

## 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.

#### STAFF

Pastor John Russell-Curry  
jrussellcurry@comcast.net

Administrative Assistant:  
Carolyn Daberkow  
shepherdofthevalleyelca@gmail.com

Office Hours

8:00 – 11:00 AM Monday-Friday

web page: [www.thesovlutheran.net](http://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 15<sup>th</sup> 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](http://spselca.org), and Evangelical Lutheran Church in America, [elca.org](http://elca.org).

#### MESSAGE FROM OUR PASTOR

When I visit chain stores like the pharmacies and the grocery, I notice that there are aisles labeled “seasonal”. The most current “seasonal” transition has been the removal of all Halloween items and the placement of Christmas items. This transition occurs almost immediately. The “old” is almost magically put away, while the “new” season is presented – also immediately.

Our liturgical calendar presents “seasons” as we progress through the year.

I recently received a packet of materials that present a four-week study for reflections on preaching (written by Dr. Walter Bruegemann). The packet is titled, “Anticipating Advent”.

We, like all Christian congregations, are in the process of anticipating Advent.

There's lots going on in the Advent season, and it behooves us to be ready. (Our Council has been considering/planning for Advent and the Christmas seasons for quite a while now.)

I want to announce that there will be an Advent Study series to take place after worship on the Sundays in Advent. Each Sunday's study will use a “participants' guide”. The guides will be available on the table in the narthex for review by any and all interested parties. The study is titled, “The Messiah”. Each week, a different name for the Christ child will be examined.

I hope to see all who might wish to be involved.

*Pastor John*



**PRAYER REQUESTS**

Prayers for healing:  
Dave Bettis; Joel Knox; 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; Judy and Warren Westerberg; Sylvia Poupard; Jeane & David Hetland; Penny Waha; 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 UPDATE**

We would like to thank Pam Andersen for volunteering to take over leading the Prayer Chain.

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

**CHRISTMAS EVE SERVICE**

"Lesson in Carols" service will be held on Tuesday, December 24, at 4 PM.

Plan on joining us for this special service as we celebrate the birth of our Savior.

**COUNCIL NEWS**  
**November 11, 2024**

Thankfest will be held November 24th after the worship service. Bring a dish and your appetite!

Jan Collins is holding a Knitting Group every Friday from 12:00pm to 2:00pm.

A potluck will be held this Friday at noon in a celebration for the garden and how well it's been growing.

Advent Bible Study will be held after the worship services starting December 1.

A tally of who has a key that gives access to the church is being made.

**ADVENT STUDY**  
**"The Messiah"**

*Sunday, December 1- Sunday, December 22*

Pastor John will be leading a four-week study after worship at 11:15 AM in Lineberger Hall. Each week a different name of the Christ child will be examined. Guides for the study will be available on the table in the narthex for review. Plan now to participate in the study as we go through the Advent season.

**POINSETTIAS**

Help beautify our sanctuary this Christmas and honor special people in your life. You can order 6" Poinsettias for \$15 each. They will grace the sanctuary on Sunday, December 22 and you can take them home after the Christmas Eve service on the 24th. You can place your check/cash in a special envelope in the offering plate along with the order form or give it to Barb Ward or the church office. Checks may be written to SOV and mark Poinsettias on the memo line.

**Deadline for orders is December 9th.**

**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 1	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**

We will not be meeting in December. Watch for more information as to where the group will meet in January.

**BIBLE TEXT READINGS**

<b>First Sunday of Advent</b>	<b>December 1</b>
Jeremiah 33:14-16	
Psalms 25:1-10	
1 Thessalonians 3:9-13	
Luke 21:25-36	Blue
<b>Second Sunday of Advent</b>	<b>December 8</b>
Malachi 3:1-4 or Baruch 5:1-9	
Luke 1:68-79	
Philippians 1:3-11	
Luke 3:1-6	Blue
<b>Third Sunday of Advent</b>	<b>December 15</b>
Zephaniah 3:14-20	
Isaiah 12:2-6	
Philippians 4:4-7	
Luke 3:7-18	Blue
<b>Fourth Sunday of Advent</b>	<b>December 22</b>
Micah 5:2-5a	
Luke 1:46b-55 or Psalm 80:1-7	
Hebrews 10:5-10	
Luke 1:39-45 (46-55)	Blue
<b>First Sunday of Christmas</b>	<b>December 29</b>
1 Samuel 2:18-20, 26	
Psalms 148	
Colossians 3:12-17	
Luke 2:41-52	White

**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.

**Do you have a key and/or code to the church?**

We are updating our records to ensure that we have accurate information. If you do have one, please contact Karen Arnold at [\(209\) 617-0626](tel:2096170626) or email her at [bookgirl66@comcast.net](mailto:bookgirl66@comcast.net). You can also call the church office between the hours of 8-11 AM. Please verify by December 31. Thank you!

**PROPERTY REPORT  
November 11, 2024**

HVACS: Haven't had any problems. Still replacing filters for winter.

FENCE: Still working on and in communication with abutting property owners on replacing fences.

OUTDOOR LIGHTS: Bulbs were ordered and are getting replaced. Front sign light may have a short or just got a batch of bad bulbs.

INDOOR LIGHTS: We are still replacing the old fluorescent bulbs with energy efficient LED bulbs.

SPRINKLERS: Leak in a main valve box in front is being looked at by a gardener. Trees in the center are being watered every 2-3 days during hottest of days.

POWER POINT, ZOOM, PA SYSTEM: We have a constant 40-50 views of our weekly services on ZOOM and later on Facebook. Our Power Point operator says that we do not have enough RAM for the power point program, which in turn, causes the screen outages.

GROUNDS: A chunk of brick by the garbage that had come off has been fixed by Alan.

SPIDER WEBS: During our early morning waterings, we are starting to brush down cobwebs. The garages were our first cleanup of those.

HOMELESS: During the upcoming colder months, we will most likely have more homeless people showing up at night to keep warm. We will continue to monitor.

All seems to be going well, we have been fixing problems as they arise and as always are looking forward to starting new and finishing old projects.

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

**Shepherd of the Valley Website**

[www.thesovlutheran.net](http://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.**

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 Program on the memo line to be forwarded.

**2025 GIVING ENVELOPES**

Giving envelopes will be available to be picked up by Sunday, December 22, 2024.

Giving Statements for 2024 will be available by Sunday, January 26, 2025.

**CONGREGATION COUNCIL MEMBERS**

**Term ends May 2025**

Jan Collins  
 Steven Hand  
 Mary Jo Knudsen

**Term ends May 2026**

Karen Arnold  
 David John Cherf II  
 Marc Medefind  
 Barbara Ward

Mona Kowalczyk–Treasurer & Bookkeeper  
 Christine Boyenga – Financial Secretary

**2024-2025 Council Officers**

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

*Next Meeting Date: **Monday, December 9, 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 1	Sunday December 8	Sunday December 15	Sunday December 22	Sunday December 29
Greeters/ Attendance	<i>Chris Boyenga</i>	<i>Pam Andersen</i>	<i>Chris Boyenga</i>	<i>Barb Ward</i>	<i>Pam Andersen</i>
Ushers	<i>Alan Arnold</i>	<i>Ron Basso</i>	<i>Alan Arnold</i>	<i>Ron Basso</i>	<i>Alan Arnold</i>
Reader/Assisting Ministers	<i>Barb Ward</i>	<i>Tim Shaw</i>	<i>Pam Andersen</i>	<i>Marc Medefind</i>	<i>Barb Ward</i>

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

Sunday	Monday	Tuesday	Wednesday	Thursday	Friday	Saturday
<b>1</b>	<b>2</b>	<b>3</b>	<b>4</b>	<b>5</b>	<b>6</b>	<b>7</b>
Worship: <b>10 AM</b> Sanctuary & Zoom Advent Study <b>11:15 AM</b> Lineberger Hall					<b>SOV Weekly News</b> sent via email	Church Clean-up <b>9 AM</b>
<b>8</b>	<b>9</b>	<b>10</b>	<b>11</b>	<b>12</b>	<b>13</b>	<b>14</b>
Worship <b>10 AM</b> Sanctuary & Zoom Advent Study <b>11:15 AM</b> Lineberger Hall	Council Meeting <b>6 PM</b>				<b>SOV Weekly News</b> sent via email	
<b>15</b>	<b>16</b>	<b>17</b>	<b>18</b>	<b>19</b>	<b>20</b>	<b>21</b>
Worship: <b>10 AM</b> Sanctuary & Zoom Advent Study <b>11:15 AM</b> Lineberger Hall					<b>SOV Weekly News</b> sent via email	
<b>22</b>	<b>23</b>	<b>24</b>	<b>25</b>	<b>26</b>	<b>27</b>	<b>28</b>
Worship <b>10 AM</b> Sanctuary & Zoom Advent Study <b>11:15 AM</b> Lineberger Hall		Christmas Eve Worship <b>4 PM</b>	<b>Christmas Day</b> Office Closed		<b>SOV Weekly News</b> sent via email	
<b>29</b>	<b>30</b>	<b>31</b>				
Worship <b>10 AM</b> Sanctuary & Zoom						



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Merced CA 95340

RETURN SERVICE REQUESTED