

VISTA GRANDE CONNECTION

November/December, 2015

AN ATTITUDE OF GRATITUDE

Whereas it is the duty of all Nations to acknowledge the providence of Almighty God, to obey His will, to be grateful for His benefits, and humbly to implore His protection and favor- and whereas both Houses of Congress have by their joint Committee requested me to recommend to the People of the United States a day of public Thanksgiving and Prayer to be observed by acknowledging with grateful hearts the many single favors of Almighty God especially by affording them an opportunity peaceably to establish a form of government for their safety and happiness. (Opening quote from the Thanksgiving Proclamation signed by George Washington, President of the United States of America, October 3, 1789)

Dear Heavenly Father,
How I thank You for all the blessings in my life,
Your love and forgiveness, Your Son, my Savior
and friend, Your Holy Spirit that leads and
guides me through each day. I love You, My God,
and thank You that You love me.

~~Jan Schuman

"A thankful heart is one of the primary identifying characteristics of a believer. It stands in stark contrast to pride, selfishness, and worry. And it helps fortify the believer's trust in the Lord and reliance of His provision, even in the toughest times. No matter how choppy the seas become, a believer's heart is buoyed by constant praise and gratefulness to the Lord."

~~John MacArthur, *Pastor, teacher, speaker, author*

Dear God,

I just wanted to send a very special "Thank you" for showing us, (Annette and I) the open doors to Vista Grande Church of God this past year. Pastor Greg has been on fire with his messages and desires to lead the congregation to what Your word is telling us to do, be Your disciples. What a blessing it has been to see our family overcome with Your anointing love, and watch the Holy Spirit move from one member to another!

~~Rob Chevalier

Daylight
Savings Time
ends
Sunday,
November 1st

Let us come before him with thanksgiving
Psalm 95:2

"Gratitude is an offering precious in the sight of God, and it is one that the poorest of us can make and be richer for having made it." ~A.W. Tozer

Dear God,

In looking back over the past years, I can see Your hand on my life. I am so grateful for Your leading, directing and always being there when I needed You most. I have found that when I turn things over to You, You set me on the right path. It is when I try to navigate for myself, that things turn out poorly, and then I am calling on You, my Savior, my Friend, my Counselor, for help.

I thank You, God, for answering my prayers for the big requests as well as the small, insignificant ones. You have blessed me...my life... in so many ways, including those that I am not even aware of. I cannot imagine facing each day without You.

Thank you, Jesus for making the ultimate sacrifice not only for me, but for everyone who would follow You.

And thank You also for Your Holy Spirit...It is unbelievable that You would care that much for me!

~~Joyce Weightman

"We pray for the big things and forget to give thanks for the ordinary, small (and yet really not small) gifts. How can God entrust great things to one who will not thankfully receive from Him the little things?"

~~Dietrich Bonhoeffer

FROM OUR PASTOR

Have You Bought Into the **Conspiracy?**

By Pastor Greg

As we are rapidly approaching the biggest holiday season of the year I wonder what is showing up on your personal radar? With the thought of another Christmas season just around the corner some are feeling overwhelmed already as they are thinking, "I'm not ready for all the hustle and bustle of Christmas this year. While others are beginning to scheme and plan just how they are going to develop their shopping strategy to maximize their chances of acquiring the best gifts for the lowest prices. Whether the thought of another Christmas season is beginning to flare up your ulcers or consume your thoughts in planning, we owe it to ourselves and to others to put this high profile holiday into a healthy perspective.

The truth is, there has been a conspiracy that has taken over the Christmas season. The Christmas story is a story of love, hope, redemption and relationship. So, what happened? How did it turn into stuff, stress and debt? Somehow, we've traded the best story in the world for the story of what's on sale.

There is a movement that began back in 2006 referred to as the **Advent Conspiracy**. It has become an international movement centered on bringing a deeper meaning to Christmas during the Christian season of Advent that immediately precedes it. The movement is characterized with a renewed focus upon these four founding principles: **Worship Fully, Spend Less, Give More, Love All**. The movement's message is to intentionally avoid getting caught up in the consumerism surrounding the holiday in order to celebrate Christmas more fully.

Back in 2006, Pastors Greg Holder, Chris Seay, Rick McKinley and others founded the organization to rebel against the hyper-consumerism to which they found many Christians fall victim. They launched a huge campaign initiative proposing to spend less on gifts and give more to the poor. Since then Advent Conspiracy has prompted thousands of churches to come together to raise funds for clean water wells in dry impoverished countries.

(Continued on page 5)



GIVE HOPE and the WARMTH OF GOD'S LOVE THIS HOLIDAY SEASON and SPREAD THE LOVE OF JESUS TO THOSE WHO DESPERATELY NEED

OPPORTUNITIES TO SHOW THE LOVE OF GOD

We are offering the following opportunities to give a gift that will mean so much to someone who will not be spending the holidays in the same way most of us spend it with friends and family, gifts and gatherings. Please prayerfully consider as a family, or individually, being a blessing to a stranger during this holiday season of Thanksgiving and Christmas. Beginning on **Sunday, November 1st**, the Giving Tree will be on the table in the front hallway across from the sanctuary doors. Take a gift tag/ornament from the "Giving Tree". Please read the instructions on the tag carefully and proceed.

THANKSGIVING MEAL

A large percentage of families who come to Mercy's Gate for assistance, don't have extra money to purchase a "Thanksgiving meal". A lot of them struggle to put food on the table everyday, and sometimes it is a hard decision whether to pay their living expenses, medical bills, etc. or buy food.

By taking a "Turkey Tag" from the Giving Tree, you are committing to purchase a Thanksgiving meal (including the turkey) for a family in need. Tear off the front part of the tag and place in the "Turkey" box. Mercy's Gate needs to know how many meals will be provided. A list of items to include in the meal are on the table by the display. We need to have your meal to the church no later than November 18th.

WRAPPED IN WARMTH

With the cold weather soon to come, the Springs Rescue Mission is needing new, warm, blankets for their shelter. If this is something your family or you would like to *give*, please take a tag from the tree, purchase a blanket (twin size). Bring to the church and place on the "Giving Tree" table.

GIFTS THAT SUSTAIN

When you or your family pick a **dairy animal gift tag** from the "Giving Tree", and donate \$70, you are, through Samaritan's Purse, providing families in poverty stricken countries with a goat or other dairy animal, a daily source of milk, rich with protein, calcium, and vitamins that are especially important to growing children. As herds grow, they can be sold for income or given to neighbors in need.

Most importantly, as the Samaritan teams offer training and basic veterinary care, they build relationships so they can tell families/individuals how they can have eternal life in Jesus Christ.

When you or your family pick a **water bucket gift tag** for \$100, you are providing hundreds of thousands of families with household water filters that use a natural process to strain out bacteria and other impurities from their water. Many water-borne diseases might be prevented if children in these impoverished countries didn't have to drink from polluted ponds and streams. These filters work for decades, need no chemicals or electricity, and can be manufactured locally for \$100.

(GIVE HOPE cont' on page 6)

GOD IS MOVING!

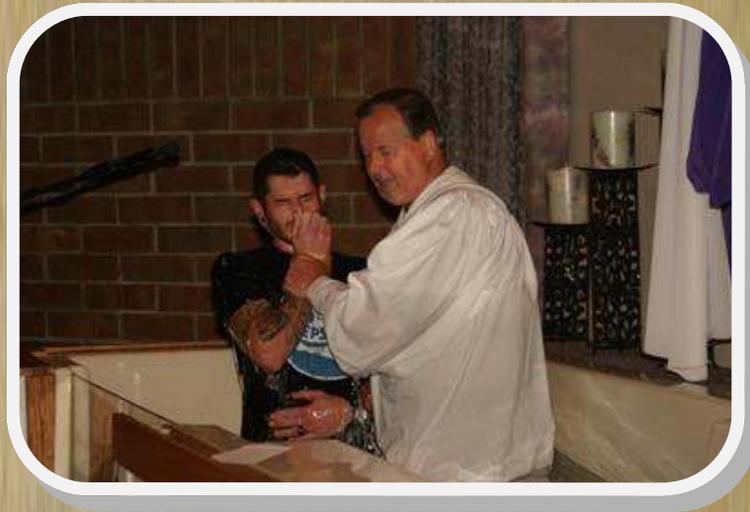
BAPTISMS at Vista Grande Church on October 4, 2015



Chris Ferguson



Tim Goetzinger



Adam Laird



Krystal Laird



Luke Merckx



Alisha Westfall

(Conspiracy continued from page 2)

Have you considered how many unwanted sweaters, boring gift cards, tasteless fruit cakes and plastic toys have been purchased every year in an effort to get a temporary smile or a fleeting moment of approval?

What would happen if families made a decision to cut way back upon spending on each other so that they could focus together upon *GIVING* to someone who desperately needs an act of love and care this Christmas?

Can Christmas still change the world? Not under it's current practices, but if families would begin refusing to buy into the Advent Conspiracy that has been spawned from consumerism, and begin choosing to become more like Christ by giving rather than taking, then yes we could begin to change the world! This Christmas season would you choose to Worship Fully, Spend Less, Give More and Love All? If you will I promise your Christmas celebration will become richer and more celebrative than ever before!

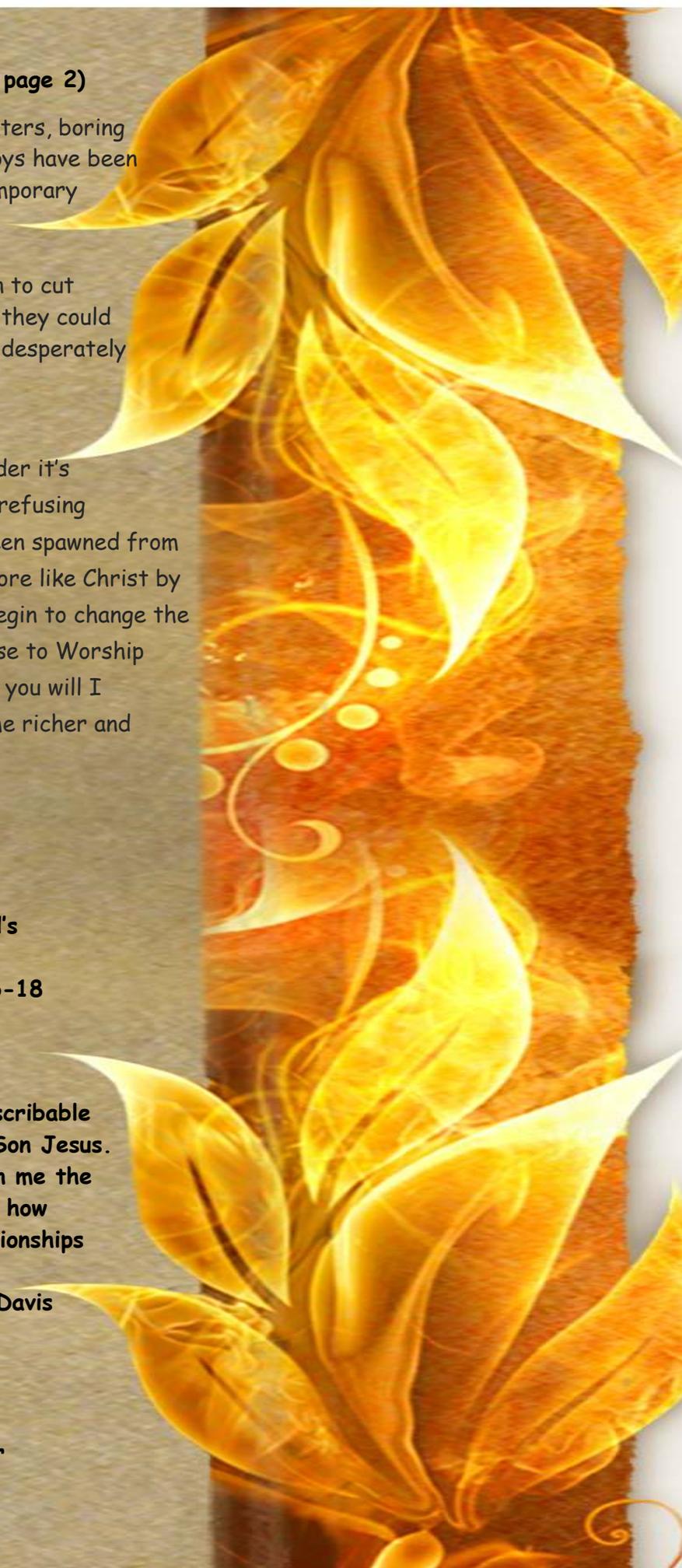
"Be joyful always; pray continually; give thanks in all circumstances, for this is God's will for you in Christ Jesus."

~~Paul, the Apostle: I Thessalonians 5:16-18

"Thank You, God for Your indescribable gift of salvation through Your Son Jesus. I am so grateful You have given me the spirit of grace and eyes to see how incredibly blessed I am in relationships and nature."

~~Cheryl Davis

"Thanksgiving with the mouth stirs up thankfulness in the heart." *~~John Piper*



HOME FOR THE HOLIDAYS Mercy's Gate sees a number of persons/families each week who, for a number of reasons—loss of job, illness, medical emergencies, etc. are not able to pay their rent/mortgage payment. The *Home for the Holidays* program at Mercy's Gate is set up to help families to be able to stay in their homes for the holidays. Through donations from churches and individuals, Mercy's Gate is able to help with rent, and at the same time give counseling and guidance to help families begin to change their situations for the better. By taking a "house" ornament, and making that donation, you are helping these families stay in their homes and work towards a better financial future. Please make checks payable to Vista Grande Church of God, and in the memo section put: Home for Holidays, and place in offering plate by December 1.

ADOPT A FAMILY FOR CHRISTMAS

Would you give up some of your Christmas to bless someone else with a Christmas that they might not otherwise have? This would include purchasing food for a Christmas Dinner, and a gift for each family member. If this sounds like something you or your family would like to do, please take a Christmas Tree tag from the Giving Tree, fill out the attached form, and put in the "Christmas Box". Someone will contact you with the name of your family, and family members. Your donation may be brought to the church to be picked up by the family or you can deliver them to the family.



WOMEN'S RETREAT 2015

What a awesome time of fellowship, spiritual learning, fun, & plenty of food! Twenty-five mostly VGC women met at the YMCA of the Rockies in Estes Park, CO from Friday night, October 9th through Sunday noon, October 11th. I think I can say with all certainty, everyone was blessed to be there!

Thank you Vicki & Jill for all the work you put into the weekend! Much appreciated!

How to contact us

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