

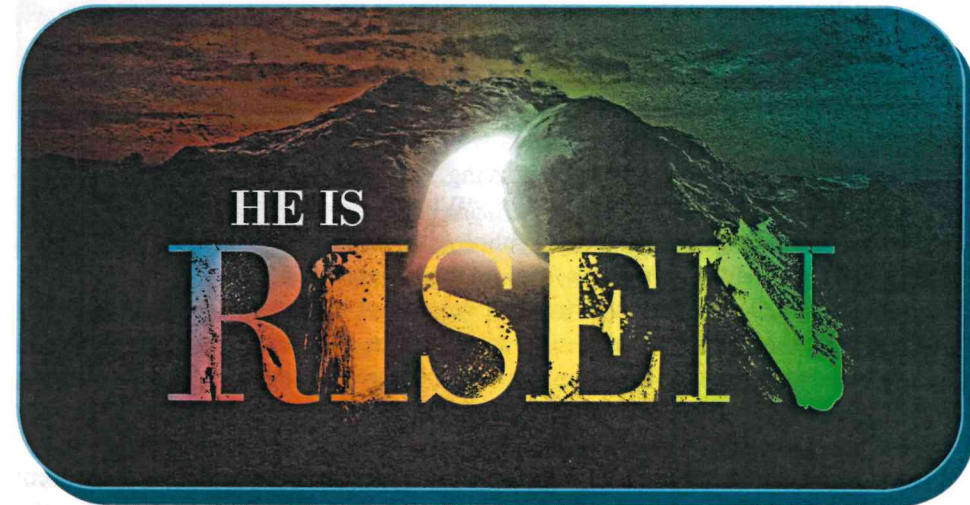
The Fountain  
1023 N Chinowth St.  
Visalia, CA 93291



**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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# Tossing Out Bait (an Evangelism Style)

By Pastor Sam Sears

While I am nowhere near the outdoorsman that my father is, I have fond memories of fishing with my dad. Last year when I was back in Kentucky for a brief visit, I was able to enjoy watching my son and my daughter learn the basics of fishing from my own dad. Fishing for us was recreational; we would eat some, of course, but not out of true necessity. Fishing was a way of life for some of the disciples.

In the midst of their work as fishermen, Simon and Peter encountered Jesus and received a call. “And He said to them, ‘Follow Me, and I will make you fishers of people.’ (Mark 4:9)” Jesus spoke to them in a way to which they could easily relate. In today’s culture, one of the first things we often share about ourselves is what we do for a living. When we meet new people, we similarly may ask, “What do you do?” to learn more about them. Psychologists report that men, in particular, strongly associate their identity with their work. For Peter and Simon, it would not be that different. While they saw most of their identity in their Jewish culture, they didn’t have a mere 40-hour week, vacations, or much in the way of entertaining distractions. Fishing was how they put food on the table and the activity that filled most of their days.

Peter and Simon used nets, but as most of us know, there are different types of fishing. When I was working in Alaska, I knew folks who fished in the style of the show “Deadliest Catch” with large nets on rough, cold waters. Author and Speaker, Greg Koukl, known for his book, *Tactics*, has shared his passion for fly-fishing in his writings and podcasts. For me, my son and my father, the normal mode of fishing is in a small lake, usually for bass.

Rather than use a large net, bait is used to lure the fish onto a hook. Avery Joe or Leliana weren’t quite ready to put on their own wiggling mealworms last summer, but I can remember my own first times adding mealworms, earth worms, and crickets onto my hook. It’s a small rite-of-passage for most country boys. With my dad and I baiting their hooks, each of them reeled in their first fish last summer.

Avery Joe really caught on and enjoyed it. Like many before him, Avery Joe was trained to watch the small bobber on the top of the water. Its movement indicated that the fish was taking the bait. First there would be a little shaking, as the fish bumped into the bait, test-



ing it, maybe tasting it just a bit. Then the bobber would dart under the water quickly. It’s the job of the fisherman to pull his rod up quickly in hopes of hooking the fish. Then the reeling starts. For some fish, it’s quite a fight; for others, it’s an easy pull. The satisfaction of reeling in a fish is hard to beat, and I enjoyed seeing it on my son’s face. The bigger the fish, the bigger the challenge, the more rewarding is the catch. Sometimes the fish gets away, even taking the bait with it, but the successes make the failure worth enduring.

We, too, have a calling, like Peter and Simon. We are also called to spread the good news of Jesus (Matthew 28:19-20). When Jesus spoke to Peter or Simon, His call to follow Him was directly connected to Jesus making them fishers of men. This was not an optional second stage of their calling but was a result of it — a natural outworking of that calling. The same is true of the Great Commission. If we are following Christ, if we respond in thankfulness to the knowledge that His death was the payment for all our wrongdoings and that He reconciled us to God the Father and proved Himself true via the resurrection, we naturally should want to share about Him, as the Holy Spirit transforms us from the inside out (Romans 12:2).

Most of us have heard this. Most of us recognize that we don’t have what has been called the “gift of evangelism” (Ephesians 4:11). It’s true that, from the outside, it seems to come more naturally to some people than it does to others. This isn’t always the case; I can attest to stomach butterflies as I knocked on nearby doors when starting a church plant. Despite having done it, and even training and leading others in doing so, I don’t consider myself one of those with the “gift” of evangelism. I work at it, just like most of us have to do.

When we work at such an important task, it’s helpful to have more tools in our toolbox. To continue the analogy of fishing, it’s helpful to have more lures in our tacklebox. One easy way for us to “fish for men” is simply to throw out bait and wait for the fish to take a bite.

Recently, our youth began selling t-shirts and sweatshirts as part of a fundraiser. You will notice that we prominently featured the refined, simplified logo. We took the key ingredients from the congregation’s votes and feedback — water (the flow on of the lines on the “f”) and a prominent cross — and distilled them into a simpler image in the style of current minimalism; we also sought professional feedback to make sure we were in line with current trends. This was to ensure that we were using the right bait for the fish we had in mind.

If you are shy, merely wearing something with our logo on it gets the word out there. The purpose is not just to grow just our church — it’s not people in seats that are important — but glorifying God by being a part of changing lives. Someone may see the logo and ask, “What’s that mean?” They have taken the bait. That’s your chance to hook them. “Oh, this is the logo for The Fountain,” you reply. Maybe you can go further. They may ask, “What’s



## Tossing Out Bait (continued)

By Sam Sears

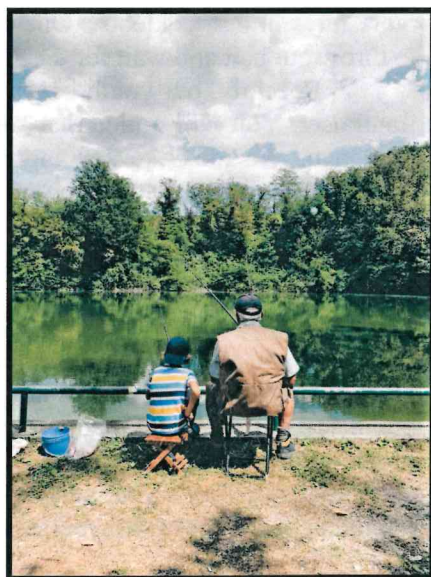
that?" You then have the opportunity to tell them about a community intentionally growing and living sent for Jesus. Beyond just telling them, you can then invite them!

The logo becomes the bait to start a conversation. It's why lots of places no longer include a website or lots of details, but stick with the logo itself. The contact point is you! They will listen to you in a different way than to a website. People have "FOMO" or "fear of missing out," and when they see a logo they don't recognize in multiple places, they become curious.

I promise that I'm not just selling t-shirts for our youth. You can use a similar tactic with other items. I've had actual success with this with Christian t-shirts and bumper stickers. Someone once followed me and pulled into my driveway to ask about my "Contradict" bumper sticker that serves as a blatant opposition to the universalism implied in the famous "Coexist" bumper stickers, each of course using multiple religious symbols. I also have had a few questions asked about my shirt with a picture of a bear holding a pineapple that says, "Bear fruit." Although you can use this tactic with other items, we aren't to be lone wolf Christians (Hebrews 10:23), so having an easy way to invite someone to a fellowship as you share about Jesus, roles two steps into one.

Maybe you aren't the type to throw out large nets or learn complicated techniques for fly-fishing, but it's easy to just throw a little bait out there and see who bites. Are you willing? Are you ready? You might be the only messenger of God someone may encounter, just when they need it. (2 Corinthians 3:2-3.)

You may have noticed I emphasized my son's enjoyment of fishing and mentioned my daughter had come along as well. I mentioned her less because she wimped out on us! The process of evangelism is often one that is one going. It takes patient. Leliana will get there, but my son's smiles as he caught the fish after Leliana had stayed at home, rewarded his patience and persistence. If you are tempted to bow out because the fish don't seem to be biting, just hang in there. Fishing actual fish may get us a nice meal, some relaxation, maybe even a trophy. Fishing for men can yield eternal results, so persistence is even more important.



## Birthdays & Anniversaries

April 2021

Lisa Barnes .....	2	Sheila Ronk .....	20
Sara Morales .....	2	Dawltyn Stowers .....	21
Rory Sanchez .....	2	Gwen Ritter .....	25
Michael Rasmussen .....	4	Talan Conrad .....	27
Betty Guzman .....	8	Ryleigh Stowers.....	27
Tom Lewis .....	8	Rosalinda Rodriguez .....	28
Kevin Turl.....	8	MaKenzie Stowers.....	28
Susan Leary .....	9	Robert Ajluni .....	30
Shannan Ajluni .....	12		
Owen Gunning.....	15		
Ryan Ritter.....	16		
Krista Romer.....	18		
Leliana Sears.....	19		
Taylor Parker .....	20		
		Kevin & Kay.....	24

*Happy Anniversary!*

## Prayer Concerns

April 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, All those battling COVID

### Cancer

Charles Douglass, Hazel Bahrenburg, Jiggy Greene, Joe Grant, Joe Ryan, Keith Moore, Michael Elder, Mike Brazil, Olly Ajluni, 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, TX  
Preston Correa - Marines

# April 2021

Sun	Mon	Tue	Wed	Thu	Fri	Sat
<p>* Fountain Family Nights include Dinner Awana Youth Men's &amp; Women's Bible Studies</p>				<p>1</p> <p>10:00 Berean Watchers</p> <p>5:00 Drive thru Easter Egg Kits</p>	<p>2 6:30 Men's Group</p>  <p>7:00 Good Friday Service</p>	3
<p>4 7:00 Sunrise Service 8:30 Worship 9:45 Egg Hunt &amp; Breakfast 10:15 Worship</p>	<p>5</p> <p>10:40 Prayer Warriors 12:00 Women's Bible Study</p>	<p>6</p> <p>1:00 Staff</p>	<p>7</p> <p>6:00 The Fountain Youth</p>	<p>8</p> <p>10:00 Berean Watchers</p>	<p>9 6:30 Men's Group</p>	10
<p>11</p> <p>8:30 Worship 10:15 Worship 2:00 Men's Bible Study</p>	<p>12</p> <p>10:40 Prayer Warriors 12:00 Women's Bible Study</p>	<p>13</p> <p>1:00 Staff</p>	<p>14</p> <p>6:00 Fountain Family Night Awana, Youth, Women's &amp; Men's Bible Studies</p>	<p>15</p> <p>10:00 Berean Watchers</p>	<p>16 6:30 Men's Group</p>	17
<p>18</p> <p>8:30 Worship 10:15 Worship 2:00 Men's Bible Study</p>	<p>19</p> <p>10:40 Prayer Warriors 12:00 Women's Bible Study</p>	<p>20</p> <p>1:00 Staff</p>	<p>21</p> <p>6:00 Fountain Family Night Awana, Youth, Women's &amp; Men's Bible Studies</p>	<p>22</p> <p>10:00 Berean Watchers</p>	<p>23 6:30 Men's Group</p>	24
<p>25</p> <p>8:30 Worship 10:15 Worship 2:00 Men's Bible Study</p>	<p>26</p> <p>10:40 Prayer Warriors 12:00 Women's Bible Study</p>	<p>27</p> <p>1:00 Staff</p>	<p>28</p> <p>6:00 Fountain Family Night Awana, Youth, Women's &amp; Men's Bible Studies</p>	<p>29</p> <p>10:00 Berean Watchers</p>	<p>30 6:30 Men's Group</p>	



## The Power of an Invitation!

By Sam Sears

Thom Rainer has long been a source for experience and statistics in spreading the good news of Jesus and the health of a local church.

In one of his works, *The Unchurched Next Door*, he reveals that 7 out of 10 people who are currently “unchurched” have never been invited! Beyond that, “Eighty-two percent of the unchurched are at least somewhat likely to attend church if invited.” That’s a high number, and if it’s from a friend or family, in fact, the closer the relationship, the more likely they are to respond in the positive and attend church!

If that’s the case, why aren’t our churches full? Why are as many as 90% plateaued or declining? Rainer also records that, “Only two percent of church members invite an unchurched person to church. Ninety-eighty percent of church-goers never extend an invitation in a given year.”

With Easter coming up, it’s a great time to invite someone to church. You can use the excuse of the holiday, the draw of the breakfast after sunrise, or the Easter egg hunt between services. But what about most of the year when there isn’t a special holiday? Considering that closer relationships yield a more likely positive answer, and that many churches have had success with this, I want to pass along a strategy to consider: multiple invitations.

Know someone you want to see in church? Rather than start with a direct invite to Sunday morning, why not invite them over for dinner? It could be for the first time, or the first time in a while. Then try inviting them to a small group, like our Monday or Thursday groups, or our upcoming Wednesday night groups; from there, invite them to a Sunday morning! Obviously, you would need to go with them to that small group, so that’s another reason to join one of our existing small groups.

It’s worth noting that the end goal isn’t simply getting more individuals in our church pews, but glorifying God via changed lives. We desire to see others experience freedom from bad ideas, find depth in terms of digging into the Bible, a purpose for life, and a community to share our lifelong journey with. Being part of a church body is just a part of that journey, but it is an important part!



## Book Recommendation: U-Turn Church by Kevin G. Harney and Bob Bouwer

As we emerge from quarantine, we face a wonderful opportunity as a church. We have in our town an admitted 76,000 non-Christians. Now, many of them are asking important questions after a long time of self-reflection. While we have a sense of community through social networks and our phone screens, psychologists have noted that it is largely a false connection, and the hunger for real community is now at an all-time high.

There are several books that I would like to encourage everyone in the church to read, but I want to highlight just one this month: *U-Turn Church*. In this book, two pastors share their journeys of serving in churches that are in many ways like our own. They guided and challenged the churches they were serving to take a “U-turn” as a group and focus on those outside their walls. Serving Jesus and obeying the command to teach others about Him, and to train them to live their lives in a way pleasing to Him, means leaving behind our personal preferences, serving those who need grace, reaching across a cultural divide, and being intentional in how we communicate and welcome those outside of our community.

*U-Turn* is profoundly and ashamedly biblical. I’ve read a few books, and browsed more, whose focus is on growing the church for what I would consider divided motives. *U-Turn* makes it clear: it’s about doing God’s will for His glory. It isn’t about getting more money in the bank; it isn’t about being the biggest or trendiest church in town. It is about understanding that God has a desire to see individuals saved. It is about sharing that desire and passion with God. We are His ambassadors here on this earth, and we should be about *His* business! This helps us keep that focus and fulfill our purpose effectively.

The authors can be challenging. They don’t pull punches when addressing “unintentional dragons” who are individuals who can hurt a church’s health and impact for the kingdom, despite not trying to. They are clear that it is an ongoing process. As a church community our natural tendency is to drift inwards, focus on our own church friends, and not prioritize those outside our walls. Both authors call for prayer, lots and lots of serious prayer.

Currently, the staff are going through *U-Turn*, and in the past, we taught it as a Sunday School class. I wanted to recommend it to you, because, while I don’t agree with the authors on every single issue or line they write, their desire for the lost reflects my own, and ideas in the book will be a part of our church culture. We have been implementing some of them since before I arrived, thanks to Carrie Guy connecting us with *Organic Outreach*, a ministry from one of the Authors. We will continue to keep its lessons in mind as we go forward. Even if you were in that Sunday School class nearly 2 years ago, it’s worth a refresh.



## Interesting Times We are In

By Carrie Guy

What an interesting time in history we are living through. To think about Easter this month and what it means for us, not only as Christians, but also as people. Sure, we are aware of the significance of Easter, but the truth is it is significant for everyone in the world not just those who know the truth and walk in freedom. This world has charmed us most of our lives into thinking it held more for us than it actually did. The pandemic been a reality check and has brought lots of opportunities for reflection. I wonder if we've taken advantage like we should. It has definitely shown me the allure of heaven, being with God, free from sin, not just in my own life, but exponentially potent in the world around me.

It was for freedom, Christ has set us free! (Galatians 5:1 - though keep reading, it's a great chapter). We can live free and it will be the only thing that gives us peace in a world so enslaved to things that don't last and only cause strife.

As we move further into this year, and seek to share Christ, let's use our freedom to love those around us and offer them what we already have. May our faith in Christ produce a natural fruit of the spirit that just flows from us.

This month we are starting Family Night and it's a great way to invite friends, get more acquainted with the church family and even volunteer with the efforts.

April 14th will be a start to AWANA for kids, youth group for junior high and high school and Bible studies for men and women. The best part is we will have dinner too so it's one less thing to worry about on Wednesday evenings.

Pray about how you might be involved and who God is encouraging you to invite.

## Attendance & Giving

March 2021

Date	Attendance	Giving
March 7 .....	96 .....	\$2,956.00
March 14 .....	81 .....	\$9,356.00
March 21 .....	88 .....	\$2,251.00
March 28 .....	84 .....	\$2,899.00
Online Giving .....		\$3,700.00
Total .....		\$21,162.00



Starting April 14th

**WEDNESDAY**

**FAMILY NIGHT**

**Awana** FOR KIDS

REGISTER KIDS ONLINE

SMALL GROUPS FOR

JUNIOR HIGH & HIGH SCHOOL

WOMEN & MEN

DINNER FOR ALL

6-7:30PM

## Some New Sights

If you've driven by the church after dark this last week you may have noticed an improvement to the lighting!

This exciting project provides multiple benefits. First, the most obvious benefit - safety for those coming and going to services, studies and events that occur in the evening. The second - providing security for the building and grounds when no one is around, a well lit area is much less likely to be vandalized or used in an unauthorized manner. And last, but certainly not least, the new lights are much more energy efficient in the way they operate! The lights will dim after a few minutes of no activity, but will automatically return to full illumination when someone walks or drives into the parking lot! This efficiency will begin to immediately help cut monthly electrical costs!