



# THE FOUNTAIN

CHRISTIAN CHURCH



**Office Hours:**

Mon-Thurs 9:00 AM— 4:30 PM

1023 N. Chinowth St.

Visalia, CA 93291-4114

Phone: (559) 732-6623

FAX: (559) 732-6625

Website: [www.thefountaincc.org](http://www.thefountaincc.org)

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**Staff E-Mail Addresses:**

**Sam Sears, Senior Pastor**

[Sam@thefountaincc.org](mailto:Sam@thefountaincc.org)

**Carrie Guy, Associate Pastor**

[Carrie@thefountaincc.org](mailto:Carrie@thefountaincc.org)

**Romy Sagastume, Next Gen Pastor**

[Romy@thefountaincc.org](mailto:Romy@thefountaincc.org)

**Sheila Ronk, Office Administrator**

[Sheila@thefountaincc.org](mailto:Sheila@thefountaincc.org)

## **Isaiah 44:22**

*“I have wiped out your transgressions like a thick cloud and your sins like a heavy mist. Return to Me, for I have redeemed you.”*

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# TOO MUCH OF WHAT WE ASKED FOR

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Sam B. Sears

I was on the phone with a friend from out of state recently. They had heard of the floods nearby and asked, “Weren’t you guys just in a bad drought?” We certainly were. When the rainy seasons began, prayers were answered. Many farmers had requested prayers for rain. Their crops dependent on it, as did their livelihood. Those of us happy to buy what farmers grew and raised were hopeful for less water restrictions on our lawn. They rain came, and we cheered — and then it didn’t stop coming.

My friend’s question made me think of Numbers 11. We had gotten too much of what we had asked for. Some of us learned how to sandbag for the first time, as we assisted others in making sure their homes stayed safe and dry on the inside. Outside of the city proper, new ponds and lakes appeared, and I witnessed a three-quarter submerged tractor in a ditch with my own eyes. It was the most rain I’ve seen here, but it was worse elsewhere. Other areas in California had to be evacuated to keep individuals safe. Our sewer and drainage systems simply aren’t built to handle that much water all at once.

During the time of the Exodus, God’s people depended on Him for guidance and food. In one instance, their minds weren’t focused on the blessings they *had*, but on what they *didn’t* have. This lack caused them to long for things they had, even as slaves.

Numbers 11: 4-6 “The rabble who were among them had greedy desires; and also the sons of Israel wept again and said, “Who will give us meat to eat? We remember the fish which we used to eat free in Egypt, the cucumbers and the melons and the leeks and the onions and the garlic, but now our appetite is gone. There is nothing at all to look at except this manna.”

What was once recognized as the miracle it was — manna: bread dropped from heaven — was now something that was too familiar to be grateful for. While not perfectly parallel, I can recall hearing tales of the famous golden sunny days of California, especially when I lived in the dreary gray rainforest of southeast Alaska. Being here for the past 4 ½ years, I missed the rain, and it took quite a bit to start missing the sun again.

California, Alaska, Israel, the desert wilderness — all these places are different. It’s very easy to admire what exists elsewhere and ignore what you possess already, for which others might long. The Israelites had been traveling; things were not yet stable for them. Though we can all appreciate the desire for variety, something more was going on beneath the surface. A simple reading of the following passage, if you ignore the context of their attitudes, might make God sound harsh. Note the reason for this action mentioned at the end of the passage.

Numbers 11:18-20 “Say to the people, ‘Consecrate yourselves for tomorrow, and you shall eat meat; for you have wept in the ears of the Lord, saying, “Oh that someone would give us meat to eat! For we were well-off in Egypt.” Therefore the Lord will give you meat and you shall eat. You shall eat, not one day, nor two days, nor five days, nor ten days, nor twenty days, but a whole month, until it comes out of your nostrils and becomes loathsome to you; because you have rejected the Lord who is among you and have wept before Him, saying, “Why did we ever leave Egypt?”’”

During our recent drought, prayer for rain probably didn’t stem from a lack of trust in God. It was a practical request based on an actual need from a people based in one place. I have no reason to think this recent flooding was any kind of punishment, even if I do have reason to think California as a whole, and many of us in it, could be punished justly. The Israelites in Numbers 11, however, had an attitude problem that we could learn from. They were rejecting God’s provisions and by doing so, God Himself.

God wasn’t withholding meat to tempt them. He was meeting their needs, and had they trusted and obeyed him, they would already have been in the promised land. While it is true that had we Californians managed our water better we might be better off, most of us aren’t on a 40-year journey due to lack of trust in God and mismanaging our resources. It’s just something happening to us in a fallen world, where actions from fallen people have ripple effects. The heart of the Israelites wasn’t just turning to what they didn’t have

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# TOO MUCH OF WHAT WE ASKED FOR

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Sam B. Sears

with them; it was turning to a land of false gods and slavery. When real freedom is in view, it's foolish to turn to temporary pleasures in a land of bondage. They had been slaves so long that even when freed physically, their minds and appetites were still warped. God wasn't overindulging them because they dared to ask; He wanted to adjust their attitude towards thankfulness for what He was already providing.

It could be said that God taught them the old lesson, "be careful what you ask for," but I think there is more in play in the passage. God also taught them to be thankful for what they already had. The time would come when that meat wouldn't be what they wanted, and they would want God's provision again. It's wise to trust in God. It's moral to serve your neighbor impacted by their environment. It's okay to pray for rain; it's okay to pray for sunshine; it's not okay to take for granted what God has already given you. Rather than being impatient about what we don't have in this portion of our journey, we should always do as the old hymn suggests, "Count your many blessings; count them one by one. Count your many blessings, see what God hath done."

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## PRAYER CONCERNS

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February 2023

Pray for the desire and opportunity to effectively share your faith! Our Nation and Leaders. Teachers & Students in Visalia. Our Brothers & Sisters at Elim.

Health: Ana Morales, Bonnie Henson, Donna Eastin, Heather Smith, Jason McKaughan, Jean Lamb, JoAnne Jordan, Kevin Guy, Kevin Ray (DHF pastor), Marilee Douglass, Pam Shattuck, Fred Wilder

Cancer: Bill Morland, Clay Jones, David Thomas, David Welch, Dr. Heiser & family, Janet Hagan, Joe Grant, Keith Moore, Mike Gunning, Olly Ajluni, Randy Gurule, Sandra Campbell, Shannan Ajluni

Other Needs: Nina Suttles (Vision)

Military: Brett Boland – Virginia, Michael Reid – San Diego, CA, Preston Correa – Marine, Tyler Richwine – Marine

Missionaries: some of our missionaries cannot be listed for their safety.

Nationally Based Global Mission Organizations: Adolfo Ibarra, Crosslink Development International, Central Missionary Clearinghouse, Soaring for Christ, Radical Truth, Maven, Gideons International, Our Daily Bread Ministries, Jews for Jesus, Pioneers, Team Expansion

Local Ministries: Care Pregnancy Center, Good News Jail Ministry, Hands in the Community, Love In the Name of Christ, Stephen Ministries, Tulare Kings Right to Life, Turning Point, Visalia Rescue Mission, Visalia Senior Housing

Ukrainian Individuals in danger: Michael, Andrew, Alex, and Angela. (Last names withheld for safety.)

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## ATTENDANCE & GIVING

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January 2023

Average In Person Attendance

83

Total Giving

\$ 23,901.00



# IN PLEASANT PLACES

Chuck Romer

*“Mr. Romer... there are students who come to this college to major in music who shouldn’t, and I think you’re one of them.”*

51 years ago – in January of 1972 – I arrived at St. Olaf College in Minnesota to pursue a degree in music theory and composition. I had just completed an AA degree in pre-music studies at Northwest College in Kirkland, WA, and I was ready to take the next step in my church music studies.

Since I hadn’t completed any formal piano lessons since early grade school years, the admissions department insisted that piano lessons should be part of my studies. I scheduled a meeting with the piano teacher assigned to me and arrived at her music studio. She welcomed me, gave me a hymnal and asked me to play “My Country ‘Tis of Thee”.

For the next few minutes, she listened as I struggled to play the 4-part hymn... and I played as many wrong notes as right ones. (I was used to improvising – making up the music as I played, not playing only what was written.)

When I stopped, she looked at me very seriously... and said, “Mr. Romer... there are students who come to this college to major in music who shouldn’t, and I think you’re one of them...” Her comment was honest – but still very difficult for me to hear.

By the time my senior year at St. Olaf arrived, I had made good progress on the piano... was singing in two different choirs on campus... and was asked to compose a song for the men’s chorus to be sung at the annual Christmas festival. That song was published the following year by Augsburg Press in Minneapolis... and I was amazed to have my first original music composition in print. It even was sung at a concert somewhere in Norway, as I mysteriously received a royalty check for \$4.87.

The years since graduation from St. Olaf have flown by. I spent 6 years as the music pastor at Evangel Temple in Ann Arbor, MI. It was a small church, but very musical. Pastor Bailey and his wife had five children who all played string instruments (violin, viola and cello)... and besides the pastor’s family, a lot of the students who came to the church were music majors at the Univ. of Michigan, and that was a blessing.

In May of 1980, the phone rang late one night. The

caller was from Visalia, CA (Where is Visalia, I asked myself?). The caller was looking for a keyboard player who could travel with *Celebrant Singers* just for that summer. I was in transition (my pastor had recently resigned), and their first rehearsal was the day after my final Sunday at Evangel Temple. It seemed like God’s provision for me. I said “Yes” and booked a flight to Fresno.

That June I joined a *Celebrant Singers* team that had just returned from 3 months of ministry in India and Sri Lanka. Their lives had been deeply changed by that experience. In 1981 I was invited to return... which grew to a total of 20 years of ministry with *Celebrants*... in 15 nations around the world... sometimes playing keyboard... sometimes leading a team... sometimes working in their Visalia office... once playing for a crowd of half a million in St. Peter’s Square in Rome... and once for a “crowd” of just one at the national soccer stadium in Belize (Central America).

In 1985 I was asked to direct a three-month team of *Summer Celebrants*. One of the vocalists, Donna Suttles, was from Selma, and the following year she began working in the office as the assistant to Celebrants’ founder, Jon Stemkoski. Over time we became good friends, fell in love, and were married in January of 1991.



God has blessed us in many ways over the years... with three children... and leading us to work in several local churches. Besides my years of service at Visalia First and Donna’s work at Parkside Chapel, I also taught choral music at Visalia Christian Academy and provided graphic design services for several of the Christian organizations in the area.

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# IN PLEASANT PLACES

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Chuck Romer

After a phone call in September of 2010, I met with Pastor Mike Messenger, and we talked about the musical needs at First Christian (now The Fountain). Donna and I visited one Sunday, and as the service began, I was excited to see Ed Kesterson, John Lauffenburger and Jim Barlogio playing in the worship team that Sunday. They were long-time friends that I had known for 20 – 30 years each... and wonderful musicians.

The following Sunday I was asked to lead the music so the church family could meet me... and that opportunity on one Sunday turned into more than 12 precious years together... as we shared Christmas and Easter services... Youth Sundays and Vespers services... and lots of other moments along the way. Thank you for welcoming us into your church family... into your homes and your hearts, as well. It has been a precious season for all of us... including our kids Brandon, Benjamin, and Krista... as well as Donna's mother, Nina.

Our deepest thanks to each one of you who served along side us during these years – choir members, instrumentalists, vocalists, as well as our sound and video teams... and to Carrie, Sheila, Romy and Sam for their friendship and support, as well. It has been an honor to serve the Lord together!

Looking back to the comments made by my teacher at my first piano lesson at St. Olaf in 1972 – quoted at

the beginning of this article – it seems to be such an unlikely path for me to have travelled. But it was God's call... and He has always been faithful.

In August of 2010 just a few weeks before we came to The Fountain, I attended a song writing seminar at a camp in the Bay area. One afternoon they gave us Psalm 16 and asked us to find a song somewhere in that chapter – and perform it the next morning! I struggled for hours without success... until late that night when I was drawn to verses 5–7. These are my words from that passage, adapted to fit a simple Jewish folk melody that came to my mind. If you've attended here very long, you've probably sung this song in a Sunday service:

*In pleasant places I spend my days,  
Your Goodness overflows.  
Even at night my heart hears Your voice,  
And I will give You praise!\**

Our time here has been precious... filled with God's goodness and your love. Thank you so very much for making this such a special chapter in our story. May God's goodness and mercy be yours all the days of your lives. Hmmm... maybe there's a melody somewhere for those words, too!

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## BIRTHDAYS & ANNIVERSARIES

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February 2023

Marcia Moore.....	7
BettyLou Pendleton.....	12
Marilee Douglass.....	13
Kay Fox.....	13
Sue Geis.....	15
Logan Ritter.....	16
Brandon Romer.....	21
LeighAshley Guy.....	22
Tim Glick.....	23
Psalm Subejano.....	25

Michael Gunning.....	27
Joanne Hazen.....	27
Connor Jameson.....	28

*Happy Anniversary!*

Carlos & Yvette Rojas.....	20
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# *Presents a Valentine's Fundraiser*

BREAKABLE  
CHOCOLATE  
HEART  
INCLUDES:  
\*GIANT  
CHOCOLATE  
HEART  
\*MALLET

INSIDE HEART:  
HOT CHOCOLATE,  
CHOCOLATE  
MARSHMALLOWS  
& CHOCOLATE  
PRETZELS

**\$25**

ORDER NOW UNTIL FEBRUARY 5TH

*Pick up at church Sunday, February 12th*

DELIVERY AVAILABLE FOR AN  
EXTRA CHARGE

# February 2023

Sun	Mon	Tue	Wed	Thu	Fri	Sat
			1   6:00 *Family Night	2  10:00 Berean Watchmen	3 6:30 Men's Group	4
		<div> <div>*Family Night</div> <div> <div>Children's classes</div> <div>Youth Group</div> <div>Men's Bible Study</div> <div>Women's Bible Study</div> </div> </div>				
5  10:30 Worship	6  10:40 Prayer Warriors 12:00 Women's Bible Study	7  10:00 Staff	8  *NO Family Night  6:00 Volunteer Appreciation	9  10:00 Berean Watchmen	10 6:30 Men's Group	11
12  10:30 Worship	13  10:40 Prayer Warriors 12:00 Women's Bible Study	14  10:00 Staff	15   6:00 *Family Night	16  10:00 Berean Watchmen	17 6:30 Men's Group	18
19  10:30 Worship	20 HOLIDAY Office Closed 10:40 Prayer Warriors 12:00 Women's Bible Study	21  10:00 Staff	22   6:00 *Family Night	23  10:00 Berean Watchmen	24 6:30 Men's Group	25
26  10:30 Worship	27  10:40 Prayer Warriors 12:00 Women's Bible Study	28  10:00 Staff				



# RETIREMENT

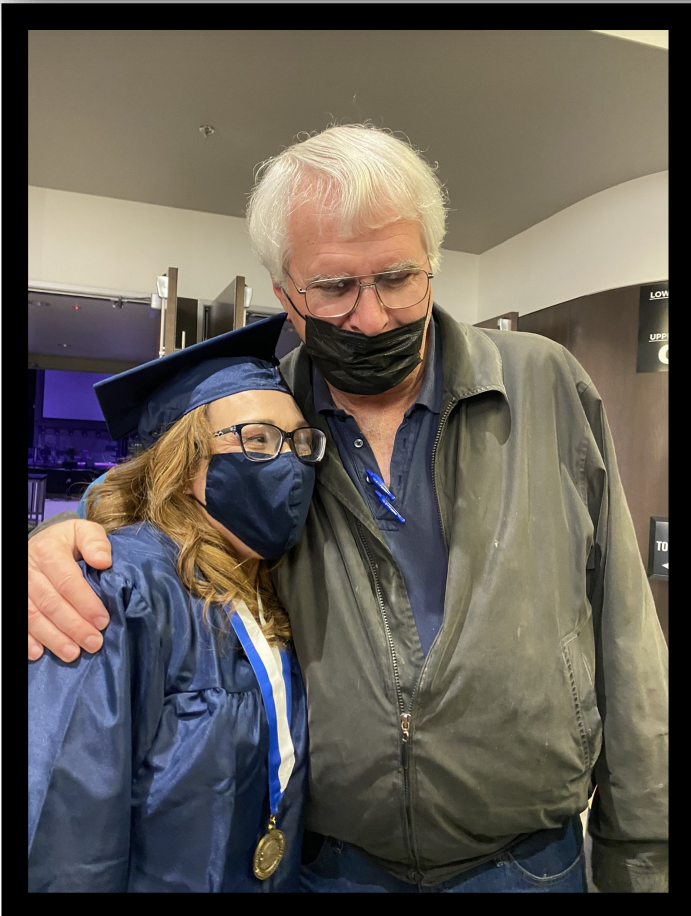
## The Fountain Staff

Jan 29<sup>th</sup> 2023 Chuck Romer crossed the Finish line into retirement. It's the end of a chapter, but not his full journey here. He will no doubt continue to minister to others, as that is in his nature, but he has past on his current duties after 12 years at the Fountain and over 40 years of ministry. He has been, is, and will be, a blessing to so many of us. On behalf of the all those impacted, we thank you Chuck, Donna, and your all family for all your service in Christ, and your friendship. And on behalf of the Romers we thank all of you who came out to celebrate our dear brother in the Lord at his retirement party.



### 2 Timothy 4:7-8

I have fought the good fight, I have finished the course, I have kept the faith; 8 in the future there is laid up for me the crown of righteousness, which the Lord, the righteous Judge, will award to me on that day; and not only to me, but also to all who have loved His appearing.

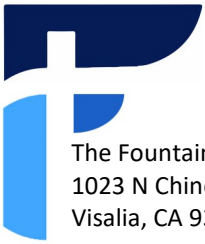




# RETIREMENT

The Fountain Staff





The Fountain  
1023 N Chinowth St  
Visalia, CA 93291

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## A LOOK INTO OUR LIBRARY

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Roma Swanson

### **Speaking the Truth in Love**

February is often called the Love month because of Valentine's Day.

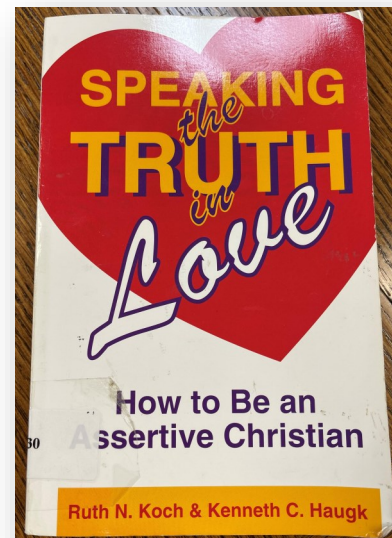
This book, Speaking the Truth in Love, covers the love that compels us to speak the truth, even when it might be uncomfortable.

Written by a social worker/counselor and a clinical psychiatrist, the book teaches you how to handle anger, criticism, and other tough social issues.

It shows us how to be assertive in a firm but loving way.

Jesus lived in an intentionally assertive way.

We need to harness those skills as well.



**Stop by our website for more information on Bible Studies  
and coming events at [www.thefountaincc.org](http://www.thefountaincc.org)**