

*ALTAVISTA  
PRESBYTERIAN CHURCH*



***THE LINK***

*January 1, 2020*

OUR VISION, OUR HEARTS, AND OUR DOORS ARE  
ALWAYS OPEN



Rev. Eduardo Soto, Jr.  
434-369-5286, office  
434-219-5648, mobile

ALTAVISTA PRESBYTERIAN  
CHURCH  
707 BROAD STREET  
P O BOX 126  
ALTAVISTA, VA 24517  
434-369-5286 – Office phone  
434-369-1101 – FAX  
[altapres@embarqmail.com](mailto:altapres@embarqmail.com) - email  
[www.altapres.org](http://www.altapres.org) - web site

Marjorie Thompson, in her book *Forgiveness*, says, “It takes a certain level of awareness to name what we are thinking or feeling at any given time...What we cannot acknowledge we cannot confess, and what we cannot confess we cannot present for forgiveness and healing.” In the Parable of the Prodigal son, we see two different actions from the two brothers. The younger finally comes to terms with his situation and his bad decisions. This self-examination came at the lowest point of his adventure. When he comes to himself, he doesn't wallow in self-pity. He doesn't cry out “Woe is me and my situation, I'm just going to die here, I have nothing left to offer.” No, God places within him the realization that he has wronged his father and must seek reconciliation. Now, in this same parable, we have an example of the exact opposite reaction. The younger brother was not the only one who needed to seek forgiveness. The elder brother, too, is holding a grudge against his brother and father. Luke 15:28 reads, “He became angry and refused to go in [the house to celebrate his brother's return].” He's angry, and rightfully so. But unlike his younger brother, he doesn't take the time for self-examination. He doesn't listen to God's tugging at his heart to seek forgiveness. Regarding the older brother, Jesus

leaves the parable in a cliffhanger. The older brother hadn't yet acknowledged his feeling hurt by his brother and betrayed by his father. He is unaware that he, too, needs reconciliation.

"Awareness, acknowledgement, and confession are the foundation for seeking and receiving forgiveness," Thompson asserts. We cannot even begin the road to forgiveness without first realizing that we need it. Otherwise, we end up like the older brother. The offense may be real and our anger justified, but Christians have a higher calling when it comes to conflict. Our fallenness mandates that we seek forgiveness, especially from God and definitely from others. Thompson says, "Sin is a deeply rooted disorientation in which we tend to see all things primarily in relation to ourselves rather than in relation to God." It is sin that always causes bumps in our relationship with God and neighbor.

When we examine ourselves, and I mean when we truly take a look at our situation, we see just how broken we are. But we can't just look at our situation and do nothing. Upon self-reflection, we should be like the prodigal son and come to terms with our fallenness. Not only must we come to terms with ourselves, but we must remember that we cannot hide anything from God. Even the chosen and powerful King David couldn't hide his indiscretion from God, no matter how hard he tried. And upon seeing the depravity of his actions, turned to God, and cried out to Him, "Create in me a clean heart." Not only are we examining ourselves, but God, too, is examining us, both inside and out. This is the question I want to leave with you. If God, who doesn't really need to forgive us, is still willing to extend us grace, how much more are we called to respond to our neighbors with that selfsame grace?

Grace and Peace,  
Pastor Ed Soto

	<b>November-2019</b>	<b>YTD</b>
<b>Pledges</b>	6,420.50	94,073.50
<b>Non-Pledges</b>	2,314	18,679
<b>Plate Offering</b>	104	1,429.50
<b>Total Expenses</b>	9,063.03	132,653.81

**Altavista Presbyterian Church**  
**Session Highlights**  
**December 15, 2019 meeting**

- Decided to hold a Christmas Eve Service at 7:00 pm.
  - Reviewed the November, 2019 Treasurer's Report.
  - Approved minutes of the November 17, 2019 Stated Session meeting & the November 24, 2019 Congregational meeting as presented.
  - Approved a Housing Allowance of \$14,400 for Pastor Ed for calendar year 2020.
  - Joys & concerns of the congregation were identified. Moderator Ed prayed for those listed & to close the meeting.
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# Sermons This Month

## Jan. 5<sup>th</sup> • Second Sunday after Christmas

Jeremiah 31:10-14

Mark 5:1-13

“The Gerasene Demoniac” Expository Series on Mark

## Jan. 12<sup>th</sup> • First Sunday in Ordinary Time

Isaiah 42:1-9

Mark 5:14-20

“A Right and a Wrong Response” Expository Series on Mark

## Jan. 19<sup>th</sup> • Second Sunday in Ordinary Time

Isaiah 49:1-7

Mark 5:21-43

“The Hemorrhaging Woman” Expository Series on Mark

## Jan. 26<sup>th</sup> • Third Sunday in Ordinary Time

Isaiah 9:1-4

Mark 5:21-43

“Jairus’ Daughter” Expository Series on Mark

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# HAPPENING THIS MONTH!

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## Bible Study — January 7<sup>th</sup>, 14<sup>th</sup>, 21<sup>st</sup>, and 28<sup>th</sup>

Bible Study meets every **Tuesday** morning in the Adult Sunday School room **at 10:00 AM**. All are welcome to join as Pastor Ed leads us through various studies and discussions of Scripture, theology, and church history.

Pastor Ed takes us back to the Bible with a survey of Israel's Monarchy.

- 1/7 Introduction to the Monarchy (I Samuel 8, 10)
- 1/14 Saul & David, part 1 (I Samuel 15, 16, 18)
- 1/21 Saul & David, part 2 (I Samuel 21, 22, 24; I Chronicles 10, 11)
- 1/28 David (I Chronicles 13, 15, 16; II Samuel 11, 12; I Kings 1)

## Prayer Fellowship — January 8<sup>th</sup>, 22<sup>nd</sup>, and 29<sup>th</sup>

Prayer Fellowship meets on the **Second, Fourth, and Fifth Wednesdays** in the Pastor's Study **at 9:30 AM**. All are welcome to join us in prayers for our church, community, nation, and the world. If you have any prayer requests for the Fellowship, please contact the main office.

## Youth Group — December 1<sup>st</sup>, 8<sup>th</sup>, and 15<sup>th</sup>

Youth Group meets on the **Second and Fourth Sundays** in the Youth Room **at 5:00 PM**. All youth between Sixth and Twelfth grades are welcome. The Youth will be treated to a meal and will fellowship throughout the evening.

This Spring, Pastor Ed will combine Youth Group lessons with Confirmation group sessions.

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## JANUARY

### Birthdays

### Anniversaries

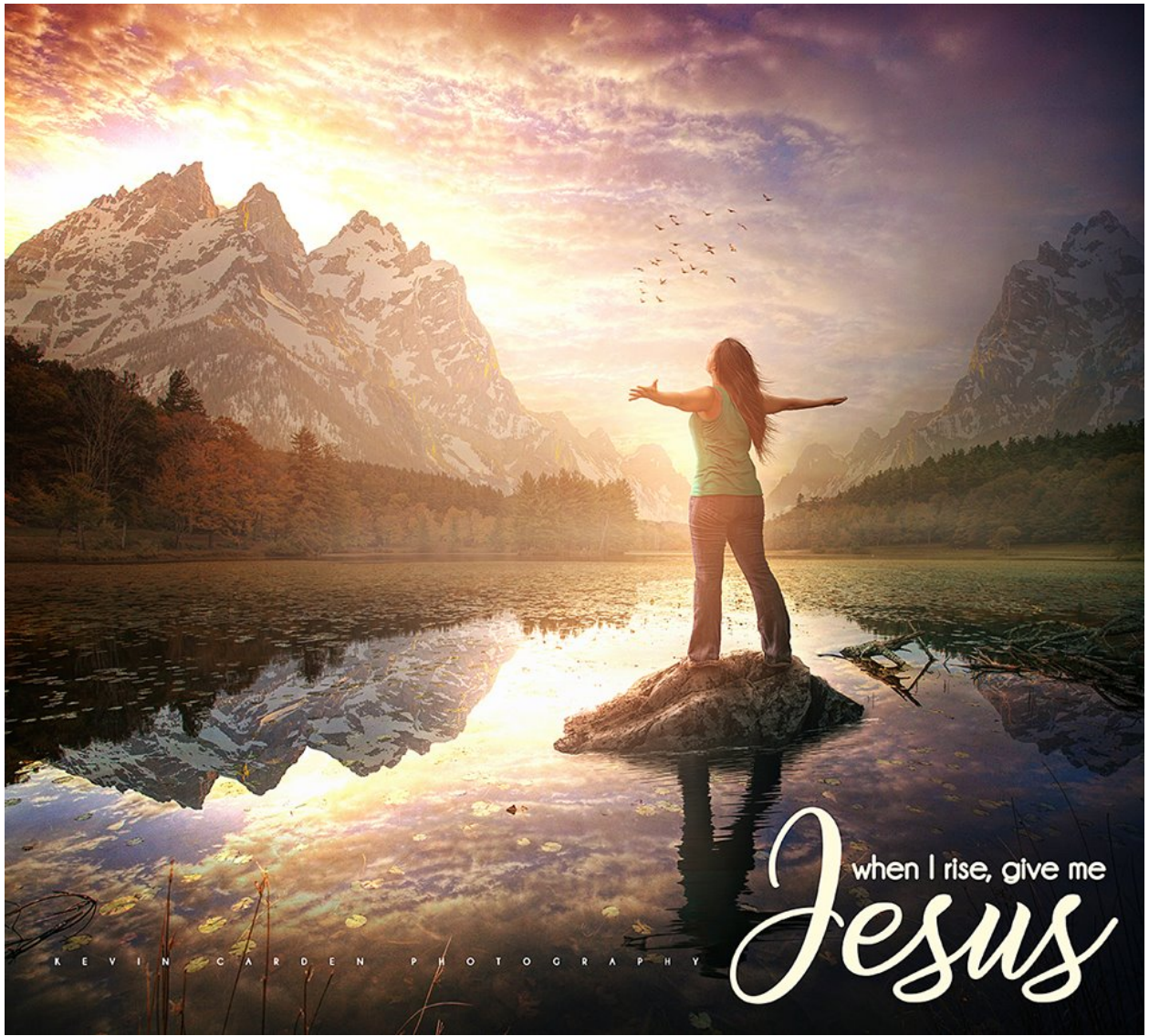
5	Caroline Peerman	
11	Billy Robertson	
		Jack & Alline Ritzer
16	Kathi Bogert	
18	Holly Roark	
20		Mark & Stephanie Moehlenkamp
29		Alex & Bev Eubank



# Month of January

Sunday	Monday	Tuesday	Wednesday	Thursday	Friday	Saturday
			<b>1</b> Church Office Closed  Happy New Year!!	<b>2</b>	<b>3</b>	<b>4</b> 4-8 PM Ed & Betsy's Open House
<b>5</b> 10 AM Worship Communion Children's Church	<b>6</b> 7 PM Boy Scouts Mtg. in FH  6 PM Ministry Beyond Mtg.	<b>7</b> 10 AM Bible Study in Adult SS Room  12 Noon -Men's Lunch – Hibachi Grill  4:30 PM Ministry Within Mtg.  5:30 PM C.E. Mtg.	<b>8</b> 9:30 AM Prayer Fellowship  11-12:30 PM APC Serves Second Helping Lunch	<b>9</b>	<b>10</b>	<b>11</b> 6:00 PM Chili Cook-off
<b>12</b> Worship/Children's Church  Confirmation Classes Begin  5 PM Youth Group Mtg.	<b>13</b> 7 PM Boy Scouts Mtg. in FH	<b>14</b> 10 AM Bible Study in Adult SS Room	<b>15</b> 9:30 AM APC Serves Lunch @ Daily Bread  11-12:30 PM -Second Helping Lunch  10:30 AM Women's F. Mtg.  1 PM DAWN Board Mtg.  5:30 PM Property Mtg.	<b>16</b>	<b>17</b>	<b>18</b>
<b>19</b> Worship/Children's Church  Session Meeting after Worship	<b>20</b> 7 PM Boy Scouts Mtg. in FH	<b>21</b> 8:30 AM Bingo-Dialysis Center  10 AM Bible Study in Adult SS Room  12 Noon -Men's Lunch – Applebee's  1 PM Bingo-Dialysis Center	<b>22</b> 8:30 AM Bingo-Dialysis Center  9:30 AM Prayer Fellowship  11-12:30 PM -Second Helping Lunch  1 PM Bingo-Dialysis Center	<b>23</b>	<b>24</b>	<b>25</b>
<b>26</b> 10 AM Worship Children's Church  5 PM Youth Group Mtg.	<b>27</b> 7 PM Boy Scouts Mtg. in FH  February Link Deadline	<b>28</b> 10 AM Bible Study in Adult SS Room	<b>29</b> 9:30 AM Prayer Fellowship	<b>30</b>	<b>31</b>	





K E V I N C A R D E N P H O T O G R A P H Y

when I rise, give me  
*Jesus*

Altavista Presbyterian Church  
P O Box 126  
Altavista, Virginia 24517