



stayCONNECTED

MONTHLY PUBLICATION OF VALLEY CHAPEL

December 2021 Edition

PASTOR'S CORNER

I learned about a new phrase the other day, "revenge spending." It is the idea that Covid has disrupted you from buying things and postponed your traveling to places you hoped to go. You feel upset, and you have some money on hand, and now you can get your revenge by spending that money. Revenge Spending. As Christmas approaches, I know we will be buying gifts for loved ones, but I would like to suggest that we do not let revenge spending be our guide for how we celebrate Christmas. I did a quick look at Jesus' teachings on money, and I did not find a single place in the gospels where he mentions revenge spending as a Kingdom idea. Jesus said things more along these lines. In Luke 12:15, He taught, "Watch out! Be on your guard against all kinds of greed; life does not consist in an abundance of possessions." Then in verse 33, he said, "Sell your possessions and give to the poor."

In his book "The Ruthless Elimination of Hurry," John Mark Comer gives us some insights into Jesus' teaching. He says, "Confused? If these sayings of Jesus sound crazy to you, well, you're not alone. They do to most of us in the West.

If you're not on board with Jesus' view of money, it could be that you, like many Christians in the West (myself included until quite recently and with frequent relapses), don't actually believe the gospel of the kingdom—the good news that the life you've always wanted is fully available to you right where you are through Jesus. Through him, you have access to the Father's loving presence. Nothing—not your income level or stage of life or health or relational status—nothing is standing between you and the "life that is truly life."

The most important things in life aren't things at all; they are relationships with family, friends, and, above all, God. Do you see how upside-down our culture's message about money and stuff is?

What if the formula "more stuff equals more happiness" is bad math? What if more stuff often just equals more stress? More hours at the office, more debt, more years working in a job I don't feel called to, more time wasted cleaning and maintaining and fixing and playing with and organizing and reorganizing and updating all that junk I don't even need. What if more stuff actually equals less of what matters most? Less time. Less financial freedom. Less generosity, which according to Jesus, is where the real joy is. Less peace, as I hurry my way through the mall parking lot. Less focus on what life is actually about. Less mental real estate for creativity. Less relationships. Less margin. Less prayer. Less of what I actually ache for? What if I were to reject my culture's messaging as a half-truth at best, if not a full-on lie, and live into another message? Another gospel?

I've been thinking about Paul's line in Philippians lately: I can do all things through [Christ] who strengthens me. I hear people tear that line out of context all the time. They use it for raising money at the church or getting that promotion or beating cancer, or raising a family. All good things. But do you know what Paul was writing about in context? Contentment. The line right before that is as follows: I have learned to be content whatever the circumstances. I know what it is to be in need, and I know what it is to have plenty. I have learned the secret of being content in any and every situation, whether well fed or hungry, whether living in plenty or in want. In context, Paul wasn't writing about overcoming some allegorical Goliath in our lives; he's writing about one of the greatest enemies of the human soul. That nagging feeling of always wanting more. Not just more stuff, but more life. The next thing might not be a thing at all; it might be graduation or marriage or children or a better job or retirement or whatever "it" is for you on the horizon. But there's always something just out of reach.

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We live with what the historian Arthur Schlesinger called an "inextinguishable discontent." It's what the poet of Ecclesiastes described as "a chasing after the wind." Contentment isn't some Buddhist-like negation of all desire; it's living in such a way that your unfulfilled desires no longer curb your happiness. We all live with unfulfilled desires.

In this life, all our symphonies remain unfinished. But this doesn't mean we can't live happily. The truth is you can be happy right here, right now, "through Christ who strengthens me," meaning, through investing your resources in ongoing relational connection to Jesus. You can live a rich and satisfying life whether you are rich or poor, single or married, infertile or counting the days until your four kids are out of the house, crushing it at your dream job or at a minimum wage J.O.B. Right now, you have everything you need to live a happy, content life; you have access to the Father. To his loving attention."

Merry Christmas

Pastor Josh Howard

December 2021 Events

Austin French in Concert @ Valley Chapel

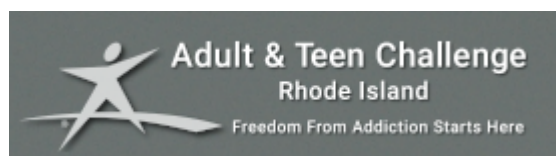
Friday, December 3 @ 7 PM

Cost \$20 (\$30 at the door)

Purchase tickets online or in the church lobby
fuseconcerts.org/austinfrench



Saturday, December 18 at 4 PM
@ Valley Chapel

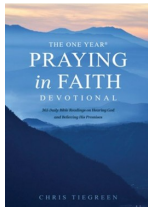


Teen Challenge Coming December 26 @ 10:30 AM

We will have the Rhode Island Women from Teen Challenge here during our worship service on Sunday, December 26. They will be singing and sharing their testimonies with us. You don't want to miss this!



Valley Chapel Devotional for 2022



The One Year Praying in Faith Devotional: 365 Daily Bible Readings on Hearing God and Believing His Promises.

Available in the Lobby for \$12.00



BIBLE STUDY OPTIONS

Women's Bible Study - Wednesday Evenings

Wednesday 6:30-8 PM at church, Room 121. We will follow the youth group schedule for 21-22 school year. Led by Amy Levins and Laurie Pappas. Contact Amy with questions, 774-245-5129

Men's Bible Study - Tuesday Evenings

Tuesday @ 7:00 PM Studying 'Acts' All men are invited to attend in Room 218 or via Zoom.

Men's Bible Study - Saturday Mornings

Men meet for Bible study **Saturdays at 7 AM** in room 218. They are continuing in the Gospel of Matthew.

Young Adult Group—Sunday Mornings

Anyone 17-25 who want a group to study the Word and a time of fellowship. We meet **Sundays before church at 9 AM** for a Bible study on the five covenants. We meet in room 218. Contact Seth Wojciechowski 774-280-6783 if you are interested in joining us.

"IN HIS PRESENCE" women's prayer ministry—

Wednesday at 9:30 AM. For conference call numbers, email Gloria DeHaas at gloriadehaas34@icloud.com or call her 508-883-5022.

To attend in person, just arrive a few minutes early to Room 225.

Bible study for Widows—Monday Afternoons

We will meet on **Mondays in room 225 from 1:00 - 2:30** We will be using The Widow's Workbook as our study guide. This study was written by a woman for women. Whether you are new to this study or have participated previously, all are welcome.

If you are interested in joining this group or would like to know more about it please contact Cheryl MacIndoe at 508-320-0667 or cherylmac76@gmail.com.

The Chosen Bible Study Series - Season Two Sundays

from 6-7 PM Meet Jesus through the eyes of those who walked with him. A video & discussion class facilitated by Lynne and Allen Randolph at Valley Chapel in Room 121 (first-floor conference room).

Share the Joy of Christmas Through Compassionate Ministries



Salvation Army Bell Ringing

Put on your coat and gloves and help us reach our goal of \$30,000 which will impact a lot of lives here in the Blackstone Valley.



It's easy to sign up for a two hour time slot at any of the following locations: Walmart in Northbridge, Exit 5 off of Rt. 146 N. (Market Door or Pharmacy Door); Market 32 in Sutton, and Shaws in Whitinsville. Sign up at www.signup.com/go/xnFLZFy Any questions? Call Sharon at 774-280-4689.



Angel Tree

Prison Fellowship Angel Tree™ equips churches to strengthen relationships between incarcerated parents and their children and support the families of prisoners year-round.

Gifts are to be wrapped and brought back to the church by December 12. If you would like to help deliver the presents, contact Teena Porter (tporter1959@yahoo.com) or Mary Theroux (maryedT1@hotmail.com).

WORCESTER SERVE CARE BAGS

Delivered to the homeless in Worcester every 2nd Sunday of the month. Sign up to bring 5 bags at www.signup.com/go/KzogaqG

Edible

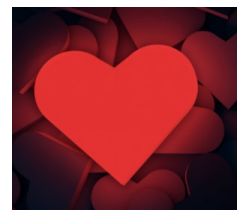
- Bottle of water
- Snack Packs of trail mix/ nuts
- Chips
- Rice Krispie Treats
- Orange/ Apple/ Banana
- Cookie Pack

Non-Edible

- Handy packs of tissues
- Soap bars wrapped in a wash cloth
- Toilet paper
- Toothpaste and toothbrush
- Female Sanitary Products (label Care Bag "Women's")
- Brush/Comb
- Deodorant
- Dunkin Donuts gift card

We have socks in the donation center that you can add to your bags. Feel free to add anything you think would be beneficial.

THANK YOU!!



New Thrive Class Coming in January

Empower Your Kids

Facilitators: Erin Tubo & Shelley Cullen

In a society that continues to blur the lines of what is good, true, and acceptable, it is getting harder and harder for us to raise our children to understand God's unchanging truth. Specifically, our children and teens are being fed damaging misinformation about sex, gender, identity, and biology.

Parents! This class is designed to equip you to...

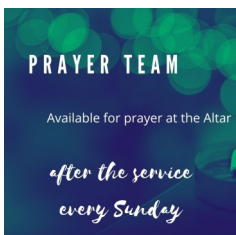
- Understand God's design for gender, sex, marriage, and family as a beautiful portrait that reveals the nature of God Himself
- Identify the tactics being used to trick children into adopting an unbiblical view of sexuality under the guise of Christian-sounding words like *love*, *identity*, *tolerance*, and *justice*.
- Teach your kids/teens to treat those who hold different beliefs with gentle, Christlike compassion without compromising biblical values

It's up to us to train our children to know God's design in a world that has rejected it. Join us at 9:30 am starting January 2, 2022

December Prayer Weekend



"You must love the Lord, your God, with all your heart, all your soul and all your strength" (Deuteronomy 6:5). The December prayer weekend will focus on worshipping and glorifying God and surrendering ourselves heart, soul and strength to him for the year ahead. Dates are Dec 31-Jan 2 and the New Year's Eve will obviously be Friday night instead of usual Sunday night.



Prayer After the Service

Someone from the prayer team will be available after service every Sunday at the altar for anyone who wishes to be prayed with through spoken requests to God in confidence and agreement. If anyone would like to join the team, please contact Amy Levins 774-245-5129

SUNDAY

CLASSES FOR ALL: 9:30 AM

SERVICE TIME: 10:30 AM

● ONLINE SERVICE

VALLEYCHAPEL.US

Watch LIVE during our service time above.

● GIVING

We appreciate your giving. Did you know that you can also give online? Go to our website and click on the giving tab on our homepage. You can also use our APP and the giving tab on the our APP.

You can also stop by and drop your offering in the offering box in the sanctuary, lobby, outside on our west entrance.

● SOCIAL MEDIA



Facebook.com/VCUxbridge



Instagram.com/VCUxbridge

NEED TO CATCH UP?

Watch all messages on our website at any time. All messages are archived for viewing.



January 7
Quiz Meet
6-7:30 PM

January 22
Men's Breakfast
7-8:30 AM

