



# stayCONNECTED

MONTHLY PUBLICATION OF VALLEY CHAPEL

March 2022 Edition

## PASTOR'S CORNER

Research by Pew, Gallop, Barna and others, and summarized by Ron Sider in *Christianity Today* has found, "Evangelical Christians are as likely to embrace lifestyles every bit as hedonistic, materialistic, self-centered, and sexually immoral as the world in general." What kind of response does that stir within you? There are a broad range of responses, but let me share two immediate actions and thoughts from the Scripture that you can apply personally.

The first is from Psalm 26:2 that says, "*Test me, O Lord, and try me, examine my heart and my mind.*" What a powerful one sentence prayer to pray daily, especially as we head into the reflective practice of Lent where we re-orient our life to the good news of Jesus Christ. Some of us practice the discipline of fasting during this time (abstaining from something to turn our attention more towards God). Whatever we put into place, the goal is to discover who we are in light of who Jesus is, essentially saying to Him: "Burn away my desire for anything that is not of You, any sinful surrender to the world."

The second is to recall and align to Jesus' prayer that He prayed in John 17:6-26. The whole passage is worth reading and reflecting upon, but let us focus in on the "oneness" that Jesus prays for all believers: "*Sanctify them by the truth; Your word is truth...My prayer is not for them alone. I pray also for those who will believe in Me through their message, that all of them may be one, Father, just as You are in Me and I am in You. May they also be in us so that the world may believe that you have sent Me. I have given them the glory that You gave Me, that they may be one as We are one: I in them and You in Me*" (vv. 17, 20-23a).

What does it mean for the Father and the Son to be one? We must understand this question if we are to know whether Jesus' prayer is being fulfilled in our lives. There are several instances where Jesus declares and embodies this in the Gospel of John (5:19; 12:29-50; 10:30;

14:9-11). What we see in these verses is that this oneness was proclaimed in the harmony that existed between the Father's will and the Son's very way of life and words that He taught. The same thing that caused God to do what He did is the same thing that caused Jesus to do and say what He did. Therefore, the oneness that Jesus prays for all those that would follow Him in John 17 is *not* a oneness in a common cause, to be obedient to leaders in particular faith community in which Christianity is compromised, or to be uniform and look precisely the same. The oneness that's demonstrated in the Gospel of John and taught to His disciples is different than that. Jesus is praying for the same kind of trust-filled relationship that works itself out in obedience as He had with the Father. It's so easy to become off focused, to become morally guided or rules-guided instead of Person-guided, isn't it? In light of Jesus' prayer, we should ask ourselves, "Does my life correspond to Jesus' teachings the way His life corresponded to the instructions of the Father? Do the things I teach and say I believe correspond to the way Jesus spoke and the things He believed as He revealed to us the very thoughts and words of God?"

As we reflect on this, we must repent and turn from all those things that have led us off the path of Jesus, that have separated us from Him, that have broken the oneness for which He prayed. Our lives and behaviors, to really live into this prayer of Jesus, must correspond to Jesus' teaching (and the teaching of the prophets and apostles) in the same way Jesus' behavior corresponded to the teachings of God the Father. All who are His sheep, who truly follow His voice (John 10:27), will pursue this oneness with all their hearts. There are many who have no interest in being one with the Son. They only want His benefits. We pursue truth ("*sanctify them by Your truth*"). We must never let our interpretations become the Word itself. This is what Jesus came into conflict over

again and again with the religious leaders of His day. Instead, as people of God, we must always revisit the Scriptures and ask, "Are we one with Jesus the way Jesus was one with the Father in our words, deeds, worldview, and assumptions?" We read the Scriptures with this purpose in mind: to listen and discern the voice of God amongst the "crowd" of voices that speak to us. We don't want to hold an opinion or act of behavior that is inconsistent with what He has told and shown us. We can't pull this off on our own; we must come to Him again and again in humility, "I see this way. Move in my life and help me see another way. Change my perspective from the inside out." My challenge for us as we journey towards Easter this month and following is to not only pray as David prayed, "Test me", but also pray to fulfill what Jesus desired: "May they be one as We are one."

*Pastor Josh Fox*



**March 10, 7 PM @ Valley Chapel**

Tickets are available at \$22 in the church lobby or order online at [fuseconcerts.org](http://fuseconcerts.org)

Join Us

**CLEARWAY'S MIRACLE OF LIFE**  
ANNUAL FUNDRAISING BANQUET

**MARCH 28 & MARCH 29**

MECHANICS HALL Worcester | TWIN HILLS COUNTRY CLUB Longmeadow

**TICKETS NOW ON SALE!**  
purchase online at:  
[clearwayfriends.com](http://clearwayfriends.com)

Guest Speaker  
**BEN WATSON**  
RETIRED NFL GREAT

***"Beloved, if God so loved us, we also ought to love one another." 1 John 4:11***

Thank you to everyone who came out to *beloved*, the first Women's Ministry event held in quite some time. We were blown away by the turnout. We had 61 women in total! As a new ministry team, it was such an encouragement to us that you all took the time to attend. Hopefully you were both blessed and challenged to grow in your Christian friendships. We pray some new connections were made and new friendships formed as a result! We hope to keep this momentum going and are in the planning stages for our next event, so stay tuned! We also wanted to thank those of you who completed the survey for future women's ministry events, your responses will help us determine the needs and wants of the women in the church moving forward. I think it is safe to say we have captured the over 40 crowd :) but we also know there are a lot of younger ladies in our church family and we would really love for you to be able to attend these events as well. Having inter-generational relationships is so important, especially for women. We understand the constraints and busy schedules of moms with families and little ones and we will plan for this in the future. If you could not attend this past event or have not yet completed a very short event survey we really encourage you to do so. We want your voice to be heard! You can pick up a survey at the front desk or you can scan the code below to complete. You can also reach us at [Women@valleychapel.us](mailto:Women@valleychapel.us) with your thoughts as well.

Thank you from all of us,  
Amy, Kara, Kerri, Sheri & Wendy



SCAN ME



### **Ark Encounter Trip May 2-7**

Still space available if you would like to join us!  
Contact Sharon at Sharon@valleychapel.us or call  
508-278-2315



If you would like something  
in the April edition of "Stay  
Connected" Please send your  
information to Alice by March  
18  
alice@valleychapel.us

Note: Some of our emails from valleychapel.us are going into the  
junk mailbox. If you were expecting a response, check to see if it  
went in your spam/junk box.

## **Easter Sunrise Service**

**April 17 7 am**  
in the church parking lot  
**Pancake Breakfast**  
to follow in café provid-  
ed by our Men's Ministry.

**No classes at 9:30 am**  
**10:30 am Service only**

### **New Sunday Morning Thrive Classes Beginning February 27, 2022**

#### **A Guide to Sexuality: Understanding & Living Out God's Design Continues**

Facilitators: Erin Tubo & Shelley Cullen Room 121

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



**Valley Chapel**  
A CHURCH OF THE NAZARENE

#### **Road to Freedom**

Facilitator: Amy Levins Volunteer Break Room—next to East side coat room  
Open to men and women

Whether you are dealing with substance abuse, relational struggles, or eating challenges, or you simply want to let go of  
what is holding you back in life, you will find answers in *The Road to Freedom*. *The Road to Freedom* will help you move from  
coping with hurts, hang-ups, and habits to the hope and health that only Jesus can bring.

#### **Where Two or More Are Gathered**

Facilitators: Suzie McCabe & Lynne Fortin in Prayer Room

Join us Sunday mornings at 9:30 am for a time of United prayer. We will be praying in agreement on a different relevant  
topic each week using scripture and a prayer guide.

Come and see what God will do when His people pray with one heart and mind!

#### **Is God to Blame? Moving Beyond Pat Answers to the Problem of Suffering**

Facilitator: Michael Swanson Room 219

Is God to blame? This is often the question that comes to mind when we confront real suffering in our own lives or in the  
lives of those we love. Pastor Gregory A. Boyd helps us deal with this question honestly and biblically, while avoiding glib  
answers. Writing for ordinary Christians, Boyd wrestles with a variety of answers that have been offered by theologians  
and pastors in the past. He finds that a fully Christian approach must keep the person and work of Jesus Christ at the very  
center of what we say about human suffering and God's place in it. Yet this is often just what is missing and what makes so  
much talk about the subject seem inadequate and at times even misleading. What comes through in *Is God to Blame?* is a  
hopeful picture of a sovereign God who is relentlessly opposed to evil, who knows our sufferings and who can be trusted  
to bring us through them to renewed life.

#### **Faith Connections Bible Study**

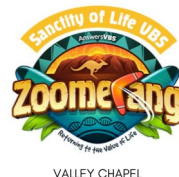
Facilitator: Paul Cnossen In Room 225  
Who is Jesus? Gospel of Mark



"Will you not revive us again so that your people may rejoice in you?" (Psalm 85:6).

Please plan on signing up for a prayer slot for the March prayer weekend on March 25-27, where our focus will be on praying for revival for this country and across the world. Please join us for a special revival prayer and worship time on Saturday, March 26, from 10-12.

SAVE THE DATE!  
JULY 25-29, 2022



**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 at 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.

a time to pause,  
pray, & praise

Valley Chapel's 2022 Lenten Study with Pastor Fox

A Message from Pastor Fox:

Lent is a significant time of year for us. It's a time to reflect, repent, and grow closer to the Lord as we prepare our hearts for Easter. Many people even choose this season to fast – whether it be food or a specific activity – to reduce distractions and focus more on Jesus and His sacrifice.

God's Word tells us that he inhabits the praises of his people. This year, I invite you to join me and experience the nearness of God through a posture of worship and praise. This season, let us commit to intentionally providing space for God in our daily lives.

Text "Lent2022" to 94000, and over the next six weeks, I will provide you with daily scriptures, reflections, and weekly videos. Join me, and together we'll lean into the presence of Jesus.

WANT TO STAY  
CONNECTED?

To receive the weekly VC Messenger and prayer requests, give your email to Alice at [alice@valleychapel.us](mailto:alice@valleychapel.us)

APRIL 2022

**April 15**  
Journey to the Cross

**April 17**  
Easter Sunrise Service  
at 7 am  
Pancake Breakfast  
10:30 am  
Service

An Easter Experience for Everyone

# Journey to the Cross

Good Friday, April 15  
Valley Chapel  
Open 10am-6pm