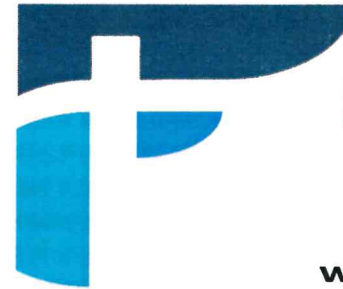




The Fountain  
1023 N Chinowth St.  
Visalia, CA 93291



# THE FOUNTAIN CHRISTIAN CHURCH

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

*Intentionally Growing, and #LivingSENT for Jesus*



## *The Fountain Christian Church*

### Office Hours:

Mon-Thurs 9:00 AM— 4:30 PM

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Visalia, CA 93291-4114  
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# The Red Sea or the Jordan River

By Deanna O'Leary

Sometimes you just don't know what to do or when to do it. It seems I have experienced this in ways like never before over the past few years. My grandpa used to tell us, "If you don't know which way to turn, don't turn," and I have learned to appreciate that phrase the older I've become. I personally do not believe we should make decisions just for the sake of change, but instead need to listen to that still, small voice that whispers to us which way we should turn. Waiting on that direction is a good thing, but what do we do when the direction isn't quite what we expect?

We were never promised that this life would be easy, and we all go through stages where we can't see a way out of situations that are draining us of our joy and peace. It could be a job, financial difficulties, our health or a host of other things, and when we think we see a light at the end of the tunnel it really IS a train! As a person of faith, I honestly believe God can make a way through any circumstance, no matter how dire it may appear. There is one account after another in the Bible where He did exactly that for His people. Sometimes the deliverances were grand and spectacular, and sometimes they were quiet, but what came to mind for me today were two specific stories of God parting literal waters for His people to cross over safely. Two miraculous and similar events, yet quite different when you step back and look a little more deeply.

In Exodus 14 we find the familiar account of the people of Israel having been delivered from the hand of Egypt only to find themselves eventually trapped in front of the Red Sea with no way out. On both sides was impassible terrain; in front of them was a sea they could not cross; and they were being pursued from behind by Pharaoh's army. Death and destruction seemed certain, but God had led them there with a pillar of cloud by day and fire by night. It is important to remember that these people didn't end up there by accident; God purposely and unmistakably led them. They were exactly where He wanted them to be, with no options of escape by their own power. Why? He did it because He wanted them to see HIS power and deliverance in a way they could not deny. There is no doubt they were scared. They were probably terrified when they looked up and saw the army charging toward them, yet Moses told them to stand still and they would see the salvation of the Lord. Then he reiterated that they simply needed to be still because the Lord would fight for them. (Exodus 14:13-14) God told Moses to stretch out his staff over the sea, and the waters would divide. Moses did what he was told, and God divided the waters. The people crossed over on TOTALLY DRY ground! Amazing, right?! There was no way out, but then a way miraculously opened before them to be delivered from certain death.

None of us want to be faced with situations that seem like they will de-

stroy us. We don't want to be in a place where we have to trust God to make a way and wait for Him to deliver us in those times. We just want out! As a result, we complain and grumble (just like the Israelites) about how God doesn't see what we are forced to endure or, even worse, that He sees our struggles and doesn't care! I've had experiences where I couldn't see a way out, but God opened up a path for me that I couldn't have opened for myself. When that happens, it is thrilling! It is a mind-blowing experience that restores and strengthens my faith. It reminds me nothing is impossible with God, and that He will always provide direction and make a way, even when it isn't on my timetable.

Like many of you, sometimes I am discouraged; sometimes I am downright overwhelmed and depressed. I believe God will impress on my heart the direction(s) I am supposed to take, and I am convinced He will make a way. As a result, I stand and watch, waiting to see the ocean part in front of me. The wind blows and the waves churn, and I watch. I look behind me and see the enemies closing in, but I hold to my faith and trust there will be a way. I watch, but I have learned something valuable along the way: Sometimes God doesn't part the sea; He parts the river. Let me explain...

I mentioned there were TWO times where God parted literal waters to make a way for His people. The first was the Red Sea, but the other was Jordan River. The people of Israel were still journeying along the path God was directing them, carrying the Ark of the Covenant (Joshua chapter 3). They arrived at the edge of the Jordan River, and there was no way for them to cross. This was the time of year the river ran so high that it would overrun its banks. It was a rushing, flooding river! God instructed Joshua that when the people come to the brink of the flowing waters of the Jordan, the priests who were carrying the Ark were to stand IN the Jordan. Joshua passed the message along, and they did as they were told. As a result, the waters parted, and the people passed across on DRY GROUND! Sound familiar? There is a similarity in these two events: God's direction (through Moses and Joshua) was to stand still, and He would provide a way. On the other hand, there is also a glaring difference between these two. At the Red Sea, the people were to stand still and watch God open the path ahead. The sea parted before anyone stepped into it. At the Jordan River, the men were told to stand in the Jordan first and then God would open the path. The waters didn't part until after they stepped in.

So back to my life (and probably some of yours). I look around me, and most of the time I think "when and how can I get out of this?" I am often exhausted, stressed and sometimes even afraid. Sometimes I am angry, not only that God hasn't delivered me from my circumstances, but that He actually LED me to a place where I can't see any way out in my own power. We all find ourselves in places like this where we are completely stuck. It wears on

*(Continued on page 4)*



# The Red Sea or the Jordan River

By Deanna O'Leary

me, but then my faith kicks in, and I remember that God is always leading me. The question is: Am I actually following?

The vast majority of humanity desires (and pursues) the ability to control their own lives and their own journeys. We want to be able to direct our own paths. We want freedom and the autonomy to choose what we do and when we do it. We don't want to feel trapped, but often we view waiting as being stuck. Waiting goes against our nature when things aren't going well. We are hard-wired to do something, or make something happen, and have come to view anything less as laziness. We overestimate our intelligence and set off in a direction based on a list of pros and cons. We think through our options and make what we believe is the best decision. As people of faith, we want to be delivered and for God to clear the path ahead, but we often want to help Him along in the process. We want to walk through on dry ground, but we cannot do that unless we first stand still.

Waiting for God to open doors and paths in our lives isn't easy but knowing where we are supposed to stand still is an even tougher dilemma for us. Questions flood our minds when we are struggling: Are we (am I) standing at the edge of the sea or the raging river? How do I know if I am waiting on God to move, or if God is waiting on me to step into the water first? We strain our eyes for signs of where we are supposed to go or what we are supposed to do. Do we wait or do we leap? My friends, God is not the author of confusion! (1 Cor. 14:33) He is continually leading us – some ways are obvious, and some are subtle, but all are powerful if we are willing to follow. God may drop a sign as obvious and tangible as a pillar of fire or cloud in front of you and say, "Follow that," or you may have to rely simply on His words.

The stress of looking around and seeing no way out while an enemy is barreling down on you to destroy you is overwhelming. There is an urgency and survival instinct that kicks in and creates panic. We are in fight or flight mode and being still is contrary to everything in us. That is precisely why God tells us to stand still in those moments. Remember God led us to this place for a reason, and if we stand still, we will see the "salvation of the Lord." Take a breath, calm down and let Him show you the way.

The Jordan River brings a totally different type of stress. There isn't the same urgency of survival that happens at the Red Sea because no one is actively pursuing you to destroy you; You are simply lacking direction. We know God has the ability to deliver us, but we may see different options or paths for that to happen. As a result, we become paralyzed, because we don't want to give up what we have if God hasn't shown us what's ahead. We don't make the leap because we fear we will be worse off than we are now. "Better the devil you know than the devil you don't," right? We give up joy, peace and contentment

for the sake of stability and safety. The stress of the Jordan doesn't come from having to calm yourself to be still in the face of a charging enemy; it comes from having to let go and step into the rushing water first and then trying to calm yourself while you stand and wait for the path to clear. It is the panic in trying to resist the force of your circumstances that are trying to pull you under. At the Red Sea, we ask God "Why did you bring me here to be destroyed?" At the Jordan, we ask ourselves, "What was I thinking?!" We start questioning whether we did the right thing, because destruction seems certain as a result of our decision. We experience the elation of courage, only to be hit with the panic of survival. We step in, but when the way isn't immediately made clear, we step back out and wonder why we still don't see a path. That isn't God's fault; it's ours.

So, the question remains – Am I, or are we, at the Red Sea or the Jordan River. To answer that question, you need to look at where you've been. Have you been following God's unmistakable direction, only to find yourself in a place where it seems there is no way out? Are you frantic and worried? If so, remind yourself of God's promises to take care of you (Deut 31:6; Matt 6:26-34). Calm yourself and stand still and watch what God is about to do. You will be walking on dry ground soon, and the circumstances that were chasing you down to destroy you will be drowned in the sea behind you.

On the other hand, have you been following God as He leads you to where He wants you to be, only to find yourself faced with a barrier or circumstance that confuses you? Is there something in your way that is causing you to look at other options, thinking you must have misinterpreted God's leading up to this point? Are you stressed or anxious, but leaning instead on safety and stability, settling for less than what you know God has for you? If so, take heart! Remind yourself that God is not the author of confusion, and He is simply waiting for you to move forward and step into the water with confidence, even without knowing for certain the outcome. Just because it's scary doesn't mean it isn't where you are supposed to be. The waters may be pulling at you once you step in but stand still and watch what God is about to do. (2 Cor 4:8-9 – "We are afflicted in every way, but not crushed; perplexed, but not driven to despair; persecuted, but not forsaken; struck down, but not destroyed"). You, too, will soon be walking on dry ground, safely and with clear direction.

No matter where you find yourself today, don't panic. God is with you, leading you forward. He isn't holding His will behind His back and making you play a game to try and figure it out. You may still be asking, "But how do I know?" Proverbs 3:5-6 says, "Trust in the Lord with all your heart and lean not on your own understanding. In all your ways, acknowledge Him, and He will direct your path." Notice the little word in the middle – "all." That little word leaves no room for creating your own directions or forging your own path. Are you the master of your destiny? Yes, absolutely. You have complete

*(Continued on page 10)*

# May 2021

Sun	Mon	Tue	Wed	Thu	Fri	Sat
						1
2 8:30 Worship 10:15 Worship 12:00 Elder Council 2:00 Men's Bible Study	3 10:40 Prayer Warriors 12:00 Women's Bible Study	4 10:00 Staff	5 6pm Fountain Family Night ♦ Awana ♦ Youth ♦ Men's Bible Study ♦ Women's Bible	6 10:00 Berean Watchmen	7 6:30 Men's Group	8
9 MOTHER'S DAY 8:30 Worship 10:15 Worship 2:00 Men's Bible Study	10 10:40 Prayer Warriors 12:00 Women's Bible Study	11 10:00 Staff	12 6pm Fountain Family Night ♦ Awana ♦ Youth ♦ Men's Bible Study ♦ Women's Bible	13 10:00 Berean Watchmen	14 6:30 Men's Group	15
16 8:30 Worship 10:15 Worship 2:00 Men's Bible Study	17 10:40 Prayer Warriors 12:00 Women's Bible Study	18 10:00 Staff	19 6pm Fountain Family Night ♦ Awana ♦ Youth ♦ Men's Bible Study ♦ Women's Bible	20 10:00 Berean Watchmen	21 6:30 Men's Group	22
23 PENTECOST 8:30 Worship 10:15 Worship 2:00 Men's Bible Study	24 10:40 Prayer Warriors 12:00 Women's Bible Study	25 10:00 Staff	26 6pm Fountain Family Night ♦ Awana ♦ Youth ♦ Men's Bible Study ♦ Women's Bible	27 10:00 Berean Watchmen	28 6:30 Men's Group	29
30 8:30 Worship 10:15 Worship 2:00 Men's Bible Study	31 10:40 Prayer Warriors 12:00 Women's Bible Study					



## Thanks Mom!

By Chuck Romer

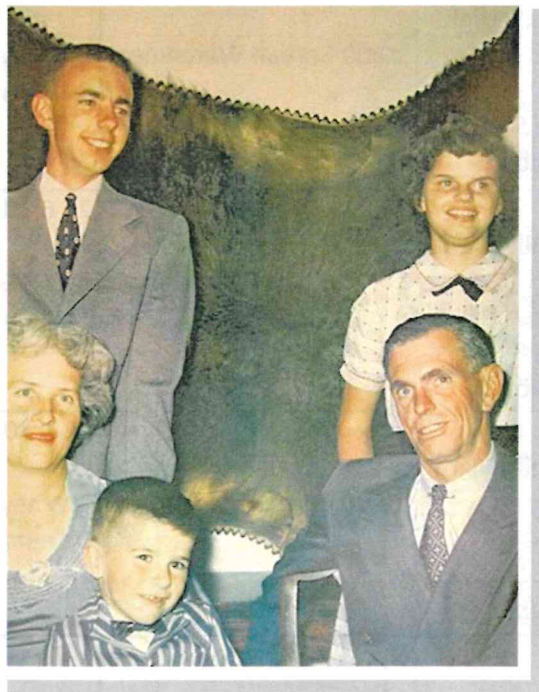
Of all the gifts my mom blessed me with through the years – beyond the gift of life – was one gift that stands out from all the rest. No, it wasn't the Lionel electric train that I found under the Christmas tree when I was eight... or the pet flying squirrel I received for my birthday in my early teens. It wasn't that she was one of my teachers in 8th grade... or when she made my favorite birthday cake from scratch. It was a gift that she gave me when I was just seven years old. But before I tell you about the gift, let me set the stage.

I grew up on a small family farm in the mountains of western Montana, about 50 miles south of Missoula (I could have referenced Corvallis, Woodside, Victor or Stevensville, but I wouldn't expect anyone reading this to be aware of those towns). We lived on a gravel road, just two miles from a large wilderness area that blanketed the border of Montana and Idaho. The farm was about 50 acres, and we had 25 Holstein cows, and dad had named them all. "Daisy" would lead the rest of the herd to the barn each morning and evening to share their milk with the world.

The photo shows the Romer family in our living room about 1957 or 1958. The bear skin rug on the wall was one of only two grizzly bears that dad shot during his time as a big game hunting guide after he moved west from New York City in his early 20s (which is a story for another day). Also in the picture are mom, my older brother John... and my sister Kathy.

Mom's contributions to our lives involved daily activities which kept us functioning – meals, laundry, cleaning and transportation when the school bus couldn't get us where we needed to be. She would also look for ways to enrich our lives. When I was just seven, she decided it would be good if I took piano lessons.

I've thought a lot about the significance of that choice in recent years, but I have no idea what prompted her action. I took lessons for four years, made



## Thanks Mom!

By Chuck Romer

a small bit of progress, but stopped before I got to junior high school – as basketball had gained my attention.

My mom did play the piano a little bit... and even filled in as the organist at church from time to time (the style was more like the theater organists on The Lawrence Welk Show – not a classic pipe organ). When I was a senior in high school, she found an organ teacher in the area, and signed up for lessons so she could play better at church. But the pop style of her lessons caught my ear, and I ended up practicing her weekly music assignments more than she did.

When the summer of 1969 came, she decided I should take her time slot with her organ teacher, so I got three months of lessons with modern chords and rhythms – my first real exposure to "ear training" and a better grasp of harmony.

That fall I left home in western Montana to attend a Christian junior college in Seattle. It was a challenging experience for me... and I would hide in the piano practice rooms in the student center to escape all that was new around me. One night as I was playing the piano, someone knocked on the door... and I met a lady from the music faculty. She invited me to audition for a music ministry team she was forming – and being much too shy to give an honest "No thanks" to her audition request, I said "Yes" and went to her office the next day. She welcomed me as a new member of the Maranatha Sounds, playing piano and trombone. Just two weeks later we were providing music for a large Seattle rally with Rev. David Wilkerson.

I hadn't considered music as a career, but when I had to drop calculus later that year, music seemed the most natural choice. I quickly found myself immersed in music theory and counterpoint... music history and performing ensembles... arranging and composition... and eventually transferred to St. Olaf College in Minnesota where I found an open door to complete a Bachelor of Music Degree and published my first original composition, an acapella Psalm setting for male chorus.

That was nearly 50 years ago... and I don't have space or time to share the many places and memories that music has given me since then. But... it all began with my Mom's idea that I should take piano lessons when I was seven. Isn't that amazing?

As we celebrate Mother's Day this month, I'd like to say thanks to all the mothers and grandmothers in our church family... and to encourage you to continue to pray for your families... to love them through the easy days and the hard days... and to encourage them to discover their God-given gifts. You never know where it might lead them. Happy Mother's Day!



# The Red Sea or the Jordan River

By Deanna O'Leary

(Continued from page 5)

freedom of choice to live your life how you choose. You can go it alone, bumping into walls, frustrated and always seeking direction, or you can acknowledge God in ALL your ways, and He will provide the direction for which you are seeking. If you want to know which way to go, then get humble, surrender your will to His in every area, and then listen to that still, small voice within. He has promised He will lead us; we simply need to be willing to stand still first, and then follow where He leads.



## Attendance & Giving

April 2021

Date	Attendance	Giving
April 4.....	114.....	\$4,366.00
April 11.....	100.....	\$5,413.79
April 18.....	105.....	\$3,358.50
April 25.....	94.....	\$6,405.00
Online Giving .....		\$3,674.00
Total.....		\$23,217.29



# Birthdays & Anniversaries

May 2021

Vincent Cheng .....	1
Oliver Ajluni.....	5
Logan Chapman.....	7
Kelli Stowers .....	8
Ignacio Garcia.....	11
Adalyn Hollis.....	12
Reagan Gunning .....	14
Lisa Brooks .....	15
Evelyn Hardisty .....	15
Kerrell Lewis .....	20
Benjamin Romer .....	23
Emerson Gunning .....	26
Donna Wilkinson .....	27
Peggy Pryor .....	28
Addisyn Sanchez .....	28

*Happy Anniversary!*

Tim & June Glick .....	7
James & Kacy Gatto.....	9
Ryan & Heather Ritter.....	11
Tom & Kerrell Lewis .....	12
Jim & Margie Barlogio.....	15
Ed & April Kesterson .....	17
Keith & Marcia Moore .....	23

## Prayer Concerns

May 2021

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

### Health

Ana Morales, Ashley Banuelos, Barbara Grant, Bill Bianchi, Cindy Marks, Donna Black, Donna Eastin, Frank Henley, Jean Lamb, Kevin Guy, Pam Shattuck, Pauline Gurule, Rick Hamilton, Fred Wilder, Sandy Zinger

### Cancer

Al Stone, Charles Douglass, Hazel Bahrenburg, Jiggy Greene, Jim Shackelford, Joe Grant, Joe Ryan, Keith Moore, Michael Elder, Mike Brazil, Olly Ajluni, Sandra Campbell, Shannan Ajluni, Susan Jacquez, Jamie Harp

### Other Needs

Nina Suttles (Vision)

### Military

Andie Richwine - Marine, Brett Boland - Virginia, Jason Mariel - Afghanistan, Matthew Calhoun - Fort Knox, Michael Reid - Fort Worth, Preston Correa - Marines