

## A NOTE FROM MATT

With the coming of April, we find ourselves amid another busy season at Orchard! But, before I tell you about some of those things, I want to begin with a word of thanks. I want to say **"Thank you" to Rich Smith** for serving as our Interim Youth Director for the last 18 months. Rich originally signed on for six months but stuck with us when the process drew out. Rich has loved our kids and has served our church faithfully, and we are grateful to him. As you may know, we have hired two great Youth Interns to lead our programs (Sarah Francis and Everett Reagan) going forward along with our volunteers, and things are looking bright. We will publically thank Rich in the worship service on April 13<sup>th</sup>.

Other great things happening at Orchard in April. Following worship on Sunday, April 6<sup>th</sup>, our next **Meet & Greet** will be for those newer to Orchard. Our Meet & Greets are periodic luncheons with some of our staff and leaders aimed at getting to know people who are newer to the church, along with a very brief introduction to Orchard. We'd love to have you join us if you're newer to Orchard or for you to encourage those you may know who are newer to Orchard to attend and even to come with them if you'd like!

During April, we continue to move through the seasons of Lent. **Lent is a time of preparation for the celebration of Easter.** As a part of our Lenten journey this year, we will once again have our Stages of the Cross guided prayer and meditation walk on April 10<sup>th</sup> at 6:30 pm. We'd also invite you to join us for our traditional Maundy Thursday Service on April 17<sup>th</sup> at 7 pm. With this service, we will take communion and trace the last hours of Jesus' life to his death. Orchard will also

participate in the **Community Good Friday Service** held at the River Community Church on April 18<sup>th</sup> at noon.

Finally, I invite you to join us on April 20<sup>th</sup> for Easter Sunday. Our services will be at the regular time of 10:30 am. There will also be an egg hunt for children and other fun activities following the service. On Easter, we expect our service to be full, so if you are able and willing, parking off campus to leave room in our lot for visitors would be greatly appreciated! I also encourage you to be unofficial members of our welcome team. Keep an eye out for new people, welcome them, and help them find their way. These small acts of hospitality can make a big difference in people's experience of our church!

As you may know, Easter Sunday will be my last Sunday before I begin my sabbatical. I'm grateful for this time of rest and renewal. In my absence, I know Orchard will be well cared for by Pastor Josh Matthews, who will cover my pastoral duties, and by the solid leadership of the Session (church board). Further, I believe you will enjoy the guest preachers each Sunday, many of whom will be familiar faces. I'll be off for twelve weeks, which I'm certain will fly by, and I look forward to being back with you on July 20<sup>th</sup> as we begin the Tent.



Grace & Peace,  
Pastor Matt Hoyt  
[matt@OrchardVentura.org](mailto:matt@OrchardVentura.org)

## A NOTE FROM JOSH

**Hello Orchard!**

My name is Josh Matthews, and I am excited to spend some time with you while Matt is on sabbatical. Since some of you have known me for a long time and others I will be meeting for the first time, I wanted



to take a moment to introduce myself. I am a native of Ventura, and I grew up right here at Orchard Community Church. I worked as the Youth Director at Orchard (Eastminster) for several years. After completing seminary, I took a call to serve as an Associate Pastor in Fullerton, CA, where I remained for almost six years. For the last five-plus years, I have served as the English Ministry Pastor at the Vietnamese Presbyterian Church of Garden Grove, which has been a challenging yet amazing experience in a ministry context I would have never expected. I will continue to serve in Garden Grove while also being in Ventura mid-week at Orchard.

I am a dad of three amazing girls, and just like Pastor Matt, I love being a "girl dad." Zoey is a senior in High School and will be going to college in San Diego in the fall, and is a fantastic baker. Reagan is a High School freshman, taller than her older sister, and is a true middle child (like her dad). Ellie is in 6<sup>th</sup> grade, on the verge of Junior High, and is becoming her own person right before our eyes. They will be in Ventura some of the time with me, and I hope you will have an opportunity to meet or reconnect with them at some point.

Returning to Orchard for a few months is a blessing, and I plan to faithfully and joyfully teach, lead staff, work with the Session, provide pastoral care, and serve in any way I can that honors Christ and helps this community. I look forward to seeing you on Sunday, April 27, and afterward through July.

Regards,  
Pastor Josh Matthews  
[josh@orchardventura.org](mailto:josh@orchardventura.org)



## SUNDAY MESSAGES

### April 6 - I Am the Way, The Truth, And The Life

John 14:1-14

We live in a world that tells us there are many ways, truths, and kinds of life and that they're all the same and equal. When Jesus calls himself "the way, the truth, and the life," He is saying that there are absolutes and that they are grounded in Him, the only one through whom salvation comes. His words are about truly knowing and having a relationship with the Savior of the world.

### April 13 - I Am the Vine

John 12:12-16, 15:1-8

On Palm Sunday, the crowds finally seemed to understand and embrace Jesus as the Messiah. Yet, within a week, the same crowds called for him to be crucified, revealing our fickle human nature. When Jesus calls himself "the true vine" and says that we are the branches, He also calls us to remain connected to Him as the source of our spiritual life, knowing that, given our fickle nature, we are prone not to do so.

### April 17 Maundy Thursday Service

Mark 14:12-15:41

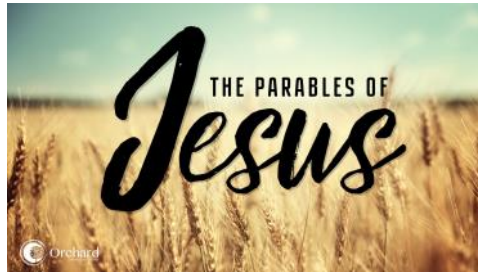
This service will celebrate the night Jesus instituted communion and follow the story of the last hours of His life from the Gospel of Mark. Amid the story of the last hours of His life, Jesus again affirms His identity as "I Am" in His response to the Jewish leaders when they asked who He was.

### April 20 - I Am the Resurrection and the Life (Easter Sunday)

Matthew 28:1-10 & John 11:21-44

When Jesus rose from the grave, He conquered sin and death, showing himself

to be Lord over all, the one in whom we hope and who calms our fears. When Jesus called Himself "the resurrection and the life," He was responding to the death of Lazarus but also to the pain, disappointment, and fear of those who loved Lazarus. In Jesus, we have a Savior who not only weeps with us but meets us in the hard moments of life and whose resurrection will one day mean the end of pain, disappointment, fear, and death forever.



### April 27 - The Parable of the Weed

Preacher: Josh Matthews

Matthew 13:24-30

## FAMILY MINISTRIES & OUTREACH



**Melinda Hoyt**

Director of Family Ministries & Outreach

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



## YOUNG ADULT MINISTRY

Our Orchard Young Adults are enjoying an evening of fellowship. Watch for details for upcoming Young Adult Activities!

## CHILDREN'S MINISTRY

Hello Orchard

Family! We need

donations of filled plastic eggs for our April 20th Giant Easter Egg Hunt on the lawn following our Easter Service! Bring your eggs to the church patio on Sundays or the office during the week. Thank you so



much for helping to make special Easter memories at Orchard!



## VOLUNTEERS NEEDED



### Adventure Day Camp June 16-20, 9 am-noon; kids

choose classes like sewing, music, art, games, etc.

### VBS June 23-27, 9 am-noon

We will celebrate both camps on Sunday, June 29, at 10:30 am under the tent.

Come help us welcome the children and their families for worship and lunch!



## OUTREACH

Have you noticed a few new special touches around campus? We are working to create spaces for people to linger and have fellowship after worship services, events, and meetings. Our new Outreach Committee seeks ways to help our guests connect and find belonging in our church family. Melinda will be making the rounds to all our groups and ministries to share our vision of an outreach mindset.

## YOUTH MINISTRY

Welcome to our new leaders for Orchard Youth!

**Sara Francis** ([sara@orchardventura.org](mailto:sara@orchardventura.org))

is a graduating senior from Westmont College. She has been an RA for the



freshmen dorms, organized and led student mission trips, and has an enthusiastic heart for sharing her faith.

## Everett Reagan

([everett@orchardventura.org](mailto:everett@orchardventura.org)) graduated from Westmont College with degrees in History and Philosophy and a minor in Religious Studies and has already completed a ministry internship. He is excited to use his gifts for teaching and listening as he serves our youth. Sara and Everett will lead our youth ministry and are excited to join our church family. Be sure to look for them on the patio after church and give them a warm welcome!



**CAMP PONDO YOUTH SUMMER CAMP:** Only a few spaces left, so be sure to register



online today if you want to join us at Camp Pondo this July 28-August 1.

## ORCHARD YOUTH MEETS

- Sundays at 9 AM for sermon sneak preview and donuts (not necessarily in that order)
- 4-6 PM Sundays for Youth Group (fun & Sermon on the Mount study)
- 6-7:30 PM Mondays - HS Guy's Group (Fun and Romans study)
- 3-4:30 PM Tuesdays at the Starbucks near Buena. (Just hang out time)



## SONSHINE PRESCHOOL



**Annette Walters**  
Sunshine Preschool Director  
[Annette@OrchardVentura.org](mailto:Annette@OrchardVentura.org)

We had some unexpected visitors in March: a swarm of bees! They landed in our rosemary bush in our raised garden bed on the playground. One of our teachers noticed them on a Monday morning during their outside time. There were hundreds of bees tucked on a large

branch of the bush. Typically, this isn't a big concern. Still, given that our preschoolers are curious and sometimes unpredictable, we moved our outside time to the bike yard for the day so that nobody ended up stung. I looked at our allergy list, and no children were on it allergic to bees. But I bet less than half of these children have been stung by a bee yet!



I did a quick Google search about bee swarms and found that the bees usually move on after a few days. That was not quick enough for my liking. A Pest Control Company confirmed they were honey bees and recommended that we find a professional bee remover. We contacted Weinerth & Son's Bee Removal, and Joshua was here quickly to help us! He was super knowledgeable and friendly and explained the process! A couple of the teachers and I were able to watch (from a safe distance).

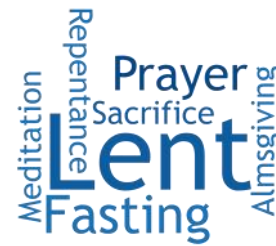
For the last couple of years, it has been a running joke that as the director, I have experienced fires, floods, plagues (thank you, COVID), more floods, and now, we have swarms of insects! Very Old Testament! Every year, there are big, unexpected events that impact the school! Thankfully, the swarm of bees was not a huge deal, but I definitely didn't have that on my BINGO card for this year. This is life, though, isn't it? Things don't often go as planned. But in those unexpected moments, the Lord gives us many opportunities to learn, grow, and, hopefully, be a little more like Him. It doesn't mean it's all easy and things work out the way we hoped for, but He knows our whole story and never leaves us. For that, I am thankful!

We hope you have a Happy Easter! Thank you for your support and prayers throughout the years! We appreciate you!

## DISCIPLESHIP CORNER

**Rich Smith & Jerry Horstmeyer**  
Discipleship Elders

**A question for you:** Is Jesus your savior, or is he your Lord and Savior? Many people are willing to accept Jesus' sacrifice for them on the cross and celebrate Easter and his resurrection with joy. But as a "Christian" or "a little Christ," we know that his call is not only to believe but to repent. That means making changes in our lives to live more like him.



The 9 AM **Lenten Adult Enrichment class**, led by LuAnn Smith, continues through April 13 (Easter is

April 20). Lent is a period of spiritual preparation for Easter, and this class explores six key concepts: Sacrifice, Fasting, Repentance, Almsgiving (charity), Meditation, and Prayer.

Other ways to grow and make connections are 9 AM **Men's Fellowship Group** (Conference Room) and the **Intercessory Prayer Group** (9:15 AM in the Farmhouse). Childcare is available with advanced notice. **Pastor's Bible Study** Tuesdays at 10 AM in the library.

Other small groups are available for Bible study or common interests during the week. **These are great ways to make connections and let God work on growing your faith.** Join one! April 20th is Easter, celebrating Jesus' victory over death. Making Jesus Lord (for example, by getting up early for Adult Enrichment or joining a small group) transforms us to be more like him. It's these little, consistent changes that enrich life and bring opportunity.

**Rich Smith**  
Discipleship Elder



**Orchard**  
community church

# HELLO! ORCHARD SMALL GROUP



## “HELLO ORCHARD!” SMALL GROUP

“Hello Orchard!” is a new Small Group, focused on walking with those newer to our Orchard community. The plan is to meet alternating weeks following Sunday worship to orient, assist, and share opportunities through fellowship. We want to meet those seeking new spiritual life at Orchard, and welcome and assist them in finding a path for growth and community at Orchard. We will be introducing group members to the different programs, events, leaders, and opportunities that exist at Orchard, and walk with them through a transition in finding each individual’s further path and plans. We welcome all those seeking information on Orchard’s programs. If you would like to assist in this Small Group ministry, please contact Jerry Horstmeyer at [jerzorchard@gmail.com](mailto:jerzorchard@gmail.com).

## WOMEN’S MINISTRY



Orchard moms have a great time together on Sundays! Join us! All moms welcome. Sundays 4-6 PM in Room 5.



Scan the QR code or find the group in the Church Center App & [request to join!](#)

## MEN’S MINISTRY

### MEN’S SUNDAY MORNING FELLOWSHIP

Sundays | 9 AM | Conference Room

Spend time in the Bible walking together through our faith.



### TUESDAY MORNING MEN’S BREAKFAST

Tuesdays | 8 AM | Main St  
Restaurant and Steakhouse

3159 East Main Street, Ventura

Tuesday morning men’s breakfast is a time where the men of Orchard and any of their invited guests meet to hang out, discuss their interests from football to family, and have a delicious breakfast. Definitely Christian based with prayer for those in need, but in a very low key atmosphere where all individuals are valued and accepted. First time attendees are highly encouraged.



### MEN’S LUNCH AND A MOVIE

Join the men in viewing **The Chosen's: Last Supper part 3** on **Saturday, April 12**. The movie will be shown in Oxnard's Cinemark Theater in the Collection at 2:45 pm. The **Men's Ministry will cover the admission cost for men registering** for the event. Meet at the church at 12:30 PM for carpooling to a local restaurant for lunch before the movie.

Some of the men will be viewing parts 1 and 2 of The Chosen's Last Supper movie on March 29 and April 5 at 11 AM. These viewings are not official Men's Ministry events. Contact the Men's Ministry Leadership Team [menministry@orchardventura.org](mailto:menministry@orchardventura.org) if you are interested.



### CARD GROUP DINNER

April 17 | 5:30 PM | Library

Join us in the library for a potluck dinner. Following the dinner, we will attend the Maundy Thursday service together.

Join the [Card Game Common Interest Group](#) and RSVP to this event!



### WALKING GROUP

Come when you can!

[Join the group](#) for more info & to stay up to date!

Wednesday Morning from 7-8 AM

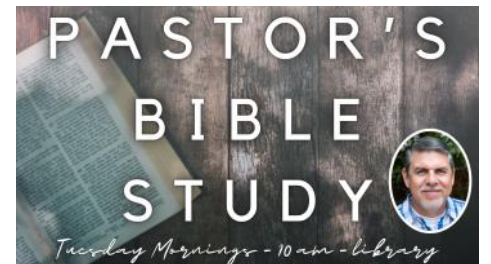
Kimball Park

Thursday Evening from 6:15-7:15 PM

Riverview Linear Park

Sunday Afternoon from 3-4 PM

San Buenaventura State beach



### PASTOR’S BIBLE STUDY

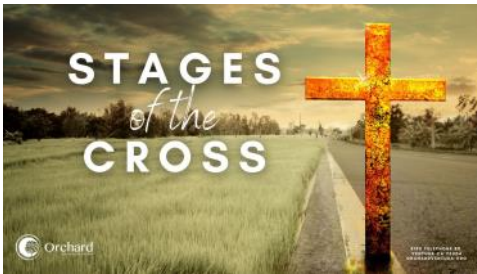
Tuesdays | 10 AM | Library

Pastor Matt leads a Bible Study and discussion about a book of the Bible in the Library at Orchard. No homework or study ahead is required. The class is open to everyone and it is a fantastic time to learn from and discuss the Bible, theology, and life application with our Pastor.

## PRAYER CORNER

God calls us to remember him. We are called as Christians be mindful of God's actions, covenants, commands, and the teachings of Jesus, and to let this memory inform our lives and guide our faith and action.

For some of us the last days of Jesus before he died on the cross are familiar. Yet, we may not have connected to Jesus' emotions and the experience of his journey to death that ultimately rescues us from being separated from God by our sin.



On April 10, 2025, from 6:30-7:30 PM, we will be meditating, lamenting and praying through the last week of Christ's life from the gospel of Mark. We will visit each day with a reading from the gospel of Mark, music, a short interactive exercise, and meditation. The devotional prayer service will be led by our prayer leader, readers, and singers.

Bring an open heart, your imagination, and willingness to engage Jesus from his point of view. Let's remove any distance between Jesus and us as we prepare ourselves spiritually for Holy Week.

We will be walking and standing for most of the service. Please let us know if you need any assistance.

There is no childcare available. Some of our exercises are graphic and may not be suitable for children.

Please sign up on the Church App, in the church office or by emailing Joy Downing Riley at [jcredit@yahoo.com](mailto:jcredit@yahoo.com).



## LOCAL MISSIONS

Thank you never seems enough. You are so generous. We cannot out-give God; He

is using our congregation's generosity to help many in need throughout the city. People in the city are commenting on our act of caring and giving. Thank you!

We have recently welcomed two new members to our local missions committee, Laura McGovern and Jean Watkins. They have joined with our co-chairs, Joan Smith and Priscilla Anderson, as well as members Jacob Ward, Jeremy Jacob, Pat Supko, and elder Judy Alexandre.



In March, we hosted a dinner with the residents of **Tender Life**. Thank you to Becky Graves, Cheryl Hayden, Joan Logan, Joan Smith, Judy Alexandre, Kate Hershey, Shirley Gapper, Linda McCulley, Karen Carpenter, and Marilyn Reeder for the delicious meal. Marilyn, Karen, Shirley, and Priscilla enjoyed sharing the meal with the women.



Our next meal at Tender Life will be in May.

In April, we will have a work day at the ARCH, a year-round homeless shelter, on **Saturday, April 26th, from 9 AM-noon**. We will again be organizing donations. This is a big effort, and we will need six volunteers. We will also be playing a bingo game with the residents hosted by Joan Smith and Laura McGovern. We are looking for some men to provide an interactive activity that might interest the men who are at the ARCH. If you are interested in volunteering, please contact Judy Alexandre. All volunteers must be over 18.

With the Local Mission portion of the **Easter offering**, we will purchase bus passes and distribute them to agencies working with the homeless. These passes will help the homeless get to medical appointments, work, house hunting, legal appointments, and more.

In January and February, the Homeless **Prevention Fund** assisted 89 of our



neighbors in staying housed. Did you know that most renters pay over 42% of their income for rent alone?

Get ready!! **The annual Kitchen Basics Collection Drive** will begin on May 4th. Our goal is 30 kits. Donations can be dropped in the green bin on the patio on Sundays or at the church office during the week. Online registration helps others know items still needed.



The Local Missions Committee is looking forward to our community outreach, working together with the congregation in 2025. **If you are interested in joining** with us, please contact Judy Alexandre ([judyalexandre@gmail.com](mailto:judyalexandre@gmail.com)), Joan Smith or Priscilla Anderson.



## GLOBAL MISSIONS



.....let us throw off everything that hinders and the sin that so easily entangles. And let us run with perseverance the race marked out for us, fixing our eyes on Jesus, the pioneer and perfecter of faith. For

the joy set before him he endured the cross, scorning its shame, and sat down at the right hand of the throne of God. Hebrews 12:1b-2

At the end of her recent update Nita Hanson suggests that whether we are in the middle of a war of words and ideas, or a war of bombs and missiles, we are called and can choose to "continue to run the race marked out for us" with our eyes fixed on Jesus.

From Nita Hanson, "As always we seek to serve the "forgotten," bringing the love of Christ into their lives through our love and care in His name." Keep reading to learn 5

how other global mission partners are running their race.



**Significant Sacrifice** which began this year on March 9 and ends on Palm Sunday, April 13. This is an invitation for each of us to prayerfully consider what we might give up during Lent in order to bring a special offering to bring clean water to the people in Xpuljil, Mexico. Our goal for this year is \$6000. As of March 27, the generous people at Orchard have already donated over \$3,800. Please visit the Significant Sacrifice table on Sunday mornings to check out our progress and learn more about the Mexico Cistern Ministry.

**Todd and Maria Luke's** Gospel-driven outreach to build cisterns in Mexico gives families, many of whom are indigenous Ch'ols suffering from poor health due in part to lack of clean water, access to an abundant supply of rainwater that makes a family healthier.

**From Todd,** "We thank God for giving us a ministry where our Christian Ch'ol Cistern Building Partners can casually share the Good News as they matter-of-factly explain to prospective cistern owners how this project differs from government projects. We are a partnership of Christ-following Americans and Mexicans, moved by gratitude and delight in our salvation to share our Father's love with neighbors. The participation of our American work teams adds sweat, sore muscles, and smiles to embody and emphasize that message."

Learn more about the ministry from these links. <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=zKvXisOXqQg>

<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=jnGroPAxRQM>

Nat (Arabian Peninsula=AP) recently sent this letter. Nat, Wes and their boys will be in the US this summer and the Global Missions Team is hoping to coordinate a time for them to share at Orchard.

"I want to give God glory for bringing me out of a long wintery season of illness. We scheduled to visit J\_\_\_ in early December to "pass the Prayer House torch" to a new team there before heading off to Italy for our family holiday. But the day we were supposed to drive eight hours to J\_\_\_, I became suddenly ill--- vomiting, cramping, esophagus spasms, chest pain and terrible nausea. A couple days delayed, we still travelled to J\_\_\_ to wrap things up and joyfully hand off our old villa to another group who has now turned it into their sending org's new ministry training base. The special 24/7 prayer room continues on. Sadly though, I remained very ill throughout our travels, well past Christmas and New Years and even into late January. We actually postponed our return home to so I could have some medical testing done in Italy. I was pro-actively treated for what doctors suspected were persistent intestinal parasites or bacteria but by the time all of my lab work finished, I had also finished my medicine. All labs came back negative for organ failure or more serious concerns like cancer but I was STILL so sick. We decided to come home to AP anyway, and continue with medical care here. With God's strength and grace upon me, I was still able to go ahead with my surgery in January, despite my mysterious intestinal illness. The mass in my abdomen was removed, my biopsy was clear and I am recovering from that surgery well. Then in early February I had an endoscopy and colonoscopy that helped identify many, many ulcers remaining in my intestines from whatever bacteria/parasite I originally had in December. I am currently in the middle of my month-long treatment for healing the ulcers. I am finally able to eat food again-- you can imagine I have lost lots of weight after 3 months of not eating much.

Wesley's company assigned him two really exciting evangelism projects this

winter-- he is overseeing them and will continue to visit the projects and support their progress in 2025. He has also continued to do the research, reporting and advocating for the persecuted church on the Arabian Peninsula as well-- and is still loving that.

Ramadan (the month of fasting and nocturnal life in Saudi) has begun! Please join us in praying for a fruitful month of ministry and prayer. We are thankful for praying for you, our family's physical and spiritual protection.



**Ramazan Arkan's** Antalya Evangelical Church is planning a bazar with handmade goods to support their ministries and outreach.



**From Brandi Bates in Romania:** Each year I coordinate Romania's celebration of World Read Aloud Day. On February 5th, thousands of teachers and librarians organized read aloud events with children around the theme of Democracy. We supplied resources on how to organize Read Aloud sessions for children with special needs, how to include child participation (i.e. voting) in their events, and we gave away a lot of books and printables with the illustration I designed with illustrator Dan Ungureanu, above. I read aloud a lot that day, including on-line to a bunch of kindergartens here. Also 4,500 members in a Facebook group and 2,000 registered schools and libraries. Our library has been thriving with lots of new families joining and lots of 12-year-old boys coming every week! I am leading a national Read Aloud at Home project for the month of March with this organization.<sub>6</sub>

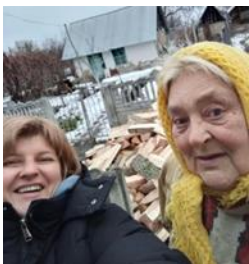


Photo is of Tonya, **God's Hidden Treasures** social worker and leader of prayer ministry helping with delivery of wood to one of the recipients of the GHT program that provided heat to over 70 people during the winter months.

**Update from Nita...** "Many of you have asked my feelings about what has transpired these last couple of weeks. Following is my best effort to explain: These last few days have been some of the hardest I've had to bear. Please know, what follows is not a political statement - no, it is from my heart and from the hearts of many Ukrainians.

"Since the all out attack on Ukraine in February 2022, I have personally seen cities and villages across Ukraine destroyed and stripped bare by a vicious enemy. I have met hundreds of refugees who escaped from Russian occupation and heard the horror stories of what they endured. I have seen schools, hospitals, and homes demolished and witnessed the anguish and heart-wrenching pain of the survivors.

"I admire and respect the Ukrainian people who have stood against impossible odds - fighting against the world's second largest military power for the sake of freedom. Ukrainians well know what living under Russia's power is like and will sacrifice anything to not let that happen again. This has been, and is, a true David against Goliath war.

"Please forgive me if I have offended anyone. My heart is breaking - I cannot even contemplate Ukraine being taken over by Russia.

"Because of the distress of my staff and the people we serve, I am returning to Ukraine earlier than planned. I will be leaving here April 2 and will depart for the US on July 16. Please be praying for a safe trip back and for wisdom and discernment for our outreach in Ukraine. As always we seek to serve the

"forgotten", bringing the love of Christ into their lives through our love and care in His name."

**Prayer requests and contact information for our mission partners.**



**An Antalya, Turkey--Ramazan Arcan, ANTALYA EVANGELICAL CHURCH**

Please pray for those who attended our Christmas event that they will seek to learn more about Jesus and come to salvation and growth in faith. Please pray for Muslims who have become Christian believers, for spiritual growth, a supportive Christian community and courage in situations where they experience rejection. Pray also for the church's continuing work with earthquake victims. Pray for peace in Turkey and an end to civil unrest and demonstrations. Protection for his church and Christians in Turkey from persecution.



**Bila Tserkva, Ukraine--Nita Hanson, Home | GHT MAIN**

Nita is currently at home in FL. She sent these prayer requests mid March. "I am requesting prayer for my trip (leaves FL 4/2). I booked with a different airline and later, upon reading their reviews I saw that they often lose luggage and are late in their arrivals. It would be a big problem if my luggage didn't arrive. When it would come later, it would be in Poland (while I will be in Ukraine)."

"Valery and Tonya took several of the kids whose fathers were killed in the war to a movie. Afterwards, one of the girls shared that her father was killed fighting in the war and her mom is an alcoholic so she is living with her grandparents. She is missing four of her front teeth and is being bullied at school. I have our office exploring how much it would cost to get her teeth fixed. Please ask for prayers for this poor girl."

"And of course for the spirits of everyone in Ukraine as they struggle with what is going on politically in addition to being bombed!"



**Lupeni, Romania--Brandi and Dana Bates (New Horizons)**

[Brandi.brianna@gmail.com](mailto:Brandi.brianna@gmail.com) or [d.bates@ocmc.org](mailto:d.bates@ocmc.org) or [OCMC Missionary Dana Bates - Orthodox Christian Mission Center](http://OCMC Missionary Dana Bates - Orthodox Christian Mission Center)

Pray for Dana and Brandi for the Lord's leading in their ministry. Pray for provision and insurance coverage for the jaw surgery their daughter Brianna needs to have to correct a severe overbite that impacts her overall health. Brianna is currently living in CA for a gap year and hopes to be able to have this procedure before beginning college in the Fall.

Praise the Lord for provision and blessing on the February trip to Africa.

*\*\*Note: Their Impact program is a different ministry than Impact with Kristy LaBarge.*



**Siquatepeque--Honduras (Union Biblica) Orlando and Sylvia Japas**

[Unión Biblica de Honduras | Facebook](http://Unión Biblica de Honduras | Facebook)

Praise for new opportunities to share Jesus teaching on character. Please pray the government will continue to allow them to present their program in the public schools and for Orlando and Sylvia for health and protection. Pray for many to come to know Jesus and his way of life as they begin a new school year.



**Kristy LaBarge, Impact Director, IMPACT - International Short Term Missions (impact-theglobe.org)**

Pray God will move people's hearts to apply for 2025 trips and for wisdom for Kristy and the Impact board in planning trips for the summer.



**Arabian Peninsula, Nat (who grew up at Orchard), and Wes, with their two sons Tobias and Jet--Please pray**

for Nat as she continues to recover from recent surgery and a parasite infection. Pray for Wes for protection. Pray for their boys Tobias and Jethro for health, a breakthrough with treatment for Tobias' speech/stutter and that they will grow in faith. Pray for the local "brothers and

sisters” who are often rejected and even tortured because of their faith for restoration and healing in their bodies. Some are in prison and many are persecuted.

**J and N**, Serving in Southeast Asia-- J&N have moved home to the US and continue their ministry abroad virtually, with teaching, counseling and prayer several days a week. Please pray for the people they have been serving for over 20 years for growing faith and courage in the face of persecution. For their prayer letters or further information please reach out to Rich Smith at [r\\_smith122@hotmail.com](mailto:r_smith122@hotmail.com)

**If you are concerned about the condition of the world**, 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 Michael McQuillan at: [irishidr@gmail.com](mailto:irishidr@gmail.com).



## DEACONS

Are you or a Church friend feeling beaten down by life's necessities? Could you use a temporary hand-up?

The Orchard Deacons want to help with compassionate and practical aid, such as emergency meals, groceries, transportation, or a little boost up if you have an unexpected bill. The Deacons would like to help, so please contact the Church Office or speak with one of our compassionate Deacons. All is kept confidential.

## SESSION MEETING HIGHLIGHTS OF THE MARCH SESSION MEETING

Session of Orchard Community Church met on March 13, 2024 in the Library. Before the meeting was called to order, Elders had shared dinner, fellowship, prayer and discussion with the Deacons at their annual joint meeting.



### Joint Meeting with the Deacons

At the annual joint meeting of the Deacons and Elders, Pastor Matt shared a devotional and there was discussion about gratitude and church leadership, based on 1 Thessalonians 5:18. Elders and Deacons shared some of the joys and challenges of serving in their ministries, as well as things they want each other to know or need from the other board.

### Pastor's Report

Matt shared several prayer concerns and needs in the congregation and how elders could be praying for them or reaching out to them. Matt discussed the timing of Rich Smith's Interim role as Youth Director coming to an end, and Session discussed how Rich could be thanked and honored for his great service, on April 13th in Worship. Matt shared and Session discussed the joy of all the young families we have seen lately and that many of them are now becoming "regular" but we might not see them as often as those who don't have young families. We can help them by introducing them not only to ourselves but to each other.

Matt discussed his Sabbatical plan in more detail for this year, April 21 (the day after Easter) until July 20 (first Sunday in the Tent), including pastoral and preaching coverage, financial aspects, what he'll be doing, etc. Session approved the plan and the finances. Since Matt won't be travelling for the most part, there are plenty of funds already set aside in a Restricted fund to cover all the needs.

### Youth Ministries

Melinda Hoyt came to give Session an update on all that she has been doing in Youth Ministries. She and her new committee (with Personnel Committee input) have considered five candidates for Youth Intern and interviewed two of them.

They were ready to offer the jobs to those two, to start by April 1. David Pels, long-time Youth volunteer, also came to share some thoughts on the ministry. Session approved the Youth Intern Job Description and hiring of Sara Francis and Everett Reagan, both students or recent graduates of Westmont College, with experience in Youth Ministries. Please introduce yourselves and welcome Sara and Everett when you see them!

### Personnel

Session considered two job descriptions, for Maintenance Assistant and Facilities Maintenance and Custodian. The first one was approved and the second one was tabled for additional details to be added by the Personnel Committee. Session also approved a new job title for Melinda Hoyt, to reflect her additional work with Youth and Outreach. The new title is "Director of Family Ministries and Outreach."

### Global Missions

Session passed a motion from the Global Missions Committee to allocate \$2000 for the "Heart of Hope" Mission. This would be a new budget item for this year and will be included in future budgeting.

### Goals and Strategic Planning

Session will continue this work next month but Matt asked Elders to be thinking about the following in the interim:

1. Consider a shift in the goals as discussed at the Retreat and the February meeting.
2. Consider what God is calling Orchard to do with the excess funds He has provided in the past couple of years. Matt feels that it should be used to grow the church.
3. Think about the staffing openings still to be filled and possible creative solutions.

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.*



# FINANCE

## ORCHARD JANUARY 2025 FINANCIAL RESULTS

February saw \$63,000 of giving while we spent \$56,500. Thus, we have an unusual winter surplus, although we are still not at target staffing levels, but we are in the process of some hiring for Youth ministry.



Thank you for all you do for Orchard ministries and missions

*\*Averages for the year*



Scoop Hockenmaier,  
For the Finance Committee



New to Orchard?  
Join us for Lunch

April 6 - following the service

Join a few Orchard Staff members and leaders for lunch and learn more about Orchard. Ask your questions and find ways to get plugged into this wonderful community.

Please RSVP online or call the church office



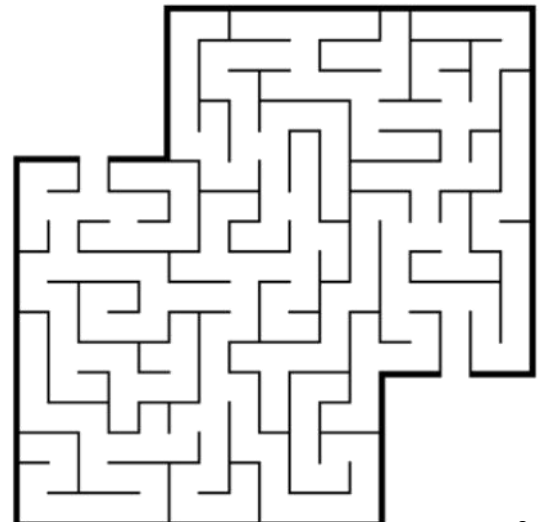
Orchard  
community church

# Meet & Greet



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IN ALL THINGS  
give THANKS

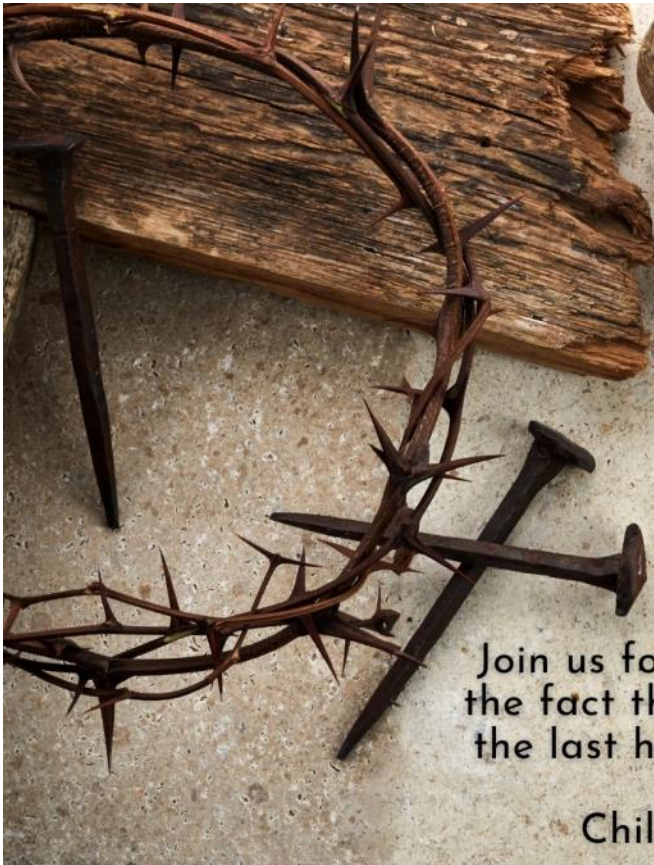




Orchard  
community church  
Children's Ministry

# Easter Eggs Needed

**NOW COLLECTING FILLED PLASTIC EGGS FOR  
THE HUGE EGG HUNT ON EASTER SUNDAY  
(stickers, small toy, individually wrapped & peanut-free candy)**



Orchard  
community church

**April 17  
7 PM**

## MAUNDY THURSDAY SERVICE

Join us for this evening service to focus or refocus on the fact that Jesus died for us. The service will recount the last hours of Jesus' life, and, like the Last Supper, we will share communion together. Childcare will be available for this service.



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



Subscribe

# 2025 Serve In

6/24- 7/8

## Honduras

### Union Biblica de Honduras

Be a part of the powerful ministries bringing hope to Honduras! The team will serve alongside Union Biblica de Honduras and Iglesia Sala Evangelica: building relationships by engaging in a variety of ministries through the church and supporting the crucial work of Union Biblica in public schools.



6/24- 7/3

## Mexico

### The Outreach Foundation

Join The Outreach Foundation in more than just a clean water/poverty alleviation project: a relationship-based work movement is happening within communities of subsistence-level farmers. The gospel is being shared through building cisterns and relationships!



6/24- 7/12

## Romania

### Brandi and Dana Bates Lupeni, Romania

Serve alongside the Bates in a variety of ministries bringing the love of Jesus to the Jiu Valley. Ministry options include: Helping run outdoor adventure camp for youth, summer reading camp for children, and physical work on their mountain bike trail and other projects in the community.



6/24- 7/12

## Turkey

### Ramazan Arkan in Antalya, Turkey

The team will meet and build relationships with local Turkish Christians. They will do ministry according to team makeup and gifts but possibilities include teaching in mens/womens Bible studies, ministry with local youth, English conversation classes, small group home ministries, physical projects for the church and more!



6/24- 7/12

## Uganda

### Care Corps International

Founded and led by Dr. Jim Witty. Many of the victims of war and violence are children, so Care Corps prepares teams to lead Children's Trauma Care Programs. Teams of young adults and professionals are trained to serve this program under the leadership of their program director. The children's program utilizes a curriculum that includes play therapy, art, music, and group and individual counseling for these traumatized children.

Care Corps International is committed to helping heal trauma-affected children by following Jesus Christ's example of practical, compassionate care. Children are particularly vulnerable to great emotional and psychological damage in crisis situations such as disaster, conflict, and violence. By facilitating healing and reconciliation, Care Corps strives to provide a substantial witness of the incarnational love of Christ

It is Care Corps' hope that through addressing the emotional, psychological, and spiritual needs of children affected by trauma, Christ's redemptive love will be witnessed and received.



## IMPACT

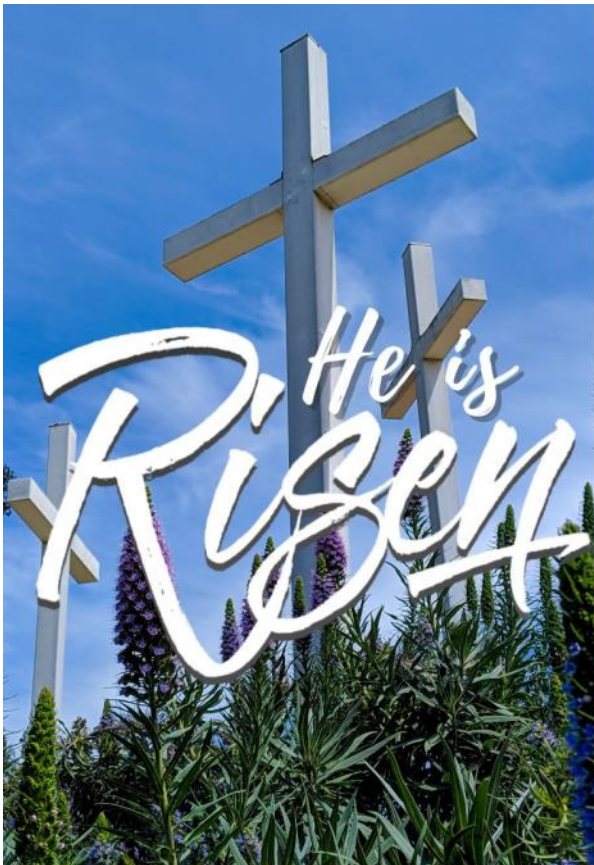
For more information visit [impact-theglobe.org](http://impact-theglobe.org)



**Orchard Community Church**  
8180 Telephone Rd  
Ventura CA 93004

## Connected & Growing.

Connected to God, each other, & our community. Growing in Christ & love for each other.



**April 20 10:30 AM**  
*Easter*

**Join us on Easter morning**

After the service:

- Photo opt with Easter Bunny
- Egg Hunt on the lawn
- Activities for all

