

CC June Lake



Pastor Ron Tennant prays to begin the service.



June Lake is a small town high in the mountains.

Shining God's Light in the Sierra Nevada Mountains

story and photos by Tom Price

I will lift up my eyes to the hills—
from whence comes my help?
My help comes from the LORD,
who made heaven and earth.

Psalm 121:1-2

*Locals and visitors enjoy ice skating
on June Lake during an unusual
warm winter spell.*

High in the Sierra Nevada Mountain Range, in a resort town known for its winter skiing and summer fishing, CC June Lake shares the Gospel.

“After I became a pastor, I began ministering to people struggling with sobriety. The Lord convicted me that it was wrong to sell alcohol to them,” said Ron Tennant, pastor of CC June Lake. The country store had been his livelihood for over two decades. Most

country stores make their profits through the sale of beer, wine, and cigarettes. God has given Ron and his wife, Julie, a love and a burden for those who are in bondage to drugs and alcohol.

“The community has always known that this is a Christian store. Many would come in asking for prayer, and we always prayed for them right there at the counter.” Ron and Julie felt the Lord’s hand upon them as

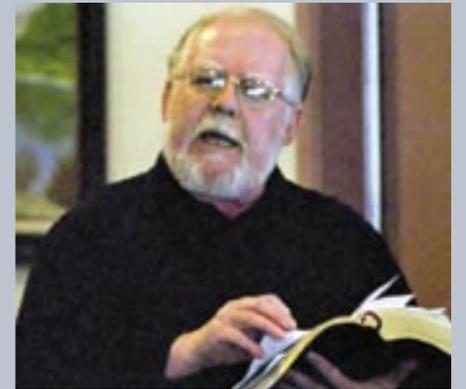
they discontinued all alcohol and cigarette sales, cutting their profits in half. Relieved to turn this over to God, Ron then felt his eyes open to their other big money maker—movie rentals.

They were soon under conviction to sell the video business, which they felt was another stumbling block, as a witness to the community. “Julie and I prayed and prayed about this since we needed to make

a living somehow.” After ending the video rentals, the store began to operate at a loss. But they had faith that God would open another door.

Ron had already ended his part-time architecture business in order to devote more time to ministry. Ron’s woodcarving hobby was soon turned into a means of support. Their store, which Julie runs, was transformed into a woodcraft and art gallery.

Ron spends his days in a nearby trailer that was converted into a workshop. While Ron listens to teaching tapes, the sawdust flies as he handcrafts beautiful works in wood. “There is something about working with wood that continually takes your mind to God’s Word—like the Potter and the clay,” offered Ron. “Each piece is lovingly made—I hate to throw any of it away, even if it is not perfect. In the same way, God pours His love into each of us. He does not want any of us to perish.



June Lake

Ron shares his passion for God’s Word.

“Since opening the woodworking and art gallery, we have gone in a completely different direction. The Lord has been faithful, bringing customers from as far away as Europe,” said Ron.

Dwarfed by the world-famous Mammoth Ski Resort 20 miles south, life in this outpost has its drawbacks. The local medical center only handles broken bones, while all other medical conditions are flown into Nevada. A hospital visit for Ron is a six-hour roundtrip if the routes are passable. The long winters are accompanied by major blizzards—skiers can ply their sport until July. The town is 7,650 feet above sea level, making the air thin and hard to breath for the elderly.

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Pastor Ron Tennant, CC June Lake



Pastor Ron Tennant makes his living by selling his wood carvings. He had felt convicted by the Lord about merchandise carried in the country store he had owned for 20 years.



Ron and Julie in front of their country store that they turned into a gallery.

One local man had his leg amputated due to circulation problems. While he was in the trauma center, his wife went into a coma, never to revive. When she died, the hospital in Nevada called Ron at 3 a.m., asking him to make the three-hour journey to tell the man that his wife had passed away. Ron was also asked to perform the funeral service. Every regular of the local bar attended and heard the message of salvation.

The town has 613 residents in summer, but only a small percentage stay through the harsh winter. CC June Lake's congregation has not been able to support a pastor. While the church blossoms during summer vacation, the locals that stay in town for the winter and call CC June Lake their church home only number in the thirties.

Ron's grandmother had brought him up as a student of the Bible. Turning away from God for a number of years, he was brought back by difficult personal circumstances that led him to a place of repentance. Then he received a study Bible, and his life began to take root again. A succession of preachers came and went through the local community church in June Lake. Finally, CC Visalia sent a man to lead the church. Ron was shocked when every question received the same reply: "Let's open up our Bibles and see what God says. My opinion doesn't matter," the young pastor, Cal Palmer,



Calvary Chapel June Lake is due east of San Francisco.



Julie leads the youth studies at CC June Lake.



Janice Chalmers only has one student for Sunday school class.



The body of Christ comes together for a time of prayer at CC June Lake. During the long, frigid winters only a few families remain. Attendance swells in the summer.



Dennis Hodges, visiting from CC Bishop, leads worship.

“Let your light so shine before men, that they may see your good works and glorify your Father in heaven.”

Matthew 5:16

would say. This was a new phenomenon in town—a preacher simply relying on God's Word for direction.

When Cal decided God was leading him on to another area, most realized that Ron was the man God was calling to pastor the church. Ron was in denial. He had forgotten that he had gotten on his knees two weeks earlier and asked God to forgive him for all his selfish desires and submitted his life totally to serving God, however the Lord saw fit to use him. Ron then felt he heard



June Lake resident and singer Bill Cody, left, greets Dennis Hodges.

God's voice, "The reason I called you to this ministry is because you surrendered your life to Me."

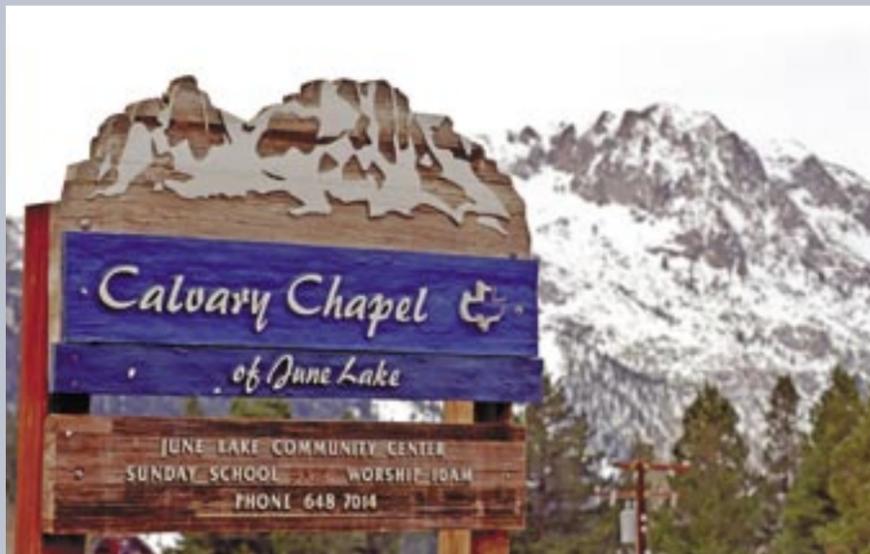
On September 11, 2001, shocked residents asked Ron to lead a prayer service for the community. The clientele of the local bar—many to whom Ron had been witnessing—came to participate. Everyone looked to the man who was always ready to pray.

The June Lake Community Center has been available for the church's use except one Sunday in August when the June Lake

Art Guild is in session for the weekend. The congregation sets up and takes down the chairs and music equipment every Sunday and for any special services. A weekly wom-

CC June Lake

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The Calvary Chapel sign in the center of downtown June Lake welcomes visitors.



The June Lake ski lift overlooks Gull Lake, which was frozen and snow covered. June Lake is in the background.

en's Bible study is held in the leader's home while the men attend a weekly leadership meeting. Once a month, the men meet at a local café, which is also the bar, to be available to the community for prayer or any other needs.

CC June Lake encourages other churches in small communities to persevere as the Bible exhorts in 1 Corinthians 15:58, "Therefore, my beloved brethren, be steadfast, immovable, always abounding in the work of the Lord, knowing that your labor is not in vain in the Lord." ☞

My brethren, count it all joy when you fall into various trials, knowing that the testing of your faith produces patience.

James 1:2-3



The community center has served as the meeting place for CC June Lake for many years. Each Sunday, members set up the chairs and clean up afterwards, as many small churches are required to do.