

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 SUPPLY PASTOR

YOU'RE WELCOME

One year old Corey has a teacher who visits regularly. She comes from Head Start.

I was home alone when she visited. Without thinking, I asked, "Want a cup of coffee or anything?" This is an automatic invitation at all visits to extended family. There was always coffee in the kitchen.

I had expected her to say, "Oh, no. I'm fine...."

Instead, she responded, "Sure, I'd love one".

I stammered, "OK. It'll just take a moment. I'm the only one who drinks coffee here and the grinder makes noise. I get the coffee ready in the garage. I'll be right back." I expected, "Oh, no, in that case, don't go to any trouble. I'll have a little water."

She didn't say this.

To break the awkward silence, "Well, want something in your coffee – cream or sugar?"

She responded, "Sure, that'll be great. Both would be fine."

I prepared the cup of coffee and guessed about how much sugar and milk to add.

I was attempting to be welcoming and hospitable. I'd forgotten how!

Growing up, houses with the incessant pot of coffee also had candy dishes around the living room. Anyone could reach for a treat. One didn't need permission. Treats were offered freely.

This advent season, we will examine "hospitality" with a bible study after worship services in December.

The focus expressed is to welcome back those who have gone missing from church.

We miss them.

We need to up-date our hospitality skills and offer metaphorical coffee and candy (sustenance and drink – bread and wine – body and blood of our Savior...)

Do you take cream or sugar?

Pastor John

STAFF

Administrative Assistant:

Carolyn Daberkow

shepherdofthevalleyelca@gmail.com

Office Hours

8:00 – 11:00 AM Monday-Friday

web page: www.thesovlutheran.net

Also on Facebook

Council President:

David Cherf

Home: 209-725-0921

Cell: 209-489-7757

djcherf@yahoo.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.



PRAYER REQUESTS

Prayers for healing:
Betty Madsen; Gleneda Muralt; Dorothy Woody; Rosie Sullivan; Karen Darby; Eric Smith; Gleneda Muralt's niece, Shereida; Lynette Figueroa; Nan Dailey; Kimberly Castillo's daughter Jillian and mother-in-law Lupe; Pam Andersen; Pastor John Russell-Curry and his family; Warren Westerberg; Jan & Joe Collins; Dottie Andersen; Sylvia Poupard; Jeane & David Hetland; Penny Waha; Annie Sofranek; Susanne Smith; 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.

CENTERING PRAYER

Centering Prayer will not be meeting in December. The group will resume meeting on Wednesday, January 3.

A CONGREGATIONAL MEETING

will be held on Sunday, December 3rd, immediately following the worship service, to vote on a proposal to extend a call to Pastor John-Russell Curry to serve as one-half time pastor. A second vote will approve the proposed compensation package. Our newly elected bishop, Jeff Johnson, will participate in the worship service and represent the Synod at the congregational meeting. All voting members are highly encouraged to attend.

COUNCIL NEWS

November 13, 2023

Tim Shaw, David Cherf, and Carolyn Stephens will be added to the PNC Bank Signatories.

The council reviewed and accepted Compensation Packet (Draft #3) for Pastor John Russell-Curry.

On December 24th there will be two services: an Advent service at 10:00 AM, and a Christmas Eve service at 4:00 PM.

Purchasing a banner to display the time of worship is being considered for the front of the Church.

November 19th is Pledge Potluck Sunday. Bring a dish and your appetite!

Stewardship Report

We dedicated the stewardship drive pledges on November 19, 2024, and celebrated together with a Pledge Potluck after the worship service. By submitting your pledge, your commitment provides assistance to the Finance Committee in planning next year's budget to fund the half-time Call and the expenses to provide meaningful worship and other programs while also maintaining the property. New pledges may be submitted in the offering plate or sent to the church office.

Thank you for your support.

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.

DECEMBER BIRTHDAYS

Karen Darby	12/05
Sylvia Poupard	12/07
Dave Sofranek	12/09
Jim Sofranek	12/09
Wendy Oates	12/11
Eileen Fite	12/12
Kathie Mackie	12/12
Lynette Figueroa	12/13
Erin Ward	12/15
Candice Medefind	12/16
David Bettis	12/17
Amanda Campos	12/18
Janel Wilkerson	12/26
Nancy Heagy	12/27
Cary Yanagi	12/27
Terry Roduner	12/31
Lynn Tatum	12/31

JANUARY BIRTHDAYS

Karen Chastain	01/03
Elizabeth Sofranek	01/14
Connie McBride	01/15
Analise Gallaway	01/20
Eleanor Roduner	01/23
Jeane Hetland	01/25
Rosie Sullivan	01/25
Elizabeth Patterson	01/25
Melissa Stephens	01/26
Briana Hamamoto-Hardman	01/30
Keira Hamrah	01/30



MONTHLY BIRTHDAY LUNCHEON

There will be no Birthday Luncheon in December. We look forward to meeting again in January.

BIBLE TEXT READINGS

First Sunday of Advent	December 3
Isaiah 64:1-9	
Psalms 80:1-7, 17-19	
1 Corinthians 1:3-9	
Mark 13:24-37	Blue
Second Sunday of Advent	December 10
Isaiah 40:1-11	
Psalms 85:1-2, 8-13	
2 Peter 3:8-15a	
Mark 1:1-8	Blue
Third Sunday of Advent	December 17
Isaiah 61:1-4, 8-11	
Psalms 126 or Luke 1:46b-55	
1 Thessalonians 16-24	
John 1:6-8, 19-28	Blue
Fourth Sunday of Advent	December 24
2 Samuel 7:1-11, 16	
Luke 1:46b-55 or Psalm 89:1-4, 19-26	
Romans 16:25-27	
Luke 1:26-38	Blue
Christmas Eve	December 24
Isaiah 9:2-7	
Psalms 96	
Titus 2:11-14	
Luke 2:1-14 [15-20]	White
First Sunday of Christmas	December 31
Isaiah 61:10-62:3	
Psalms 148	
Galatians 4:4-7	
Luke 2:22-40	White

Advent – December 3

The glorious season of Advent begins on Sunday, December 3. Join us as we go through the Advent and prepare for the birth of our Savior.

Advent Calendar 2023 Available

Several churches in our area - including SOV – have developed an Advent Calendar for 2023.

Each day the reader will find a reflection on one of the scriptures for the day, an Advent prayer specific to that day and a suggested Advent Activity.

The calendars in booklet form are available in the Narthex free of charge.

LUNCHEON RECEPTION

We are so very blessed and so very happy to announce the marriages of our daughters, Sarah to Blaze the past month, November 2023 and Amy to Rvee this coming January 2024.

We would like to invite our church family to a lunch reception to celebrate them after the church service on Sunday, January 14, 2024. No gifts please. Your presence is their present.

Love in Christ,
Dave & Annie Sofranek

ADVENT BIBLE STUDY

Join us on December 10 and 17 for an Advent Bible Study which will be held in Lineberger Hall at 11 AM. We look forward to seeing you.

CHRISTMAS SERVICES

Two services will be held on Sunday, December 24, at 10 AM and 4 PM.

Plan on joining us for these special services as we celebrate the birth of our Savior.

CALL COMMITTEE "CURRENTS"

The "Current" Call Committee of 2023 and the Congregation Council members met November 8, 2023, with Pastor Manda Truchinski, Pastor Jerilyn Dhalke, and Pastor John Russell-Curry. The requirements and procedures needed to work together with the Presbytery, our Sierra Pacific Synod, and Shepherd of the Valley Merced (SOV) were reviewed to proceed with a Minister of Word and Sacrament half-time Call. The Draft #1 Compensation package was reviewed and discussed with some concerns expressed. It was approved to take it to the Congregation Council for consideration on November 13, 2024.

The Compensation package and housing allowance motions for 1-1-2024 to 12-31-2024 were presented and approved by the Congregation Council on November 13, 2024. Copies were signed by President David Cherf and Pastor John Russell-Curry and shared with Pastor Manda and Pastor Jerilyn by email that evening.

The Congregation Council also approved increasing the Supply Pastor salary to be paid for working more hours in December 2023.

A Special Congregational Meeting is scheduled December 3, 2023 to allow voting members of SOV to vote to offer the half-time Call to Pastor John Russell-Curry. After approval of the Call, the compensation package will be presented for a vote.

May God be with all of us as we move together into the new church year.

Chris Boyenga, Chair; 209-769-8544, chrisboyen@aol.com; Jeane Hetland, Vice Chair; Mary Jo Knudsen, Secretary; Candice Medefind; Tim Shaw; Judy Westerberg; Marit Medefind, Alternate

CAMPUS MINISTRY and SEE'S CANDY SALE

You haven't heard about Campus Ministries of Merced for a while. COVID slowed things down a bit, but the organization is still very active and SOV is a part of the action. Early on at UC Merced, the Methodists formed Wesley Foundation, which eventually became an ecumenical group, and that's when we joined in. A part-time campus pastor leads Bible study, faith conversations, worship and service projects at both UC Merced and Merced College. A residential house offers a select number of students an opportunity to live in "intentional community" as part of their spiritual journey.

As you might expect, financial support is needed, and an annual **See's Candy sale** helps to keep this effort going. For more information, check out the flyer on the church's bulletin board – or call Dave Hetland at 209 489-8969. The deadline for orders is Thursday, December 7th and delivery is scheduled for no later than Sunday, December 17th. Think candy for Christmas and support campus ministry!

PROPERTY REPORT

November 11, 2023

HVACS: Haven't had any more problems from the 10 HVAC units.

GARAGE DOOR: Garage door being used by Healthy House giving some problems still.

FENCE: We are watching a section of fence.

OUTDOOR LIGHTS: Still have 8 bulbs that need to be put in.

INDOOR LIGHTS: We are still replacing the old fluorescent bulbs with energy efficient LED bulbs. This takes time to remove the ballasts and rewire the fixtures.

SPRINKLERS: Will need to replace some in the front courtyard. Need to find leak in center 'round' planter.

CLEAN-UP SATURDAYS: A small group of us have been vacuuming, sweeping, cleaning windows and windowsills, and changing out toilet paper rolls and such. I hear your complaints, but we are saving \$8,400 a year with our monthly clean-up.

POWERPOINT, ZOOM, PA SYSTEM: We have a constant 60-70 views of our weekly services on ZOOM and later on Facebook. The PowerPoint issue was resolved.

HOMELESS: Haven't heard of any more problems.

GROUNDS: Steve continues to water the tree by garage. Dylan, David II and I will be out this next month clearing out weeds and grass around the garden beds

David Cherf, Property Manager
cell/text: (209) 489-7757
home: (209) 725-0921

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. Any suggestions/articles and/or photos may be shared with Jeane Hetland to be reviewed for placement.

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, along with Jeane Hetland for the continuing updates.

BENEVOLENCE OF THE MONTH

**November and 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.

Next to children, seniors are the most vulnerable group at risk of hunger. Senior food insecurity has risen as a result of the recession. The number of seniors at risk of hunger in 2015 was 70% higher than in 2007. Pre-seniors between the ages of 55 and 64, are particularly vulnerable as they are not yet of retirement age and thus ineligible for safety net programs like Medicare and Social Security.

Merced County Food Bank's Senior Brown Bag Program provides supplemental nutritious groceries twice a month to over 2,400 older adults (ages 55+) 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. Many seniors are forced to make difficult but unavoidable choices such as whether to purchase their medications, pay for their housing, and/or pay their utilities. Buying food, especially nutritious food, is often last on their list.

Sample Senior Brown Bag food items:

Chicken, Eggs, Fresh Produce, Cereal, Rice,
Other staple items

Senior Brown Bag Program participants are 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 Program on the memo line to be forwarded.

CONGREGATION COUNCIL MEMBERS

Term ends May 2024

Pam Andersen
 David John Cherf II
 Marc Medefind
 Carolyn Stephens

Term ends May 2025

David Cherf
 Jan Collins
 Steven Hand
 Mary Jo Knudsen

Tim Shaw – Interim Treasurer & Bookkeeper
 Christine Boyenga – Financial Secretary
 Audit Committee: Karen Arnold, Chris Tomford, and Barb Ward

2023-2024 Council Officers

President: David Cherf Vice-President: Carolyn Stephens
 Secretary: David John Cherf II

*Next Meeting Date: **Monday, December 11 6:00 PM***

DECEMBER SUNDAY MORNING WORSHIP ASSISTANTS

To help serve the glory of God in worship - please contact Chris Boyenga, 209-759-8544 to participate as Greeter, Usher, or Reader/Assisting Minister for our 10 A.M. Sunday Worship Service.

	Sunday December 3	Sunday December 10	Sunday December 17	Sunday December 24	Sunday December 31
Greeters/ Attendance	<i>Chris Boyenga</i>	<i>Dave Bettis</i>	<i>Chris Boyenga</i>	<i>Pam Andersen</i>	<i>Chris Boyenga</i>
Ushers	<i>Cherf Family</i>	<i>Cherf Family</i>	<i>Al Arnold</i>	<i>Cherf Family</i>	<i>Dave Bettis</i>
Reader/Assisting Ministers	<i>Pam Andersen</i>	<i>Tim & Pat Shaw</i>	<i>Marc Medefind</i>	<i>Barb Ward</i>	<i>Tim & Pat Shaw</i>

SHEPHERD OF THE VALLEY LUTHERAN CHURCH
DECEMBER CALENDAR OF EVENTS

Sunday	Monday	Tuesday	Wednesday	Thursday	Friday	Saturday
					1	2
					SOV Weekly News sent via email	
3	4	5	6	7	8	9
Worship 10:00 AM Sanctuary & Zoom Congregational Meeting 11:00 AM Bishop Jeff Johnson will join us.					SOV Weekly News sent via email	
10	11	12	13	14	15	16
Worship: 10:00 AM Sanctuary & Zoom Advent Bible Study 11:00 AM	Council 6:00 PM				SOV Weekly News sent via email	
17	18	19	20	21	22	23
Worship 10:00 AM Sanctuary & Zoom Advent Bible Study 11:00 AM					SOV Weekly News sent via email	
24	25	26	27	28	29	30
Worship: 10:00 AM Sanctuary & Zoom Christmas Eve Service 4:00 PM	Christmas Day Office Closed					
31						
Worship: 10:00 AM Sanctuary & Zoom						



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RETURN SERVICE REQUESTED