



# THE FOUNTAIN

CHRISTIAN CHURCH

Depth in Love, Truth, and Life



**Office Hours:**

Mon-Thurs 9:00 AM— 4:30 PM

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## **Matthew 5:9**

*“Blessed are the peacemakers, for they shall be called sons of God.”*

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# MY DOG BIT ME

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By Sam B Sears

Most of you know that on Christmas Eve in 2021 we added our little dog, Potato, to our family. As a Pug, she makes plenty of cute noises, and as a puppy, she has the same problems many puppies have. She is a noisy, gassy, nibbling, cute little ball of



energy. Although she was purchased as a gift for my children, she is very attached to me. This past Saturday, I had been away from her for a bit and was about to leave to come to the church office. I knew I had to say goodbye, and as she spotted me in the kitchen, she ran to me with excitement, wanting to be in my arms.

I've never appreciated dog "kisses" the way some do, but to borrow a phrase from Gary Chapman, that is clearly one of Potato's "love languages." She is the only puppy I have ever had who wants to give you a lick on the face and then also each ear, occasionally with little nibbles. I've attempted to explain to Potato that I don't want my ears nibbled on, even if the nibbles were intended to communicate love and they were light. This time, I had Potato in my arms, and she was loving on me in that same excited, intense manner she always does when she hasn't seen me in more than five minutes. As I moved her away from my ears, she latched on elsewhere... to my nose.

I have recently had allergy problems, including nose bleeds that have flared up again. My nose was already sore and raw inside. You can imagine how much pain I experienced when she didn't just nibble, but gave, in what I'm sure was intended to be playful, a pretty good bite on my nose.

Having received control tactics training to better defend myself while working in a locked facility, I knew

that the best way to deal with a bite, is somewhat counterinitative. Person, dog, whatever, you should lean into the bite forcefully, which can cause the biter to adjust their jaws or their neck, giving you a chance to escape. Sadly, muscle memory, that is an instinctual reaction, kicked in instead of my training. I jerked back quick and hard trying to escape the pain, which made it much worse. What was likely only painful because I was having some nostril difficulty, became painful because I just raked sharp little puppy teeth on the inside of my nose, all while I was scaring the puppy and causing her to clamp down to stabilize herself.

I pulled Potato away, gaining enough sense to put my free hand on her jaws to separate them. I turned her around, spanked her bottom, walked to the door and put her in the backyard forcefully. Heather had not realized what had happened at first, and was concerned that I was abusing our poor puppy, but she realized what had happened when she saw the blood.

No one said anything Sunday, but I was self conscious about preaching with a visible scratch and scab on my nose. It's still there at the time of writing this, and still hurts. Despite the pain, I have made up with little Potato. She is a young puppy, and I don't think there was malicious intent. I continue to train her and am even more stern about nibbling. But why am I telling you about my dog?

Those of us with pets know how much effort, time, and sometimes cash we go through taking care of them. When we spend so much effort loving some little critter, spending so much time with them, when they hurt us, the betrayal is made deeper. How could Potato bite me? It would be silly to ask of her, do you know much I paid for you? How many toys I have given you? How often I clean your water? How much I clean up after you? How much I love you? Given all that, how could you do this? I'll admit to asking my pets questions, but God has graced me with enough sanity not to

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# MY DOG BIT ME

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Continued

expect them to answer... at least in English, and certainly not those kinds of questions. The reality is that loving can open us up to deeper pain, and it's not just with animals.

Like us, Peter had no doubt been hurt by others. Matthew 18:21-22 records the following exchange between Peter and Jesus, "Then Peter came and said to Him, "Lord, how often shall my brother sin against me and I forgive him? Up to seven times?" Jesus \*said to him, "I do not say to you, up to seven times, but up to seventy times seven." Unfortunately, we can't take this overly literally and only forgive someone 490 times. Sometimes it may feel tempting to keep track so that we can wash our hands when we hit our limit. Peter's use of seven was likely already seen as a high number for his day, and it wasn't enough. Jesus told him that his level of forgiveness needed to increase exponentially.

This isn't a call to remain in an abusive or unwise situation. Too often I hear "Forgive and Forget" and while I understand the intent behind the phrase, there are times we need to remember, not for the purpose of anger, but for the purpose of recognizing patterns, protecting ourselves and others, and even, as was addressed earlier in Matthew 18, addressing those who wrong us in an appropriate way, in hopes they can grow past the issue or behavior.

The other extreme is blaming people for hurt that they really didn't understand in the first place. It's been recognized that "Hurt people hurt people." The truth of that fact plays out in our daily lives often, and in many cases, people are unaware that they are passing their pain onto others.

Since I began with my dog, let me tell you a little about my cat, or more specifically, her mother. While Maxi is a loving, to me anyways, old house cat, when I first got her mother, she was feral. It took a long time for that feral cat not to hiss and swipe at me out of her

own fear. I had to build a relationship with her and slowly teach her she wasn't a feral stray anymore, and that we lived together and needed to get along, and could trust and even love one another. Unfortunately, I did have to give her to my cousin after a move, but she was rehabilitated at that point, and you would have never known how she started out. When I went back to retrieve her from my cousin, she was such a loving cat, and my cousin had so bonded with her, that I accepted a kitten, instead.

Many people respond in hurtful ways, because they have been hurt, and because they aren't fully understanding what is going on. Words are often reactions, not a well thought out script. A dog may snap at a vet because of an instinctual response to pain at a shot or a stitch, but it doesn't mean the dog is malicious and needs to be put down. Many of the hurt people we encounter need more grace as we are interacting with them. We usually don't know what's going on in their life and how that might impact the way they treat us. Keeping that in mind isn't easy in the moment.

Loving those who hurt you requires patience, understanding, and forgiveness. It's always wise to check ourselves and make sure we aren't continuing to spread the hurt when we receive it. Proverbs 15:1 instructs us that "A gentle answer turns away wrath, but a harsh word stirs up anger." So, if we take a deep breath in the moment, and pause before simply responding, we may be able calm down or change a situation. It's worth it to try. They were made to bear God's image. As followers of Christ, we should recognize what God's grace, in the face of our own imperfections and hurt, means to us, Shouldn't we naturally want to spread that to others? I'm quite sure the people who have hurt me aren't in need of as much forgiveness from me, as I am in need of forgiveness from God. That should inspire us to follow Him with depth in love for those around us, even those who are hurting us.

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# INVITING OTHERS IN

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By Carrie Guy

The next few months brings some happy holidays on the calendar, but for us they are also opportunities. Opportunities to invite our community to join us - join us in celebrating, join us in fellowship and join us in love, redemption, and ultimately, join us in the family of Jesus.

Easter brings special times of prayer and worship as we focus on what Jesus did for us on the cross. Easter brings some fun options for connecting with the kids and families in our community. Easter is the ultimate spiritual holiday because it brings the message of hope fulfilled. The long-awaited Savior was here and sacrificed so we could have restored relationship with Him.

As we move into May, we come to Mother's Day and if Alina's shower showed us anything its that we not only support each other but we miss being together, connecting with one another. As we go into May this year, we are doing something new as well as a new take on something familiar.

We will be doing a Ladies' Breakfast (with a tea option for those who want it). It will be a great time to

invite friends to sit around a table together, focus on Christ and love each other. That same day we are trying something new - a Mother/Son Nerf Wars. This is a great way to get some new faces on campus and have fun with a little dirt on our hands and knees. We've done the mother/daughter events and even have the father/daughter luncheon, but this will be our first mother/son event (well at least since I've been here).

I am so grateful for our church and I see the beauty that all of you offer to our collective spiritual family. If you want to get more involved, but aren't sure how, contact the office, or me directly. I'd love to have a conversation about that. Serving and giving should be an extension of our spiritual walk and the passion that God has gifted us with.

Be on the lookout for more information on these events online and in emails in the coming weeks. We'd love to have you join us! Maybe you know someone who might be intimidated to come to church but may come to a fun event. Start talking about these upcoming holidays and be ready to invite them to come.



**Remember The annual  
Andrew challenge.  
Pick one person who isn't  
following Jesus.  
Pray for them daily, and  
invite them to join you  
for church events, and in  
following Jesus.  
(John 1:40-42)**

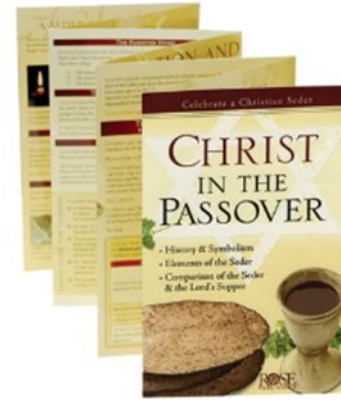


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## SPECIAL GUEST - MARCH 13TH

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By Judy Jameson, Missions Chair



<https://jewsforjesus.org/>

On Sunday, March 13, 2022, Joshua Sofaer, who serves with Jews for Jesus, will be giving the message, "Christ in the Passover" during morning worship at both services. Josh will be available between the services to share more about Jews for Jesus and their mission and ministry. Josh and his wife first visited our church when Sam had just arrived as our pastor in October 2018. We are looking forward his visit!

Jews for Jesus is a non-profit organization made up primarily of Jewish people, as well as other followers of Jesus who are committed allies of the Jewish people.

Our staff promote Jewish faith in Jesus, facilitate Jewish community, and provide local services. They facilitate Jewish life and community all over the world, sharing with everyone we meet the life-changing teachings of the Hebrew Scriptures and the New Testament. They live out our faith and heritage by loving God and our neighbors. They also help Christians gain a deeper understanding of the Jewish historical and cultural context of their own faith, and fight antisemitism across the globe by helping bring greater partnership and understanding between Jewish and Christian communities.

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## OPPORTUNITY TO SUPPORT TULARE KINGS RIGHT TO LIFE!

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If you are interested in joining the LIFEWALK you can call TKRL to sign-up.

Or if you would like to support Pastor Sam as he walks you can make donations by making a check to **TKRL** or put cash in an offering envelope marked "Requested Designation" and put TKRL on the line marked "Designated for" and dropping it in the donation box in the lobby on Sundays, mail it to the office, or dropping it off during office hours.

Please make checks out to **TKRL** so that Pastor Sam can take them along on April 2nd.

**2022 LIFEWALK!**  
**Sat. April 2nd 10am**



Starting point will be the parking lot at the corner of Conyer and Main Street.

Come walk with us and be a voice for life!

Tulare-Kings  
**Right to Life**  
Reviving a Culture of LIFE

Contact: 559-732-5000

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# PRAYER CONCERNS

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March 2022

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, Jean Lamb, Jeff Rolph, JoAnne Jordan, Kevin Guy, Marilee Douglass, Mary Stemkoski, Pam Shattuck, Fred Wilder, Sandy Zinger

## Cancer

Ann Johnson, Bill Morland, David Thomas, Jiggy Greene, Jim Shackelford, Joe Grant, Keith Moore, Mike Gunning, Olly Ajluni, Sandra Campbell, Shannan Ajluni

## Other Needs

Nina Suttles (Vision)

## Military

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

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# BIRTHDAYS & ANNIVERSARIES

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March 2022

Cayla Gunning..... 4  
Debbie Bianchi..... 8  
Steve Ritter ..... 12  
Caroline Hanstad ..... 17  
Kevin Ray ..... 18  
Ryan Pendleton ..... 24  
William Bianchi..... 26  
Kay Ray ..... 26  
Julian Reynaga ..... 26

*Happy Anniversary!*

Brad & Traci Yale ..... 12

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# ATTENDANCE & GIVING

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February 2022

Average In Person Attendance

99

Total Giving

\$ 22,657.75

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We are in the process of upgrading our website. While this will make some much needed improvements it also entails some changes that will affect those of you who are giving online. These changes will also reduce the Fountain's expenses for the giving platform that we are using.

We need to make sure those of you who give online are aware that:

- You will now be covering the typical \$0.25 fee for ACH donations in the near future.
- And you will be receiving receipts from [hello@nucleus.church](mailto:hello@nucleus.church) now, not [hello@rebelgive.com](mailto:hello@rebelgive.com)
- You can soon access your personal giving account at <https://my.nucleus.church> using the exact same username/password as you did before for RebelGive. Please, save this new login for future use!

# March 2022

Sun	Mon	Tue	Wed	Thu	Fri	Sat
		1 10:00 Staff	2  6:00 *Family Night	3 10:00 Berean Watchmen	4 6:30 Men's Group	5
*Family Night		{ Awana Youth Group Men's Bible Study Women's Bible Study         }				
6 9:00 Worship 10:30 Worship	7 10:40 Prayer Warriors  12:00 Women's Bible Study	8 10:00 Staff	9  6:00 *Family Night	10 10:00 Berean Watchmen	11 6:30 Men's Group	12 Spring Ahead At bedtime!! 
13 9:00 Worship 10:30 Worship	14 10:40 Prayer Warriors  12:00 Women's Bible Study	15 10:00 Staff	16  6:00 *Family Night	17 10:00 Berean Watchmen	18 6:30 Men's Group	19  10:00-2:30 Children's Ministry Workers CPR Class
20 9:00 Worship 10:30 Worship  12:00 Elder Council	21 10:40 Prayer Warriors  12:00 Women's Bible Study	22 10:00 Staff	23  6:00 *Family Night	24 10:00 Berean Watchmen	25 6:30 Men's Group	26
27 9:00 Worship 10:30 Worship	28 10:40 Prayer Warriors  12:00 Women's Bible Study	29 10:00 Staff	30  6:00 *Family Night	31 10:00 Berean Watchmen		



The Fountain  
1023 N Chinowth St  
Visalia, CA 93291



## ***Coming Events***

***March 13th - 9 & 10:30 AM - Worship Services featuring  
Josh Sofaer with Jews for Jesus***

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***March 19th - CPR Class for Children's Ministry Workers***

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***April 2nd Annual Egg Hunt - watch for details***

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