

**December 2011 & January 2012
Calendar
of
Events**



Women's Evening Bible Study & Cookie Exchange
December 14, 7:00 p.m.
Resume: January 10

**Women's Daytime Bible Study
Christmas Brunch**
December 15, 9:30 a.m.

Christmas Eve Candlelight Service
December 24, 5:00 p.m.

Christmas Day Service
December 25, 10:30 a.m.
No First Hour Connections
Childcare for infant – Age 3

New Year's Day Service
January 1, 10:30 a.m.
No First Hour Connections
Childcare for infant – Age 3

All-Church "Undecorating" Day
January 2, 10:00 a.m.

Brentwood Senior Ministry
January 14, 10:30 a.m. (Off-site)

**Committees, Ministries, and Other
Standing Groups/Events:**

Sr. High & Middle School Youth
December 14, 6:30 p.m.
Wednesday Evenings in January, 6:30 p.m.

Missions Ministry Committee
December 14 & January 11, 7:00 p.m.

Financial Resource Committee
December 14 & January 11, 7:00 p.m.

Concert of Prayer
December 18 & January 15, 6:30 p.m..

Children's Education Ministry
January 8, Noon

Worship Planners
January 8, 5:00 p.m.

Board of Elders
January 12, 7:00 p.m.

Craft Night
January 13, 7:00 p.m.

Care Ministry
January 23, 7:00 p.m.

Dudes' Night (Youth Group)
January 28, 5:30 p.m.

**The Hanging of the Greens
VCL Kids Shine at the Annual Christmas Celebration**



**Record Number of
Boxes for
Operation
Christmas Child**

This year VCL collected 117 shoeboxes for *Operation Christmas Child*, our best ever. These boxes, along with millions of others, are enroute to underprivileged kids around the world. Samaritan's Purse hopes to provide over eight million boxes this year. If you would still like to participate, you can build a box online. Interested? Visit their website at: <https://www.samaritanaspurse.org/index.php/Giving/Build-A-Box/>



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Senior Pastor
Associate Pastor
Ministries Administrator
Office Manager
Custodian

Lee Eclov
Michael Mauriello
Susan Eclov
Susan Beck
Angela Fisher

Elders: Warren Anderson (chair), Carl Johnson, Chris McNiven, Jim Stamoilis & Raymond Wunderlich

December 2011/January 2012

Annual Congregational Meeting Looks to the Future

By Pastor Lee Eclov

We had such a delightful and encouraging annual congregational meeting! We gathered on Sunday evening, Nov. 20, to address church business, to give some thought to future issues, and to pray.

The congregation approved a 2012 general budget of \$505,000, as well as a variety of changes to the bylaws. Chris McNiven and Raymond Wunderlich were affirmed for the Board of Elders. Also approved – Henry Van-Dixhorn as Financial Resources Chair, Jim Hansen as Treasurer, Sharon Johnson and Karen Kasch as members of the Human Resources Committee.

Jim Hansen did the impossible. He made the financial report the most entertaining part of the evening with his Pecha Kucha Moola. (You had to be there.) He explained that this year's giving, through October, is \$9000 behind budget, but our expenses are also less than budgeted. So as of the end of October our balance this year is about \$9000 in the black. Our 2012 budget

breaks down as follows: 48% staff salaries and benefits, 19% for mortgage, 11% building and property care, 13% missions and supported organizations, and 10% for VCL office and ministry expenses.

I explained that we have been seeing growth and that the elders will consider three related issues in the new year. First, we will continue to track attendance in the event we need to go to two services. A task force has discussed this prospect and has given some guidelines to the elders. Second, we will consider a mini-capital campaign for some building improvements including the room dividers for the Great Room and possible fixed walls for children's rooms and a future office, as well as debt reduction or other priorities. Third, we will address the issue of future staffing. We invited the congregation's comments and questions and had a helpful discussion. After the business portion of the meeting we had a time of prayer and fellowship.

Finding God in a Dark, Cold Season: Sermons for the Winter

By Pastor Lee Eclov

During the dark months of January and February we will look into two dark Old Testament books to see the light of God's work – Habakkuk and Esther. The prophet Habakkuk learned that God would use a people even more wicked than Israel had become to chastise his people. It was a hard pill to swallow. We'll spend four Sundays looking at the three chapters of the prophet's journey to joy in a dark season.



Esther is a wonderful, strange story of God's intervention to save his people from annihilation. In ten chapters, God's name is never mentioned. Now what do you make of a book of the

Bible that never mentions God!? The story gives rise to the Jews' greatest celebration of the year, Purim. These will be some fascinating Sundays.

Those two dark stories will lead us to Lent. Traditionally, that is a season for sober self-evaluation but I plan to take us in a different direction this year – to the great hymns in Revelation. More on that later.

Here's my challenge: **Please read Habakkuk and Esther!** You will get so much more out of these sermons and worship services if you have prepared.

**For more news and information
from VCL check our website:
www.eVCL.org**

Compassion Ministries

By Pastor Michael Mauriello

Senior Ministries at Brentwood Begin Saturday, January 14, 10:30 a.m.

Have a dog, but don't know how to get him or her involved in ministry? Don't have a dog, but looking for a way to serve Jesus? As you know we've been working to create relationships with our senior adult centers in order to expand our compassion ministries. We've made a new arrangement with Brentwood North to visit the second Saturday morning of every month from



10:30-12:00 noon. What will we do on those mornings? We'll walk our dogs! Brentwood would like us to bring

well-behaved dogs to meet the residents and to give them a chance to connect with a two-legged visitor, too. If you don't have a dog, come along anyway! We would love to have you come with us.

LOVE Inc., January 14

Every second Saturday, our Love INC. team meets to deliver furniture throughout Lake County. This is a great ministry opportunity for those with a strong back looking for an opportunity to serve with some great guys at VCL. Contact Carl Johnson for more details.



PADS Lunches Looking for Help

We are looking for some additional individuals to help us out with PADS lunches. Give Pastor Michael a call or email (pastormike@evcl.org) for more info.

Seeking Volunteers for Senior Adult Ministries

Volunteers are still needed to help with our worship services on Thursday afternoons at the senior adult communities (Sedgebrook, Brentwood North, and Wealshire). Teachers, musicians, and general friends wanted. Chat with Pastor Michael.

Praying at Just the Right Time

By Pastor Lee Eclow

One Sunday morning in October I was passed a note just before the benediction asking if we would pray for Eric Lyons, John and Kaye's son, who was at that moment involved in a dangerous mission in southeast Asia. Eric founded a small organization called Hope for the Silent Voices and was involved that night (for him) in a rescue.

Later he wrote with his thanks: "I am humbled and grateful for people to take time out of their lives to answer what may be God's leading. It appears that Sunday was such a time and I can assure you that protection was afforded. Perhaps the prayer prompting was not so much for me as it may have been for the young girl with whom we were assisting. God continues to show up in the midst of real trials and this is a reassurance to me that this work is something He wants pursued. So again I say 'thank you' to you for allowing that prayer time to happen. And I thank VCL for playing a part in what we believe has been a safe and successful return of a young girl. Your gesture has been a tremendous encouragement and shot of spiritual adrenaline to our efforts."

To learn more about Eric's work go to

Hope for the Silent Voices

<http://hopeforthesilentvoices.org/>

Thanks to Dave Hooper

Dave Hooper completed his fall internship on our staff in early December. During his three months with us Dave worked with compassion ministries, adult education, leading a Growth Group, and strategic planning. He sat in on our elder board meetings. He also did a variety of other assignments. Dave has strong gifts in theology and strategic thinking. He and Libby will continue to be part of our congregation for the foreseeable future while he pursues a Ph.D. Their hope is to eventually be involved with missions—he in education, Libby in medicine.



Dave, Libby & Anastasia Hooper

You Are Always Welcome—Adult Fellowship First Hour Connections and Growth Groups

By Pastor Michael Mauriello

A friend in the church and I were talking about some ministry possibilities. She asked me if she and her husband had to sign up to go to our First Hour Connection classes. I was very surprised, and said, "No sign up required". She then asked if she and her husband could be a part of a growth group even if they traveled frequently, and couldn't be regular attenders?

Allow me to say that you all are always welcome to any of our gatherings. Busy schedules or traveling need not keep you from being a part of Sunday mornings or growth groups. Hebrews 10:26 says, "Let us not give up meeting together, as some are in the habit of doing, but let us encourage one another, and all the more as you see the day approaching." We won't stand in your way of obeying this command, I promise! Be involved! We'll be gracious.

Explore Membership at VCL January 22 and 29, 9:00 a.m.

By Pastor Lee Eclow

We don't talk too often about membership at VCL, but it is a significant part of church life. Membership is a reflection of one's commitment to the church and is an encouragement to the other believers in the church. Essentially, to become a member at VCL a person must make a clear profession of faith in Christ and affirm our Statement of Faith.

Our bylaws require anyone applying for membership to "receive instruction in the doctrine, by-laws, history and philosophy of ministry of VCL and the Evangelical Free Church of America." Our next Explorers' Class will be at 9 a.m. on Sunday morning, Jan. 22 and 29, in my office. Not only do we cover the topics required, but it is a time to get better acquainted and to answer questions you might have. If you haven't taken this important step, I hope you'll join us.

Check Out New Blog for Christians in the Workplace

One of VCL's own, Nancy Nauman, has worked for many years in the corporate world. She recently began a blog you might find encouraging. Check out <http://heartofaservant.biz>. Her vision is to provide Christians in the workplace with encouragement, resources and support to make positive changes in the business world by adopting the Heart of a Servant.

If you have a blog with a Christian emphasis that you'd like others at VCL to see let us know.

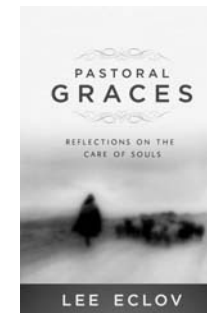
Mornings with Michael, Sundays 9:00 a.m. will begin the New Year in *Galatians*. We'll have an opportunity to explore Christian freedom, and how Jesus makes us freer than we can imagine.

Abundant Life, led by Raymond Wunderlich and Jim Stamoolis, meets Sundays 9:00 a.m. and continues its discussion of John Vosnos' book, *Getting Into Jesus' Life*.

Growth Group Sign-Ups:

Did you miss a chance to get into a Growth Group? Well, you can sign up in January! Growth Group sign ups are going to occur on Sunday, January 8 and Sunday, January 15, 2012. We will have a list of Growth Groups who still have open spots, and perhaps even a brand new one, just starting out. Growth Groups meet at different times and places, so you should be able to find a match for your schedule. Contact Londa Mauriello, our Growth Group Coordinator, if you have any questions.

An Update on Pastoral Graces



In the November *Vine* I announced that I have been working on a book for Moody Publishers entitled *Pastoral Graces: Reflections on the Care of Souls*. I finished the manuscript on November 29 and sent it to my editor. Now the review and marketing processes begin.

The book is scheduled for release around May 1. I am very grateful for the wonderful encouragement I have received, and for the freedom the elders gave me to pursue this in the first place. My editor wrote, "I believe we have a 'gem' with what you've done in this manuscript.. I'm more eager than ever to get the book completed and in the hands of readers. As I read it there are times that I laugh out loud and there are times that I weep in identification with the stories you tell."



Preaching & Worship Sermons

DECEMBER 2011 AND JANUARY 2012



Date	Text	Sermon Title
12/11/11	Psalm 13	"How Long, O Lord" with Dan McConchie
12/18/11	Micah 5:1-5	"He Will Be Their Peace" Communion
12/25/11	Luke 2:14	Peace and Favor
1/1/12	Heb. 13:21-22, 13:25	Benediction for a New Year

FINDING GOD IN A COLD AND DARK SEASON

1/8/12	Hab. 1:1-11	Wrong Answer?
1/15/12	Hab. 1:12-2:20	There Must Be Some Mistake
1/22/12	Hab. 2:4	Last One Standing Communion
1/29/12	Hab. 3:1-19	Yet

Prayer for this month

Our Missions Ministry Team as a new chair is found and new members added.

Elders as they begin considering how to handle various growth challenges.

People attending VCL who are not yet disciples of Jesus Christ.

Faithful and consistent stewardship from each of us.