

THE SHEPHERD'S VOICE



Shepherd of the Valley Evangelical Lutheran Church

1455 East Yosemite Avenue, Merced CA 95340 209-383-0632

Our Mission Statement: To be loving Christians, centered in God's Word and serving one's neighbor.

Our Vision Statement: Accepting people where they are and loving them as God does.

MESSAGE FROM OUR PASTOR

STAFF

Pastor John Russell-Curry
jrussellcurry@comcast.net

Administrative Assistant:
Carolyn Daberkow
shepherdofthevalleyelca@gmail.com
209-383-0632

Office Hours

8:00 – 11:00 AM Monday-Friday

web page: www.thesovlutheran.net
Also on Facebook

Council President:
Marc Medefind
Cell: 209-777-9302
mrmedefind@aol.com

Sunday worship is live on Zoom at 10:00 AM and in-person in sanctuary. (See updates on calendar & SOV Weekly News emails.)

Please have your articles for the newsletter sent each month by the 15th to:
shepherdofthevalleyelca@gmail.com
Thank you.

THE SHEPHERD'S VOICE newsletter is available as a paper copy for pickup, mailed, or sent as an email attachment, or viewed on the website.

ELCA Statements and information are available on the web sites: Sierra Pacific Synod, spselca.org, and Evangelical Lutheran Church in America, elca.org.

We have packed Halloween decorations and pulled out Christmas boxes. Veterans Day is the 11th of the month. Reign of Christ Sunday falls on the 23rd. The first Sunday of Advent will be at the end of the month just a couple of days after Thanksgiving.

We think about how to answer the question, "For what are you asking at Christmas?". At the same time, we're to answer, "For what are you the most thankful at Thanksgiving?"

The other day, I ventured into the front garden area of the church. The attendant pointed out a shoot from one plant and explained that it is just a "sucker". It doesn't produce any blooms and doesn't present anything useful. "I keep it and trim it anyway", explained the attendant.

When I gathered the Halloween material and unpacked Christmas and Thanksgiving stuff, I proposed that all is just a "sucker". It hasn't much use and produces very little. (I keep it anyway – every year.)

Much of our surroundings are "suckers" that seem to produce nothing of worth. Much of the sermons, prayers, readings, and text studies may seem to be "suckers" – what to do with this?

Some things do not need to be defined by the perceived "value". Much of what we do produces little if anything. The internal comfort is the hopeful assertion that, someday, this will come in "handy".

Such it is for the hope-filled activity of the church – of mission. Someday, this will come in handy. Judgement seems to produce nothing of use. Searching/seeing the fulfillment as God's intent **and** "coming in handy" becomes something for which we are the most thankful.

Our blessing and our challenge is to "see" the usefulness within the divine creating and declaring it "the item most thankful".

Pastor John



PRAYER REQUESTS

Prayers for healing:

Dave Bettis; Joel Knox; Gleneda Muralt; Dorothy Woody; Rosie Sullivan; Eric Smith; Gleneda Muralt's niece, Shereida; Nan Dailey; Kimberly Castillo's daughter Jillian and mother-in-law Lupe; Pam Andersen; Pastor John Russell-Curry and his family; Warren Westerberg; Sylvia Poupard; Jeane & David Hetland; Annie Sofranek; David Cherf; and people who are ill around the world.

We lift prayers for our Benevolence of the Month, **Senior Brown Bag Program** and for our Sierra Pacific Synod Bishop, **Jeff Johnson**.

The names on the Prayer List may be removed at the end of each month unless the office is notified that you would like them left on for another month. Please leave a message at the office, 209-383-0632. Thank you.



PRAYER CHAIN

If you have any prayer requests, please contact Pam Andersen at 209-631-4594 to start the Prayer Chain.

Council Notes

The October Council meeting was cancelled due to a number of council members not available on that date. Any immediate business was handled by email.

STEWARDSHIP NEWS

The Stewardship Pledge Drive is in November. You will soon be receiving a pledge letter in the mail. We would appreciate it if you would prayerfully consider your pledge for 2026. Every pledge is important as it helps the Finance Committee plan next year's budget.

IT'S THANKFEST TIME AGAIN!

As we culminate our Stewardship drive in November, we traditionally celebrate with a potluck lunch together after worship. We will be doing the same again this year so get out your best recipes and bring something to share. There will be a sign-up sheet in the Narthex leading up to our Thankfest on **Sunday, November 23rd.**



NOVEMBER BIRTHDAYS

Tim Shaw	11/02
Ana Boyenga	11/04
Gwen Cherf	11/06
Karen Goldsmith	11/06
John Pruett	11/07
Danica Christofferson	11/13
Kylie Christofferson	11/13
Dominic Basso	11/23

DECEMBER BIRTHDAYS

Sylvia Poupard	12/07
Dave Sofranek	12/09
Eileen Fite	12/12
Erin Ward	12/15
Candice Medefind	12/16
David Bettis	12/17
Janel Wilkerson	12/26
Cary Yanagi	12/27
Lynn Tatum	12/31

MONTHLY BIRTHDAY LUNCHEON

The birthday luncheon will not be held in November and December. Watch for more information as to where we will meet in January.

Share Your Favorite Hymns

The choir invites the congregation members to let us know your favorite hymns. We'd love to include them in our upcoming worship services. Thanks to all who have shared with us already, and many of those hymns will be featured in the coming months. Just give us a list (scribble cards are in the pews) or for those on Zoom, email Karen Arnold at bookgirl66@comcast.net. Thanks!

BIBLE TEXT READINGS

All Saints Sunday

Daniel 7:1-3, 15-18
Psalm 149
Ephesians 1:11-23
Luke 6:20-31

November 2

White

Twenty-Second Sunday After Pentecost

Job 19:23-27a
Psalm 17:1-9
2 Thessalonians 2:1-5, 13-17
Luke 20:27-38

November 9

Green

Twenty-Third Sunday After Pentecost

Malachi 4:1-2a
Psalm 98
2 Thessalonians 3:6-13
Luke 21:5-19

November 16

Green

Christ the King

Jeremiah 23:1-6
Psalm 46
Colossians 1:11-20
Luke 23:33-43

November 23

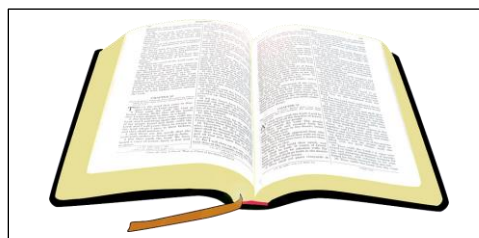
White

First Sunday of Advent

Isaiah 2:1-5
Psalm 122
Romans 13:11-14
Matthew 24:36-44

November 30

Blue



OPERATION CHRISTMAS CHILD REMINDER

For those of you who filled a shoebox or multiple shoeboxes, this is just a reminder that they need to be returned to the church by November 23rd. If you will not be able to return them by that date, please let me know in advance so arrangements can be made to pick them up from you. Thank you for your generosity.

Love in Christ,
Annie

COMMUNITY BABY SHOWER

The Merced County Community Action Agency (MCCAA) in Merced is hosting a Community Baby Shower on November 14, 2025, at the Italo Lodge. They have asked community groups and churches to put together baskets of essential items for pregnant and postpartum women who are having challenges navigating their new life changes. These women have been referred to MCCAA by their doctors and do not have any support systems.

Our church council has approved putting together items for this event. You can help by donating new gender-neutral clothing (size newborn, 3 or 6 months); a baby bathtub, bath toys; baby towels; baby body wash & shampoo; books; socks; bibs; hats; receiving blankets, etc. I will put a box in the narthex that you can add your gifts to. Or, you can make a monetary donation using the special envelopes in the pew and designate "Baby Shower". Checks can be made out to Shepherd of the Valley. **The deadline is November 2.** Contact Barb Ward for any additional details.

Shepherd of the Valley Website

www.thesovlutheran.net

The website is active and being monitored by Carolyn Daberkow, Administrative Assistant. Take a little time to review the website.

You will find the links to the Zoom gatherings by clicking on ABOUT US, click on WORSHIP SERVICE OUTLINES and click on the long link. You will need the Zoom app downloaded to your phone, tablet, or computer first.

Thanks go to Carolyn Daberkow for the continuing updates.

SOV WORSHIP SERVICES ARE ON FACEBOOK

Our worship services can be seen any day, at any time, on Facebook. Just type in the search box "Shepherd of the Valley Lutheran Merced" and you will see the church listed. Click on our church and our Facebook page appears, with all the services.

We encourage you to send the service to your family and friends by clicking on the "SHARE" icon below the picture and then use "Share to your friends" or "Send in Messenger" service.

BENEVOLENCE OF THE MONTH

November & December Benevolence

SENIOR BROWN BAG PROGRAM

2000 W. Olive Avenue, Merced, CA 95348

Earla Anderson, Senior Brown Bag Program Manager
(209) 726-3663

email: earlaa@mmcfb.org.

The Senior Brown Bag Program provides supplemental nutritious groceries twice a month to over 3,850 seniors at 16 distribution sites in Merced and Mariposa Counties. Without the Senior Brown Bag Program, many seniors in Merced and Mariposa counties would be extremely isolated and at increased risk for malnourishment and illness.

There is no cost to the individuals served and eligibility is determined by using the federal income guidelines for poverty. The Senior Brown Bag program is designed to help those whose main source of income is Social Security, and who normally have to choose between nutritious foods and crucial medications.

Senior Brown Bag Program participants are also provided with opportunities to volunteer at their food pickup site, which offers them social connections and a sense of belonging and purpose as they contribute to the Food Bank.

Every month, more than 200 volunteers gather at the various Senior Brown Bag sites to sort, bag, and distribute food to their peers. Many participants have built new friendships and a sense of community by volunteering.

Donations may be given to Shepherd of the Valley Lutheran Church with Senior Brown Bag on the memo line to be forwarded.



Daylight Saving Time ends Sunday, November 2 at 2:00 a.m. Don't forget to "fall back." Set your clocks back one hour before going to bed on Saturday night.

CONGREGATION COUNCIL MEMBERS

Term ends May 2026

Karen Arnold
David John Cherf II
Marc Medefind
Barbara Ward

Term ends May 2027

Mary Jo Knudsen
Mona Kowalczyk
Christine Love
Christopher Tomford

Mona Kowalczyk – Treasurer & Bookkeeper
Christine Boyenga – Financial Secretary

2025-2026 Council Officers

President: Marc Medefind Vice-President: Barb Ward
Secretary: David John Cherf II

Next Meeting Date: Third Monday of the month
November 17, 2025 10 AM

NOVEMBER SUNDAY MORNING WORSHIP ASSISTANTS

To help serve the glory of God in worship - please contact Chris Boyenga, 209-769-8544 to participate as Greeter, Usher, or Reader/Assisting Minister for our 10 A.M. Sunday Worship Service.

	Sunday November 2	Sunday November 9	Sunday November 16	Sunday November 23	Sunday November 30
Greeters/ Attendance	<i>Chris Boyenga</i>	<i>Pam Andersen</i>	<i>Chris Boyenga</i>	<i>Chris Love</i>	<i>Barb Ward</i>
Ushers	<i>Alan Arnold</i>	<i>Donald Gumm</i>	<i>Donald Gumm</i>	<i>Alan Arnold</i>	<i>David Bettis</i>
Reader/Assisting Ministers	<i>Marc Medefind</i>	<i>Mary Jo Knudsen</i>	<i>Barb Ward</i>	<i>Mona Kowalczyk</i>	<i>Chris Love</i>

**SHEPHERD OF THE VALLEY LUTHERAN CHURCH
NOVEMBER CALENDAR OF EVENTS**

Sunday	Monday	Tuesday	Wednesday	Thursday	Friday	Saturday
						1
						Church Clean-up 9 AM
2	3	4	5	6	7	8
Worship 10 AM Sanctuary & Zoom					SOV Weekly News sent via email	
9	10	11	12	13	14	15
Worship 10 AM Sanctuary & Zoom		Veterans Day Office Closed			SOV Weekly News sent via email	
16	17	18	19	20	21	22
Worship 10 AM Sanctuary & Zoom	Council Meeting 10 AM				SOV Weekly News sent via email	
23	24	25	26	27	28	29
Worship 10 AM Sanctuary & Zoom Thankfest			SOV Weekly News sent via email	Thanksgiving Day Office Closed	Office Closed	
30						
Worship 10 AM Sanctuary & Zoom After service Advent Bible Study						



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Merced CA 95340

RETURN SERVICE REQUESTED