



Valley Vision

Volume 2 Issue 6 - August 2009

Valley Ministries MCC Quarterly Newsletter

Living Lovingly

**Saturday
September 26, 2009
9am to 4pm
at
Valley Ministries**

This Workshop is designed to talk about Marriage Equality from a Faith Perspective.

Engage in a time of active listening and open dialogue about a topic that is critically important to so many people. Discussion topics included:

- The meaning and history of marriage
- Understanding and history of marriage
- The civil rights of the GLBT community
- Exploring biblical texts and theological reflections on homosexuality, marriage and relationships
- Exploring some of the positions of the mainline Christian churches

Produced by California Counsel of Churches and Endorsed by California Faith For Equality. Registration opens soon at www.Valleyministires.com. For more information of this event, see Abbi, or if you are interested in bringing a workshop to your neighborhood, contact Toni Curtis at (916) 599-2410 or via email at todogg2u@comcast.net.

Statement of Faith

Valley Ministries is a church alive which exists to communicate God's love, to celebrate God and accept all people in order to encourage maturity in Christ, empowering people to share God's love.
Communicate – Celebrate
Accept – Encourage – Empower



Pastor's Message

Reverend Terri L. Miller

Greetings Saints:

Can you believe it we are half way through 2009. We have been blessed this year with the approval of our building and our ten year anniversary! Wow what is God calling us to do next?

Well, I believe we are being called to reach out beyond the walls of our church into this community that needs to hear the message of love, hope, joy and eternal life that we have to share. We need each person to share and become involved in order for the message to get out. One way you can is to join us as we begin the first phase of launching the new campaign "Would Jesus Discriminate?"

We have some upcoming events that you can be a part of which include Stanislaus Pride in September. We will have a booth again so please see Abbi if you want to help at our booth. We share information about our church and visit with people.

I have been encouraged with how God is working in our ministry. We are looking ways to improve our worship and possibly expand our worship to include another service. I have been in discussion with our Wednesday night group about doing a service as well on Wednesday nights. I invite you to pray for God's wisdom for us as we move forward to make these changes possible. We know that all things are possible with God!

Parents we will be doing a Christmas program with our children of all ages. We will begin the program in September. Please see Sharon for the details. Yeah! If you want a summer camp day I am willing to do it here at the house. We just need to plan it. Please let me know.

We have so much to be thankful for and I realize how very blessed we are. Even in difficult times God shines the light of hope upon us. God gives us every resource and fills every need as we press on toward the calling we have been given. I am thankful to you, the church members, for all that you do and I consider it a privilege to serve in ministry with you.

If you plan on being gone on vacation remember we take credit cards for your tithe or you can obtain stamped and addressed envelopes to send in while you are gone! God's blessings be upon you.

Blessings, Rev. Terri

Valley Vision

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Valley Vision Editor

Princess Uribe

Location and Phone

4118 Coronado Ave,
Stockton, CA 95204
(209) 464-5244

Web Site

ValleyMinistries.com

Church Service

Prayer Partners 9:30am
Every Sunday at 10:30am

Wednesday

Pastor Office Hours 11am-6pm
Bible Study
7-8PM at the Church

Between the Covers!

by Jane Tesch

The Everyday Life Bible by Joyce Meyer

In past issues I have reviewed books that were interesting to me, helpful in my spiritual journey, and possibly helpful to those reading Valley Vision. This month, however, I am doing something different. The book I am going to discuss is a Bible.

Since I have been a member of Valley Ministries, the Bible has taken on new meaning for me. I was raised in a church that believed only the clergy were to interpret and teach lessons on scripture. The laity did not explore the Bible on their own.

At Valley Ministries, and in many other Christian churches as well, people are encouraged to read the Bible, search for the meaning of its content and apply the lessons to their lives. Bible Study and

Sunday sermons at Valley Ministries offer opportunities to expand our knowledge of the Bible.

There also have been special workshops on the Bible at Valley Ministries where Reverend Terri taught the use Strong's Concordance, the Bible Dictionary and other resources. We searched for the meanings of words in the original language, clarifying the writers' messages.

We also learned about the culture at the time the passages were written so that the writing could be understood in context. There are almost limitless "helps" for those who want to understand God's Word more completely. Certainly Wednesday evening Bible Study from 7:00 p.m. to 8:00 p.m. continues to be an opportunity at Valley Ministries, and I encourage everyone reading this to participate.

There are many different translations of the Bible. It is a personal choice; a person may continue reading a translation he or she used when first becoming a Christian.

Some have several Bibles and like to compare how the a scripture is worded in different translations. This is an ad-

vantage of going to Bible Study - people bring the Bible they like best and then certain scriptures can be compared and studied in a group setting. (We also do that in our Care Groups!)

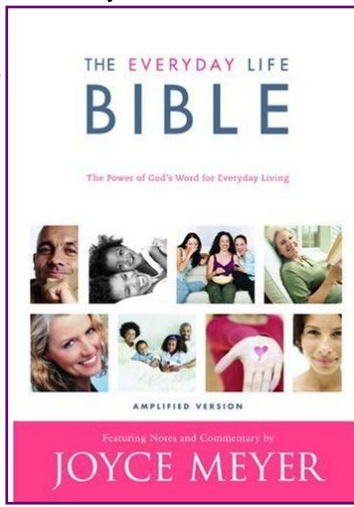
But to the point... the Bible I am reading now and the one I want to tell you about is The Everyday Life Bible with notes and commentary by Joyce Meyer. It is essentially the Amplified Old Testament and the Amplified New Testament, but this Bible is different in several ways. Joyce Meyer, an evangelist who has written many books on spirituality, has published this Bible, incorporating life lessons, prayers and her thoughts based on her thirty years of ministry. The Bible is, word for word, the Amplified Bible. But it is more.

At the beginning of each book of this Bible there is a brief history about the time in which it was written, the author, and the circumstances. "Everyday Life Articles" corresponding to specific verses or passages, provide insight and advice on various topics. Every few pages, the author includes "Life Points" which are "short, to-the-point... phrases (emphasizing) certain principles or truths" (p.

iv). Joyce Meyer uses different fonts and different color ink so that these commentaries, prayers, etc. are distinguishable from the scripture.

The author also includes ways in which the reader can put The Word to work in daily life. At the back of this Bible, there is an index by topics a person is likely to face in a lifetime. For each topic, there are scriptural references pertaining to that topic, to help "overcome challenges and live life victoriously" (p. iv).

I recommend this Bible to those who are looking for help in understanding the Bible and applying it to everyday life as a Christian. I also recommend it to those who have read the Bible all their lives, simply because the commentaries may **Con't on page 6 Between the Covers**



Valley Ministries Information & Fundraisers

Important Dates!

- ✦ Aug. 9th Board Meeting following church service
- ✦ Sept. 26th - "Living Lovingly" Workshop *see Abbi*
- ✦ Oct. 24th -Regional Gathering *see Pam*
- ✦ Nov. 7th - Would Jesus Discrimnate Workshop *see Bethene or Nancy*

Valley Vision Announcements!

- ✦ **2010 Devotional Booklet** - We are getting ready to begin work on our 2010 devotional booklet.

I am looking for people who have a personal story or would like to write on a specific topic. The book will be similar to this year's 2009 puzzle book but you don't have to do the puzzles ... just the writing. If you would like to contribute can you please email Rev. Terri at Revtlm@valleyministries.com for details.

Classifieds!

- ✦ **Room for Rent** - Looking for responsible person to rent master bedroom with full access to house *see Princess or PurpleWC@sbcglobal.net*

Important Information

- ✦ **Taped Sermons:** Have you missed an important sermon? See Raeleen to place your order. CD- \$5.
- ✦ **Prayer Shawl Ministry:** If you crochet or knit and would like to participate in this wonderful ministry, see Carol LaPrade for more details.

Let's OUT-SMART CRIME ✦ **Help Wanted with Church Security!!** We need your help and you don't have to be a member of the church, just a willing volunteer. Duties include working one of 2 shifts 10:30am to 11:15am or 11:15am to 12:30pm. Times are not exact but pretty close. The job entails standing on the corner at the front of the church. We're making sure that our church and private property are secure while we are having church services. If we have a problem, we call the police and note the description of the persons involved and or the vehicle and the license plate.

Please see Kendra, keloja@att.net, if you would like to help and she will fit you into the monthly schedule. We need to be responsible for our own security so please volunteer to help.

Up Coming Fundraisers

- ✦ August 9th - CarWash following church service in the parking lot. *see Annette for more info*
- ✦ August 21st - Hot August Night Dance *see Phyllis*
- ✦ September 19th - Stanislaus Gay Pride *see Abbi or Dena for more information*
- ✦ October 3rd Doggie Pagaent *see article and ad on page 5*

On Going Fundraisers

- ✦ **Change for Change Fund:** Drop your change in the bucket in the back of the sanctuary. If you would like to match the change fund for a special month take the change fund envelope off the bulletin board in the back of the sanctuary.



- ✦ **Recycle Your Cans and Bottles:** Place them inside on the porch at the church. *Please separate!! Cans in one bag and plastic in another.*

- ✦ **Recycle cell phones, printer, and fax cartridges.** Drop them in the recycle container in the Food Closet room.

✦ **Goodsearch.com** Register Valley Ministries as your preferred non-profit organization and our church receives money each time you use this search engine to find something on the web or buy something on the web.



- ✦ **Raleys Donation Cards:** You can contribute by getting a donation card. No extra cost to you; but Raleys donates a percentage to the church based on what you spend. See Rev. Terri to get your card.

*When you get to your wit's end,
You'll find God lives there.*

Random Thoughts or Are They? by Renee D Jurian

Okay here it is! The article that Princess asked for someone to write last week, when I read the email she had sent out on the One List the other day. When I read it, I thought, "now that sounds like fun!" But then I thought "hopefully, someone else will do it". Too late, God heard me. A funny thing happened to me in church last Sunday. I asked Princess if she had found someone to write the article for the newsletter. I have to confess I silently prayed that someone else had volunteered to write it. So, here they are, random thoughts, or are they?

I don't know about you, but I'll sometimes find myself in a situation, that often leaves me scratching my head. And then, I wonder how I got there in the first place. Does that ever happen to you? Recently, Charlene and I found our lives on a path that sometimes twists and turns in unexpected ways. Then again we said we would take it. You know that, sermon, where Pastor Terri challenged the congregation to "change". Yah, well you usually get what you ask for.

Do you think God has a sense of humor? Have you ever looked at the Zebra, the giraffe, the elephant? What about the turkey? There is an interesting bird. Anyway, that is how I personally learn in life, through laughter, and frankly God puts me through a lot

of it. Sometimes it's by my own doing, or simply a lesson God is teaching me.

There isn't enough room to describe the whoops moments, or the "oh yah" moments God gives to me, but then, without them there would be no growth. Yup, so there I was sitting in Barns and Noble on one of those nice comfy chairs. You know the kind, where you can relax, read a book, enjoy your beverage of choice.

I had settled in with a nice book and was getting ready to read, when this woman wearing a black muumuu walks toward me. She was respectfully sporting a walker she needed to use for assistance. She asked if the overstuffed chair next to me was being used. Graciously, I waved her to the chair. As she sat down, I went back to my book. My big, important book! I admit, I hoped I would not get into a conversation with this person, but deep down, there was a feeling that it was going to happen.

Before I knew it, this nice lady in the black muumuu began to tell me all about her family, her children, and their life stories as well. It was an interesting conversation of one. But then she said something that caught my attention. She told me "my daughter is

a lesbian; I am Pentecostal and I am not sure how I feel about it!" Right away, the feelers on the back of the neck went up. I thought, "hmm, this is going to be interesting!" I listened to this woman, as she went on and on and on about her daughter and her partner. Deep in my soul a stirring began to rumble. At first I thought it was hunger, as it was about lunchtime or noontime. I actually hoped that this woman would see my big important book sitting in my lap, waiting to be read, or just leave or change the

a Pentecostal, and I believe in Jesus!" There they were my words of wisdom, my deeply spiritual and riveting words, which actually sounded like they were blurted out, like an actor on stage who doesn't know their lines too well. To be honest, that wasn't exactly the way I pictured that moment of... well you know what I mean. Have you ever had a moment like that?

My new friend in the black muumuu began to tell me how many degrees she had in theology. I braced myself for what I thought would be a barrage of scriptures, which actually never happened. The conversation actually never boiled down to it. She made some other comment; boy, I fired back with "there are no risers at the cross". What I meant was there is room there for all of us. Inside I was looking at myself in hysteria and saying to self "who are you and what have you done with her". But then God has a sense of humor with me. That is how God teaches me.

subject. It never happened. She sat there and talked and talked and talked. It took me a while, to realize that God wanted me to say something. Okay I admit I am slow sometimes to some of God's little lessons. The truth is I need a picture book. So, the undercurrent in my heart began to repeat the lessons on Homosexuality and the Bible that we have been discussing in our CARE groups. (Go team Tracy!) To be honest I wanted to ignore the beating of my heart, but I had to say something. I know that I know that I know, that God was telling me to say... something!

Silently I prayed again, this time for wisdom and the words. I cleared my throat and prepared myself for a brilliant statement. Suddenly, with a flash, my mouth opened and out came the words, "I, too, am a lesbian. I used to be

So my friend with the black muumuu actually changed the subject and then after 30 minutes of her talking and me agreeing or nodding in understanding, she actually went back to her book. Then she began to read. Go figure. Of all things to ponder! At that moment, as in Cinderella, the clock struck 12:00; okay it was 12:30. This time it was lunch. As I gathered my things, I turned to the lady in the muumuu, "it was nice to meet you". She said the same thing in return.

Later that day, I asked God, "What was that about". Do you know what God said to me in reply? "It doesn't always matter, what you say exactly. Its how you say it, and it matters that you listen when I speak and act when I do." So, there it is random thoughts. I still laugh, when I think about my friend in the black muumuu.



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2nd Annual Doggie Pageant by Marilyn Miller

We will be holding our 2nd Annual Delta Breeze Doggie Pageant with the City of Lathrop on Saturday, October 3, 2009 at Manuel Valverde Park located at 15557 5th Street in Lathrop. We expect this year's event to be bigger and better. This year in addition to the Doggie Parade and Pageant, we will be offering a Resource and Education Expo. There will be canine experts on hand to demonstrate how to handle behavior problems, as well as dog grooming tips, and a discount shot clinic, just to name a few.

The City Of Lathrop and Lathrop Veterinary Services will be offering free Rabies and micro-chipping vouchers to the first limited number of residents. This will be a community event and we will be inviting some area leaders to be judges for the pageant. If you know of any business that may want to have a booth at the event, we have information for you to give to them. Booth space is \$50, non-profits pay only \$35.


We are also looking for a Big Paw Corporate Sponsor, cost is \$300. They will receive free advertising & promotion, along

with a booth, event recognition, and 4 tickets to the pageant. Or they can choose to be a Little Paw Commercial Sponsor which includes a booth, event recognition, & 2 admissions to the event.

All proceeds will be divided between Lathrop Animal Services and Valley Ministries. We

hope you will tell your family and friends about this fun event. Our church will be having a booth at the event, as well as selling food & drinks. So, we could use some help in this area. Please contact Marilyn if you are willing to help out the day of the event. This is a great opportunity to let people know our church is in the community.

Delta Breeze Doggie Pageant



Mission: Possible

City of Lathrop
PLANNING & RECREATION

Saturday, October 3, 2009
9am to 12pm

Manuel Valverde Park

15557 Fifth Street
Lathrop, CA

\$10 registration

Children under 10 are FREE

The Delta Breeze Doggie Pageant is a fundraiser benefiting Lathrop Animal Services and Valley Ministries world missions

Canine Games - Costume Contest - Prizes - Vendors - And More!

Event Kick Off 9am start
City Official to Toss 1st Squeaky Toy

Doggie Parade
All ages and dog breeds welcome

Doggie Pageant (costume contest)
Talent Show
Best Dressed
Best in Show - Large Breed
Best in Show - Small Breed

Workshops & Presentations
Lathrop K-9 Unit • Microchip Voucher* • Grooming
Behavioral Training • Dog Food Specialist

Services
Rabies Vaccines - Dogs Only*
Spay / Neutering Voucher*

*Lathrop residents only. While supplies last.


Delta Breeze

I - 5

Louise Ave.

Manuel Valverde Park

Fifth Street



Lathrop Rd.

Doggie Pageant



GET THE WORD OUT
FOR
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THIS COULD BE
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1/2PG AVAILABLE AT
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The CARE Group by Sharon Henry

The CARE group ministry is steadily growing both spiritually and physically. We currently have over 40 people consistently active in small groups. With the structure of CARE Group ministries, groups are intended to be 6 to 12 members strong. That means we are getting ready to enter a new phase of the ministry – groups multiplying. In order to multiply groups, however, we need apprentice leaders to step up. If you have been involved in a CARE Group and are willing to give a little more time to facilitate a group please let your leader know that you would like to step up as an apprentice leader. We will also be looking for potential host homes.

We just finished a six-week series called CARE to Explore: How the Bible is for Sexual Minorities Too. The session

began looking at passages that have historically and inappropriately been used to condemn same-sex relationship; it then celebrated same-sex commitments in the Bible; and finally looked at Christ's words and deeds regarding same-sex relationships. The study was

g r e a t , but the conversation was even more incredible thanks to the diverse experiences, knowledge, and passion of each person in the groups. We then took a CARE Sunday to have a fun



social group. While all groups met individually for barbecues, pool parties, and get-togethers, we will be planning a CARE Group social for all groups to come together for a fun afternoon at a park.

Looking forward we will be beginning a 3-week series on social justice. It is never too late to become a part of this exciting ministry. If you are looking to become involved contact a CARE Group leader at church, or send an email to CARE@valleyministries.com.

Stockton Billy Moss
Stockton Leslie Vaughn
Tracy Dena Bowmer
Sacramento Erica Retzer
Stay tuned for more CARE group information. I know God will grow individuals and the church alike!

Mission: Possible by Jaime Thompson

Valley Ministries Missions...

Asian Pacific Initiative- The API was established in 2008 for the purpose of introducing MCC to Asia. In Asia gay men and lesbian women cannot assemble for worship. In spite of this fact, Rev. Elder Ken Martin and the API have been able to meet with a group of more than 100 GLBTQ Christians in Pakistan.

Encounter Missions International- EMI is actively training missionaries to go into the world and founding and discipling churches throughout the world. Their mission statement reads: "EMI

has only one passion and one purpose which is to see the nations come to know God's love."

Mother of Peace Orphanage- The Mother of Peace Orphanage houses and nurtures 210 children ranging in ages from newborn to 18 years of age. Each child's life has been affected/impacted by HIV/AIDS. Valley Ministries facilitates a Child Sponsorship Program where funds are collected and allocated for an individual child's educational expenses.

Safe Passage- Safe Passage works with the at-risk children of families working in the Guatemala City garbage dump. Within a safe and caring environment, we provide a comprehensive and integrated program that fosters hope, good health, educational achievement, self-sufficiency, self esteem and confidence. Children and parents discover that, through their own efforts they can move beyond poverty.



Between the Covers Con't from page 2

present a new look at very familiar scripture. The one point that may be a negative for some readers is that it is not written using inclusive language.

Note:

On Tuesday evening, May 26, I felt like this article was not finished. It needed an example of one of Joyce Meyer's commentaries. At the time I was feeling very discouraged because of what had happened earlier that morning. Now in case you do not remember what happened the morning of May

26, the California Supreme Court upheld Proposition 8. Even though my marriage to Princess will still be recognized, it felt like we as a community were defeated again.

Trying to put those feelings aside, I opened the Everyday Life Bible. It fell open to page 522: First Kings Chapter 3. Here is Joyce Meyer's note on that page: "Putting the Word to work"... "Have you ever thought that a law or perhaps a court verdict was unfair or unjust? The Israelites ruled by Solomon were greatly blessed by his God-giv-

en wisdom in administering justice among them (see I Kings 3:28). Some governing officials today are like Solomon, but not all of them are. Remember to pray for those in the legislative and legal systems, that they might have great wisdom and discernment in matters of justice. Pray that they will all totally submit their lives to God and make laws based on His Word and principles." The message seemed to be just for me and for my attitude. Could there be any better advice than that for May 26, 2009?