew, decorating divas, friendly welcome team, setup and clean-up crew, activity leaders, yummy treat makers, and youth role models. Wow, what a wonderful afternoon for our church, preschool, and community families. We had 80 dapper and well-mannered guests who enjoyed every minute! THANK YOU!! (Liz, Hannah, Megan, Betsy, Matthew, Kate, Mike, Matt, Ella, Bailey, Lauri, Donna, Randy, Lynn, Elizabeth, MaryAnn, Sarah, James, Pat, LuAnn, Christian, Corrie, and I'm sure a few others!)

**Easter Eggs needed!** Now collecting filled (stickers, small toy, individually wrapped & peanut free candy) plastic eggs for the huge Egg Hunt on Easter Sunday.

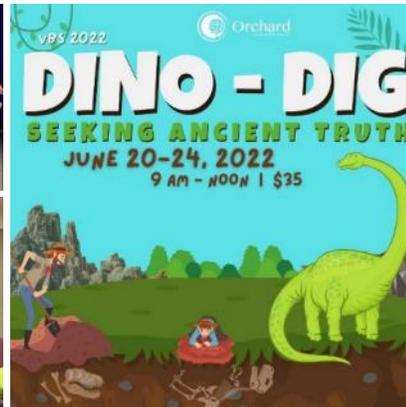
VBS and Dance Camp Volunteers Needed! Please sign up on the [Church Center App](#) or contact me if you would like to help with **VBS** (June 20-24) or **Cheer and Dance Camp** (August 15-19).



**Melinda Hoyt**

Children's Ministry Director

[Melinda@OrchardVentura.org](mailto:Melinda@OrchardVentura.org)



HAPPY  
**Easter**

you're!  
INVITED!

**Orchard Kids Easter Party**

Celebrate our Risen Lord

Sunday, April 17 at 10:30 am.

The party will end with a HUGE Egg Hunt!



## Why You Should Care About the Future of the Church

When you think about the church's future, what comes to mind? If you don't think of our youth, I think you are thinking too short term. Our youth today are the leaders of the church in the next generation. Once we are gone, they will be the ones who push the Gospel in a world that is growing more hostile towards faith. The youth are critical to the church and are more than just a labor source to help set up for services/events.

However, the youth are one of the most ignored demographics in the global church today. For 10+ years, churches have noticed the trend of 18-year-olds disappearing from congregations for at least a year. In many instances, they disappear for much longer and only come back due to a significant life event/change, if they come back at all.

According to a study done by Lifeway Research, there are five main reasons 18-year-olds are disappearing from church: college, work, judgmental/hypocritical church members, not being connected to people in the church, and disagreeing with the church's stance on politics. These five reasons share roughly similar amounts of blame for why young adults are leaving, which is sad when we, the ones raising and equipping the next generation, can do something about it.

Students go to college; they have to enter the workforce. That is just an eventuality of life, but if we are waiting until that day comes to try and attack the problem of young adults leaving the church, we have waited too long. I have watched as our Orchard students have graduated from the youth group and don't want to leave the youth program largely because they have no connection to the rest of the church. I believe that personal relationships greatly impact people. Suppose the church has acknowledged that one of the primary reasons students

leave as they transition to adulthood is either a lack of relationship or a negative relationship with the congregation. In that case, we have to own that as the adults of the church.

Regarding politics, students under the age of 18 are increasingly drawn into politics at younger and younger ages. Atheistic teaching has crept into high schools, instead of primarily existing in the college sector. These things are a recipe for disaster when our students' only connection to the church is a youth group they maybe attend for two hours a week. Our Orchard students face an onslaught of critical culture at school. Some are labeled as homophobic, racist, etc. for openly claiming to be a Christian.

Here's how you can help. Get to know our students. Every week that adults ignore students, they are forming a perception that the congregation members either don't care or dislike them. We need to work together to shift this perception and show these students that we care about them and desire to see them grow in the Lord. This doesn't happen if we don't start by getting to know our youth. Sixteen years ago, I was a youth in this church, and several people (who were in their 70's, 50's, and 40's) in the church took their time to get to know me. They would shake my hand and be sure to say hi each Sunday, play games at youth group occasionally, sit with the youth at potlucks and other church events. They left a positive impression of the church in my head and made it the place I wanted to be. My hope and encouragement is that you would join me in choosing to do this for the next generation. Hopefully, together we can start to change the trend that has surfaced over the last 10+ years.



**Cody Schulze**  
Youth Director  
[Cody@OrchardVentura.org](mailto:Cody@OrchardVentura.org)

## LOCAL MISSIONS

Are you ready? April 2 is a workday from 9 am until noon at City Center and Tender Life Maternity Home. Jobs include window cleaning, gardening, etc., at both sites. We will also be providing dinner for the residents of Tender Life. You are invited to be involved and share your love for Jesus and the residents. Let Mike Hershey know if you are interested in helping at [mikehershey59@yahoo.com](mailto:mikehershey59@yahoo.com). If you want to carpool, we will meet at Orchard at 8:45 am.

Tender Life provides safe housing, case management, and parenting support for unhoused pregnant women. After their stay at Tender Life, the residents often move to the City Center, where they are expected to work, save money, and have counseling and case management to prepare for a successful independent life. Both sites would love to have volunteer mentors for the residents. Tender Life would also appreciate the gift of baby showers for the soon to be born babies. Both agencies are Christ led and are non-profits.

Also, get ready for the Blood Drive on May 22 in the Church parking lot.

Please remember that we collect food for the food pantry at the Salvation Army on an ongoing basis. As we all know, food prices have gone up and families and individuals on a limited income are struggling. Please put non-perishable food items (soups, cereals, canned vegetables, pasta and meat sauce, canned meats, salt and pepper, cake mixes for special occasions, nut butters and jam, etc.) in the bin on the patio on Sunday mornings. Or, during the week, bring them to Judy Alexandre's home and place them on the bench in the front of the house.

Hygiene items are also collected on an ongoing basis (toothpaste, toothbrushes, combs and brushes, shampoo, undergarments, sanitary necessities, soap, etc.) Please place those in the collection bin outside of the worship building. For other donation items, please contact Judy Alexandre (judyalexandre@gmail.com) for information, etc.

We recently made a significant donation to the Homeless Prevention Fund from the local outreach Thrive allocation. Rents have increased and the result is more people becoming unhoused. Since the COVID rental assistance ended, the Fund has already had more requests in 2022 than in all of 2021. Money is for rent only, reviewed by a case manager with the best assurance that the family or individual will be able to pay their rent moving forward after the first payment. Budgeting assistance is provided. In Jan-Feb, the Fund assisted 22 adults and 14 children. Thank you for your generous support.

The local outreach committee also donated to the Royal Family Kids Camp from the Thrive account. Greg Pels has submitted the following description of this very worthwhile organization:



I wanted to bring to your attention one of the local mission efforts that I work with that is making a difference in our community.

Royal Family Kids Camp is a National Organization helping local chapters put on respite summer camps for kids in foster care or temporarily displaced from their homes. We are a Non-Profit and all our funding comes from donations. The Ventura chapter serves children in the Ventura County Foster care and Resource

Families system. We work with the local social care agencies to contact families with children in the 7-11 age range and invite them to a five-day overnight camp. Some of our children have been through considerable trauma and displacement in their lives through no fault of their own. We have had children who have been physically and emotionally abused and children who have been displaced due to the actions of their care giver. Our volunteers are trained in dealing with the children and providing a positive week of memories for these children, with a "God loves you" message. It is our belief that a week of positive experiences can help to build resilience in the child which will help them moving forward with whatever they have to face.

Our children are wards of the state. Therefore, safety and security are a top priority. Our volunteers go through training to make sure our kids are well protected. Our organization also requires what we call two sets of eyes on every child basically meaning that two adults are responsible for watching every child. No child is left alone with any adult; there are always two.

Our staff consists completely of volunteers. For our camp, that is about 80 people serving 40 children. We need volunteers from every stage of life, ranging from 16-100. While our children receive the blessing from our volunteers, it is often the volunteers who are blessed. What are the ways you can help? You can apply to be a counselor or a support staff. You can volunteer for one of our offsite opportunities such as registration or welcome home. You can donate items for backpacks or birthday boxes.

If you would like to know more about what Royal Family Kids camp is about, I would

love to speak to you. You can send me an email at venturarfkf@gmail.com.

In His service,  
Greg Pels  
Co-Director RFKC Ventura

## GLOBAL MISSIONS

### World News today

Thank you for continuing to make a difference through your support of Global Missions at Orchard.



**IMPACT:** Karen Rittenburg and Richard Smith will be joining an IMPACT team of eight supporting Ramazan

Arkan and the Antalya Evangelical Churches in Turkey. Look for ways to support them in the coming weeks.



In Bila Tserkva, Ukraine, Nita Hanson's **God's Hidden Treasures** team has been actively and courageously

taking refugees out of Bila Tserka (just south of Kyiv) and to Slovakia and returning with food and medicines. They have made several such trips in their two vans. Pray for their safety. Those

staying in Ukraine are sheltering in neighboring farm root cellars. Meanwhile, Nita is in Florida, wishing she could be there in person as she sees her adopted city destroyed. You can support her directly (and the Ukrainian relief efforts) at <https://www.godshiddentreasures.org/supportus>.



Pray for the forces of good to be successful and those of Satan to be bound, for aid recipients unable to leave, and for peace in Nita's heart.



In **Antalya, Turkey**, Ramazan Arkan (Antalya Evangelical Church) continues to reach out to Muslim Turks. The IMPACT team will be busy supporting worship services, men's and women's Sunday School classes, home small groups, language classes, Alpha Date Night programs (dinner with a message for engaged couples), children's day camp, visiting homes, and more. Along with being busy, the weather tends to be hot and muggy — pray for their planning, success, and strength.



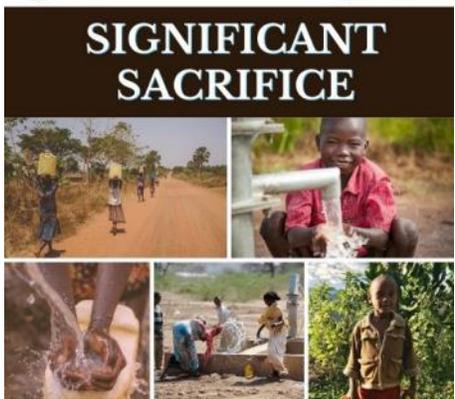
In **Siguatpeque, Honduras**, Orlando and Sylvia Japas with **Union Biblica Honduras**, continue to be thankful for your support as they minister throughout Honduras. An IMPACT team of eight will be visiting this summer, encouraging the church, teaching kids, visiting homes, etc. Pray for team effectiveness and success as they prepare and go.



In **Lupeni, Romania**, **Brandi and Dana Bates (New Horizons)** are also thankful for your support and prayer. Dana continues to grow the Impact Program within the Orthodox Church and prepare for Ukrainian refugees, while Brandi is adapting her literacy program to help children cope with the trauma they're experiencing.



Remember to pray for **Lifewater** as they bring hope to hard places by bringing water, sanitation, hygiene training,



community development, and God's love in tangible form to Ethiopia, Uganda, Tanzania, and Cambodia. Donate to Significant Sacrifice here: <https://give.lifewater.org/Orchard-Sig-Sac2022>

Pray also for **Wes and Natalie Roberts**, ministering in an undisclosed country in the Middle East.

If you are concerned about the world's condition, want to see how God is working around the globe, and want to learn from churches in other cultures, join the Global Missions Team. Contact Rich Smith at [r\\_smith122@hotmail.com](mailto:r_smith122@hotmail.com).



## LENTEN PRAYER & FASTING

Lenten Guided Prayer and Meditation services

Prayer Focus: David's Psalms of Lament/ Contemporary Interpretations of Psalms

**April 5 - 6 - 7 p.m. - Worship Building**

**April 12 - 6 - 7 p.m. - Worship Building**

Just as we celebrate Advent as a season of anticipation for the coming of the birth of Jesus and exchange gifts in remembrance of the gift of baby Jesus, we celebrate Lent as well with the anticipation of the coming of Christ's death on the cross.

At Orchard Community Church, we have traditionally entered into the season of Lent with intentional times of prayer.

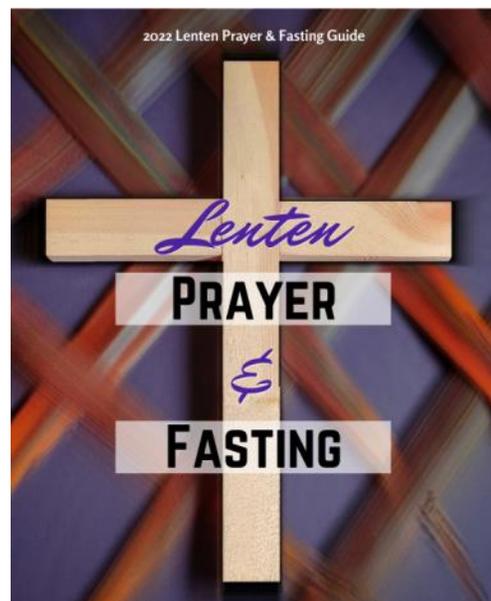
This year, the Worship Committee is adding fasting to our prayer focus for Lent. Fasting is a challenge, but the experience of the quickening of our spirits to God and God to our spirits is a grand adventure into the unexpected things of God.

A 7-week Lenten prayer and fasting guide will be available for download from the church's website and in a booklet form you can pick up from the office or the welcome center on Sundays.

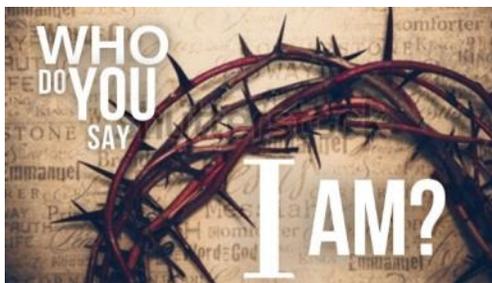
The guide is a how-to guide for prayer, fasting and meditation during Lent, focusing on the psalms of lament of King David. The guide is designed for use at home, but there will be four guided prayer group evening sessions on Tuesdays in the Library to support your prayer and fasting journey:

Family activities for Lent are included in the guide.

For questions, email Joy Downing Riley, Worship Elder, at [jdredit@yahoo.com](mailto:jdredit@yahoo.com).



**Orchard**  
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### Who Do You Say I Am?

Many people in Jesus' day wondered who he was and had lots of different ideas about who he might be. So much so that at one point, Jesus asked his disciples, "Who do the people say I am?" and then, "Who do you say I am?" The truth is that many people today still wonder who Jesus was. Lent is a time to focus on Jesus, His life and teachings, and especially on the meaning of his death. We do this because we can't fully understand or celebrate Jesus' resurrection on Easter unless we first understand who He was and why he died. So with this series, we'll look at who people in Jesus' time said He was at points and, more importantly, at who He truly is. And as we do, each of us should ask, "Who do I say Jesus is?" Some of us may be considering this question for the first time; for others, it's a chance to think through who Jesus is more deeply as we seek to know Him more.

### April 3 "Jesus the Son of God and God Himself"

John 10:22-33 & John 1:1-3

Many people in Jesus' time asked who He was. Some called Him, the "Son of God." But what does this mean? It describes the special relationship between Him and God, the fact that Jesus is God in the flesh. (Communion)

### April 10 "Who do we say Jesus is?"

Matthew 21:1-11 & Luke 6:46

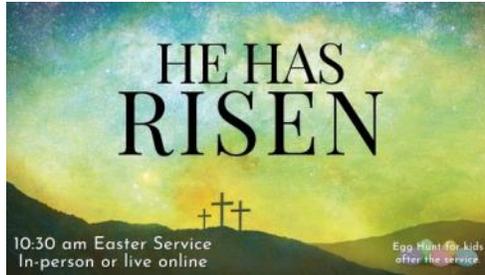
Palm Sunday was the one day in Jesus' life that the crowds seemed to have a sense of who He was, and yet even then, there was confusion. So, with Easter just one week away, who do we say Jesus is? And do we live like we believe He is who we say He is?

### April 14 "All The Way To The End"

Maundy Thursday Service at 7 pm

Mark 14:12-15:41

Even at the very end of His life, people were still wondering who Jesus was. In His trial before the Sanhedrin, they asked, "Are you the Messiah, the Son of the Blessed One?" and when he was before Pilate, he asked, "Are you the King of the Jews? Yet one Roman Centurion proclaimed, "Surely this man was the Son of God!" when He died. (Communion)



### April 17 "Jesus our Risen Lord!"

Easter Sunday Service

Luke 24:1-12, 36-43, John 11:25 & Revelation 1:18

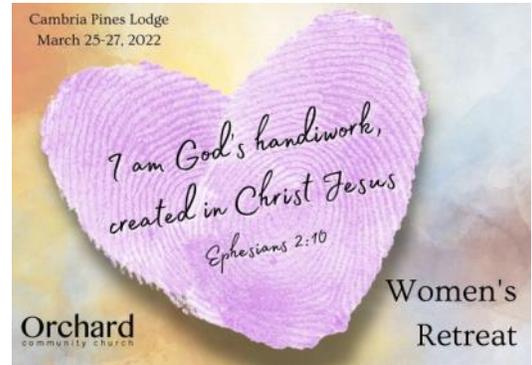
On that first Easter morning, Jesus' followers learned one more amazing thing about who He is. He is our risen Lord. The tomb was empty, the angel proclaimed it, Jesus had said it about himself, but they only truly understood it through their personal experience with Him.



### April 24 "A Greater Melchizedek"

Hebrews 7:1-10

The greatness of Melchizedek foreshadows the greatness of Jesus, the true King of righteousness and peace and our greater priest from a greater priesthood.

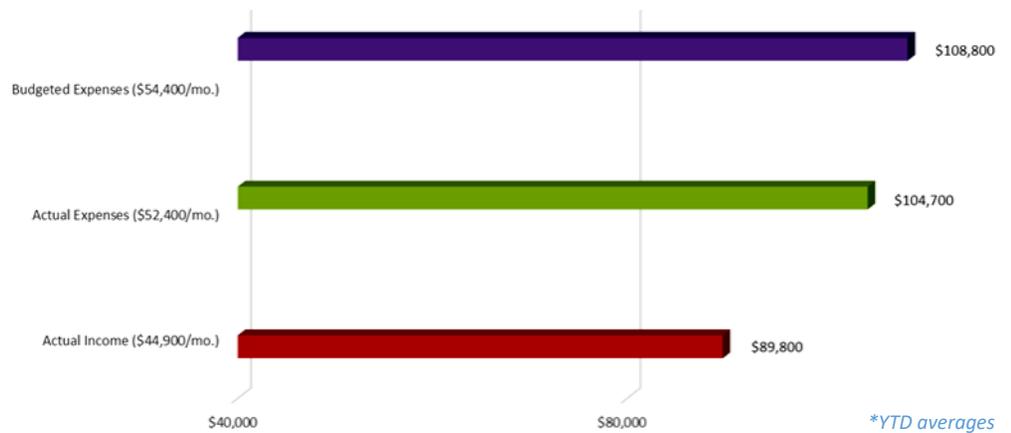


# FINANCIAL REPORT

Financial Results for February 2022

February was a more challenging month for Orchard finances with \$49,000 of expenses and \$43,000 of giving. This \$6,000 deficit makes our YTD deficit about \$15,000. Admittedly, the first two months of 2021 represented our best start ever but this year, income so far is \$11,000 lower while spending is up \$11,000. But, God is good and faithfully provides for what He calls Orchard to do. Thank you for all you do for Orchard ministries and missions!

- Scoop Hockenmaier, For the Finance Committee



# SESSION REPORT

The Session of Orchard Community Church met on March 10, 2022 in the Library and on Zoom. Before the meeting was called to order, Session had shared a devotional time on 1 Timothy 1:12 and met with New Member candidates.

## New Members

After meeting with them, Session welcomed into membership Becky Graves, Mary Budd, Liz Arpino, Karen Carpenter, and Marilyn Reeder, who had all completed the membership classes. They will be officially welcomed in Worship on a future Sunday when all can be in attendance. It is a joy and privilege to have such wonderful new members, who have already been an active part of our life and family at Orchard!

## Pastor's Report

Pastor Matt shared several prayer concerns and needs in the congregation and how elders could be praying for them and/or reaching out to them. He shared that he is feeling better and has now tested negative twice for Covid. There has been a small outbreak among church members. Matt shared some information about homeless people who had been spending time on campus and how those situations have been handled. Matt told Session about a break-in at the Preschool office and that nothing of value or importance was taken, but asked for everyone to be extra diligent about checking and locking doors, even if they didn't open them.

Matt requested and Session approved his vacation for the week of April 4-8.

## Clerk's Report

In the Clerk's report, Sue Hockenmaier mentioned that the annual statistical report of membership was in the Session packet, for elders' information. This could be useful as we look at staffing and other growth initiatives. This report is also in the Directory/handbook that was passed out at the Annual Congregation Meeting (FFFF).

## Finance Update

Elder Dave Fuhrmann gave an update on 2022 finances so far. The General Fund is in the red almost \$15,000 after the first two months of the year. A deficit at this point in the year isn't unusual, but it is larger than normal. (See the Finance Report above.) Dave asked for Session to review again who is "missing in church" and may have left Orchard, and whether this might explain some of the losses. This will be done in April by Session, and the Finance committee will keep monitoring the situation for some potential actions like a special appeal in April. The reserves are in good shape to handle any shortfall but that would preclude using them for new ministry opportunities that Session has been considering.

Dave also shared that there has been a transition in how people are able to give to the DeVries' missionary work and that he is researching whether donations can be legally routed through Orchard as they have requested or if they will be using another non-profit.

## Opportunity Fair

Elder LuAnn Smith led a recap of the Opportunity Fair, where all teams were able to present their ministries and volunteer opportunities, February 27th after church.

All felt that it was a good event for fellowship and information sharing, and that several committees as well as the office got sign-ups for volunteers. It was suggested that this could be an annual event, but maybe in the fall when ministries are restarting after summer breaks.

## Staffing for Outreach and Discipleship

An ad-hoc committee that has been working on the needs for outreach and discipleship came to make a presentation to Session. The members are Elder/chair LuAnn Smith, Tamir Reagan, Deya Jacob, Judy Alexandre, David Pels, and Kevin Bossoletti. After starting with prayer, the committee presented their proposal in detail and Session had an opportunity to ask questions. It will be on the Session agenda next month for further discussion about next steps. Elders will pray for discernment in the meantime.

## Ukraine Support

At the request of the Global Missions committee, Session approved information being publicized to the congregation about how individuals can give to the support of humanitarian efforts in Ukraine through the God's Hidden Treasures mission which Orchard supports.

NOTE: The April Session meeting will be Thursday, April 21, due to Maundy Thursday being the regularly scheduled second Thursday of the month.

Submitted by Sue Hockenmaier, Clerk of Session

Members of Orchard Community Church may request copies of minutes from Session. Please contact Sue Hockenmaier with your request.



Orchard Community Church  
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# THE Story is not OVER

**Spoiler Alert**  
Death will be defeated!

Join us Easter morning to celebrate at  
10:30 am in person or [live online](#).



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Stay up to date with all that is happening around Orchard by [subscribing](#) to our weekly email. Get it in your inbox every Thursday!



Orchard Quick Links

Quick links to our website, Connection Card, Digital Bulletin, Sunday's Online Service, subscribe to the weekly email, online giving, and our social media accounts.