

Escalon Pres

May 2013

SEEK: *to bring others to Faith in Jesus Christ*
SUPPORT: *personal Growth through God's Word*



SERVE: *in Mission locally and globally*
SUSTAIN: *a Christ-Centered Fellowship*



The Meal

By Pastor Troy Onsager

I had an interesting twist of events take place during the week of my recent study leave. I attended the West Coast Presbyterian Pastor's Conference in Mount Hermon along with my wife and boys. Yet, this year at the end of the week I added an additional con-ed event in Bismarck, ND. Here's the story:

A friend of mine, with whom I went to college in Jamestown, North Dakota and then seminary at PTS, informed me a few months ago of an event that he was planning at the University of Mary in Bismarck where he now teaches New Testament. For the planned leadership event, he was bringing out our former professor from Jamestown, Jim Edwards (now at Whitworth), to speak to a group of pastors about the Gospel of Luke. After a few conversations, this snow-balled into an event in which five of us, who were religions majors at the same time at Jamestown, all made plans to get out to Bismarck to surprise Jim as a sort of reunion. Among our group were

two NT professors, one Presbyterian and one Catholic, two pastors, one Presbyterian and one Baptist, and one priest - who also happens now to be the President of the University of Mary. An eclectic group of folks to say the least - but we had not been together as a group since 1995 where we debated theology and enjoyed one another's company as friends who were all heading to the service of the church (most of us had not entered Jamestown College with this intent at all).

Certainly, it was an eventful weekend, particularly as I went from spending an afternoon with my family and friends from WCPPC in shorts on the beach in Santa Cruz, to the familiar cold weather of North Dakota. In fact, as I was staying with my friend and his family over the weekend, I watched out the window on Sunday as a record-breaking blizzard in April shut the city of Bismarck down - completely. It was a minor miracle that a Ford F-150 and a sloped street enabled me to make it to

the airport the next day and fly out largely without significant delays.

The public lecture and the day-long pastor's colloquium were wonderful opportunities to learn and to relive our time as students. Yet the highlight of the trip was a meal.

On Friday evening Dr. Edwards, Dr. Watts, and his wife Myra (another formative theology professor during our time in Jamestown) and the rest of us gathered in Mr. President's house right next to the University of Mary. He prepared and served us a seven course Italian meal that he picked up during his studies in Rome and we sat around a table, eating a stellar meal together, for almost *six hours*.

It was a night I will never forget - for it was filled with laughter as we reminisced about our days together in Jamestown as foolish, confused, and immature college students trying to sort out the rest of our lives. We remembered our eclectic yet true friendship that invariably led to very vigorous and animated theological debates. We talked of current events and the state of the church, eventually having the good natured and thriving debate that are natural for friends who really care about faith and life. In such a context, defensiveness is unnecessary.

Finally, the evening consisted of a series of personal speeches of gratitude for the ways in which Jim and Gary really spoke into our lives during such a formative period of our spiritual growth and vocational discernment. They themselves also expressed gratitude for the joy of teaching students that have become friends which they now are learning from in return. It was very moving and an evening simply filled with gratitude to God for the way in which he brought our paths together, all of us with different struggles and, at times, painful roads.

It was just an evening of grace. I thought, at many times to myself throughout the evening, what a blessing it was to be *there*, at that table, as friends - Christian friends. More importantly, I thought, where would I be, *who* would I be, had I not experienced the four coldest years of my life with these people who were put into my life by virtue of the mere acceptance of a wrestling scholarship. My life changed dramatically there in North Dakota - and these people were to blame.

Or maybe God. His grace. And that night - a meal of grace. Words were spoken that night because the joy of the shared meal provided the conditions for it to occur.

Meals of Grace at EPC

We have many meals of grace here at EPC. Sure we have annual all-church meals together as a body which range from gourmet sit-downs to casual potlucks. We prepare and serve meals at the Salvation Army facility in Modesto. We support C.A.R.E. in Escalon which feeds many families each week and when we haul in our groceries at the end of each month for donation we are participating in God's grace in the provision of a meal.

One of the great surprising joys over the past few years has been the Dinner for Eight program run by the Deacons. If you are not familiar with it, the Deacons partner together eight people from our church around a table at the host family's house for an evening of food, fellowship and conversation. My wife and I have participated in a number of these and they have been a tremendous blessing to us. I have received constant feedback from those who have participated in these dinners concerning the remarkable way in which a meal can be a wonderful context to really get to know others in the church - who they are, where they've been, what God is up to in their lives. There's no pre-programmed agenda for the evening. There's just this remarkably deep and meaningful experience that often accompanies the gathering of Christians around a table, where every voice is heard. Very biblical by the way.

If you haven't tried a dinner for eight, look for sign-ups to be coming from the Deacons in the fall.

Most importantly, our meals of grace happen on the first Sunday of each month - around a table of grace. It is a table where we remember how foolish, confused and immature we've been - yet how moved by the grace that is still offered to us. It's a table where God doesn't merely *accept* us as we are, it's a table where God wants to *change* us into who he would have us be. That is why the grace of God is so powerful - for it takes us as we are, yet refuses to leave us that way.

Our lives are meant to be changed dramatically at this table - and Jesus is to blame. Our only proper response to it is that of gratitude - for the the grace of a meal where our eyes are opened to the living grace of God:

When he was at table with them, he took the bread and blessed and broke it and gave it to them. And their eyes were opened, and they recognized him. And he vanished from their sight. They said to each other, "Did not our hearts burn within us while he talked to us on the road, while he opened to us the Scriptures?" (Luke 24:30-32)



Music In Life

By Joel Adams

I have been amazed at the weather recently. Within a couple weeks, we had thunder and lightening storms, 80 degree days, and rushing dry wind. Creation and it's variety always points me to music. The Psalmist draws many connections between creation and the Creator. The idea that the unbelievable beauty and variety in nature points to the infinite nature of God, is all over scripture as well. The psalmist pens "When I look at your heavens, the work of your fingers, the moon and the stars that you have established; what are human beings that you are mindful of them, mortals that you care for them?" (Psalm 8:3-4) Multiple tunes have been paired with this psalm.

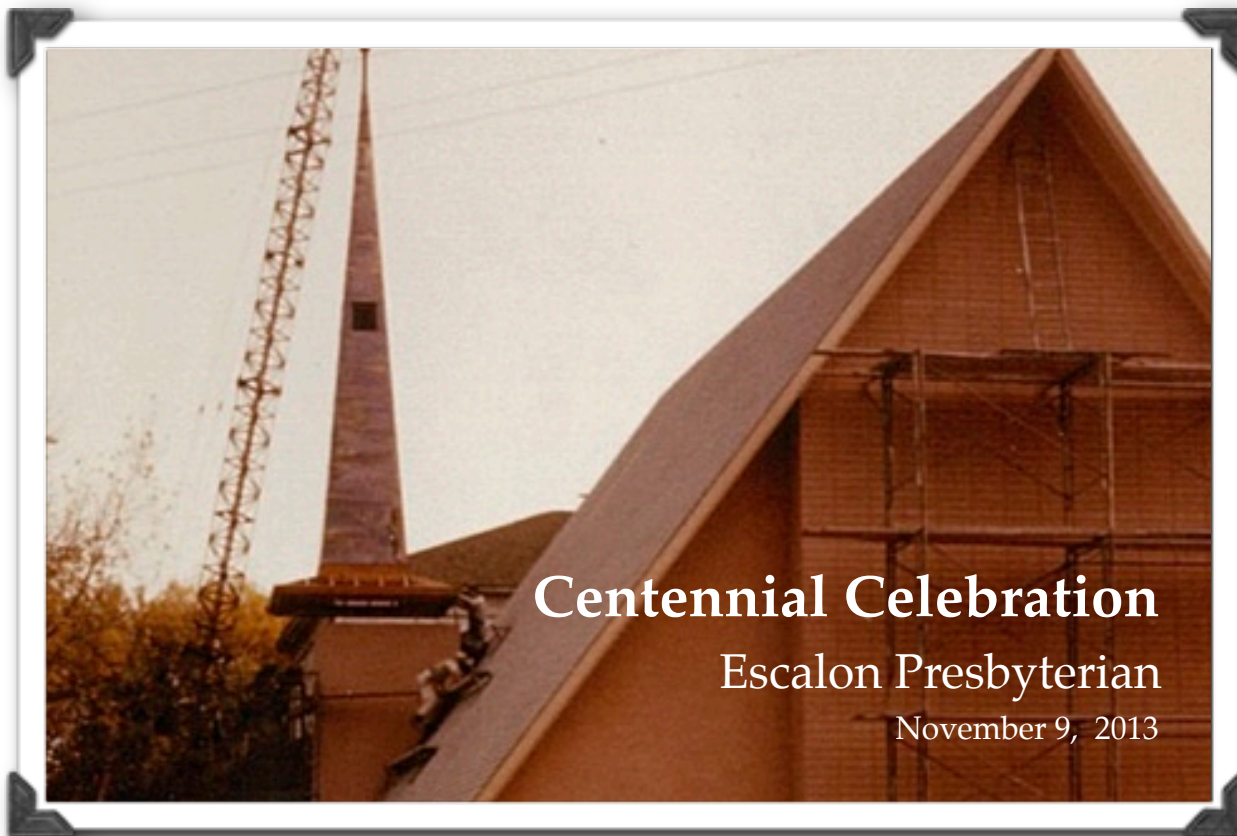
Music that draws from creation is of the most powerful. I think of Gustav Holtz's "The Planets" and Vivaldi's "The Seasons". How rich and beautiful is the translation of raw creation into scored music. Music, without words, can alone, communicate volumes. Music has the power to speak to us and lead us like few other vehicles in this world. The right tune can ease our aches, inspire our thoughts, and maximize our joy. We all have those "go to" tunes that help us in our valley's and mountains of life, when we need to relax, and when we want to celebrate. Music is a tool we use throughout our lives! Music with text can do the same thing in a more directed manner. We respond directly to the text, which is understood, and the music supports the message or story. Well written and composed songs do this well. Often, a song writer is inspired with words, but does not have a tune to communicate the message. We find this often with hymns, where throughout history the same text has been set to different tunes. Here is where we add a third element to the power of music. A quality matching of

tune and text is then taken to another level when the topic is sacred. Here is where our transcendent God surpasses all simple tune and text pairings with music that glorifies himself and gives us a "voice" in worship. We can't describe it adequately, but must actually "do" it to experience the amazing reality. And so it is with worship overall, we must "do" worship in order to adequately worship. As we act in word, song, prayer, silence, listening...we are giving to God our worship. How we are blessed and what we receive is a result of our offering and not the focus of worship. When we give our praise to God our lives are enriched immeasurably.

Although we don't always recognize it, music enriches life and is an integral part of who we are. While at worship, sing and rejoice with intentional vibrance. This "act" is for GOD. While you are living the day to day remember hymns as a great tool for our benefit! Next time you watch a tree in the wind, are refreshed by a breeze, or taken away by the stars and moon, think of the Creator. When you are on a mountain top remember the song "How Great Thou Art." When you are experiencing a storm sing "O God Our Help In Ages Past." When your joy is uncontainable try humming "Hymn to Joy." When you're in the lowness of a canyon, sit and sing softly "It Is Well With My Soul." Be enriched by music!

EPC Centennial Celebration 1913 - 2013

By Diane Houglund



how to make pies, we need your help. Pie making sessions not only contribute to the centennial celebration, but provide a unique time of fellowship for all involved. More detailed information will follow, as well as sign-ups for pie ingredients needed and for volunteer bakers. Contacts for this project are Laura Alcantor (604-3728) and Lorie Macsenti (838-2600).

EPC's Centennial Celebration will take place on Saturday and Sunday, November 9 & 10, 2013.

Saturday's celebration will include a catered evening meal and special program at the Escalon Community Center. Sunday's portion of the celebration includes a distinctive worship service, followed by fellowship with homemade pies on the menu. You have already heard about plans for a unique commemorative booklet to be published.

Our plans include each and every one of you. If you have photos, recipes, or any type of historical information regarding EPC and/or Escalon, please bring them to the church office by May 5. Originals will be returned to you. Please include your name with your entries. Contacts for this project are Marsha Love (847-4430) and Janet Barton (599-6400).

The pies will be made in the Faith Center later this year. If you have fruit and/or nut trees and would like to contribute some of your harvest, please let us know. If you have pie making experience and/or want to learn

Escalon means "stepping stones"

which is a fitting theme for our centennial celebration. EPC has been an important institution in our community for 100 years. Not only will we be stepping back into the past to examine where we have been, but looking forward to where we might step going into the future.

We hope each of you will join us on November 9 & 10 and consider getting involved in helping with one or more of the planned projects. Further information will be forthcoming as plans evolve and time draws nearer to November.

Your Centennial Planning Team:

Laura Alcantor, Janet Barton, Charlie Dodge, Diane Houglund, Marsha Love, Lorie Macsenti, Lisa McCune, Leslie Onsager



Hot Dog Fundraiser

Youth - June 2, Fellowship

The Philippine Mission Team is raising funds for their mission trip. On June 2, during Fellowship, there will be a chili dog luncheon. You will be able to pre-purchase tickets for the event. Come and enjoy a delicious lunch as well as support a great cause! Any questions contact Jen Schmidt.



VBS June 17-21, 2013

EPC June 17-21 2013

Out in the wide-open spaces, we'll discover a colorful old town where all the excitement of the Wild West awaits! In **SonWest**, we'll celebrate all the fun of being buckaroos-so grab a sarsaparilla and join in the jamboree! There'll be food, games, music, crafts-and amazing true stories that point you and your kids to Jesus! We need lots of volunteers! For more information contact Ellen Nelson.



EPC Youth Group

May - Mike Fahey

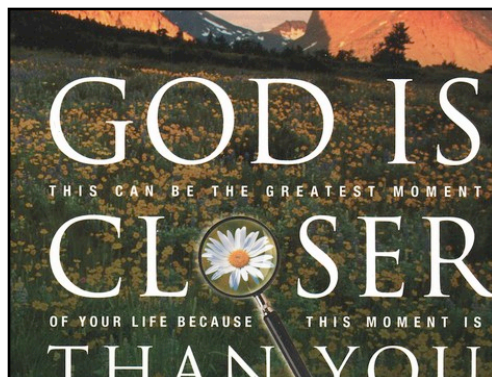
EPC Youth Group will be meeting from 6:30pm - 8:30pm in the Youth Room. For further information contact our Youth Director Mike Fahey. Come join us and have some great fellowship, teaching and fun!



All Church Picnic

June 23

Save the date! All Church Picnic at Van Allen School 21051 Hwy 120, immediately following worship, 11:00am to 2:00pm. Sign-ups for potluck and helpers coming soon! Come and have fun!



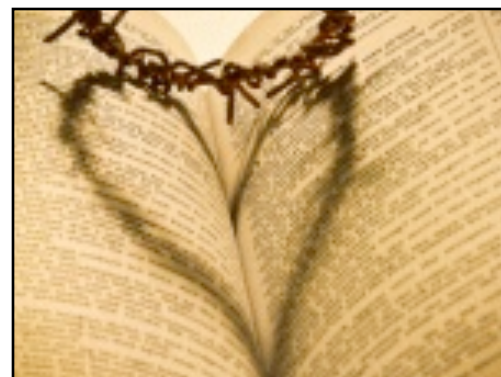
Adult Sunday School

Sunday 9:00 am - Scott Mayfield / Fireside

Current Study: God is Closer Than You Think DVD series by John Ortberg.

Sunday 9:00 am - Dan Adams / Faith Center

Current Study: The book of Romans. We will be starting Isaiah immediately after finishing the book of Romans.



Women's Studies

May 13 @ 1:30 pm - Women's Circle

Women's Circle meets on Monday May 13, 1:30 in the Fireside Room.

Mondays @ 7 pm - S.I.S.

S.I.S. Bible Study meets Monday evenings at 7:00 pm in the Fireside Room. Current Study: James: Mercy Triumphs by Beth Moore.

Session Notes

By Jeff Hood

Session met in the Fireside Room at EPC on Tuesday, April 16th, 2013. The Rev. Troy Onsager opened with prayer at 7:03 PM PT.

Julia Leeth, Executive Presbyter, joined us representing the Presbytery Engagement Team (PET).

For the purposes of Gracious Separation process, Session voted on a number of requirements; for dismissal from PC(USA) to ECO; to engage use of Presbytery selected real property appraiser, Mann & Associates; to approve Finance Team to negotiate and report to Session terms of dismissal; that the full Session be appointed as the Special Committee of the Congregation (SCC) regarding negotiating terms of dismissal process, MSC unanimously.

An explanation of the dismissal formula was discussed and presents a fair calculation related to dismissal. This is in support of the Presbytery's willingness to bless the churches choosing to go and bless those churches choosing to stay. Julia noted that "next step" materials should be expected in the near future from PET.

Discussion on Gracious Separation concluded when Julia left at 8:07 p.m.

Business: Finance – March was a 5 week month so totals are a slight bit skewed, but again overall we are right about where we planned to be related to budget and finances.

Troy's Notes – Bere and Kathy Lindley were presented for membership here at EPC. MSC

On the Calendar: 04/20-Mission/Outreach Work Group at Escalon Golf Course

04/27 – Love Escalon

04/28 - C. A. R. E. Sunday – Rice

05/10– Tisha DeHavens Spring Piano recital @ 6:00 p.m.

05/12 – Mother's Day – Deacons Fellowship

05/14 – Life Line Screening, EPC Faith Center, @ 8:00 a.m.

05/21 – May Session Meeting @ 7:00 p.m. Fireside Room

Communion for April will be Laura Alcantor, Sherry Branscombe, Bob McCune & Margie Sawyer.

Assistant Counter for April is Bob McCune and May will be Jeff Hood.

Meeting adjourned with prayer at 8:15 p.m.

Deacon Notes

By Cheryl Hall

April 18, 2013 Meeting

Community Help:

We have finished serving meals at the Modesto Salvation Army facility for the year 2013.

Thank you to all who have supported this ministry! We are appreciative for so many who participated in this ministry by:

Prepping meals, financial support, serving meals, praying for the ministry, providing music and providing cookies.

And to those who came to personally share the Gospel with those staying at the facility.

What a blessing you have been to so many. Thank you.

The C.A.R.E. focus food for June 2 will be potatoes and the June 30 donation food will be eggs. And don't forget you can always bring other non-perishable foods, too.

Thank you for providing food for others.

Deacon Activities:

The Deacons would like to remind you that if you or your family has need for prayer or other needs we can help you with, please contact your Deacon or the church office.

Deacon of the Month for May will be Ruth Paz.

The next Deacon Meeting will be on Thursday, May 16.

May 2013

April 2013							May 2013							June 2013																							
S	M	T	W	T	F	S	S	M	T	W	T	F	S	S	M	T	W	T	F	S																	
1	2	3	4	5	6		1	2	3	4	5	6	7	8	9	10	11	12	13	14	15	16	17	18	19	20	21	22	23	24	25	26	27	28	29	30	31

Escalon Presbyterian Church

Sunday	Monday	Tuesday	Wednesday	Thursday	Friday	Saturday
<p>28</p> <p>C.A.R.E. Sunday - Rice</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> 9:00 AM Adult Sunday School 9:15 AM Youth Sunday School 10:30 AM Worship 11:30 AM Fellowship 6:30 PM Young Adults 	<p>29</p> <p>Church Office Closed</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> 7:00 PM S.I.S. Bible Study 	<p>30</p>	<p>1</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> 6:30 PM Youth Group (HS) 7:00 PM Chancel Choir 	<p>2</p>	<p>3</p>	<p>4</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> 7:00 AM Men's Fellowship Group & Study
<p>5</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> 9:00 AM Adult Sunday School 9:15 AM Youth Sunday School 10:30 AM Worship 11:30 AM Fellowship 6:30 PM Young Adults Study 	<p>6</p> <p>Church Office Closed</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> 7:00 PM S.I.S. Bible Study 	<p>7</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> 2:00 PM Jr. Girl Scouts 7:00 PM Trustees Meet 	<p>8</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> 6:30 PM Youth Group (HS) 7:00 PM Chancel Choir 	<p>9</p>	<p>10</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> 6:00 PM Tisha DeHaven's Spring Piano Recital 	<p>11</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> 7:00 AM Men's Fellowship Group & Study
<p>12</p> <p>Mother's Day</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> 9:00 AM Adult Sunday School 9:15 AM Youth Sunday School 10:30 AM Worship 11:30 AM Fellowship 6:30 PM Young Adults 	<p>13</p> <p>Church Office Closed</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> 1:30 PM Women's Circle 7:00 PM S.I.S. Bible Study 	<p>14</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> 8:00 AM Life Line Screening 	<p>15</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> 6:30 PM Youth Group (HS) 7:00 PM Chancel Choir 	<p>16</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> 6:30 PM Deacons Meet 6:30 PM VBS Planning Meeting 	<p>17</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> 9:30 AM Mom's Time Out 	<p>18</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> 7:00 AM Men's Fellowship Group & Study
<p>19</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> 9:00 AM Adult Sunday School 9:15 AM Youth Sunday School 10:30 AM Worship 11:30 AM Fellowship 1:30 PM Golf Tournament, Dinner and Silent Auction 6:30 PM Young Adults 	<p>20</p> <p>Church Office Closed</p> <p>Newsletter Deadline</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> 7:00 PM S.I.S. Bible Study 	<p>21</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> 7:00 PM Session Meeting 	<p>22</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> 6:30 PM Youth Group (HS) 	<p>23</p>	<p>24</p>	<p>25</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> 7:00 AM Men's Fellowship Group & Study
<p>26</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> 9:00 AM Adult Sunday School 10:30 AM Worship 11:30 AM Fellowship 6:30 PM Young Adults Study 	<p>27</p> <p>Church Office Closed</p> <p>Memorial Day</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> 7:00 PM S.I.S. Bible Study 	<p>28</p>	<p>29</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> 6:30 PM Youth Group (HS) 	<p>30</p>	<p>31</p>	<p>1</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> 7:00 AM Men's Fellowship Group & Study

FINANCIALS **March**

	Income
Actual Income	\$ 23,094
Budget Income	\$ 20,007
Over Budget	\$ 3,087
	Expense
Actual Expense	\$ 17,817
Budget Expense	\$ 20,007
Under Budget	\$ (2,190)

FINANCIALS YEAR-TO-DATE

	Income
Actual Income	\$ 63,163
Budget Income	\$ 60,021
Over Budget	\$ 3,142
	Expense
Actual Expense	\$ 60,083
Budget Expense	\$ 60,021
Over Budget	\$ 62

Bible Study Fellowship

A ladies Welcome Class will be offered May 8th at 9:20 a.m. to enroll for Bible Study Fellowship's study of Matthew beginning in September. Bible Study Fellowship meets at Modesto Covenant Church 913 Floyd Ave., Modesto. For more information, ladies can contact Vanessa Holcombe or Ruth Paz.

C O N T A C T U S - L E A D E R S H I P

Escalon Presbyterian

1612 First Street, Escalon, CA 95320
(209) 838-2798
Website — www.escalonpres.org
Office Hours — 9-3 Tuesday - Friday
Pastor — Troy Onsager
 • troy@escalonpres.org
Secretary — Kristy Applegate
 • kristy@escalonpres.org
Music Director — Joel Adams
 • jcadams70@gmail.com
Youth Director — Mike Fahey
 • mikefaheysr@yahoo.com
Custodian — Laura Alcantor

Session

Adult Ministries — Margy Sawyer, Sal Sandoval
Youth Ministries — Ellen Nelson, Sherry Branscombe
Church Life — Laura Alcantor, Michele Hood
Finance — Jerry Hougland, Jeff Hood
Mission Outreach — Dick Nelson, Dave Hall
Trustees — Bob McCune, Rick Dodge
Clerk of Session — Jeff Hood
Treasurer — Diane Hougland

Board of Deacons

President — Tom Love
Vice-President — Victor Paz
Secretary — Cheryl Hall
Treasurer — Tisha DeHaven
Lay Leaders — Cheryl Hall
Greeters — Linda Gentry
Shepherding — Marsha Love, Ruth Paz
Prayer Chain — Cheryl Hall
Sunshine — Janet Barton
C.A.R.E. — Tom & Marsha Love
Communion — Victor & Ruth Paz
New Deacons — Stephanie Bruns, Linda Gentry